
“They Shall Seek Peace, and There Shall Be None”

THE LONG-TURBULENT MIDEAST has been at the top of the news for several months now, and will probably remain so for quite some time to come. Although of short duration, the Desert Storm war and the freeing of Kuwait proved to be a very bloody one—destructive and costly to the aggressor, as well as to the country they invaded. The deployment of the combined military forces of many of the United Nation countries to right this gross injustice included some Arab countries also, namely: Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Kuwait. Other Arab nations which were sympathetic toward Iraq but chose to remain neutral were Iran, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Still another neutral country in that area of the world was Israel. In the background of this scenario, the lingering hostilities between Arabs and Jews was very much in evidence.

The Scud missile attacks upon Israel by Iraq, it is believed, were calculated to draw Israel into the war on the side of the United Nations’ forces. If Israel had retaliated, they, no doubt, would have incited old hatreds by the neutral Arab states, causing some of them to join with Iraq in a ‘holy war’ against Israel. And those Arab states which championed the coalition forces could have dropped their support of the United Nations’ cause. The hatreds of many centuries are still strong there, and could well prove to be a very potent force in the future outcome of the Mideast crisis.

The relationship between Jews and Arabs has been bitter and contentious from the beginning. Both peoples are descendants of their revered patriarch, Abraham, and both proudly affirm that lineage—the Jews through Isaac, and the Arabs through Ishmael.

The Jews claim the land of Israel as their own, as promised some 4,000 years ago to Abraham by Jehovah God. By faith, and in obedience to God’s instructions, Abraham had led forth his wife, Sarah, and the other members of their little band from Haran and entered the land of Canaan, then occupied by the Canaanites. “The Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.”—Gen. 12:7

Sometime later, this wonderful promise was repeated to Abraham: “Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan. ... And the Lord said unto Abram, ... Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.”—Gen. 13:12,14,15

It is interesting to note that this promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham and to his seed as an everlasting possession was made before Abraham had any seed whatever. Then Ishmael, Abraham's first son, from whom the Arabs claim descent, was born of Hagar, Sarah's maid. Subsequently, when Abraham was 99 years old, *and when Ishmael was still his only seed*, the promise was reconfirmed by God. He said: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."—Gen. 17:7,8

Scripturally this would seem to give the Arabs more right to the land of Israel than that claimed by *the Jews, whose progenitor had not yet even been born*. But this circumstance is clarified by the Lord following the subsequent birth of a son, Isaac, to Abraham's wife, Sarah. The baby, Isaac, was hardly weaned when contention arose between the infant Isaac and his half-brother, Ishmael—then about fourteen years old. "The child grew, and was weaned. . . . And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian [Ishmael], which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir [to the promises] with my son, even with Isaac."—Gen. 21:8-10

Seeing that Abraham was deeply troubled by Sarah's request, Jehovah spoke to Abraham, saying: "Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; *for in Isaac shall thy seed be called*." (Gen. 21:12) So it appears plain that God's promises for Abraham's seed to inherit the land were to flow through Isaac, the progenitor of the Jews, and not through Ishmael, from whom the Arabs claim to be descended.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their families successively dwelt in the land, until a famine forced Jacob and his family to join Joseph in the land of Egypt. When life under a new pharaoh became intolerable, they were led by God's arrangements from Egypt, under the leadership of Moses. After wandering forty years in the wilderness they returned to the land that had been given to Abraham, and dwelt there.

Through the prophets, God promised the nation of Israel—Jacob's descendants—that he would be their God and would bless them in the land, if they were faithful and obedient. If not, he would drive them from the land and scatter them throughout the nations. (Lev. 26:1-34; Deut. 4:23-28; Jer. 16:13; Ezek. 20:23,24) Time and again they were disobedient, and in A.D. 70, Jerusalem was destroyed by Roman power and the Jews were subsequently scattered to the ends of the earth.

Since that time the land has been occupied principally by people of Arabic descent, who since the 7th century have been strongly united by ties to Islam. This religion was founded by the Prophet Mohammed, who was born about A.D. 570, and who believed he was chosen of God to be the Arab prophet of

true religion. Their sacred book, the *Koran*, accepted by followers of Islam as a revelation from God, is written in Arabic.

Islam has proved to be popular, and although it is more recently founded than some of the world's great Christian religions, it presently numbers some 700 million followers, and has proved to be a powerful unifying force among all Arabs—the descendants of Ishmael. Significantly, although Mohammed was born in Mecca, the city of Jerusalem in Israel is especially holy to the Mohammedans, for they believe it was from Jerusalem that the prophet ascended to heaven.

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Since May, 1948, by action of the United Nations, Israel has been an independent state occupying portions of the land formerly known as Palestine, with a population composed mainly of some 4,000,000 Jews, and about 850,000 Palestinian Arabs. It is surrounded virtually on all sides by Moslem Arabs, most of whom are fanatically hostile to the Israelis. On the same day that Israel proclaimed her independence she was attacked by her neighbors—Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Saudi Arabia—the rallying cry being “to drive the Jew into the sea.” Since that time these bitter antagonists have fought three more wars—the last one in 1973, resulting in a worldwide fuel crisis when the Arab oil-producing countries cut off shipments for six months to the United States, Japan, and other nations, because they had aided Israel in the war.

Israel still holds substantial areas of the territory it captured in those wars, mainly the Golan Heights from Syria, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and part of the formerly divided city of Jerusalem. The continued retention of these lands by Israel is bitterly resented and openly opposed by her Arab enemies, who, indeed, have not to this day accepted as proper even the

original division of the land of Palestine arranged in 1948 by the United Nations, and who staunchly maintain that Israel was unjustly established on land that had been owned and occupied by Arabs for eighteen centuries. The Arabs are determined to regain the land lost to Israel in the wars, and many still want Israel out of the area altogether, by one means or another. The entire world is aware, however, that another war between Israel and the Arabs will involve the entire world disastrously.

For several decades, the interest of the United States in this witch's brew of conflicting interests has been the vital need for a continued flow of Mideast oil, both for itself and for all the Western world. It was convinced that Russia would like to see that source of supply nullified and so render the West helpless to thwart Russian aims at world domination. The United States has felt that a militarily and economically strong Israel was needed in the area to counter Russian moves to interrupt the essential supply of oil. But moves by the United States to support and strengthen Israel arouse deep resentment against the United States by the Arab nations—nations that control the flow of oil so essential to the free world. And these Arab nations have shown they are capable of denying oil to nations who gain their disfavor by supporting their archenemy, the nation of Israel.

So much for history, which sketchily brings us down to the recent past and the present. The Western industrial nations are still heavily—indeed, crucially—dependent on Arabian oil for their economic and political well-being. The Soviet Union is clearly and watchfully aware of the West's heavy dependence upon Mideast oil. Thus, it is believed that a militarily strong and friendly Israel is of vital importance to the Western world to forestall any future Soviet effort at disrupting the supply of oil to the West.

Indeed, the implications of a prolonged curtailment of the flow of oil from the Mideast are awesome—going far beyond mere domestic deprivations and inconveniences. It could threaten the industrial, economic, and political existence of

many nations, and possibly the peace of the entire world. Moreover, bold attempts to correct the situation could quite possibly develop into a confrontation with the Arab powers, the results of which are terrible to contemplate.

But the chief stumbling blocks to peace in that area of the world have been the same ones that have existed from the beginning—what to do about the Israeli-occupied areas of the Palestinian West Bank and the Gaza Strip—should this land be turned back to the Palestinian Arabs to form an independent Palestinian State? Or should Israel retain possession of this land as its own? Should Israel retain the land but grant the inhabitants a measure of autonomy, or complete self-rule? And what about Jerusalem, that shrine so-long sacred, not only to Jews, but also to every Arab follower of the Prophet Mohammed—should it remain the undivided possession of Israel, as it has been since its capture? Will the Arabs insist upon regaining possession of that part which they formerly held—and which is so holy to them—or all of it?

President Hussein of Iraq is seizing upon the Israeli issue—and the strong, uncompromising feelings of both Jew and Arab alike—to unite the Arab world in a 'holy war' against Israel and any who will lend their support to her. He feels certain that Israel will fight if provoked long enough. How long they will refrain from retaliation, and how the Arab world will react when, and if, it occurs, only time will tell. But the likelihood of the world ever finding a solution to this growing problem is very bleak indeed.

What then does the future hold? Although all humankind longs hungrily, and prays unceasingly, and works tirelessly, for a world of peace and safety, it is obvious that the basic causes of wars between nations—selfishness and iniquity—still direct the affairs of nations and men. Until these are eliminated from men's hearts there can be no real or lasting peace in spite of imperfect man's best efforts to find it. The LORD informs us through his Word that these iniquitous conditions will culminate in a 'great time of trouble' at the end of the Gospel

Age, just prior to the establishment in the earth of Christ's kingdom of love and righteousness.

