

The Dawn

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

IN RECENT DAYS the world has been rudely reawakened to the reality of the nuclear threat that still hangs over our heads.

The people of earth enjoyed a short respite from this most dreadful fear after the collapse of the communist regime in Russia. With their fall and the subsequent lessening of tensions between the major world powers, humanity began to breathe a little easier. No longer did nuclear activities capture the headlines and television screens, with their pictures of atom bomb explosions and mushroom clouds. And references to nuclear winter were encountered less often in magazines, or on book covers. But as much as we tried to tell ourselves that this awful threat to the human race was fading away, the facts were that nuclear proliferation had made its way into the less responsible hands of smaller nations where, in some respects, the danger could be even more imminent.

The North Korean situation has shocked us back to a reality we do not like to face; but it is there, and it has to be dealt with. No doubt this will stimulate increased speculation on the subject of Doomsday, and the end of the world.

We would like to let our readers know what we believe the Bible teaches to be the truth on this forboding subject.

THE DAY THE WORLD ENDS

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."—I John 2:15-17

SOMETIMES WE HEAR said concerning 'the end of the world', "I hope it doesn't come in my day." This expression, 'the end of the world', is a familiar one to most people living in so-called civilized countries; but in the minds of many, the end of the world has frightening connotations. This is due to a traditional concept of this important development of God's great plan of the ages. Dark Age tradition teaches that the end of the world foretold in the Bible means the destruction of the planet Earth, and that at the time of this destruction all faithful Christians then alive will be caught up bodily to heaven, and all non-Christians will be unsaved.

Naturally, with this concept of the end of the world, most professed Christians do not care to think about it too much, and non-Christians even less. There is a general belief—and a Scriptural one also—that the end of the world and the second coming of Christ are in some way associated. But for those holding to the traditional concept of the end of the world rather than the Scriptural viewpoint, it is impossible to understand either subject clearly as taught in the Bible.

THE EARTH REMAINS

According to the Bible, Planet Earth will never be destroyed. Solomon wrote, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever." (Eccles. 1:4) The Prophet Isaiah explains that the reason the earth will abide forever is because God designed it to be inhabited by man, and that this design is sure, not "in vain." We quote: "Thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else."—Isa. 45:18

This promise of the LORD reminds us of the Genesis record of Creation where we are informed that God created man in his own image, commanding him to multiply and fill the earth, and to subdue it. In other words,

The record tells us that God planted a garden eastward in Eden in which was provided every tree that was pleasant to the sight, and good for food. In reality, these were all trees of life—trees, that is, which provided all the life-sustaining nutrients man would need in order to continue living forever.—Gen. 2:8,9

But, as verse 17 explains, there was also the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and Adam was forbidden to eat of this tree—the penalty for disobedience being death: “The day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” We all know what happened. Our first parents did transgress the divine law, the penalty of death fell upon them, and they were driven out of their garden home into the unsubdued Earth to die.

But this did not destroy God’s original design that the Earth should be man’s eternal home wherein he might live in perfection throughout the endless ages of eternity. It only means that in the divine arrangement it was not due to reach fruition in the days of Eden. In his divine plan God foresaw the fall of man into sin and death, and provided redemption from what otherwise would have been lasting tragedy. That redemption was through Jesus. “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

In this well-known and wonderful text, the word ‘perish’ denotes eternal destruction. While our first parents, and all their progeny since, have fallen asleep in death, and the human race continued thus to die, this is not eternal death, but is described in the Bible as being like a sleep from which there will be an awakening. This awakening will come about because Jesus gave his humanity in death as a substitute for Adam and his race. Paul wrote, “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—

WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN, IS YET TO BE!

The opportunity to gain eternal life will come to the people as a whole after they have been awakened from the sleep of death. So, if we can visualize what would have occurred in human experience had not our first parents transgressed God's law, we can realize what God's grand design has in store for humanity; for because of the death of Jesus as man's Redeemer, what would have been, is yet to be!

RESTORATION

Both the Old and New Testaments abound with promises and prophecies giving us the assurance that it is God's plan to restore mankind to health and life on the earth. One of the most comprehensive of these is found in the third chapter of the Book of Acts, including the first two verses of chapter 4. This is a record of a sermon preached by the Apostle Peter shortly after Peter and John had healed a man who had been lame from birth. Peter then explained that following Jesus' return there would be "times of restitution of all things." (Acts 3:19-21) Peter adds that these times of restitution had been spoken by the mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began.

This implies that if the earth is to be destroyed as a result of Jesus' return, God's prophets who foretold that there would be times of restitution were not holy prophets at all, but lying prophets. However, we are glad for the assurances of God's Word that restoration is indeed the Creator's grand design for the sin-sick and dying world of mankind.

WHAT COMES TO AN END?

One of the outstanding teachings of the Bible is that the present world, in God's due time, does come to an end. As we have seen, however, this does not mean the destruction of the literal earth. It is, rather, the present evil social order that is destroyed in what the Prophet Daniel described as "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation."—Dan. 12:1

SYMBOLIC OR LITERAL???

Sometimes the prophecies pertaining to the end of the world use fire as a symbol of the destructive powers of this prophetic time of trouble, but the prophecies also use other symbols, from one standpoint or another, to illustrate the manner in which the present evil social order is destroyed. In the New Testament, the word 'world' is frequently used to denote a social order, but the word 'earth' is also used, and it is this use that led students of the darker past to conclude that it was the literal Earth which was to be destroyed. But the word earth is used many times in the Old Testament, in contexts which clearly indicate that our planet is not meant.

For example, Jeremiah 22:29 reads, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the Word of the LORD." It is clear, we think, that it is not the literal Earth that is referred to here, but the people, and the associations of people on this planet.

In one of the prophecies of the end of the world we read, "Wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy [Hebrew, 'zeal']." (Zeph. 3:8) This gathering of the nations in connection with the prophetic time

of trouble—which ultimately will destroy the present evil social order—has been taking place for many years.

But note the end result of this. The LORD informs us that it is his determination to destroy the whole earth with the fire of his zeal. This is a very interesting statement; the prophet declares that the earth would be 'devoured'. In Daniel 7:23 this word devour is also used to describe the aggressive propensities of a great "beast" which is said to represent a particular "kingdom." Most students of prophecy believe that this refers to the Old Roman Empire, concerning which Daniel wrote, "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces." It need not be argued that the reference here is not to the literal Earth. This is a prophecy that was fulfilled centuries ago, yet the literal Earth still remains. But a symbolic earth was devoured by the aggressions of Rome, and the nations involved in it were trodden down and broken to pieces.

GOD'S NAME EXALTED IN THE EARTH

Psalms 46 contains a very interesting prophecy concerning the end of the world. In the great time of destruction symbolically described, the 'earth' is 'removed', and also 'melted'; yet, after describing the time of war and chaos that brings about this result, the LORD says, "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen [Hebrew, 'nations'], I will be exalted in the earth." (vs. 10) This latter reference is to the literal Earth which abides forever to be man's eternal home, and it still exists in the prophecy even after the symbolic 'earth' is 'removed' and 'melted'!

Another wonderful statement in this end-of-the-world prophecy is found in verses 8 and 9. We quote: "Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder: he burneth the chariot in the fire." War

is one of the menacing characteristics of this present evil world, and here the LORD's prophet is assuring us that ultimately, when the LORD says, "Be still," to the chaotic and raging nations of the earth, war will be a thing of the past, for the destruction of this present evil social structure will lead to the beginning of a new world — God's new world of tomorrow.

CHRIST'S PROPHECY

As we have noted, the prophecies of the Bible associate the end of the world with the return of Christ, for he will be the great king in God's new world. Near the close of Jesus' ministry the disciples questioned Jesus concerning the sign of his promised return. They asked, "What shall be the sign of thy coming [Greek, 'presence'], and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3) In his reply to this question, Jesus mentioned many things which would take place in the earth during the period of his presence, the final one being that those who prove worthy of life during the future Judgment Day will inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.—Matt. 25:31-34

But Jesus mentioned many events which would precede this ultimate restoration of the obedient to life and to their lost Paradise. He referred, for example, to Daniel's great prophecy of a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, describing it as a great 'tribulation' that would come upon the peoples of the earth. He said that this great tribulation would be so severe and widespread that unless it was cut short no flesh would survive.

It is evident, we think, that we are even now living in the time thus described by Jesus, and what this means is that we are watching a world come to an end. However, Jesus gave us assurance that the period of this tribulation, or destructive trouble, will be cut short before all flesh is destroyed. (Matt. 24:21,22) We can take comfort in this in view of what is taking place throughout the world today. We know that the destruction of the human

race is still threatened by the misuse of nuclear power. Environmental pollution continues to endanger the existence of the human race; and contributing to this danger is the much-dreaded population explosion, even though we do not hear about this as much as we did at one time. So, we are thankful for the Master's assurance that through the LORD's elect there will be divine intervention in the affairs of men in time to prevent all of the above listed climactic events that so many now fear.

DIVINE HELP WILL ARRIVE IN TIME ! . . .