The Prophet Ezekiel described this trouble in vivid language. He wrote: "The time is come, the day of trouble is near; . . . let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn: for wrath is upon all the multitude thereof. . . . All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water. . . . They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed; their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD; they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels; because their iniquity is their stumbling block." [*Marginal translation*] Then, in speaking of the efforts of man to bring peace in this terrible time, the prophet said: "Destruction cometh; and **they shall seek peace, and there shall be none.**"—Ezek. 7:7, 12, 17, 19, 25

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The LORD further indicated that while this trouble will be universal, it will reach its culmination in the land of Israel in an attack upon the regathered Jews by a powerful army "out of the north parts."—Ezek. 38:1-23

This is the same 'time of trouble' of which Jesus spoke, as recorded in the 24th chapter of Matthew, and Luke 21, where he indicated that it shortly precedes the establishment of Christ's kingdom of peace and righteousness. After detailing certain aspects of the trouble, our Lord said, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption [deliverance] draweth nigh. . . . When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the

kingdom of God is nigh at hand."—Matt. 24:21; Luke 21:28,31

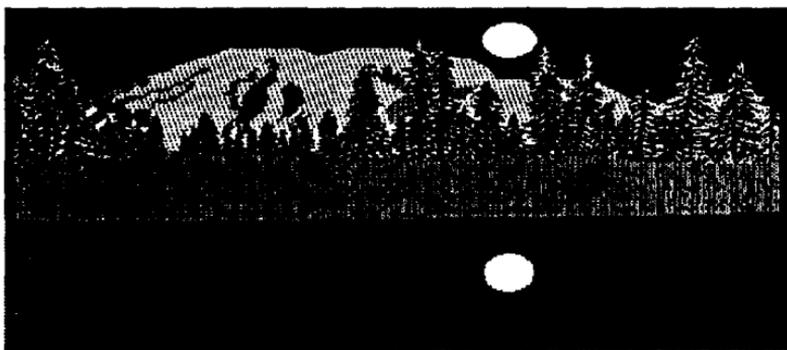
The Apostle Peter also comforts us with the promise that following the destruction of this present evil social order, the longed-for kingdom of truth will be set up. (II Pet. 3:10,13) This glorious new world order will be under the control and direction of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given," Isaiah said, "and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."—Isa. 9:6,7

In that new kingdom 'wherein dwelleth righteousness' there will be no more wars, for all men will be at peace with one another. (Isa. 2:2-4) Selfishness will be removed from every heart, and every man will be taught to love his neighbor as himself (Jer. 31:33,34; Matt. 5:43,44), when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, just as the waters cover the sea. (Hab. 2:14) In that day all the fleshly descendants of Abraham, both Jews and Arabs, will learn to dwell together in harmony, and together raise their voices to their Heavenly Father—the true God—in everlasting praise and blessing and thanksgiving for his unspeakable love and mercy and wisdom and power!

This is the glorious promise by God as recorded over and over again in the Old Testament concerning the coming of this wonderful kingdom of peace. But the Scriptures show that this longed-for day will come only with divine intervention, and not through efforts made by imperfect men, however sincere. One prophecy reads, in part, as follows:

"In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain [government] of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains [over all other governments], and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow into it.

And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off [from God]; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nations shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it."—Mic. 4:1-4



THE WORD THAT Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down; and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

—Isaiah 2:1-5, 17

Take Heart



LET ME TAKE HEART! the present scene shall soon be
o'er;

The clustering clouds shall hide the sun at noon no more.
The tears now dropping from my eyes shall be forgot;
The joys undimmed by sin and misery, my lot.

The storm now sweeping through the troubled sky be past;
The longed-for morning without clouds arise at last.
The hindermost shadow soon shall utterly depart;
Then let me watch and wait, and hopefully take heart!

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INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDY LESSONS

LESSON FOR APRIL 7

Celebrating Our Faith

KEY VERSE: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."—*I Corinthians 11:26*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *I Corinthian 11:17-29*

THE SCRIPTURES REVEAL clearly that the slaying of Israel's Passover lamb prefigured the death of Jesus as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) It was appropriate, therefore, that Jesus should give his life on the same day appointed for the typical Passover lamb to be slain, and it was on the "evening" of that day—which began at sundown the night before—that Jesus partook of the Passover Supper with his disciples for the last time.

It was on this occasion that Jesus instituted the only recurring rite, or ceremonial, enjoined upon his followers; namely, the Memorial Supper—called by some "communion," and by others "the Eucharist." As Jesus outlined it to his disciples, it was a very

simple ceremony, in which were used unleavened bread and wine—or "fruit of the vine." Paul explained the significance of this ceremony, saying, "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."—*I Cor. 11:26*

The phrase, 'as often', has been taken by some to mean that it is appropriate to partake of the Memorial Supper almost any time, and as frequently as deemed practical. We doubt, however, that this is what Paul had in mind. The ceremony is in memory of the death of Jesus, and we believe that the only proper time to partake of the bread and the cup is on the anniversary of his death. If one should say, "As often as you commemorate the birth of Jesus," we would not under-

stand him to mean as many times in the year as we feel disposed to commemorate the Savior's birth.

The fact that Jesus instituted the Memorial Supper while he and his apostles were partaking of the Passover Supper does not imply that this new ceremony is simply a revision of the old, although there is a close relationship between the two. Jesus was the antitypical Passover Lamb, so with his death, the yearly sacrifice of the typical Passover lamb officially ended. The true Lamb which it prefigured had come, and would shed his blood so that all who come under its protection might have life.

The new rite was intended to be, not a revision of the old, but a commemoration of that which the old prefigured—that is, a memorial of the antitype. As Paul explained, it is to "show the Lord's death." In this ceremony we 'show' or proclaim the Lord's death by partaking of the bread which represents his sacrificed body, and the cup which symbolizes his shed blood. Concerning the bread, Jesus said, "Take, eat: this is my

body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."—I Cor. 11:24

Jesus did not mean by this that the bread was actually his body, as taught by some, for his literal body of flesh was still living when he gave this command. Clearly, Jesus meant that it *represented* his body. On a previous occasion the Master had taught his disciples that he would give his flesh for the life of the world. (John 6:51) "The blood is the life," the LORD told the Israelites. (Deut. 12:23) Thus, in partaking of that which *represents* Jesus' blood, it is with the thought that we receive life from him.

Each year on the 14th day of Nisan, corresponding with the Jewish calendar, after 6:00 p.m., would be the appropriate time to partake of the Memorial Supper commemorating the death of Jesus as our Redeemer, and the whole world. This was the event to which the Passover, celebrated once a year, pointed forward, and the accomplishment of Jesus' death is the event properly celebrated as a memorial once a year. □

Using Our Gifts

KEY VERSE: *"The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."* — *I Corinthians 12:7*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *I Corinthians 12:4-7, 12-26*

PAUL HAD BEEN discussing various gifts which came through the Holy Spirit to different members of the classes which constituted the Early Church. He observed how, in this unique arrangement for their instruction, there was a need for cooperation in the use of these gifts if they were to be profitable for the entire congregation. For instance: in order for one who could speak in a tongue to be useful, it required someone else with the ability to interpret. This situation being true with most of the miraculous gifts, a close unity was forced upon them if they were to be spiritually benefited by their function.

Paul was quick to point out, however, that this need alone was not sufficient to sustain a strong and meaningful unity in "the body of Christ." (I Cor. 12:27) Paul wrote to the Ephesian brethren that our true unity in

Christ is based upon a solid foundation of a united belief in the "one Lord," and the "one faith." (Eph. 4:5) He mentions the unity of the "Spirit" and "the faith."

Some have thought that what he meant by the unity of the Spirit was simply a tolerant, kindly attitude toward others, regardless of what they believe. While this should be possible, they say, unity of the faith is an ideal for which we should strive but will probably never attain. This does not seem to be Paul's viewpoint. When he spoke of the unity of the Spirit, his reference was to the Holy Spirit, that holy influence of God which reaches us through his written Word.

Paul informs us that the written Word is communicated to us by servants whom the LORD has provided—prophets, apostles, teachers, evangelists, pastors—and that the work of these is "for the

perfecting of the saints, . . . for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature [*Margin, 'age'*] of the fullness of Christ," who is the Head.—Eph. 4:11-16

The Holy Spirit of God has manifested itself in the lives of his people during the Gospel Age in a variety of ways; some of which are described in the Bible as the "gifts" of the Spirit, and some as the "fruit" of the Spirit.

There are many different gifts of the Spirit—among them the ability to perform miracles of healing, and to speak in unknown tongues. These special gifts did not continue. They were of great value in the Early Church, but were not needed after the church, under the direction of the apostles, had become well established.

These apostles were miraculously inspired by the Holy Spirit so that their utterances, oral and written, were infallible. Other 'uninspired' servants have been pastors, teachers, evangelists, bishops

(overseers), and elders. These are consecrated men who, in the LORD's providence, and by the infilling of the Holy Spirit, have had their natural talents for this type of service quickened by the Holy Spirit of truth.

There is also the 'fruit' of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit differs from the 'gifts' of the Spirit in that it is a growth or development of divine graces which reflect the likeness of the Lord in daily conversation and conduct. Jesus called attention to this in his parable of 'the vine and the branches'.—John 15:5

The fruit of the Spirit is also mentioned by the Apostle Peter. Peter indicated that it was only by possession of these godlike graces of heart and mind that we can be assured of an entrance into the kingdom of Christ.—II Pet. 1:5-11

We may think of godlike love as being the 'bond' which unites all the Christian graces. If these gifts and fruits of the Spirit are properly used in our lives they will not only profit us individually, but also all who come in contact with us. □

Learning to Love

KEY VERSE: "Now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

—I Corinthians 13:13

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: I Corinthians 12:27-31;
13:1-13

GOD SO LOVED the world, we are told, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3:16

Jesus, constrained by love, willingly and gladly gave his life that Adam and his race might have an opportunity to live. And how graciously Jesus did this! In his day by day sacrificial ministry Jesus displayed the qualities of love in all that he said and did. He was long-suffering and kind; he was not envious, rash, or boastful. He was not puffed up with pride. He always conducted himself properly, and never sought his own. He was not easily provoked, and did not think evil. He did not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoiced in the truth. He was willing to bear all things, and because of his faith and hope in his Heavenly Father, he was able

to endure all things. —I Cor. 13:4-7

Those who are following in the footsteps of Jesus have been called by God for a purpose. That purpose is to be co-workers with him and with our Lord Jesus in the reconciliation of a lost world, and the restoration of the people to perfection of life here on the earth. In the carrying out of that purpose much preparation is needed, and it is this work of preparation that is being accomplished during the Gospel Age. We are working out our own salvation now, and in this God is working with us to will and to do his good pleasure. (Phil. 2:12,13) God has designed that this present work of preparation for the future glorious work of the kingdom should be accomplished through cooperation, not only with him and with the

Lord Jesus, but also with one another.