THREE WORLDS

The Bible speaks of three worlds, one following the other; and Planet Earth is the location of all of them. There was the world before the Flood, often spoken of as the antediluvian world. There is the "present evil world," as described by the Apostle Paul. (Gal. 1:4) There is also "the world to come."—Heb. 2:5

Peter described these symbolically in their spiritual and material aspects as "the heavens and the earth." Concerning the antediluvian world, Peter observed, "By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." (II Pet. 3:5,6) He continues, "But the heavens and the earth, which are now [and they are still 'now'], by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment and perdition [destruction] of ungodly men."—vs. 7

In verse 13, Peter observes, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." This new heav-

sand years of that world will be under the rulership of Christ and his glorified church. It will also be the thousand-year Day of Judgment. These are the reasons Peter could refer to the new heavens and earth as representing righteous conditions, although sin will not be completely destroyed until the close of that thousand years.—Rev. 20:4,6,11,12

"THE 'DAY'"

The title of this article is, "The Day the World Ends," pinpointing the time in the outworking of the divine plan when this present evil world will be destroyed so that God's new world of tomorrow might be established. However, this 'day' is not one of twenty-four hours, but a period of time the length of which is, of course, known by the LORD, but is not yet revealed to his people. The period in which the antediluvian world ended is referred to in the Scriptures as 'the days of Noah'. While it was Jehovah who caused the waters of the Flood to destroy that world, Noah was closely associated with what took place, in that he was the builder of the ark in which he and his family were brought over into the new world.

Peter speaks of the period in which the present evil world ends as "the Day of the LORD," and "the day of God." Other prophecies describe it as the day of Jehovah's wrath upon an evil world to bring about its destruction. In Peter's prophecy the elements of destruction are symbolized by fire. We quote, "But the Day of the LORD will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Again, "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."—II Pet. 3:10,12

In reading this description of the destruction of the present evil world it is important to note that when the

destruction of that social order, not the destruction of the earth. So also now, it is not the destruction of the Planet Earth that is involved in the destruction of the present evil world—it is the present evil social order which is destroyed. Fire is one of the symbols used by the LORD to denote the manner in which the evil world of today is destroyed, both the religious aspects: the ‘heavens’; and the material aspects: the ‘earth’.

The Bible also uses storms, whirlwinds, earthquakes, and other symbols—even floods—to symbolize what we now see taking place as wars, revolutions, anarchy, famines, economic breakdowns, slavery under despots, etc., all adding up to increasing chaos, which will finally result in the complete disintegration of a world. Yes, this is the ‘day’ in which the world ‘ends’; in fact, this is the day that is bringing about the end of the world.

In his prophecy, Peter marked the full extent in time of “the heavens and the earth which are now” when he said that they are “reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment.” The **Revised Standard Version** makes the thought a little clearer. This translation reads, “By the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water, and by means of water, through which the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for fire, being kept until the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men.”—II Pet. 3:5-7

The first world existed until destroyed in the waters of the Flood. The second world still exists, even though on fire, and will continue to be “kept until the Day of Judgment . . . of ungodly men.” While there will be destruction of human life brought about by the symbolic fire of the Day of the LORD, none will be singled out for destruction on the basis of their sin, nor will the morally upright—professed Christians and other religionists—be

institutions and wicked nations—a world—and not designed specifically for individuals.

But it will be different in the coming Day of Judgment. Then the LORD will be dealing with individuals, the whole world being under the rulership of that Prophet foretold by Moses. Then it will be only those who will not hear that prophet who will be destroyed from among the people. These will be the truly ungodly, the willful sinners, who will be destroyed in the “second death.”—Acts 3:22,23; Rev. 20:12-14

LET THE HEAVENS REJOICE, AND THE EARTH BE GLAD!

But how different it will be in the Judgment Day for the righteous; those who willingly and joyfully rejoice in the true knowledge of the LORD as it will then be revealed to them. The psalmist described what a happy time it will be for them in these words: “Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD: for he cometh . . . to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.”—Ps. 96:11-13

THE NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH

After prophesying the destruction of the present heavens and earth in a great time of trouble which he symbolized by fire and noise, Peter adds, “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (II Pet. 3:13) As Peter shows, the first and second symbolic heavens and earth were by, or according to, the ‘word’ of God. This is the same as saying that this is true also of

the new heavens and new earth; these are according to God's word of promise.

Important among these promises is one set forth in Isaiah 65:17, which reads, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Then the prophet changes the symbol to a city, the 'New Jerusalem', and continues, "But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." —vss. 18,19

Isaiah explains that in this new heavens and new earth "they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." (vss. 21,22) Notice that these activities take place on God's green Earth, which is still here after the symbolic heavens and earth are destroyed!

John the Revelator, in a vision given to him by the risen Lord Jesus while on the Isle of Patmos, sees the promised new heavens and earth, and describes what he sees: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first [former] heaven and the first [former] earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven [locating what is described in this passage as taking place on the earth], prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow,

former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."—Rev. 21:1-5

How significant is the promise of God that he will make all things new; and as we have noted, the application of this promise is right here on the earth—the literal earth which abideth forever—the earth which eventually sees God's will done throughout its entire expanse even as it is now done in heaven. It is to this that the end of the present evil world will lead. Shall we not continue to pray for the kingdom which will bring about these blessings?

Important among the 'all things' which will be changed, is the destruction of pain and death. Think of what this will mean in human experience! There will be no more need for hospitals, doctors, nurses, old-age homes, ambulances, or drug stores—as much as these are appreciated now. We thank God for these helpful services rendered, but we are more thankful for the prospect of those blessed conditions in the new heavens and new earth when disease, dying—from whatever causes—and death itself, will be no more!

Isaiah wrote of the coming new world, saying, "The LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us." (Isa. 33:22) Verse 24 reads, "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." How wonderful to realize that when the LORD is Judge, Lawgiver, and King, he will indeed save the people from pain and death, and that because of this the people will no longer need to say, "I am sick," because they will be forgiven their iniquity.

It is the iniquity of the people, beginning with original sin in the Garden of Eden, that is responsible for sickness and death. But, through the death of Jesus, God provided redemption from Adamic sin. Paul wrote, "As for Adam, all die: even so by Christ shall all be made

alive." (I Cor. 15:22) This means that in addition to the abolition of sickness, all those who already have gone down into death will be awakened from their long sleep in the great prison of death. Truly, then, it is a fact that there shall be no more death. The reign of sin and death will at long last be brought to an end.

THE LORD'S MOUNTAIN

A mountain is used in the Bible as one of the symbols of the LORD's kingdom. This is probably because the LORD was spoken of as having ruled over ancient Israel from a mountain—Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. One of the wonderful prophecies in which the future kingdom of God is symbolized by a mountain is found in Isaiah 25:6-9, which reads:

"In this mountain shall the LORD of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations [preventing them from knowing and serving the true and living God]. He will swallow up death in victory; and the LORD God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; . . . we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

THE PROSPECT

Wonderful, indeed, is the prospect of God's new world of tomorrow as held out to us by the precious promises of God! Those who are able by faith to lay hold upon these promises will rejoice to see evidences that the present evil world is coming to an end. When we know what the Biblical 'end of the world' will ultimately mean for the people of all nations, we will want it to come as soon as possible.

While there has been much in the world that 'now is' that has been good, on the whole it has been an unrighteous world. It has been characterized by sin and selfishness—by sickness and death—by war, revolution, and chaos. It has been a world of crime; a world in which the human race is threatened with destruction by the misuse of nuclear power, environmental pollution, over-population, and disease gone out of control. People of the earth today who are sixty years old, or younger, have never read a newspaper that did not report war!

What a world it is, with its starving and poverty-stricken millions, and all its other evils, only a few of which we have mentioned! Who wishes to see a world like this continue! Let us rejoice that it will not continue—yea, that even now it is disintegrating, and soon will be completely destroyed, preparatory for God's new world, the 'new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness'.

Excerpts from "Daily Heavenly Manna"

SEPTEMBER 4: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment."

—1 John 4:18

MIGHTY, IMPOSING, AND terrifying, indeed, is the influence of fear, except upon those who have learned to know the LORD through previous experiences, and to trust him even where they cannot trace him. The giant of fear and despair must be met with the pebble from the brook, "It is written." The sling of faith must propel the word of promise with such force as to slay the Adversary and to deliver us from his domination. . . . Thus armed only with the Word of God, and trusting in His rod and staff, we may well be courageous and answer imposing sectarianism as David answered the Philistine, "Thou comest to me with a sword and a spear and a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of . . . Israel, which thou hast defiled."

SEPTEMBER 30: "The love of Christ constraineth us."

—II Cor. 5:14

IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE to describe love itself; the best we can do is to describe its conduct. Those who possess a love with such characteristics are able to appreciate it, but not able otherwise to explain it—it is of God, Godlikeness in heart, in the tongue, in the hands, in the thoughts—supervising all the human attributes and seeking fully to control them. As disciples or pupils of Christ, we are in his school, and the great lesson which he is teaching us day by day, and the lesson which we must learn thoroughly if we would attain the mark of the prize of our high calling in all its various features and ramifications, is the lesson of love. It takes hold upon and relates to all the words and thoughts and doings of our daily lives. As the poet has said, "As every lovely hue is light,—so every grace is love."—Z. '03-55,58 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

SEPTEMBER 1—"The LORD said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."—Acts 9:15 (Z. '03-206 Hymn 229)

SEPTEMBER 8—"Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."—James 4:4 (Z. '99-70 Hymn 299)

SEPTEMBER 15—"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."—II Corinthians 6:17 (Z. '99-203 Hymn 312)

SEPTEMBER 22—"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."—Psalm 23:6 (Z. '03-413 Hymn 170)

SEPTEMBER 29—"Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD."—Proverbs 16:5 (Z. '03-220 Hymn 212A)

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 4

SPYING OUT JERICHO

KEY VERSE: *"They said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us."*

—Joshua 2:24

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Joshua 2:1,8-14,22-24

JOSHUA WAS NOT unaware of the difficulties that confronted the Israelites in crossing the Jordan and entering Canaan. Forty years before this he had served as a spy himself, and had noted how potentially strong their enemies were; but he believed then, and still believed, that the LORD would give his people victory over their enemies. He knew, nevertheless, that the LORD expected him to use all the wisdom and skill he possessed, and that God would help his people only when they had done all they could to help themselves.