In his letter to the Corinthian brethren, the Apostle Paul explained how God has arranged for this cooperation to be on an orderly basis, with each individual functioning as part of a whole, these being referred to in the Scriptures as the "church," which is the "body" of Christ.—I Cor. 12:12,13; Eph. 1:22,23

Paul then follows his lesson on the working arrangements of the New Creation with his emphasis on the importance of love, as we find it in the next chapter—I Corinthians 13. In the 12th chapter Paul speaks of the various gifts of the Spirit, and admonishes the brethren to covet earnestly the best gifts. To this Paul adds, "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way." (vs. 31) The more excellent way he describes is one of the most beautiful and practical definitions of love in action that has ever been given, and he ends with the words of our text, "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity [love]."—vs. 13

When the culmination of our faith and hope has been reached in the kingdom, and the knowledge of the LORD fills the earth, and the kingdom manifested on every hand, faith will not be so much needed, for "faith is the substance [*Margin*, 'ground' or 'confidence'] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1) So far as the church is concerned, her hopes will have been realized through an abundant entrance into the kingdom. But the great principle of divine love will continue.

Even the subjects of the kingdom, as is now true with those who are being prepared to be its rulers, will need to give up their selfishness as a motivating principle in their lives, and adopt the way of love. No one will have eternal life on any plane unless he loves the LORD with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength, and his neighbor as himself. (Luke 10:27) How glorious it will be when every creature in heaven and on earth is motivated by, and filled with, this spirit of divine love! □

Sharing, Suffering, Comforting

KEY VERSE: "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

—II Corinthians 1:5

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: II Corinthians 1:1-11

JESUS INVITED THOSE who believed on him to become his followers. He made it plain that the only ones who could be his true followers were those willing to deny themselves and bear the cross.

Self-denial as taught by Jesus is not merely the foregoing of the pleasures of life. Rather it is the denial of self—a dedication to the LORD that is so complete and wholehearted that one is denied all rights to govern one's life. It is the giving up completely of our own will and ways, and accepting the will of the LORD as our rule of life. It means a transforming of the mind to conform to the will of God.

Cross-bearing signifies more than enduring unpleasant experiences—it signifies our willingness to die with the Master. Those condemned to death under the Roman law carried their own

cross to the place of crucifixion. To carry a cross meant that one was on his way to death, and this is the symbolic meaning of Christian cross-bearing.

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

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

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

What a wonderful consolation for the sufferings of Christ! Paul wrote: "If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me." (Phil. 2:17,18) May all of us recognize our privileges of service and rejoice in our share in Jesus' suffering.

From the human point of view, the trials and experiences which make up the church's sacrifice do not appear any different from those present in the world at large. Yet, under the direction and control of our LORD these

are accomplishing significant purposes. One of these is to develop the character of the LORD's people so necessary for the proper functioning of the sympathetic priesthood class in the next age. All the experiences of life help to shape the character of the body members who are properly exercised thereby.

The New Creature's desire to participate in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings results from having tasted the goodness and mercy of God, and from having been drawn within the inner circle of revelation to comprehend something of the grandness of his plan of salvation. Having obtained this glimpse of the program of restitution, we are eager to cooperate with the Heavenly Father in carrying his will forward. We realize that the church, even as her Lord Jesus, must endure the difficulties of the way as part of the training course for this future day. We marvel at the privilege the Father has extended to us of being included with our Lord in his life of sacrifice and also the glory that will follow. □

He Loves and Cares

"Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

—Isaiah 40:28-31

THE APOSTLE PETER wrote, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." (1 Pet. 5:7) How reassuring are the many texts of Scripture which affirm the fact that our loving Heavenly Father, the Creator of heaven and earth, is abundantly able to care for his people. He is all-powerful, and is never weary. He watches over us, and his ear is ever open to our cries for help in time of need. He will not withhold any good thing from those who love him sincerely, and who have devoted themselves wholly to his service.—Ps. 84:11

Man was created in the image of God, but we do not understand this to refer to a bodily image. However, in order that we may grasp to some extent the unlimited capabilities of the Creator, the Scriptures refer to his various senses of sight, hearing, smelling, etc. By this use of language we are able to understand that our Heavenly Father enters into our feelings, and is sympathetic to all our needs, and will, through his unlimited agencies, care for us. The psalmist inquired: "He that

planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?"—Ps. 94:9

He does indeed 'see' and 'hear' his people. In Psalm 34:15 we read: "The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." And again, "The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivereth him out of them all."—Ps. 34:17-19

In the 7th verse of this psalm we are informed that "the angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." This is an indication of one of the means the LORD uses in the care of his people. Jesus spoke of these angels, and said that they "do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 18:10) Thus they have an accurate knowledge of the Heavenly Father's will for each of his people, and can shape the divine providences in their lives in exactly the right manner for the accomplishment of his will.

This, however, calls for a right attitude of heart and mind on our part. The LORD's delivering power is exercised only on behalf of those who are of a "contrite spirit," and of a "broken heart." The proud of heart, and those who resist his providences in their lives, have no assurance that the LORD's ear is always open to their cry. Nor should we expect that his power exercised on our behalf will necessarily deliver us from all of our trials and difficulties. The LORD in his wisdom may see that certain hardships—mental, physical, or both—are among the experiences we need in order that we might be more fully developed as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. But while he may not deliver us from these trials, we are assured that he will provide strength to bear them.

On the other hand, the LORD's faithful people are assured of ultimate deliverance from all their afflictions—the deliverance which will be theirs in the first resurrection. It is important, therefore, that in noting the LORD's providences in our lives we maintain this regard for the ultimate, which is the LORD's

viewpoint. He is not working in us merely for the accomplishment of what might be his good pleasure for today or for tomorrow. More particularly he is preparing us for the glory of the future, when, if faithful, we will have the privilege of living and reigning with Christ.

The Apostle Paul presented the proper viewpoint in this connection when he wrote that our "light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (II Cor. 4:17) If we are of a contrite spirit, and fully submissive to the manner in which the LORD is working in us, then we also will realize that whatever our trials may be, they are in reality to be considered as "light afflictions" in comparison with the eternal "weight" of glory which they are helping to work out in us. And the LORD knows just how to shape our schooling to accomplish his purpose in our lives as New Creatures.

In Psalm 101:6 we read, "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me." Here, again, we are reminded that it is only those who faithfully serve the LORD who are the objects of his special watchcare. These, the LORD declares, "may dwell with me." How precious is the thought that if we are endeavoring with all our might to know and to do the LORD's will, it means that we are to dwell with him in the secret of his presence. And this, after all, is where we should always delight to be. The psalmist spoke of dwelling in "the secret place of the Most High," and of abiding "under the shadow of the Almighty."—Ps. 91:1

God's Foreknowledge

God's love for his people and his watchcare over them can be seen in a more wonderful light when we take into consideration the exercise of his foreknowledge. In Psalm 139:16 we read, "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." In this psalm David declared that he was "fearfully and

wonderfully made." (vs. 14) It is quite possible that David is representative here of Jesus, the Head of his church, which is his body, and that the 'members' known in advance, even before they 'were fashioned', are the members of the body of Christ.

In any case, whether the reference be to the natural body, or to Christ and his body members, the lesson is the same in that it reveals the infinite wisdom of the Creator. He is always able to know in advance the outcome of the mighty works which he sets out to accomplish. Nor does this in any way destroy our free moral agency. Our finite minds could not determine what another would do tomorrow unless we controlled his actions, and compelled him to take a certain course. But God is able to know what we will do without controlling our actions. This is because his 'eye' is able to discern that which goes quite beyond our comprehension. The best we can do is to understand the meaning of what is taking place in our lives today, and the experiences through which we passed yesterday, and even here our understanding is quite limited. However, many of the LORD's people can look back in their lives and note the wonderful way in which the LORD was overruling their daily lives, frequently even before they knew him. And this is still more true of his wonderful providences since we dedicated ourselves to the doing of his will.

How wonderful it is to realize that the LORD's wisdom was shaping our affairs, even in our being drawn to him, when as yet we possibly had no definite knowledge of him, or of his plans and purposes for us or for the world. Yes, we can trace his overrulings which brought us in contact with the Word of truth, and with Jesus, and with the brethren. And after we made a full consecration of ourselves to do his will, his providences in our lives have been still more outstanding. To realize this is to strengthen our faith, for we should find it easy to believe that he who led and blessed us in the past will continue to do so, and that the darkness which may surround us today will, in his due time, be dispelled, and once again the sweet smile of his presence will be revealed.

Proverbs 15:3 reads: "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." This is most comforting, for it assures us that no matter where we are, or what our circumstances might be, the LORD 'sees' both the good and the evil. That is, he knows the circumstances which are favorable to us as New Creatures, and sees the evil influences which are arrayed against us. This means that God is always aware of the difficulties which confront us, and of any efforts which might be made by the Adversary to hinder our progress in the narrow way. We have been assured over and over again in his Word that God will use his power to prevent any evil befalling us as New Creatures.

David's Experience with God's Foreknowledge

In moments when our faith might not be as strong as it should be, we might temporarily wonder if the LORD really knows about the complexities of our trials, and is actually caring for us in each situation. But we have the assurance of his Word that he 'sees' in every place, and understands every situation, and is abundantly able to care for us regardless of what the circumstances may be. How wonderful this is! We know, too, that he will care for us if we continue faithfully to walk in the narrow way, and put our trust fully in him. David, the man after God's own heart, was assured that Jehovah was with him in every event of his life. He wrote:

"O LORD, thou has searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell [the grave], behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there

shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."—Ps. 139:1-12

David beautifully emphasizes the fact of God's love and care for us, regardless of what situation or place in which we might find ourselves. No matter where we may be—even if we fear that our mistakes may have taken us away from our Heavenly Father and his care—we can still be assured that he leads us, and that he upholds us, when we ask for forgiveness and guidance. If conditions seem dark around us, and we are uncertain of the direction in which we should go, we can be assured that the darkness is as the light to our Heavenly Father. He is never confused by the situations in our lives which seem so complex to us, and which may baffle and perplex us.

We know that our God knows and understands our every need. He is sympathetic to our every ache and pain—whether they be heartaches or bodily pains. We may not be able to 'see' his hand immediately in every changing circumstance of life, but by faith we can know that his providences are directing us, his mighty power is sustaining us, and he will not permit us to be tested above that which we are able to bear; and if our burdens become too great he will provide a way of escape.—I Cor. 10:13

Job's Experience

In the account concerning Job we have a wonderful example of faith in God's love and care. Job did not understand why the LORD had permitted such severe experiences to come to him. Everything in his life which he treasured, and which he had accepted as having been given to him by the Jehovah, was removed—even his health. Job did not understand this, but he continued to believe that the LORD knew all about it, and would overrule his experiences for his good. While passing through these deep shades of sorrow, Job explained his

search for God, saying: "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: but he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."—Job 23:8-10

This is a wonderfully true description of experiences which God permits to come to all those who are faithful to him. The purpose they serve is to test our fidelity to the LORD, and our faith in the fact that he knows exactly what is best for us as New Creatures. How we have all searched for our Heavenly Father in trials which have come upon us! Job says that he looked in every direction, symbolically describing his attempts to understand the meaning of the calamities which had come upon him, and why his God, whom he trusted and had served faithfully, had permitted them.

At the time Job was encountering his severely difficult experiences, he failed to comprehend their meaning. He did not 'find' God. But Job's anchor of faith held secure. He remained assured that while he could not see God in his experiences, the LORD could see him, and his conclusion was, "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." He knew that God was testing him and understood all about his trouble, and that if he maintained his faith and his integrity he would pass the test, and come forth as gold.

Job trusted the LORD even though he could not understand why his providences had so harshly frowned upon him. Job's faith enabled him to be convinced that God's love and care were being manifested in his life, even though his own reasoning on the matter would lead him to believe otherwise. The Apostle Peter described a situation like this as "the trial of your faith," which, he explained, is "much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire."—I Pet. 1:7

The reason we can trust in the LORD, and know that he is caring for us, regardless of circumstances which might indicate otherwise, is our faith in his ability to see beyond the immediate present, and therefore to shape our experiences in a man-

ner to accomplish the ultimate purpose he has in mind for us in his great plan of the ages. And when we remember that God's design for us is that we might attain "glory and honor and immortality" (Rom. 2:7) and a place of joint heirship with Christ in his kingdom, we will realize that the trials of the present are not worthy to be compared with the glories of the future; and since the LORD is using them to test our fidelity to him, and to work out in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, we will rejoice in his love and wisdom which permits them, and continue to believe that he is caring for us in every vicissitude of life.

The psalmist wrote: "The eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine." (Ps. 33:18,19) There is little or nothing in this present evil world that is favorable to the sustenance and growth of God's people as New Creatures in Christ Jesus (Gal. 1:4) We could well say, as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, that we are surrounded with famine conditions which, apart from the LORD's love and care, would lead to our death.

Our Experience with God's Foreknowledge and Care

Our loving Heavenly Father watches over our every interest and makes every provision to deliver us from the death from which there would be no awakening. He provides "meat in due season" in his Word. (Matt. 24:45) He provides the fellowship and comfort of his people. He provides just such experiences as will best serve to accomplish his divine purpose. He can turn unfavorable circumstances into assets for the New Creature if we but put our trust in him, and continue to allow him to work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

The fact that we feel weak and inadequate for the tasks before us merely gives our Heavenly Father an opportunity to use his mighty power on our behalf. As our text declares, "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." When Paul prayed for the removal of his "thorn in the flesh," and his request was not granted, he ac-

cepted Jehovah's will in the matter, explaining that the LORD said unto him, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." To this Paul added, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."—II Cor. 12:7-9

It is indicated by our theme text that even those who by nature are usually strong, sometimes become faint and weary, and that even young men 'shall utterly fall'. Thus is emphasized that even those who might be inclined to think they are strong are not really so when it comes to walking in the narrow way, for actually none are able to maintain their faithfulness to the LORD and their zeal for his cause, without divine help. There are too many opposing forces arrayed against the children of God for any of them to suppose that they can win in the struggle except as they wait upon the LORD, looking to him at all times for grace to help.

How blessed the assurance that "they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength"; that "they shall mount up with wings as eagles"; that "they shall run, and not be weary"; that "they shall walk, and not faint." (Isa. 40:31) How blessed, indeed, is the privilege of waiting on the LORD, of knowing that in his own way and time he will provide strength; knowing he does love and care in all the circumstances of life. Sometimes, indeed, the cares which seem difficult for us may, and usually are, evidences of his love, for he knows our needs better than we do. He will see to it that when the need is for bitterness, that need will be supplied. He also supplies the sweetness that so fills our hearts and lives with joy.

The Apostle Paul admonished us to consider Jesus, who endured such "contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." (Heb. 12:3) We know that our Heavenly Father loved his Son, Jesus. We know that Jesus never displeased his Father—yet he did suffer. He was allowed to die on Calvary's cross. The Father did not deliver him from these ordeals, but did give him strength to bear them. And we are to think of him, and remember his prayer in which he affirmed that the Father loves us even as he loved

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"FRANK AND ERNEST"

Sundays Unless Otherwise Noted

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Little Rock	KAAY 1090	6:30 a.m.
Marshall	KCGS 960	4:30 p.m.

CALIFORNIA

Claremont	KTSJ 1220	9:45 a.m.
Lancaster	KVOY 1340	10:15 a.m.
Los Angeles (Mon.)	KJTYM 1160	6:30 a.m.
Los Angeles (Spanish)	KALI 1430	5:45 a.m.
Monterey	KNRY 1240	8:30 a.m.
Sacramento	KJAY 1430	10:00 a.m.
San Francisco	KEST 1450	3:30 p.m.
Tehachapi	KTFI-FM 103.1	10:15 a.m.

FLORIDA

Jacksonville	WXTL 1010	7:45 p.m.
Orlando	WVCF 1480	4:30 p.m.
Tampa	WTMP 1150	8:30 a.m.

ILLINOIS

LaSalle	WLPO 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.
LaPorte	WCOE-FM 96.7	10:00 a.m.
North Vernon	WKRP 1460	8:00 a.m.

KANSAS

Goodland	KLOE 730	7:15 a.m.
Coffeyville	KGGF 690	9:05 p.m.

KENTUCKY

Bowling Green	WLBJ 1410	8:00 a.m.
Winchester	WHRS	10:30 a.m.

MICHIGAN

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NEW JERSEY

Salem	WNNN-FM 101.7	9:45 a.m.
Salem	WJIC 1510	9:45 a.m.

NEW MEXICO

Los Alamos	KRSN 1490	6:45 a.m.
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NEW YORK

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

OHIO

Cincinnati	WNOP 740	9:00 a.m.
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of adjustments which are being made regularly in the schedule for the "Frank and Ernest" programs. New stations will be added, and some old ones will no longer carry our program. You may wish to check this schedule regularly, to see what is happening in your area.

OREGON

Portland	KKEY 1150	7:00 a.m.
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PENNSYLVANIA

Allentown	WHOL 1600	10:45 a.m.
Jenkintown (Wed.)	WIBF-FM 103.9	12:30 p.m.
Pottstown	WPAZ 1370	12:45 p.m.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston	WOKE 1340	7:06 p.m.
Beaufort (Sat.)	WVGB 1490	1:00 p.m.

TENNESSEE

Nashville	WLAC 1510	7:45 p.m.
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VIRGINIA

Richmond	WGGM 1410	7:45 a.m.
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WASHINGTON

Spokane	KUDY 1280	9:45 a.m.
Tacoma	KAMT 1360	7:30 a.m.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee	WNOV 85.6	7:00 a.m.
Jackson	WYLO 540	2:15 p.m.

... WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

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ALBERTA

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Nanaimo CHUB 1570 9:30 p.m.

Qualicum- Parkerville CHPQ 1370 9:30 p.m.

MANITOBA

Winnipeg CKJS 810 9:00 a.m.

QUEBEC

Montreal CFMB 1410 5:15 p.m.

SASKATCHEWAN

Weyburn CFSL 1190 8:45 a.m.

Estevan CJSL 1280 8:45 a.m.

Overseas Broadcasts

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NOVA 756 FM 6:15 p.m.

BRITISH WEST INDIES

Grand Cayman Radio Cayman 9:30 a.m.

Trinidad Radio Trinidad 610 10:30 p.m.

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Radio Villa Verde (Fri.) 6:00 p.m.

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MHz 102 5:30 p.m.

Radio Corleone Centrale

FM-88-500 FM-92 11:00 a.m.

MEXICO (Spanish)

Culiacán Ranchera XEQC 8:30 a.m.

NEW ZEALAND

Dunedin 4XD 11:15 a.m.

NIGERIA

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

PANAMA (Spanish)

Panama City HOQ 1250 10:30 a.m.

PHILIPPINES

Manila (Sat.) DZAM 1026 KHz 7:15 p.m.

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Joubert Park (Thurs.) SWAZI Music

Radio 1400 & shortwave 49 & 60 9:00 p.m.

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Ye are the light of the world. . .



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instance when the definite article, 'the', is present yet it does **not** refer to God the Father: "In whom **the** god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not."—II Cor. 4:4

Clearly, we must interpret the meaning of scriptures by the context, and not by the presence or absence of Greek articles. So what is the context of John 1:1 in terms of the entire Gospel? The relationship between God and the Logos in John's Gospel is unmistakable. It is God the **Father** and Jesus his **Son**.