Using his considerable knowledge of military strategy, Joshua felt that it was essential first of all to secure what information he could concerning the current strength of their enemies, that he might have some knowledge of what to expect after they crossed the Jordan. Consequently, he sent

two spies to "go view the land." Joshua knew that almost immediately after crossing Jordan they would be confronted with the walled city of Jericho, and he was anxious to discover, if possible, the size of the army within that city and any other helpful information needed in planning an attack.

Entering the city, these two spies went into the house of a woman named Rahab, and lodged there. (Josh. 2:1) This circumstance was reported to the king of Jericho, who sent messengers to Rahab's house. It was correctly assumed that the men were spies, but when Rahab was requested to bring them forth, she told them that they already had left. She admitted that she had seen the two men but said she did not know where they went after they had gone away. Actually she had taken them to the roof

of her house and concealed them under stalks of flax.

Rahab reported further that the men had left about dark. "Whither the men went I wot not," she said. Then she told those seeking the spies, "Pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them." The searchers took her advice, leaving the spies on the roof of Rahab's house. Later she let them down over the wall of the city with a rope, this being possible because her house was built on the wall. Following her instructions, they hid in the forest of the mountain until they could safely recross Jordan and report to Joshua.

The account is exceedingly brief, and there is nothing to indicate how much they had learned except what had been reported to them by Rahab. The information she gave them was that the people were terrified at the thought of the Israelites entering the land. "Your terror is fallen upon us," she said, and "all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you."—Josh. 2:9

Her own testimony was, "I know that the LORD hath given you the land." Her city had heard of the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea forty years prior to this, and they also knew, as Rahab said, "What ye did unto the two kings of

other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed."—Josh. 2:10

Then Rahab, revealing further the great fear of the people, confessed her faith in the God of Israel, saying, "As soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." (vs. 11) Rahab then asked that the spies arrange for the protection of her family when the city was captured, and they agreed to this.

Rahab's eloquent confession of faith in the true God indicates a genuine desire to be in harmony with him, and the LORD honored her faith. In Hebrews 11:31 she is cited as an example of having great faith. In James 2:25 her "work" in concealing the spies and sending "them out another way" is mentioned as evidence of her justifying faith. Later she married Salmon and became one of the outstanding mothers in Israel.—Matt. 1:5

The spies reported to Joshua that their enemies could easily be conquered, and reaching the same conclusion, Joshua at once began to move the people into position for the crossing of the Jordan River.—

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 11

ACTING ON FAITH

KEY VERSE: *"The priests that bear the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan."*
—Joshua 3:17

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Joshua 3:7-17*

AFTER THE SPIES reported to Joshua what they had learned, as mentioned in last week's lesson, they emphasized the great fear of the people of the land, which meant that they could easily conquer their enemies in Jericho. Joshua at once began to move into position for the momentous crossing of the river, bringing them from Shittim close to the banks of the Jordan.—Josh. 3:1

Israel's marching orders are set forth in Chapter 3. They were to follow the Ark of the Covenant and were told that when the feet of the priests touched the water, "the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap." (vs. 13) Verse 16 explains that this backing up of the waters took place "very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan." This indicates the water did not pile up as a perpendicular

wall near the place where the priests touched it with their feet, but that the stoppage occurred at a point considerably upstream. The Hebrew word translated "heap" literally means "a piling up." Today we would say the water 'backed up', which is what would have to occur to allow the water below to drain from the riverbed. What caused the stoppage just at the right time the Bible does not say. To us it was a miracle, and faith accepts it without further explanation.

By this miracle Joshua's faith was rewarded, and the people's faith and confidence in him as the LORD's representative in their midst must have been greatly increased. The priests carrying the Ark, when reaching the center of the riverbed, stood there until all the Israelites had crossed over. They were instructed by the LORD to take twelve stones from where they stood and

leave them where they lodged the first night in the Promised Land. These were to be an evidence to later generations of Israelites of the miraculous manner in which the nation was brought safely over Jordan. Joshua also took twelve other stones and placed them in the riverbed where the priests stood, "and they are there unto this day."—Josh. 4:9

Our understanding is that Canaan typified the coming 'new earth' condition, under the administration of the Millennial kingdom. What, then, does the River Jordan signify? It would seem to represent divine condemnation—the curse—against our race which has for six thousand years hindered mankind from entering into the kingdom conditions which shall ultimately prevail for all. Therefore, the Jordan River well represents the death sentence imposed upon mankind. This seems rather to be implied by the name of the river, which is derived from the names of the two main springs by which it is formed: Jor, signifying 'down', and Dan, which signifies 'judge'. The word Jordan would thus have the significance of being "judged down," or condemned—the divine condemnation which hinders mankind from entering into favor with God

In this view of the matter, we see how appropriate it was that the Ark of the Covenant, representing the LORD himself—his grace, his goodness, his promises—should stand in the midst of Jordan, effecting a cancellation of the sentence of death in order that the blessings of the Millennial kingdom might be attained by all under the lead of Joshua's anti-type, our Lord Jesus.

That the Ark of God was borne by the High Priest and the underpriests, and that these first passed into Jordan, is also significant. Jesus, our great High Priest, gave himself for our sins; he became a 'curse' for us; he, as the man Christ Jesus, stopped in the midst of Jordan, that the world might pass over. The royal priesthood are following him in this sacrifice, and they, too, are stopping in the midst of Jordan. They also, as joint-heirs with their Lord, lay down their lives to the intent that the whole world of mankind, or as many as will, may enter into the glorious kingdom privileges, according to the divine arrangement.

The twelve stones placed in the middle of Jordan represent the anti-typical twelve tribes of Israel, the royal priesthood, who will participate with Christ in the great work of blessing all the families of the earth ■

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 18

WINNING THE BATTLE

KEY VERSE: *"It came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city."*

—Joshua 6:16

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Joshua 6:1-5, 15-20*

THE ISRAELITES PITCHED their tents at Gilgal, but Joshua knew they were not to remain here, for they still had the task of conquering the land which they had now entered. Making his own investigation, "Joshua was by Jericho" when "he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?"—Josh. 5:13

We can understand why Joshua was so cautious. He was in enemy territory, and it was wise to make sure with whom he was speaking. The 'man' identified himself, saying: "As captain of the host of the LORD am I now come" (vs. 14), referring to the angelic forces often employed by the LORD for the accomplishment of his purposes. Their commander appeared in human form to instruct Joshua in the

proper procedure for capturing Jericho.

Joshua himself had considerable experience as a military general, but he bowed worshipfully before this mighty one, and in a dependable, soldierly fashion asked, "What saith my LORD unto his servant?" (vs. 14) The answer was, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy." His true spirit of obedience to the LORD is eloquently displayed in the four words, "And Joshua did so." (vs. 15) Happy are all the LORD's people who, when they hear his command, hesitate not to obey, but 'do so'.

Joshua's responsibility was great, but the LORD reassured him. God said, "See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour." The people of the city were fearful, and when they realized that the Israelites had crossed Jordan, they closed the doors in

Joshua's faith must have been tested when he learned from the "captain" of the "LORD's host" the method for capturing this heavily walled city. Naturally he would think in terms of heavy and continuous assaults upon the walls, coupled with attempts to scale the walls to get as many soldiers within as possible. But no ordinary military strategy was to be employed.

All of Israel's military men were to "go round about the city once" each day, for six days. Seven priests preceding the Ark were to accompany them, blowing upon rams' horns. On the seventh day there were to be seven encirclements of the city. After the seventh round of the city, the priests were to blow their trumpets when commanded by Joshua, and the people were to "shout with a great shout." (Josh. 6:3-5) The assurance was given to Joshua that with this shout the walls of the city would crumble, and the Israelites were to march right in. The walls did crumble. The 'LORD's host' saw to that!

However, the part played by Joshua and the Israelites, was important. For forty years, or from the time they first heard of the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, the Canaanites had been fearful. Now that this much-feared people were en-

camped just outside Jericho's walls, their hearts 'melted' with fear. With that final, mighty shout, to see and hear the supposedly impregnable walls of their city crumble and fall, they were paralyzed with fear, making it easier for the Israelites to march into the city and take possession. Had the people within the city been composed and alert, they might have held off the Israelites for a long time, even with their walls destroyed.

But the LORD knew how to gain this signal victory for them. It was just as Joshua had said, "The LORD hath given you the city." (Josh. 6:16) No doubt the wickedness of the people was great, and their presence among the Israelites as captives would have been detrimental to them; so the orders were that all should be destroyed, "both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass."—vs. 21

In the larger picture of the conquering of the citadels of sin of this world, their destruction is eventually assured through the mighty power of God acting in conjunction with all who obey the commands of a greater savior than even Joshua (whose name means 'savior'). This will be when the kingdom of Christ is abroad in the earth. ■

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 25

CHOOSING TO SERVE GOD

KEY VERSE: *"The people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."*

—Joshua 24:24

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Joshua 24:1,2,11-16,22-25*

JOSHUA MADE A farewell speech to the Israelites, recorded in chapters 23 and 24 of the Book of Joshua. He reminded the people of the wonderful manner in which God had dealt with and blessed Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; of how he had brought the whole nation out of the land of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and kept them alive in the wilderness. He recounted their miraculous crossing of Jordan, and the victories the LORD had given them since entering the Land of Promise. Joshua emphasized how important it had been to them that they followed the LORD's instructions in taking the land. When they did not do this, failure accompanied their efforts.