Logos is John's title for Jesus, God's Son. He said, as recorded in John 1:14, "The Word [**Logos**] was made flesh and dwelt among us." Why did John invent a new title, **Logos**? Was it because he wanted to describe in his Gospel the role which Jesus had here on earth. Just as invisible thought is revealed by words, the invisible God was revealed by a living "Word." We use words to communicate our will; God used a **Logos** to do the same. "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God."—John 3:34

Jesus was six times more likely to say, "My Father" as the account of his life was recalled in John's Gospel, than in any of the other three Gospels. You will never find Jesus saying, "Our Father," or, "Your Father," in the Gospel of John, although these expressions are found twenty-five times in the other Gospels. John never said that Jesus prayed 'to the Father', though Jesus did so frequently, as mentioned in the other Gospels. The English word 'pray' does occur in the **King James Version** of the Gospel of John, but it is a different Greek word than generally used, and has a different meaning. There is no temptation scene recorded by John—no baptism, no agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, and, surprisingly, no parables. The word 'parable' as used in John 10:6, is a different Greek word—one translated "proverb" in the three other places it is used in John.

John drew a portrait of God from Jesus' life on earth, one that encompassed many themes. We list them here:

Theme 1: Life

John used the word 'life' thirty-nine times, although it occurred only seventeen times in all the other Gospels combined. The best known scripture from this Gospel is in chapter three: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting *life*."—John 3:16

This scripture emphasizes the father-son relationship, and that God's object in giving his Son, was to give *life*. This was not to be life just for Jews, or just for those living in Jesus' time. It was to be for "whosoever believeth," regardless of race, age, sex, national origin, or time period. The next verse says that this is in order that "the world might be saved." John showed our Heavenly Father as a God who is accessible to all.

Why does God love the world when Christians are explicitly told not to love it? (I John 2:15) Here is the answer: we are not to love the world the way it is at present—with its spirit of selfishness, strife, and sin. God does not love the world in its present form either. He loves it because he knows the way the people of the world will be at the conclusion of his marvelous plan of salvation, in much the same way that a parent loves his children, although sometimes he might not like their behavior at the moment.

John is the only Gospel writer who recorded the literal gift of *life* which Jesus gave to one of his friends: "He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes." (John 11:43,44) Since John recorded no parables, it was left to Luke to record the parable of the 'rich man' and 'Lazarus', given just a few weeks before Jesus raised his friend, Lazarus, from the dead.

Theme 2: Love

John used the word *love* ten times more frequently than the other Gospel writers. We have this word three times in a single verse: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye

love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” —John 13:34

Notice that this thought was expressed as a new ‘commandment’. We are to love as Jesus loved. And just how did he love? Did he love his neighbor as himself? Certainly. In fact, he loved his neighbor *more* than himself, because he laid down his life for his fellow man. Jesus was asking us, as his footstep followers, to be ready on all occasions to lay down our lives for each other!

John never referred to himself by name in his Gospel. Instead he speaks of himself as the recipient of the Master’s love: “Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.” (John 13:23) As we see evidenced in this Gospel, his three letters, and in the Book of Revelation, John warmly returned that love with an undivided heart

Theme 3: Truth

John used the words translated ‘truth’, ‘true’, or ‘truly’, three times more often than the other Gospel writers combined. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” (John 14:6) Here again John shows that Jesus is not the Father. He is the one who shows the way to the Father; he spoke the truth about the Father; he offers life to “whosoever believeth.”

The word ‘verily’ has the same meaning as the word ‘truly’. John always doubled this word by repeating it: “Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” (John 6:47) He did this on twenty-five occasions. The other writers never did it. Why is this the case? Perhaps it was to emphasize the great authority with which our Lord spoke. He spoke for God, and because of this, his words should be considered as having much greater—double—importance.

“Sanctify them through thy truth, thy **Word** is truth.” (John 17:17) John introduced Jesus as ‘the Word’. This conveys the idea that he is an embodiment of the truth, one who is able to sanctify us, to set us apart for his service.

Theme 4: Light

Light is still another theme in this Gospel. John wasted no time introducing the themes of light and life: "All things came into being through him, and apart from him nothing that now exists came into being. In him was Life, and that Life was the Light of men. The Light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness has never overpowered it. . . . There was the true Light, which lightens **every man**, coming into the world."—John 1:2-4,9, *Weymouth Translation*

Once again John emphasized the worldwide scope of the love of God: every person is to be enlightened. We say 'to be enlightened', because Jesus has not yet enlightened every man. He has certainly not enlightened those who lived and died before he was born. Countless billions have died without hearing a word about the one through whom salvation is possible. This means that there must be a future time of resurrection and instruction in righteousness, to fulfill this scripture.

John was the only Gospel writer who recorded a particular miracle, when Jesus literally gave the gift of light to someone: A man born blind "said, . . . One thing I know, once I was blind, but now I can see."—John 9:25

Theme 5: Water

John liked to use water as a symbol of life and truth. He used it four times more frequently than the other Gospel writers. Note these occasions, most of which are exclusive to John:

- Turning water into wine at Cana.—Chapter 2
- A conversation with Nicodemus regarding being born of water.—Chapter 3
- The conversation with a Samaritan woman who came to draw water.—Chapter 4
- The healing of the impotent man who could not enter a pool of "troubled" water.—Chapter 5
- Jesus walked on the water.—Chapter 6

And then there is a puzzling scripture about water in chapter 7, which reads: "In the last day, that great day of the feast,

Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37,38) What exactly did Jesus mean by this? He might, of course, be simply repeating publicly what he had already told the Samaritan woman at the well: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:14) But these two statements are quite different. In John 4 the water is said to have sprung up within the one who received it. In John 7 it is described as flowing outward to nourish others. Jesus could have been referring to that pure river of water of life that will flow will out from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the kingdom.—Rev. 22:1

Water is a symbol of truth. Perhaps Jesus' statements meant that as we have received truth from him, we in turn become conveyors of truth to those with whom we come in contact. Even if we accept this understanding as the answer, one problem still remains. Jesus said that this happens "as the scripture hath said." No Old Testament scripture speaks of a believer's belly having rivers of living water flowing from it. Therefore, it is possible that Jesus was not talking about 'believers' at all. Instead, he could be talking about himself. We could punctuate and divide the words this way: "Jesus cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and let him drink, he that believeth on me. [End John 7:37; begin verse 38] As the scripture hath said, out of his [Messiah's] belly shall flow rivers of living water [making truth and life available for believers to drink]."

By using the expression, 'his belly', he would very likely mean that he was the source of all spiritual blessings—the source of life and truth available to the believer. Water is a particularly good symbol of life because it is critically important to maintain life. We do have Old Testament scriptures that talk about waters being available to heal people. Here is one example: "In that day there shall be a *fountain* opened to the house

of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”—Zech. 13:1

John did explain what Jesus meant by the words recorded in John 7:39. He did **not** say that Jesus was speaking of believers. He said, Jesus “spoke of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive.” Water is here explained as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. This may also elucidate Jesus’ words when he spoke with Nicodemus: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be [begotten] of water and of Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”—John 3:5

At that very time, water was being used by John the Baptist as a symbol of cleansing the people from their past sins when they had repented of them. But Jesus baptized with the Holy Spirit, of which water was only a symbol. Literal water begets no one. If there is no begetting of the Spirit, there is no New Creature, there is no life!

What Is God Like?

What kind of God emerges from the portrait drawn by John?

- “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth.”—John 4:24
- Those who accept the testimony of Jesus have “solemnly declared that God is true.”—John 3:33, **Weymouth**
- “God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”—I John 4:16
- “God is light and in him is no darkness at all.”—I John 1:5

John’s great themes of truth, love, and light as seen in the life of Jesus are actually characteristics of God, himself. Jesus said, “I and my Father are one.” (John 10:30) Because of this ‘oneness’, we ‘see’ God in the life of Jesus.

John recorded more words spoken by Jesus than any other Gospel writer. Especially important to us are the five chapters that record what was spoken the night before the crucifixion. (Chapters 13 through 17.) It was then that Jesus asked his

Father that we, his followers, might share the oneness they had: I ask "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."—John 17:21

The *Logos* and God were one, and true Christians should look forward with great anticipation to the time when they will become part of that oneness, as well.

At the close of Matthew's Gospel, we learned that Jesus had "risen." (Matt. 28:6) In Mark's Gospel, it was recorded that Jesus both rose and ascended. (Mark 16:6,19) In Luke's Gospel Jesus arose, promised the Holy Spirit, and then ascended. John was the writer who added another important promise: "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and **come again** unto you." (John 14:28) This is the promise of his Second Coming, an event which we believe has already occurred. However, the world's situation remains much the same as it was 2,000 years ago. We can still say, as did John the Baptist, "There standeth one among you whom you know not."—John 1:26

We have been given a perfect example to imitate in word, thought and deed. This is our Lord Jesus Christ. We are to be 'well-doers', and to follow his marvelous, perfect example to the best of our ability. By keeping our eyes on him, we truly can say that we 'see' God. As John wrote, "My dear friend, do not imitate bad examples, but good ones. The well-doer is a child of God; the evil-doer has never seen God."—III John 11, *New English Translation*

"The LORD himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. 7:14) Immanuel means, 'God with us'. Because of John's faithfulness in recording his Gospel, we can repeat the words of Job 42:5: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." □

Forgiveness

"The LORD passed by before him [Moses], and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

—Exodus 34:6,7

AS WE LEARN about God through the testimony of his Word, we cannot help but be impressed with his wonderful characteristic of forgiveness. This facet of Jehovah's character would not have been perceived before the creation and fall of man. Certainly no event in heaven before that time required forgiveness under the perfect conditions existing. This may be why the angels are so interested in observing how God rescues those who have disobeyed him and thus have become estranged from him.—I Pet. 1:12.