Following the victory over Jericho, disappointment awaited them. The next fortified stronghold of the enemy to be taken was the small city of Ai. Following his usual custom, Joshua sent men to "go up and view the country. And the

men went up and viewed Ai."—Josh. 7:2

However, unintentionally, they brought back a deceptive report to Joshua. Having conquered the mighty and heavily walled city of Jericho, the little city of Ai seemed insignificant; so the spies said to Joshua, "Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labor thither; for they are but few."—vs. 3

Joshua took this advice, but the small army he sent against Ai suffered a humiliating defeat. As a consequence, "the hearts of the people melted, and became as water." (vs. 5) How quickly they forgot the miracles of Jordan and of the crumbling walls of Jericho! Even Joshua, to whom the LORD had said, "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee," felt that the LORD had deserted him and the people.

With these faith-trying experiences permitted by divine providence as test of their obedience, Joshua warned them against worshiping false gods and called upon them to continue serving the true God. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, . . . or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."—Josh. 24:15

Joshua called upon the Israelites to go on record as to where they stood with respect to their God. He instructed them to "Put away the gods which your fathers served . . . and serve ye the LORD." His eloquent appeal was effective, for the people answered, "God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods." (Josh. 24:14-16) They said, "The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."

The people renewed their covenant to serve the LORD, and again Joshua warned, "If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good." (vs. 20) Again the people affirmed their determination to serve Jehovah, the true God, saying, "The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."—vs. 24

Joshua was a faithful servant of the LORD, and a strong leader of God's people. He "died, being an hundred and ten years old." (vs. 29) Verse 31 informs us that "Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel." What a wonderful tribute to the faithful example of this man of God!

Unlike the experiences of Moses while leading the people of Israel in the wilderness, many of which are mentioned in the New Testament as types, we have only the two references to Joshua, one of which relates to the failure of the Israelites to enter into rest under his leadership. (Heb. 4:8) His conquering of so much of the Land of Promise cannot, therefore, be considered as being specifically typical, although many helpful lessons may properly be drawn from these experiences.

As Christian soldiers, fighting the 'good fight of faith', we have many 'Canaanites' to fight, and it is only by faith in the LORD and the obedient following of his instructions, making use of all the means of grace which he has provided, that we can hope to be victorious. ■

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

WHAT THE LORD REQUIRES

*"Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself
before the high God? shall I come before him with
burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?
Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
He hath showed thee, O man, what is good;
and what doth the LORD require of thee,
but to do justly, and to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with thy God?"*

—Micah 6:6-8

THE DETAILS OF the divine will may vary in their application to us as individuals, yet the basic principles of what God requires of his people are the same for all. In fact, these basic principles have operated in the past; they operate now; and they will continue to operate in the future. What our text says is this: Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God!

We all appreciate that circumstances vary according to the will of God for the particular time. For instance, for anyone to humble himself before God during the Gospel Age has meant, and still means, walking the narrow way of sacrifice and suffering even unto death. This has been God's will since the death and resurrection of Jesus. But to humble oneself before God during the Millennial Age, will not mean suffering unto death. It will mean walking the highway of life, back to mental, moral, and physical perfection as perfect human beings on a glorified earth. (See 60:12) Nevertheless, all, whether in this age or the

next, will have to humble themselves before God. No blessings will accrue to those who do not.

The tendency of the fallen flesh is to lose sight of these fundamental principles. The inclination is to seek ways and means of pleasing God that are less exacting, more pleasing to the flesh. That was true in the days of the prophet when our text was written, and it is still true today. To find an easier way of serving God usually means seizing upon some detail of the divine will and magnifying its importance to the exclusion of other divine requirements. We should always be on guard against such tempting practices.

Some of the results of this fallen tendency of the flesh are alluded to in our text. Says the prophet of God, "Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?" Under the arrangements of the Law given to Israel, God was pleased for his people, in certain instances, to offer rams in sacrifice to him. God was pleased for them to use oil in connection with their services and sacrifices. These things were commanded by God in the Law—the Israelites could not have neglected them and at the same time have been wholly pleasing to him.

But rams and oil were not the only things that entered into God's will for his typical people. Even though a thousand rams were brought, and even though ten thousand rivers of oil were used, these would not give anyone license to ignore or omit the other requirements of God. As God said to his people through the prophet (Mal. 3:10), "Bring ye all," not some, not most, but "all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing."

The Apostle Peter's outline of the divine will for Christians is very comprehensive. After exhorting to 'super-add' what are sometimes termed, the 'graces' of the

shall not be barren [**Margin**, 'idle'] nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord, and we shall not fall. (II Pet. 1:4-10) No half-measures are to be tolerated. The apostle's outline of the divine will includes not only the growth of grace in our hearts, but the outward expression of it in understanding and activity.

The Apostle Peter said we are to add to our faith virtue. **Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott** uses the word 'fortitude'. Fortitude is very essential in the Christian life. Without it, we shall be of those who are simply tossed about by every wind of doctrine. Fortitude is strength of character—not our strength, but strength derived from a living faith in God and his Word. We should endeavor to be strong in the LORD and in the power of his might. This we do by prayer, by study of the Word and by fellowship with the brethren. But let us not make the mistake of thinking we can stand in our own strength. If we do, we shall surely be thrown off our guard, and fall. As the scripture says, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."—I Cor. 10:12

Not only have we the need to increase in faith and fortitude, but we are also to increase in knowledge. As Paul puts it in Colossians 1:10, "That ye might walk worthy of the LORD unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." If we are to increase in knowledge, then we must apply the knowledge as we acquire it. Rightly dividing the truth and fidelity to the truth, are primary requisites to our growth in the grace and knowledge of our LORD.—II Tim. 2:15; II Pet. 3:18

Viewed from this standpoint, we can see that knowledge is fundamentally important to us as Christians. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (I John 3:14) Again, "We know that we are from God, and that the whole world lies under the evil one." (I John 5:19, **Wilson's Diaglott**) Furthermore, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called"

according to his purpose.”—Rom. 8:28

While the attainment of an accurate knowledge of the truth is of primary importance to a Christian now, the ultimate of his attainment will be the power of Christ's resurrection to the divine nature. (Phil. 3:10,11) It is through the knowledge of the truth that we are able to keep the requirements of the LORD—to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before him, and thus be found worthy of such a great reward.

Our text says, “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the LORD require of thee.” The test which the LORD himself applies as to whether we love him or not, is in the knowing and doing of his commandments. Jesus said, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” (John 14:21) We need, therefore, both to know and to do the will of God. In fact, if we do not know the will of God for us, how can we do it?

KNOWING AND DOING

How does the LORD show us what is good, and what he requires of us? Surely it is through a knowledge of his Word. It follows then, that we cannot know what the LORD requires of us unless we have a knowledge of his will. Hence the Scriptures say that we are to study to show ourselves approved unto God—not approved unto this brother or that sister, but approved unto God.

From this standpoint alone can we glory in the knowledge of the divine plan of the ages; not merely because we know it, but because, through it, God has revealed his will to us. As we read in Jeremiah 9:24, “Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.”

Then Peter says that we have need to increase in temperance or as **Wilson's Diaglott** renders it, ‘self-control’. We are reminded here of the proverb which

says, "Better . . . [is] he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32) Self rebels against the divine leadings. It must be brought and kept under control. It is not only a matter of controlling self. One can observe that practice going on in the lives of those not begotten to a living hope. The reason we need to increase in the control of self is that we might bring ourselves more and more into harmony with the divine will.

Peter said we are to increase in patience. So many and varied are the obstacles in the way of a Christian that we need to increase in patience if, as Jesus said, we are to endure to the end. Unless we do increase in patience we shall become weary in well-doing and faint by the wayside. We deal justly with others, perhaps only to receive injustice in return. We manifest love and mercy towards others, but sometimes it is not appreciated; sometimes it is scorned. We consistently walk in God's way instead of our own way or the ways of others, often to be opposed by those who have the spirit of the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

Yes, we certainly need patience if we are to cheerfully endure, meeting the three requirements of our text. Building on what has gone before, Peter says we are to increase in godliness. The word godliness is translated from a Greek word which means 'piety', or 'reverence'. We should certainly be of those who worship or reverence God in spirit and in truth. How truly pious, how truly reverent was Jesus. He could, and did say, "I do always those things that please him [my Father]." (John 8:29) Without reverence for God and for his Word we could never be sure what God requires of us. Truly did Jesus say, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4) Wherever we are—in the church, in the home, where we work—let us ever maintain our reverence for God and his Christ.

Another increase we have to make is of brotherly kindness. That is to say, we should always have a real

lively interest in the welfare of our brethren. After exhorting the Christian to become fully equipped with the God-given armor, Paul then says, "Praying always . . . for all saints." (Eph. 6:18) Yes, our interest should be a family one. Not merely for the brethren of the ecclesia to which we belong, but for all the brethren, in this country, and all over the world.

There is a danger of becoming cramped in our spiritual outlook. Says the Apostle in II Corinthians 6:13, "Be ye also enlarged." While keeping the local viewpoint in mind, let us not become provincial and lose sight of that broader viewpoint which takes in the interest of the LORD's people and the LORD's work generally. We want to increase in brotherly kindness toward all. We do not want that narrow, confined, limited, and selfish spirit which says, "Bless me and my wife; my son John and his wife; us four and no more."

And then, finally, Peter says we are to increase in love, that divine principle of unselfishness. This disinterested, unselfish love enables us to bestow blessings even upon our enemies. If we fail to increase in love, we cannot possibly meet the requirements of our text to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

We would like to emphasize this: when Peter said, "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall," he did not mean if ye do one or two of them ye shall never fall. To use the illustration of our text—it is futile to come to the LORD merely with 'rams' and 'oil', even though these be great in quality and quantity. **All** the LORD's requirements are important. **All** the LORD's requirements should be faithfully met.

PRAYER

This brings us to I Thessalonians 5:17, where the exhortation is to pray without ceasing. One of the outstanding privileges and necessities in the life of a Christian is prayer. But even prayer loses its true value when other features of God's will and purpose for us are neglected and ignored. It is in prayer that we express

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

WEST VIRGINIA

Wheeling WWVA 1170 6:30 p.m.



**PLEASE NOTE
CHANGES!**

WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

Canada

ALBERTA

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

BRITISH COLUMBIA

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

MANITOBA

Winnipeg	CKJS 810	9:00 a.m.
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ONTARIO

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

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

Argentina (Spanish)

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

British West Indies

Trinidad Radio Trinidad 610 10:30 p.m.

Chile (Spanish)

Valcahuno Radio Almirante Latorre

Costa Rica (Spanish)

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

Kenya and Uganda

Radio East Africa 4:00 p.m.

Mexico (Spanish)

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

New Zealand

Whakatane IXX 8:10 a.m.

Nigeria

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

Panama (Spanish)

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

Peru (Spanish)

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

Philippines

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

Portugal (Portuguese)

Vila Nova de Gaia Radio Minute 8:45 a.m.

Russia (Russian)

Novgorod FM 71.3 10:00 a.m.

South Africa

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

Tonga

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

Uruguay (Spanish)

THE BIBLE ANSWERS TV PROGRAMS

UNITED STATES:

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

National Access Television, Satellite ASC-1, Channel 11.

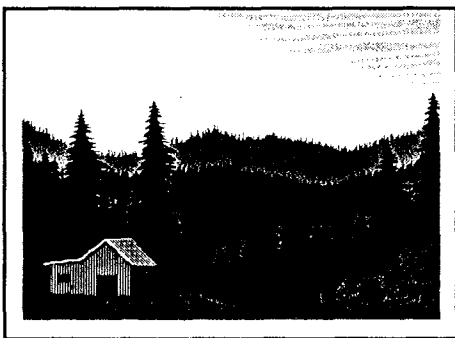
CANADA:

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

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

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

Pacific Time—6:30 a.m.



"I WILL SING of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. . . . And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints."

— Psalm 89 1-4

our thanksgiving to God. We ask his forgiveness for our transgressions. We ask for strength and guidance in our daily efforts to meet his requirements. When the Scriptures use such phrases as "Pray without ceasing," and "Be instant in prayer," it means that we should consistently maintain the spirit of prayer in all our enterprises. Prayer is not a ceremonial rite. It is one of the divine provisions of grace.

Prayer is a means to an end, but not the end itself. Prayer is very precious to the followers of the Master. Often it has been said that prayer is the vital breath of the New Creature. But we should not engage in prayer to the exclusion or neglect of anything else. It is certainly a privilege and a necessity to come before the LORD with a liberal supply of the oil of prayer, but if we lose sight of the real objective, even 'ten thousand rivers' of such 'oil' will not enable us to meet that which Jehovah requires of us.

FOR THE BRETHREN

We are admonished to lay down our lives for the brethren. (I John 3:16) This sacrificial service is prompted by love. It means that the requirement of lovingkindness is being worked out in our lives to some extent. Let us be on guard against having too restricted a view of who constitutes our brethren. Do not let us restrict our outlook merely to those with whom we are personally acquainted. Do not let us think that we have fulfilled our obligations when we have done what we can for their spiritual and material welfare.

Sometimes brethren with whom we are not personally acquainted need our help. This was true in the Early Church. Paul visited both the Jewish and the Gentile brethren, building them all up in the most holy faith. Let our interest be for all the brethren. Let us be prepared to disregard our own personal and local preferences if by so doing the general interests of the LORD's people and work are best served, not only in this country but every-

Richly blessed are those who make self-sacrificing efforts to help the brethren. Truly this also is a part of that which Jehovah requires of us. But it, too, is only a part and must not be so magnified and emphasized as to smother other requirements of Jehovah. We do need to exercise the spirit of a sound mind in all these things.

PREACH THE WORD

Another important essential of God's will is given in II Timothy 4:2, where Timothy was told to preach the Word. Faithfulness in all the requirements of the LORD means that we will be doing what we can, both as individuals and as ecclesias, in the work of spreading the truth as a witness to our God and for the good of those who will accept it and make it their own.

Evidence of life is activity. Activity in the service of the truth should result from our own filling of the truth and its Spirit. We do not engage in any service of the truth with the thought that by such faithfulness we can earn our way into the kingdom. It is by grace we are saved. (Eph. 2:4,5,8) It is by grace we will have a place in the kingdom. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," said Jesus. (Luke 12:32) It will not be by works alone. But God wants us to appreciate his grace. He wants us to appreciate it so much as to be willing to spend and be spent in the telling of it to others. As the poet expressed it in one of our hymns, "Low in the dust I'd lay me that the world my Savior might see."

We often refer to the economy of God. In the economy of God it has been so graciously arranged that the overflow of appreciation from the hearts of his consecrated people can be utilized by him for the preaching to, and blessing of, others. Thus we can lay down our lives for the brethren. Thus we can bear witness to the truth. We can do these things with the assurance that our labor will not be vain in the LORD. We can rejoice because we know that it is God's will for us, and that, in so doing, we are walking humbly with him.

CONTENDING

Another detail of the LORD's requirements for his people is found in Jude 3, where we are told to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. The exercise of this privilege has a very direct bearing upon our success in doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God. If we appreciate the wonderful light of truth as we should, we will gladly and earnestly contend for it. We will guard it as a very precious treasure in our own hearts. We will do all in our power to help others of our brethren do the same. If we are inclined to take the view that it really does not matter what we believe, then such an attitude should be regarded as a danger signal.

Failure earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints may, once again, be caused by specializing along some line, or lines, in what the LORD requires. Perhaps the conclusion has been reached that prayer and brotherly kindness are the only essentials of Christian experience, that it does not really matter what we believe, or what others believe. Human reasoning might dictate that such an attitude is tolerant, but it sometimes arises because faith has been lost in one or more doctrines of truth which we come to regard as non-essential, or as no longer applicable. The Scriptures clearly teach that we are sanctified by the truth—that we should earnestly contend for the truth by which we are sanctified; that the truth should be kept clean and pure and bright.

To do justly means to obey the Golden Rule—Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you. This is a high standard. We want to keep it in mind in our dealings with others. We are to love mercy, that great principle of unselfishness which is the basis of all God's works and ways. Says the Psalmist David, "The mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear [reverence] him." (Ps. 103:17) Blessed indeed are the merciful: for they shall obtain

mercy. (Matt. 5:7) Very little, if any, progress can be made without the quality of God-like mercy.

Even though we do justly and love mercy we will be coming short of what God requires of us unless we walk humbly with him. This has been, and still is, very costly. It means the sacrifice of our little all upon the altar of God's will. He wants us to bring to that altar our rams and our oil—not thousands of rams, not ten thousands of rivers of oil—just the amount he asks for; just the kind he asks for; yes, and all the kinds he asks for. We have been shown in the Scriptures what is good, and what Divine Justice requires of us. It is for us to live prayerfully and zealously day by day, keeping these requirements in mind, and endeavoring to live up to them.

Let us continue to rejoice in the knowledge of the truth. Let us do all in our power to show our appreciation to God for the fact that he has taken us into his confidence. God has revealed to us his gracious plan of salvation. We can know nothing about God's plan except as he reveals it to us through his Word. As we, the consecrated children of God, are able to view all matters from the divine standpoint, our lives will be blessed even in the midst of earth's lamentations.

True, we do long to see the end of suffering, dying, and death. But let us realize that our Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus are much more interested in the human family than we are. His wisdom knows best just how fast the divine plan of the ages should progress. Like the skilled surgeon who cuts deeply in order to heal, so the LORD in his great abounding love and vastly superior wisdom knows exactly what is best for each individual in order that their everlasting blessing may be assured.

Let us be assured that God will help us day by day, each and every day. He helped his saints in ages past, and we can witness that his love is still the same. He will help us through the blessed assurance of his Word

He will help us through fellowship with those who are truly his. He will help us in his providential overruling of all our affairs. He will help us in permitting those experiences which, if rightly received and endured, will make us vessels fit for the Master's use, now and in the future.

Do we think sufficiently of what the truth has really done for us? Do we think sufficiently of the condition of mind we would be in today if we did not have the truth? Do we think of what it cost our Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus to bring us into the grace wherein we now stand?

Politicians tell us that the whole scene is dark, anxious, and confused. Brethren, how blessed it is in this time of world darkness, anxiety, and confusion to have a theme of life that lifts us above the trouble; that keeps us rejoicing in the blessings that are ahead!

Our whole course in life should be governed by our knowledge that the present evil order of things is soon to give place to the new order of things—that order of the restitution of all things.—Acts 3:19-21

Let us all, more earnestly than ever before, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. (Matt. 6:33) More earnestly than ever before, let us “touch lightly the things of this earth, esteeming them only of trifling worth,” or of no worth at all to us, the called according to his purpose.