The angels were not the only beings who desired to know more about God and his plans. Jehovah's prophets in ancient days, and other faithful servants among mankind, also desired to understand his purpose and his ways. Moses wanted to see God, but was told that it was impossible for any man to see God and yet live. However, Moses was allowed to have a small glimpse of God's glory.

We read in Exodus 33:18-23: Moses said, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory. And he [the LORD] said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall

come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen."

Then Jehovah spoke the words of our theme text, which clearly declare that God's love is not just for those who faithfully serve him. His love extends even to those who have committed iniquities, transgressions, and sins. In fact, the divine plan of the ages is a program whereby God will exercise his forgiveness to the entire world of mankind, without exception.

However, God exercises his forgiveness within a framework of justice. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne," said the psalmist. (Ps. 89:14) The wonderful attributes of mercy and forgiveness described in our theme text are always coupled with justice. This is expressed in the words that he "will by no means clear the guilty."—Exod. 34:7

Unfortunately many people have an image in their minds of a very unforgiving God. The Law, which he gave to his chosen people, did not enhance the idea of compassion. For example, it demanded an "eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." (Lev. 24:20) The Law seemed extremely harsh. But the Law provided something additional to strict rules and regulations: it was indeed the basis of a relationship between God and man which provided forgiveness for transgressions.

Consider Leviticus chapters 4, 5, and 6. In these chapters there are detailed instructions about sin offerings, peace offerings, burnt sacrifices, as well as trespass and meal offerings. These sacrifices were to have been brought by the people when they realized they had done something wrong and wanted to be forgiven, or if they simply desired to express their gratitude and worship toward their Creator. These offerings illustrated that, under the provisions of the New Covenant during Christ's thousand-year kingdom, it will be possible for the people to have their sins forgiven through 'trespass offerings', and to praise and thank God through their 'thank offerings'. But just as Leviticus specified a bullock as the re-

quired sacrifice for the sins of ignorance of the whole congregation, so in the kingdom there must be an acknowledgement of the sacrifice of the antitypical bullock, Jesus Christ.—Heb. 9:13-15,28

Under the Law arrangement, in all cases a person would bring something to sacrifice when they wanted individual forgiveness. The wealthy brought large animals—calves, goats, sheep—the poor brought turtledoves, or even a meal offering would be acceptable in the case of the very destitute. But everyone had to bring something. The scripture says that then the sin “shall be forgiven them.”—Lev. 4:20,26,31,35

God, speaking through Jeremiah concerning the New Covenant which will be made with the people during Christ's kingdom, says, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jer. 31:34) This forgiveness will not be forthcoming because the people will offer animal sacrifices, as they did during the Jewish Age. Instead, it will be because they have sacrificed something far more valuable—their own will and ways—theirself. They will bring their hearts and minds to the LORD to do his bidding, with the petition that they be brought back into harmony with him. In this way they will show their sincerity and determination to please God.

God showed by his actions that he follows his own principle of justice. He would “by no means clear the guilty” without a just compensation. Thus he, himself, made the greatest sacrifice of all when he offered his own beloved Son to die upon Calvary's cross. Jesus told us of God's marvelous, incomprehensible gift in John 3:16. Jesus said nothing about his own sacrifice; he knew it was his Heavenly Father's love for the world which had made forgiveness and salvation possible.

Throughout his ministry Jesus emphasized the importance of forgiveness. In his sermon on the mount, for example, he taught that an acceptable heart attitude goes considerably above and beyond what was taught in the ancient Jewish Law. “You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If

someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”—Matt. 5:38,39, *New International Version*

As recorded, in the next few verses in his sermon Jesus explained that if we exercise forgiveness even to our enemies, we are displaying the same principles which motivate our Heavenly Father. “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of our Father which is in heaven.”—Matt. 5:43-45

This ‘new law’ from Jesus was not written on tablets of stone, as was the Old Law. Those who follow it have it written by the Holy Spirit on the fleshy tablets of their hearts. (II Cor. 3:3) God requires our heart appreciation of him and his righteous principles, in order that forgiveness can be truly accomplished. “Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” In order to keep God’s law in an acceptable manner, one cannot not keep it because one *must*, but because it is right, because it is an expression of God, and because one wants to be like God.

It was also in the sermon on the mount that Jesus gave us a model prayer called the ‘Lord’s Prayer’. One important portion says, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” (Matt. 6:12) How important is it that we forgive our debtors? We are informed that it is so important that if we do not forgive from the heart, our Father will not forgive us. “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”—Matt. 6:15

The topic of forgiveness was such a frequent feature of our Lord’s discourses that Peter finally sought to bring it down to a level he could understand. He asked, “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?” (Matt. 18:21) Seven acts of forgiveness toward one person no doubt seemed like an extreme limit of patience to Peter. But much to his surprise, he learned that as far as our Lord was concerned, there really is no limit to the number of times we

must extend forgiveness to those who seek it. "Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." By this statement, Jesus did not imply that the limit was literally 490 times! He was using Peter's suggestion of counting up a particular number of offenses, to show that as many times as someone asks for forgiveness, we are to forgive him. Certainly we would not keep a tally, and when it rose from 469 to 470 conclude that we had reached our limit of forgiveness! We are to forgive others because our Father has forgiven, and continues to forgive us, all our many trespasses against him—which are certain to exceed far beyond 490.

The Unforgiving Servant

Jesus illustrated this point in a wonderful parable of forgiveness: "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants. . . . One was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him; and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him a hundred pence [far less than even a single talent]: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt."—Matt. 18:23-30

The king in this parable represents God. The servant who owed the gigantic debt, could well depict any consecrated servant of the LORD. When he was asked to pay the debt, he could not. So the king commanded that he and all that he had, including his family, be sold—picturing how the demands of justice are important to God. But then the man begged elo-

quently for mercy, and as a result we read the beautiful words, "The lord was moved with compassion."

God is moved with compassion concerning his servants now, who sincerely request his mercy, and he has loosed them from their debts. Concerning the world of mankind, although the result of the payment for their sins has not yet reached mankind as a whole, their forgiveness will be effected in the kingdom, and all will, indeed, be released from their debt. Their debt was freely paid through the sacrifice of God's only begotten Son. Nothing more will be required than for them to ask for forgiveness, to give their hearts and minds to God, and to follow the principles of righteousness.

But the parable did not end with the forgiving of the servant. If you had been forgiven a great debt would you seek to imitate the attitude of your lord toward those who owed something much less to you? In this parable the servant did just the opposite. He exhibited such gross ingratitude that the king ordered him into his presence and reproved him, telling him that he should have had the same compassion toward his debtor that had been shown to him. The lord informed him that because he had not shown mercy and forgiveness, his own debt was reinstated.

Although the parable does not reveal directly what became of the uncompassionate servant, one assumes that he was thrown into debtor's prison, and never again released. To be certain that we would get the lesson which he intended, Jesus said, "So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."—Matt. 18:35

The Prodigal Son

Luke recorded another parable of our Lord that also illustrates the attribute of forgiveness on the part of the Heavenly Father. It is known as the parable of the prodigal son. (See Luke 15:11-32.) A father had two sons, one of whom asked for his inheritance, received it, and immediately left the comfort of the father's home. In a far country, the son lost every-

thing because of "riotous living." It was only when a famine arose in the land and his situation became life-threatening that the son remembered the favored position he had previously enjoyed. He resolved to return to his father's house, if only to fill the position of a servant, since he was sure he could never be received again as a son.

Although the principal application of this parable was meant as a rebuke to the scribes and Pharisees who, like the elder son of the parable, believed that they had never left the Heavenly Father's house, and who resented any consideration that might be shown to sinners, we can see another important lesson in it. The human family has gone astray—far away from their Father and his principles, and thus from his favor. Like the prodigal son of the parable, the human race is serving this 'citizen of that far country', the Adversary himself. Satan is associated with things that are unclean in God's sight, and so in this parable he is depicted as a keeper of swine, and he has the prodigal son tend them. Swine were, of course, one of the most unclean animals under the Jewish Law.

When the son came to his senses and realized he could not continue to exist on the same food that he was feeding to the swine, he resolved that he would return to his father, regardless of the consequences. In the same way, the human race will 'come to their senses' and desire to return to the home of their Father when offered this opportunity during Christ's kingdom.

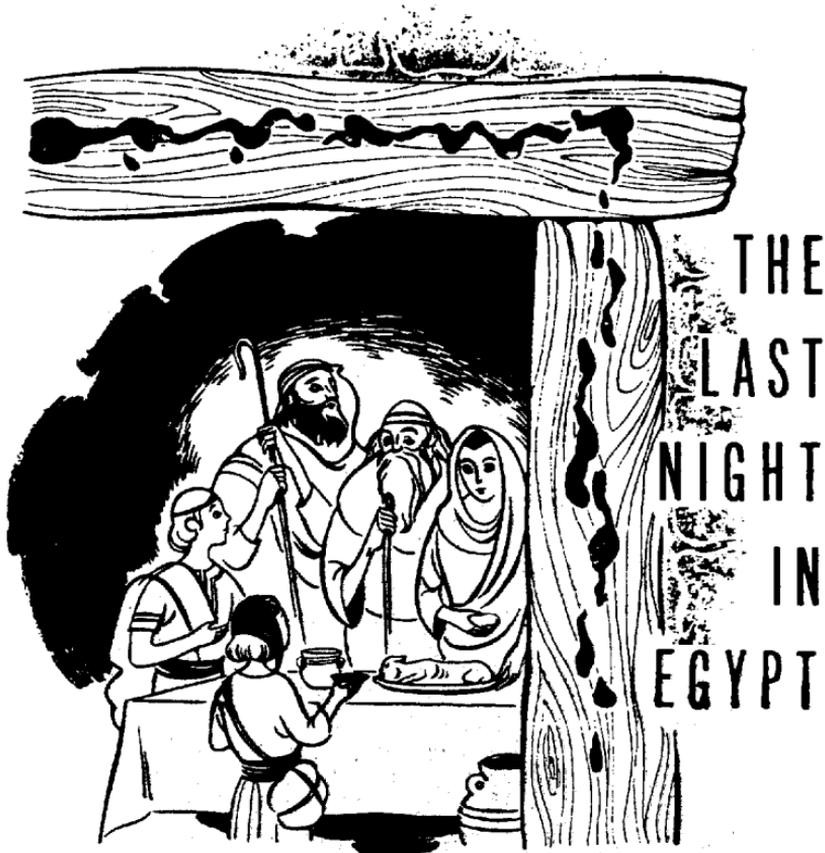
In the parable, the Father was eagerly watching and waiting for his son's return. He saw him coming while he was yet 'a long way off', and he rushed out to greet him, and to welcome him back. Likewise, the Heavenly Father has done everything possible to make it easy for the human family to return to him during the millennial reign of that kingdom for which we have been taught to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as is in heaven, so in earth." (Luke 11:2) It is God himself who has made all the arrangements whereby he can exercise the

forgiveness and compassion expressed in this parable by the father's actions.