As Christians, we must continue to be guided at all times by the Word of God. Let us the more earnestly resolve that we will zealously do all we can to lay down our lives for the brethren, to comfort and cheer others by bearing witness to the glorious Messianic Kingdom, so near at hand. While doing so, let us keep in mind that which Jehovah requires of us: “To do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. ■

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

THE SEED, PART 6

TIMES OF RESTITUTION

PETER AND JOHN were ardent exponents of the Gospel of Christ. They experienced the same opposition from the religious rulers of that time as Jesus encountered. We read, for example, that "as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."—Acts 4:1,2

This notation of the unpopularity of Jesus' disciples, so far as the priests of that time were concerned, follows the record of a very interesting episode in which Peter preached one of his informative sermons. It was shortly after the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which had been followed by that wonderful sermon by Peter in which he affirmed that Jesus had been raised from the dead, had returned to the presence of his Heavenly Father, and had "shed forth" the divine power, the mighty demonstration of which they had all witnessed at that time. This led to the conversion of "about three thousand" Jews, who "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship."—Acts 2:41,42

Some time after this, "Peter and John went up together into the Temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the Temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the Temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the Temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said,

Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.”—Acts 3:1-5

This poor, unfortunate man did receive something from Peter, and much more than he expected. Peter said to him, “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the Temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.”—Acts 3:6-8

Evidently many people were in and about the Temple when this miracle was performed, and it attracted much attention, as can be readily understood. Concerning this the account reads, “All the people saw him walking and praising God: and they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the Temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon’s, greatly wondering.”—Acts 3:9-11

Peter was quick to sense the possibilities of the situation and to use it as an opportunity to present to the Jewish people important facts concerning Jesus and the divine plan of redemption and restoration centered in him. First he disabused their minds of any thought they might have had that he possessed superhuman power to heal this lame man. On this point Peter said, “Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?”—vs. 12

Peter explained to these Israelites that it was through the resurrected Jesus that this lame man had been made to walk. But before he got to this point he said to them, “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pil-

late, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."—vss. 13-15

Peter did not unduly censure these Israelites for their responsibility in connection with the crucifixion of Jesus, for, as he explained, his suffering and death had been foretold and what had occurred had been in fulfillment of prophecy. The prophecies had also foretold the purpose of Jesus' death, saying that "he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."—Isa. 53:5

Thus, this and other prophecies explain that Jesus was to die as the Redeemer of the world. Jesus himself said that he was to give his "flesh," his humanity, for the life of the world. (John 6:51) The promise God made to Abraham that through his "seed" all the families of the earth would be blessed could be fulfilled only because redemption from sin and death would be provided. While Jesus, the promised "Seed" of the Abrahamic Covenant, was destined to be a great and powerful Ruler whose dominion would extend from "sea to sea," it was first necessary that he be the Redeemer of those who were to be blessed by and through his kingdom. It was this that was accomplished at Calvary.—Ps. 72:8

Having reminded his hearers of the death and resurrection of Jesus, Peter then explained to them that it was through faith in Jesus' name that this lame man had been made to walk—"The faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." (vs. 16) Peter set before his amazed audience that the one whom they had rejected and crucified was responsible for the fact that this lame man was now able to walk, having been given "perfect soundness." It was important that they understand this, even as it is important now for us to realize that the hope of the world

centers in Christ, who is the seed of Abraham through whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed.

When our first parents transgressed God's law, he withdrew his favor from them. This meant that even as a plant dies when the sunshine is withdrawn, so the human race has been dying. It does not mean, however, that God ceased to love his human creation. The statement made in Eden that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head gave assurance that God would do something to rescue man from the dilemma into which he had been plunged by his own sin. God's later promise to Abraham that his seed would bless all the families of the earth was a further amplification of this. And now Jesus had come and had died as man's Redeemer, which was a proof of God's goodwill toward mankind.

Herein is revealed an important aspect of the divine plan to bless all the families of the earth through the seed of Abraham. The blessings were not due to come to the people at the First Advent of Jesus. He came then to open the way for these blessings by dying as the world's Redeemer, but it is not until he returns that the blessings made available by his death are actually dispensed to the people.

In keeping with this, Peter explains further the nature of the blessings which will result from the LORD causing his face to shine upon the people, describing the period in which they will reach mankind as "times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (vs. 21) Restitution means restoration. The lame man was restored to health, and Peter is saying that all lame men will, in God's due time, be restored to soundness of limb. He tells us that this had been promised by all God's holy prophets.

Isaiah was one of God's holy prophets. He wrote, "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart." (Isa.35:6) Peter's healing of the one lame man who sat at the gate

of the Temple called Beautiful, was merely an assurance of the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy on behalf of all the lame and otherwise crippled ones during the coming times of restitution of all things. And not alone will those who are lame be healed. Isaiah further prophesied, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." He also assures us that "the tongue of the dumb" shall sing.—vss. 5,6

In the miracles performed by Jesus we have a further illustration of the wide scope of restitution blessings which will reach the people of all nations during the times of restitution of all things. Jesus will heal all manner of diseases as a result of his return and the establishment of his kingdom. Concerning that time the Prophet Isaiah further wrote, "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: [for] the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."—Isa. 33:24

SELFISHNESS REMOVED

The most devastating of all the maladies which now afflict mankind is selfishness. This is a disease of the mind and heart which more or less distorts all human thinking, and is the cause of most of the maladjustments of human society. It is the cause of family jealousies and of neighborhood strife. It is responsible for worldwide crime and war. What lasting benefit could accrue from giving a man his physical health, only to have him use it selfishly and at the expense of the well-being of others? But selfishness, with all its blighting effects upon the human race, is to be eradicated from human hearts during the times of restitution of all things.

Through Jeremiah, another of God's holy prophets, the LORD promised, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." (Jer. 31:31-34) This statement was made in connection with God's promise to make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, and the Scriptures reveal that these promises to God's typical people will actually be

fulfilled on behalf of all mankind—'all the families of the earth'.

God created man in his image, which means, among other things, that unselfishness, or love, was a very part of his being. When man disobeyed divine law he was sentenced to death, and driven out of Eden and forced to eat bread by the sweat of his face. The fight for survival soon began to engender the spirit of selfishness. Now, six thousand years later, selfishness has become the motivating principle behind practically all human endeavor. In many instances this spirit of selfishness manifests itself in cruel forms, inflicting untold suffering upon the human race.

But when the LORD again puts his law in the inward parts of the people, and writes it in their hearts, it will mean that his spirit of love will control their thoughts and actions. And how blessed this will be in human experience! On the international level, for example, one of the results will be, as foretold by another of God's holy prophets, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid."—Micah 4:1-4

How refreshing it will be when love replaces selfishness in all human thought and action, when the spirit of helpfulness welling up in every heart will meet a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence will mark every act! In one of Jesus' revealing parables he uses sheep to picture those who during the time of his kingdom, the—times of restitution of all things—will be judged worthy of enjoying the favor and blessing of God forever. He indicates that the attitude which qualified these sheep to receive divine blessings was one which induced them to think of others. In the parable Jesus says to these, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and

ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." The "sheep" asked when they had done these things, and the reply by Jesus was, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."—Matt. 25:35-40

Thus does Jesus, the greatest of all the prophets, add his testimony to the forecasts presented by the holy prophets of the Old Testament assuring us that in the times of restitution of all things the divine image of love, as manifested in the spirit of helpfulness, will be restored to those who accept the provisions of divine grace and obey the laws of Christ's kingdom which will then be in force throughout the whole earth. The completeness of their restitution is shown in the invitation which will then be extended to the 'sheep' class "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 25:34) This is the dominion over the earth that was given to our first parents, and which they later lost because of sin.—Gen. 1:28

MOSES' PROPHECY

In addition to informing us that all God's holy prophets had foretold the times of restitution of all things and the great boon it would be to the peoples of earth, Peter quoted some prophecies which they had given. One of these was a prophecy by Moses. Peter quotes it thus: "A prophet shall the LORD your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you."—Acts 3:22; Deut. 18:15,19

This is a remarkable prophecy. The 'prophet' referred to is Jesus and his joint-heirs, the seed of Abraham; and Peter reveals that the time of its fulfillment follows the Second Advent of Jesus and during the times of restitution of all things. The prophecy was made to the Israelites living in Moses' day, and Moses said that the prophet would be raised up to them. This means that

those Israelites of Moses' day are to be raised from the dead and given an opportunity to hear and obey this great Prophet.

Thus the blessings of restitution for the world include the resurrection of the dead. Even the enemies of the Gospel who heard this sermon by Peter recognized this fact. Some of these believed in the resurrection of the dead, and some did not; but they were all grieved that Peter should preach that the resurrection would come to the people through Jesus.—Acts 4:1,2

With the exception of the sect of the Sadducees, the Jewish people believed in the resurrection of the dead. In a speech before Felix, when condemned by certain religious leaders of Israel, the Apostle Paul said, "This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."—Acts 24:14,15

THE RETURNING CAPTIVES

It is clear from Paul's testimony that the doctrine of the resurrection is set forth by the Old Testament prophets, those referred to by Peter as God's "holy prophets." However, the word "resurrection" is not used in the Old Testament, the resurrection being described by other words and phrases. The Prophet Isaiah wrote, "The ransomed of the LORD **shall return**, . . . with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa. 35:10) The ransomed of the LORD are all mankind; all who were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Paul wrote that Jesus gave himself "a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."—I Tim. 2:3,4

In a prayer Moses said, "Thou [God] turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men." (Ps. 90:3) It was in the Garden of Eden that God turned

man to destruction by sentencing him to death. But God still loved his human creatures and made provision, through Christ, for their return from death. So Paul wrote, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." I Cor. 15:21,22

The Old Testament likens those in death to prisoners who are held captive by the great enemy, Death. Their awakening from death is described as a releasing of prisoners. In this vein, Isaiah, in a promise to the seed—Christ and his faithful followers—wrote, "Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves."—Isa. 49:8,9

Through the Prophet Jeremiah God promised, "I will bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days." (Jer. 48:47) And again, "I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the LORD." (Jer. 49:6) And then in the 39th verse of this same chapter, the LORD assures us, "It shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD." In all these promises the 'captivity' referred to is the captivity of death. And thus we are assured that such wicked people as the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Elamites are all to be awakened from death in the "latter days."

Here, the expression, 'latter days', simply refers to the great consummation age in the divine plan, when the seed of promise will deliver the world of mankind from sin and death. It is the same period of time described by Peter as the times of restitution of all things. In Ezekiel 16:53 we are assured by God that the Sodomites, the Samaritans, and the Israelites are also then to be released from the captivity of death.