Those Christians who are faithful to their heavenly calling during this Gospel Age will have the opportunity to join with Jesus, their Lord and Master, holding out welcoming arms to the human family as they return home to their Father. Jointly, Christ and his church will be the agency God will use to express his forgiveness and his compassion for mankind. What a wonderful time that will be for the entire human race.—Rev. 5:9,10; 20:4; 21:1-5

□
"Savior, like a Shepherd
lead us, much we need thy
tender care."—Hymn #257,
Hymns of Dawn





PHARAOH, THE EVIL ruler of Egypt was finally forced to the point of desperation. In a rage, he ordered his slaves, the Israelites, to leave his country. Just as God had foretold at the time he called Moses to leadership at the burning bush, Pharaoh had hardened his heart and had refused to

release the nation he had enslaved until God had performed all his 'wonders' on behalf of Israel.

From the very first, Jehovah had told Moses to warn Pharaoh with these words: "Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, *even my firstborn*: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn." (Exodus 4:23) Patiently, God gave Pharaoh many chances to change, and to soften his hard heart before he brought this final and most terrible plague upon him.

But as each of the nine preceding plagues ended, Pharaoh still would not let Israel go. When his oldest son died during the night of the tenth plague—the sudden, mysterious death of all the firstborn, both men and beasts, in the small hours of the night—Pharaoh was convinced at last that this calamity had indeed come upon Egypt because he was refusing to allow the Hebrews to leave, and to worship their God—Jehovah. (Exodus 4:21-23) This was, by the way, the first time God told his people that his name was Jehovah. Before this he was known by the name God Almighty.—Exodus 6:3

But there is more to the story of the firstborn. While all the firstborn in Egypt were dying, all the firstborn of Israel were kept safe. God had given Moses directions that were to be followed exactly to the letter to insure the lives of Israel's firstborn. On the 10th day of the month, Nisan—no doubt while the ninth plague of the thick darkness that "could be felt" was still distressing Egypt—the Hebrews were to bring into their homes either a young lamb or a young goat. It was to be the finest, most perfect male kid or lamb that they owned, not more than one year old.

The instructions from God were to keep the animals, one for each household, in their homes until the 14th day of Nisan. On the evening of that day, when the sun was going down—which is when the Jewish 'day' begins—the whole assembly of Israel was to kill their animal, saving the blood. Using small branches as brushes, they dipped them in the blood and

smearing it on their doorposts—above the door and on both sides of the entrance to their homes.

Next, they were to roast the meat from the animal over the fire, and as soon as it was ready the whole family was to gather to eat it. This meal was not a leisurely one to be enjoyed, but was to be eaten quickly, as they stood ready to leave this land of their bondage. Nothing was to be left of the lamb or kid. If a family was too small to eat a whole animal, they were to share it with their neighbors. Any meat that could not be eaten was to be completely burned up before the morning came.

It might seem odd to us, but it was very important for the Israelites to carry out all of these very particular instructions. God was using these events as illustrations so that we might know that he had a plan which spans the centuries. We will take a look at the meanings of these pictures after we complete the story of the occurrences of this special night at the very beginning of Israel's history as a nation.

All the people followed Moses' words exactly. They selected their lambs or kids on the 10th day of Nisan; they slew them on the 14th of Nisan, putting the blood on their doorposts; they gathered their families inside their homes, roasted and ate the meat; they burned whatever they could not eat. No one left his home before morning, or went out from under those bloodied doorposts. They waited all through the long night to see what would happen next.

The last plague destroyed all the firstborn of Egypt. It was the signal for the Hebrews, who were packed and ready—staff in hand—shoes on their feet—to leave Egypt hastily. We read, "It came to pass, that at midnight, the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.

"And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children

of Israel; and go, serve the LORD as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.

"And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, Or we will be all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians."—Exodus 12:29-36

"And they departed from Ramses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the Passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments."—Numbers 33:3,4

What did these events mean? "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." (I Corinthians 5:7) This scripture is a clue to the meaning of the Passover lamb and what it illustrated. We remember that Jesus was called "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and death which follows as a result of sin. (John 1:29) With this key we can unlock some of the lessons from God.

The relentlessly wicked Pharaoh represented the evil angel, Satan. Pharaoh kept Israel in his bondage as slaves, picturing how Satan has kept the whole world of mankind in slavery to sin and death. The world (represented by Israel) will be released from bondage by the death of the passover Lamb—Jesus—just as Israel's firstborn were saved on the first Passover night. The necessity for Israel to remain inside their homes during the entire night until the morning, showed how Christians must stay 'under Jesus' blood' by exercising faith in him, and must eat the Lamb completely. Just as Israel's life

and nourishment came from the lamb they ate—so our life comes from Jesus' death as the sacrificed Lamb of God. (Ephesians 1:7) There are many other lessons we can learn from this Passover story.

As the scene of our story fades away, we leave the Egyptians, including Pharaoh, mourning their thousands of dead with weeping and loud cries. We see, led by Moses, the 600,000 men of Israel filling the roads which would take them out of Egypt, with all their women and children, household goods, flocks and herds, as well as the spoils they had taken from Egypt. And going in front of the entire procession was a great "pillar of cloud" by day, and by night "a pillar of fire." Jehovah God would be their guide to the Promised Land!—Exodus 13:1,2;12:37,38

QUESTIONS

1. What does the expression 'firstborn' mean?
2. When was God's first warning given to Pharaoh, "I will slay thy firstborn if you do not let my people go"?
3. Did Jehovah give Pharaoh enough time and opportunity to avoid having the firstborn of Egypt destroyed?
4. Were the firstborn of Israel in danger of death also?
5. What three things was each family to do to keep their firstborn safe?
6. What was this special night called? Do the Jewish people still celebrate this event?
7. What happened on the day after Egypt's firstborn were slain?
8. The experiences of this night were wonderful pictures of God's plan of salvation:
 - a) Whom did the Passover lamb represent?
 - b) Whom did Pharaoh picture?
 - c) Whom did Israel picture?
 - d) Do you know the meanings of any of the other pictures shown by the Passover?



ENCOURAGING LETTERS

Wants More

I have read the booklet, "**Hope**," pertaining to a glad tomorrow. I would like to read more about that time. Will you please send me a free copy of "**God and Reason**." Thank you.—MI

Teaching the Young

The Bible Answers: Please send me information regarding what is going on in the world. We just received the booklet, "**Armageddon, Then World Peace**," after having watched your film on that subject. It was a well filmed movie. The class understood it and enjoyed its implications. We had just finished a unit on Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, and so they were able to relate the information to the unit. Thank you. From a 7th Grade teacher.—UT

Can't Wait

Dear Sirs: I would like **The Dawn** magazine for another year. It has to be the best book. It tells the truth according to the Bible and I can't

wait to get it. Thank you.—CA

Needs Fellowship

Dear Dawn: Please renew my subscription to **The Dawn** magazine. My daughter and I really enjoy reading '**The Golden Thread Series**'. Please send me the other books I have checked, also, on the attached form. I would like to donate the remainder to your general fund. I was also wondering what church or meeting place would be O.K. to attend, that would teach what you are teaching. Are there any in my area? Thank you.—CA
ANSWER: Address sent.

Enjoys "Songs In the Night"

Dawn Publications: I ordered your book, "**Songs in the Night**," and I am enjoying it very much. So I would like to have you send a copy to a friend of mine as a gift from me. I am enclosing the money. Thanking you in advance.—NM

Appreciates Spiritual Guidance

Dear Brothers in Christ: For 15 years I was a member of a nominal Christian group. I was taught that the people who didn't go along with their message constituted an 'evil slave' class, whose main purpose was to glorify themselves while destroying the work of our group. I have been reading *The Dawn* for a few months now, and really appreciate the spiritual guidance and overall *loving* tone of the articles. I found a balance and reasonableness that really surprised me, considering what I had been taught.

It would take a book to fully describe the change in my outlook, and I'm sure I'm not the first person to write you about my former religion. I noticed in the *Encouraging Letters* column a booklet mentioned entitled, "*When Pastor Russell Died.*" Is this still available? If it is may I please have a copy? Do you have the address of the nearest group of Bible Students to Weatherford, TX? I would dearly love to associate with people who serve Jehovah out of love

and with a clean conscience. May Jehovah continue to bless your service.—TX
ANSWER: Booklet sent, and address sent.

Comfort In Troublesome Times

Dear Bible Students: Please renew my subscription to *The Dawn*. I don't want to miss a copy. I receive comfort from your booklets in these troublesome times; it is so comforting to read your booklets. Please use the remainder of the enclosed check as you desire. God bless your ministry.—AL

Family of the consecrated

Dear Brethren: As it has been continually in the past, my wife and I enjoy the articles in *The Dawn* and the uplifting effect it has had on both of us. Enclosed is a check for continuing our subscription to *The Dawn*, and the balance to your General Fund. Keep up the good work in these days, as we can see prophecy actually unfolding! Respectfully.—CA

Watching the Signs of the Times

Dear Brethren at the Dawn: Once again it is time to renew my subscription to *The Dawn*, which I continue to enjoy, and I appreciate the efforts of the dear brethren involved in getting it out. Also, I appreciate the efforts of the brethren who make pilgrim visits to some of us in various parts of the country. We very much enjoyed having their visits. So, as we continue to watch the signs of the times in harmony with the fulfillment of God's plan, let us also continue to pray that we may discern God's will for each of us. May he continue to bless all of you. With sincere love to all.—GA

A Question

Dear Dawn; Will you please answer a question for me? Do you believe that there will be any that live thru Armageddon? Don't all have to die to be acquitted of the Adamic sin?—WA

ANSWER—This subject is fully covered in the booklet, **"Armageddon, then World**

Peace," which was sent to him.

Enjoys the Sunday School Lessons

To All of God's Children:

He builds his church with different
stones,

He makes each one belong;
All shapes and sizes fit in place,
To make the structure strong.

May God bless each one of you, and keep you all doing his work. Thank you all for helping us to understand our Sunday School Lesson better. I have enclosed the money for two subscriptions. Yours in Christ.—OH

From South Africa

Dear "*Frank and Ernest*," brothers in Christ: I have been blessed listening to your programme. I am a child of God for 10 years. I give our Lord Jesus Christ all the glory and praise for saving me and my family. Could you send me the booklet, "*The Truth about Hell*." I will pass it on to others so they can also be blessed. God Bless you.—South Africa

'One-Year Old' Subscriber

Dear Sirs: Enclosed is \$1.00 for another year's subscription to *The Dawn* magazine. I answered your ad in the *Readers' Digest*, and have enjoyed my first year's subscription. I am thankful for it. Keep up the good work.—KS

Expresses Gratitude Well

Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus: After reading your booklet, "Hope," I received a different understanding of hope for a better world. I am requesting your booklet, "God and Reason." Thank you for a better understanding of God's Word. I am not very good at saying words, but Jesus knows my heart. Again, thank you. May God bless you. In Christ.—MI

'Just Happened to Hear' "Frank & Ernest"

Dear Sirs: I just "happened" to hear the last few minutes of your radio broadcast this evening, and determined to

send for your booklet, "*The Church*." Much to my surprise, upon hearing how to receive the booklet it was announced that you are members of the Dawn Bible Students! Coincidentally, I have been trying to locate your organization for various reasons and am truly happy that God has directed me to you at this time. Although Marie, my wife, and I ponder the Scriptures daily, we have never joined any organization to date. Our son, like us, is also a Christian without a church. I did catch a brief moment of your description of baptism, and will most certainly appreciate clarification of this also. It has been our hope to be baptized one day, God willing. Please let us know as much as possible about the Dawn people, that is, who can we talk to regarding the clarification of important aspects, and where we can get together, and when. With a hope for the future, I am sincerely, in Jesus name, yours.—NJ □

UNTO THEE, O GOD, do we give thanks, . . . for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.—Ps. 75:1

Registration Form

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION

Hope College • Holland, Michigan
July 27–August 1, 1988

Number staying for the whole week, attending all meals.

(If you have filled in above box, you need not complete the form below.)

Fr	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Lodging
Sa				
Su				
Mo				
Tu				
We				
Th				

Please indicate above which meals you wish to attend, and how many for each meal, if you are not staying the entire week, or do not wish to eat certain meals at the convention.

...

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

...

Please list names of all + ages of children, included in this reservation:

NAME

AGE of CHILD

(SEE OVER)

SEND RESERVATIONS TO: Conference Service Director,
 Hope College, Holland, MI 49423
MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: Hope College

Please indicate *how many* in each category:

WEEKLY RATES (SUBSIDY HAS BEEN APPLIED)

<u>Dormitory:</u>		<u>Number</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Ages 12, up (double occupancy)	\$129.10	_____	_____
Ages 12, up (single occupancy)	\$159.50	_____	_____
Ages 5-11 (own room)	\$ 80.30	_____	_____
(in parents room in sleeping bags)	\$ 29.00	_____	_____
Ages 0-4	FREE	_____	<u>FREE</u>
Cots or Cribs—\$5.00		_____	_____

Apartments: (2 bedrms., double occupancy only)

Non-air-conditioned (per room)	\$195.00	_____	_____
Air-conditioned (per room)	\$209.00	_____	_____
(plus \$69.00 per adult; \$29.00 per child 5-11)		_____	_____

DAILY RATES (SUBSIDY HAS BEEN APPLIED) (Lodging for partial

<u>Dormitory:</u>		<u>week as indicated on reverse side)</u>	
Ages 5, up	\$ 11.20 double per person	_____	_____
	\$ 17.50 single per person	_____	_____
Ages 5-11: Parents' room in sleeping bags-FREE		_____	<u>FREE</u>
Ages 0-4	FREE	_____	<u>FREE</u>
(Cots or Cribs—\$2.50 per day)		_____	_____

<u>MEALS:</u>	<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>Lunch</u>	<u>Dinner</u>		
Ages 12, up	\$3.65	\$4.75	\$6.65	_____	_____
Ages 5-11	\$1.35	\$2.35	\$3.30	_____	_____
Ages 0-4	FREE	FREE	FREE	_____	<u>FREE</u>

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE: _____

Please send minimum deposit check for 1/2 Total Amount Due.

AIRPORT PICKUP INFORMATION:

Airline _____ Date _____ Time of Arrival _____ Flight Number _____ No. of Persons _____

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Mary Kamarauskas, Chicago, IL—January 14. Age, 95.

Sister Helen Tyk, Chicago, IL—February.

Brother Ed. Bushlus, Chicago, IL—February.

Brother Emmett Home, Louisville, AL—February 3. Age, 97.

Brother Stanley Zuba, S.W. Florida—February 5. Age, 84.

Brother William A. Cole, Columbus, OH—February 9. Age, 77.

Sister Agape Kojes, New York, NY—February 11. Age, 64.

Sister Betty Joseph, Cincinnati, OH—February 19. Age, 85.

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

G. Balko		Joe. Panucci	
Gary, IN	April 13,14	Santiago, Chili	These appoint-
		Mendoza, Argentina	ments run
M. Balko, Sr.		Monte Grande, Argentina	from
Dallas, TX	April 3,4	Berazileque, Argentina	April 2 to
Louisville, AL	7	Montevideo, Uruguay	April 20
Mike Balko		Curitiba, Brazil	
Cincinnati, OH	April 21	Sao Jose, Brazil	
J. Hausmann		G. Tivador	
London, ONT.	April 14	Pittsburgh, PA	April 28
G. Jeuck		R. Shahan	
Los Angeles, CA	April 21	Middletown, NY	April 21



HERE TWO OR THREE are gathered in my name, there am I [the LORD] in the midst. . . . Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.—*Matthew 18:20, 10*

CONVENTIONS

Conventions are listed at the request of the classes who sponsor them. Send your listing **IN WRITING** at least 2 months before the date of the convention.

GARY AREA BIBLE STUDENTS, April 13,14—Porter County Expo Center, 215 E. Division Rd., Valparaiso, IN. Contact: John Ulicni, 6703 Tyler St., Merrillville, IN 46410

NEW YORK, NY, April 14, 1991—Wm. Paterson College of NJ, Pompton Road, Wayne, NJ. Contact: Mrs. A. Lange, 76 Longview Ave., White Plains, NY 10606
Phone: (914) 948-5428

CINCINNATI, OH, April 21—The Harp home on 2607 Merrittview Lane, 45231
Phone: (513) 825-4112

LOS ANGELES, CA, April 21—Masonic Temple, 248 E. Olive, Burbank. Contact Michael Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades 90272
Phone: (213) 454-5248

BOISE, ID, April 26-29—Owyhee Plaza Hotel. For reservations, contact Mrs. Paul Cooper, 1422 Denver, Boise 83706.
Phone: (208) 344-2173

DETROIT, MI, April 28—Redford YWCA, 25940 Grand River, Redford Township. Contact George Tivador
Phone: (313) 978-7444

HARTFORD, CT, April 28—Mt. Carmel Hall, 30 Olde Roberts Street, East Hartford. Contact: Mrs. D. Slivinsky, 42 Andrew Dr., East Hartford.
Phone: (203) 289-0116

PITTSBURGH, PA, April 28—Parkway Center Inn, 875 Greentree Rd. Contact: Charles Martig, 730 Dunster St. 15226
Phone: (412) 563-6110

AGAWAM, MA, May 19—Ramada Inn, 161 Bridge St., East Windsor, CT. Contact: Mrs. G. Zulinski, 232 Shoemaker Lane, Agawam, MA 01001
Phone: (413) 786-0256

WEST NEWTON, PA, May 19—Sewickley Grange, Route 136.

ASILOMAR, CA, May 24, 25, 26, 27—Pacific Grove, CA. Contact: Tom Marshall, 1089 Bluebell Dr., #1108, Livermore, CA 94554.
Cutoff date is April 23rd.
Phone: (415) 443-0567

WATERBURY, CT, June 2—YWCA, 80 Prospect St. Contact: Associated Bible Students, P.O. Box 1494, Waterbury 08721

AUSTRALIA Conv., July 12-14—State School Staff Room, Coronation Dr. Write: Mr. Greig Tosh, MS 1536 Paynters Clm Rd., Nambour 4560 Queensland, Australia.

BIBLE STUDENTS' GENERAL CONVENTION, July 27-August 1

JERUSALEM, ISRAEL, Spring 1993. Write before May 1st, 1991 to indicate interest: D. Shallieu, 1041 Johnston Dr., Watchung, NJ 07060. A statement of interest is **NOT** a commitment of registration.