GOD'S DESIRE

The Prophet Job also foretold the resurrection of the dead. God had permitted severe trials to come upon Job, and in a moment of discouragement he asked God to let him die. (Job 14:13) After making this request Job wondered just what it would mean to him in the event God answered his prayer and let him die. So he asked the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Job, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, expressed his belief that he would live again. He said, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change [from death to life] come. Thou wilt call, and I will answer thee: thou shalt have a desire to the work of thine hands."—Job 14:14,15

How reassuring to know that God has a 'desire' to the work of his hands! Man, in his perfection, was the direct creation of God, the work of God's hands. God created him in his own image and loved him. And although man transgressed the divine law, God still had a 'desire' for him, and in his great plan of redemption through the promised seed provided for his recovery from sin and death, a recovery that will require an awakening from the sleep of death, an awakening that will be accomplished during the times of restitution of all things. What a wonderfully refreshing experience that will be for all mankind!

THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

Another Old Testament promise quoted in part by Peter as due to be fulfilled following the Second Advent of Christ is the one made to Abraham in which he was assured that through his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. Certainly 'all the families of the earth' have not as yet been blessed, and we are glad to learn from Peter that these promised blessings were due to reach the world of mankind after the return of Christ and the establishment of his worldwide government.

And how wonderfully the divine plan for the blessing of the people opens up and becomes understandable as we trace the many promises of God which are recorded throughout his Word. Abraham could not know that the seed which God promised to him, the seed that was to bless all the families of the earth, would be Jesus Christ, who would give his life as a sacrifice for sin and later return to earth to establish his kingdom of blessing. Nor could Abraham know that the blessing of all the families of the earth would mean the healing of all the diseases of mankind, so universally and so completely that none of the inhabitants of the earth anywhere would say, "I am sick."

Abraham did have faith in God's ability to do anything he purposed to do. He believed when God asked him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering that he would raise his beloved son from the dead. However, it is doubtful if Abraham understood that God's promise to bless all the families of the earth included the resurrection of all the dead.

Abraham himself was an unselfish man. When difficulties arose over pasturage for his flocks and for the flocks of his nephew, Lot, he invited Lot to choose whatever part of the land he wished, which he did; and Abraham was content with what was left. But Abraham could hardly know that the promise to bless all the families of the earth involved the eradication of selfishness from all human hearts, making an end of all strife and war.

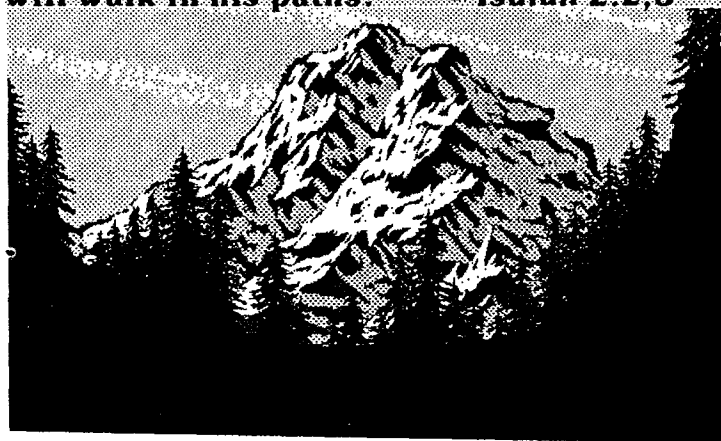
OBEDIENCE NECESSARY

When Abraham proved his loyalty to God by his willingness to offer his son, Isaac, in sacrifice, the LORD said to him, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Gen. 22:18) It will also be necessary for all who receive the promised blessing through the seed, that Prophet, to be obedient. God's blessings will not be bestowed upon anyone who is in open, willful rebellion against him.

This is emphasized by the Apostle Peter, who, in telling us about the times of restitution, adds, "It shall come to pass that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:23) Here we are assured that the human race, restored to perfection of mind, heart, and body will not be subjected to the menacing efforts of any who are out of harmony with God, and who prefer greed and selfishness rather than helpfulness and love. ■



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 LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. —Isaiah 2:2,3



CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

“From Strength to Strength”

“How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God”

—Psalm 84:1,2

DAVID SPENT MANY hours meditating upon the LORD and his prophetic Word. Being occupied as a shepherd from his youth, David had the time and solitude necessary for contemplation. Working close to nature both day and night made him aware of the great Creator's wisdom, power, and love, manifested in the usefulness and beauty of the earthly home planned and executed by God for man's pleasure. The psalmist's writings reflect his love for Jehovah for all these mighty works. Likewise the LORD's dear saints of this age also spend as much time as possible in meditation upon God's Word resulting in a growing appreciation of Jehovah and a continuing endeavor to become more and more like him.

In Psalm 84:2,3 (from the **Leeser Translation**, and vss. 1,2 from **King James**) we read David's words (from the): “How lovely are thy dwelling-places, O LORD of hosts! My soul desired, yea, it also longed for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh shout with joy unto the living God.” Every soul that hungers and thirsts after righteousness longs to be separated from the evil of this present world, and to enter that state which will obtain when God's promised kingdom is abroad upon the earth, when all things in heaven and earth will praise the LORD—when all mankind will have communion with God as Adam enjoyed it before his disobedience and fall from favor. How great a shout of joy will go up unto God from the hearts and voices of every man woman

and child when the restitution work is complete, and when God will receive the praise and glory due his holy name!

Verse 4 (3 in the **King James Translation**) is also more understandable when read from the **Leeser Translation**. (It is unlikely that swallows or sparrows would have made nests in the altars of the Tabernacle, as suggested by the **King James Translation**, since they were almost constantly in use.) **Leeser** says: "Even as the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young:—(have I found) thy altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God."

This is a prophecy representing the experiences of the Head and the body of the LORD's anointed, and not only an account of the personal experiences and feelings of the prophet. Both the Brazen Altar and the Golden Altar of the Tabernacle picture the rest and the peace of the saints through their faith in the sacrifices offered thereon. The Brazen Altar in the Court speaks of that great ransom sacrifice of Christ; and the Golden Altar in the Holy, pictures, not only God's acceptance of our Lord's sacrifice for sin, but our acceptance as joint-sacrificers with him—accepted through the merit of Jesus' sin-offering on our behalf.

"Happy are they who dwell in thy house: they will be continually praising thee." (vs. 5) These words express the joy of all who now, or ever, shall enjoy a place in the Father's house. And the sixth verse tells us: "Happy is the man whose strong confidence is in thee, (all) whose heart reflecteth upon the paths of righteousness." The happy journey of the consecrated toward their heavenly home is expressed so beautifully in these words. While here we read of the joy of those trusting in God, verse seven advises us of the fact that, although joyful in the LORD and his blessed promises for the future, the present time is still one of conflict—of disappointment and sorrow—the valley of the shadow of death—in which nevertheless the holy ones may sing for joy and

rejoice evermore looking forward to future blessings: "Passing through the valley of weeping, they will change it into a spring: also the early rain covereth it with blessings." What an expressive symbolism of the blessings to come at the hands of Jesus, the Savior of mankind, and his bride, the church, when the fruits of their labors are enjoyed by all the willing and obedient. The dry and barren desert will be changed into a spring!

For all the world of mankind, life under the permission of evil has been a valley of weeping; it is a desert that is barren and dry. It has been very difficult for all, but particularly for those who walk in the Master's footsteps. They are living sacrificial lives, and endure many trials and temptations, as the deceiver, the Adversary, attempts to draw them from their chosen pathway.

Although our earthly experiences differ greatly one from another, the LORD permits each of them for our individual spiritual development. At the same time he makes every provision for our needs so that, by relying upon him, we may be successful in our Christian walk. God provides the necessary spiritual refreshment; he revives us when we are weary and discouraged, and as we learn to live and lean upon him completely, he supplies our needs more and more completely.

The early rain (vs. 7, **Leeser**, or 6 in **King James**) seems well to represent the Pentecostal blessing of the Holy Spirit upon the church, which quickly followed the presentation by our Lord to Jehovah of the merit of his great offering for sin. The latter rain will be the outpouring of the Millennial blessings after the great time of trouble is past. Rain is an apt picture of that which is needed for life and for luxuriant growth.

"They [those faithful ones who have consecrated their lives to walk in Jesus' footsteps] go from strength to strength, each of them appeareth before God in Zion." (vs. 8) Here we read of the time when the progressive journey toward Zion has been accomplished, Zion being the goal of the bride of Christ. She is said to be

Mount Zion with her Lord during the Millennial Age. (Rev. 14:1) This is an individual walk, not a congregational one, despite the fact that we are walking along the same pathway, with the same goal, and with the same Lord as our helper and guide. Verse eight is the inspiration for the title of this article: "From Strength to Strength," emphasizing the individual growing process whereby our faith becomes stronger with each preceding victory of faith.

Progress along our journey is made as we grow in the spiritual fruits and graces. How do we grow stronger and more like our Master? Let us consider some of the sources of our strength. Surely we receive encouragement and stimulation from our gatherings together at conventions; in our regular class study meetings; in testimony meetings together; singing praises to our Heavenly Father and his blessed Son; in listening to the audio and video taped discourses of brethren; of reading the Word, and the helps the LORD has provided at this end of the age. We have the scripture, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, . . . and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Rom. 10:25), because our Father knew how much strength and benefit we would receive from this association.

We increase in strength through our individual prayers—fellowship and communion with God; individual study of his Word and all the helps available to us today; as well as lifting up our hearts and our minds in song to him at any time. And we have many opportunities to share with those of like precious faith in the witness work. All of these activities strengthen us and build us up in spiritual things. Time made for including any and all of the activities mentioned is time well spent on things eternal, as we have all, no doubt, experienced.

"O LORD God of Hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. (Thou) our shield, behold, O God, and look upon the face of thy anointed. For better is a day in

thy courts than a thousand (elsewhere): I would rather choose to wait at the threshold of the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For a sun and a shield is the LORD God; grace and glory will the LORD give: he will not withhold any good from those that walk with integrity. O LORD of hosts, happy is the man that trusteth in thee.”—vss. 9-13, **Leeser**

Here the saint of God is represented as waiting at the threshold during the present life for admission into the Father’s house. To such the LORD God is a sun and a shield! As a sun to enlighten us he shines upon our pathway and into our hearts. He fills us with a sense of his greatness and perfection; and as a shield he protects us from all of the fiery darts of the Wicked One. So our desire and earnest endeavor should be, more and more, to trust in him for grace and strength to be worthy to dwell in the LORD’s house.

Even during the difficult life chosen by the true Christian, he continues to walk in the narrow path joyously, endeavoring to be pleasing to the Heavenly Father, and ultimately found faithful. The follower of Christ finds cause to rejoice no matter what the outward conditions may be. They know that all things are working together for their good because this is promised in God’s word. (Rom. 8:28) The Apostle Paul admonishes in Philippians 4:4 to “Rejoice in the LORD alway: and again I say, Rejoice.” These words reflect the very essence of Christian living. Rejoicing, however, with sobriety—not boisterously—is appropriate. Loud demonstrations are not necessary, but we should be able to rejoice in the LORD “at all times”—**Wilson’s Diaglott**

Let us consider some of the promises of God’s Word that help us to appreciate our Creator and find cause to rejoice. In Psalm 19:3,4, **Leeser Translation**, we read, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech, there are no words. their voice is not

heard. [Nevertheless] Their melody extendeth through all the earth, and to the end of the world their words."

These words take our minds back to the time of Creation, and to the magnificence of the heavens. Gazing into the glories of the midnight sky is just breath-taking. Particularly when you are away from the dazzling lights of cities, the stars are so bright and so beautiful that it makes us think of David's words here in Psalm 19. How silently but magnificently the heavens declare the glory of God!

Today scientists are still learning more and more about the universe. They send out space satellites with telescopes to probe the skies; and from these satellites, which are not encumbered with the atmosphere surrounding the earth, they have a clearer vision to study the universe. Much of what they formerly believed concerning the universe has had to be rejected. Writings and interpretations from earlier studies were limited, but each decade they can probe further into space, discovering more wonders.

It is interesting to note that nothing that has been discovered by scientists can take away from the glory of God, nor his greatness in creating the earth or of the vastness and grandeur of the universe! This gives us foundation for an even greater conviction that the Biblical account of Creation is the truth, and it describes God's great wisdom and power necessary to accomplish his grand designs.

Again, David, the sweet singer of Israel, also wrote these words of praise: "O LORD, our LORD, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. . . . When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"—Ps. 8:1-4

This is still another method of going from strength to strength. We see in Creation God's Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power displayed! As we consider the four

majestic attributes of our God, we know we can lean upon him to carry us through this time of testing and learning upon which we are now embarked, and come off "more than conquerors through his strength."—Rom. 8:37

Going from strength to strength in our daily walk means that we will live closer to the LORD. The more we realize the divine direction, the more we shall make use of the means he has provided for our strengthening. Let us rejoice in the LORD that we have the privilege of walking in the narrow way, faithfully making use of all his grand provisions, and going 'from strength to strength'. ■

"FRANK AND ERNEST"

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topics discussed on

WHOL-1600
10:45 a.m.

SEPTEMBER:

- 4-The Earth Devoured
- 11-When There Is No Peace
- 18-Sifting Superstition from
from Religion
- 25-Your Adversary the Devil

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

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On Sunday, September 18th, "Frank and Ernest" will discuss the topic, "Sifting Superstition from Religion." Free circulars are available which announce this program, and you are invited to send for as many as you can use. Address your request to:

The Dawn

East Rutherford, NJ 07073

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

"Hooked" on "F&E"!

Dear "Frank and Ernest": I was at a friend's house when I first heard of your broadcast over DZAM Radio. Thinking that it was one of those 'commercials', I did not pay much mind to it. When I noticed that my friend and her family were intently listening to your broadcast, I, too, became interested. Now I am hooked on it, and since then I never miss a Saturday without listening to you both. Thank you, and more power! Yours sincerely,

—*Philippines*

Letter of Appreciation

Dear Sirs: Congratulations! You have a great program on DZAM and I'll encourage my friends and office mates to listen to you. Listening to you helps me receive God's message, and this really is very inspiring. God bless and keep up the good work. —*Philippines*

Answers Her Questions

Dear Sirs: Thank you for

on "**Life after Death**" which I received today. I am 95 years old, and have many requests for what my idea is of life after death, and these pamphlets certainly answer my questions and those of my friends. Thank you.—*OH*

A Letter from Hong Kong

To Whom It May Concern: I received the books already ["Archeology Proves the Bible"]. Thank you so much. It helps me a lot to broaden my knowledge of Jesus Christ. It was so interesting, everybody like to read it. Again, thank you so much and God bless you and your ministry.—*Hong Kong*

L.A. County Fair Booth Brings Results!

Gentlemen: A couple of years ago I picked up at the Los Angeles County Fair a number of your pamphlets from a booth featuring your publications. Recently I at last found time to read the material and I am tremendously impressed with the clarity, insight, and help I

"Dawn" is a real discovery for me. Please send me the following items [list attached] for which I enclose the money to cover the material; please keep any extra for your work. Also, send me material about all your publications, and about your organization. I am very curious. I am happy you are there. Yours truly.—CA

Helps Confirm Her Faith

I enjoy your publications. They seem to be the truth as told in the Bible, and not just the words of men. In these days of unbelief, including at times my own, your work is very helpful to me to keep my faith in God and the Bible. Thank you so much also for the affordable prices you have. Otherwise I could not have this valuable material. Thank you.—OK

Uses Sunday School Lessons

Dear Dawn: I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate The Dawn. It has and is still a blessing to me. All the lessons go along with my Sunday School Lessons

You have some wonderful articles in it. I just thank the LORD for your work for his kingdom God bless you! In Christ who is our one hope.—LA

Found "Hope" in Her Bible

Dear Sirs: I found your booklet, **"Hope,"** in my Bible. I do not know who gave it to me, but it is great! My husband died December 23, 1993, and I have found much consolation in the booklet. I would like to have five copies, please, if it is still in print. **"God and Reason"** sounds so good—please include a copy. Let me know the cost. Yours truly.—MO

DZAM Radio Station

Dear "Frank and Ernest": May the good LORD continuously impart to you his message so that we may hear them in your weekly broadcast over Radio Station DZAM. This is to humbly say that we appreciate your program very much. It is soul-touching and enriching. We will keep you in our prayers always. Very sincerely yours, *Philippines* —

OBITUARIES

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

Brother Don Moore, St. Petersburg, FL—June 1. Age, 76.
 Brother Gene Bessinger, Buffalo, NY—June 23. Age, 71.
 Sister Violet Dolan, Centralia, WA—June 25.
 Sister Helen Simon, Los Angeles, CA—June 29. Age, 79.

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

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

J.B. Brown
 San Luis Obispo, CA Sept. 11

R. Goodman
 Seattle, WA Sept. 3-5

R. Gorecki
 Claymont, DE Sept. 11

N. Kasperowicz
 Middletown, NY Sept. 11

F. Nemesh
 New York, NY September 2-4

L.B. Post
 Chicago, IL Sept. 25

L. Young
 Louisville, AL Sept. 4

L. Wesol
 St. Petersburg, FL Sept. 11 ■

CONVENTIONS

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

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3,4,5—
 Northwest Elementary School, 3757

Lansing Avenue, Jackson, MI. For information please contact: Mrs. Ray Lumley, 2531 Ashton Road, Jack-

son, MI 49203
Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 2,3,4—Ramada Inn, Two Bridges Road, Exit 52-Route 80, Fairfield, NJ. For room reservations, contact: Mrs. Ann-Truth Lange, 76 Longview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10605.
Phone: (914) 948-5428

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 2-5—For information and reservations, contact: Ginger Brann, 20B East Inter-city Avenue, Everett, WA 98208-2747
Phone: (206) 353-8983

DETROIT, MI, September 17, 18—Echo Grove Conference Center, Lakeville, MI. Contact: George Tivador, 11202 Lorman, Sterling Heights, MI 48312
Phone: (810) 978-7444

LOS ANGELES, CA, September 25—Burbank Auditorium, 248 E. Olive Avenue, Burbank. For information contact: Stephen Mengos, 8355 Santa Ynez, San Gabriel, CA 91775
Phone: (818) 286-0766

BALTIMORE, MD, October 2—Knights of Columbus Hall, 7910 Harford Rd., Baltimore. For information contact: Robert Wagner, 2753 Pelham Ave., Baltimore 21213
Phone: (410) 483-1394

NEW ENGLAND CONVENTION, October 7,8,9—Howard Johnsons, 400 New Britain Ave., Plainfield, CT 06062. For reservations contact: Mrs. Anna May Suraci, 171 Johnson Rd., Hamden, CT 06518
Phone: (203) 248-3793

FREDRICKSBURG NORTH, VA, October 8,9—Holiday Inn. For in-

formation contact: Mrs. Felicia Everett, Washington Bible Students, 2027 North Lexington St., Arlington, VA 22205. **Reservations deadline: October 1st.**
Phone: (703) 538-6406

GRAND RAPIDS, MI, October 15,16—Contact: Mark Carpenter, 804 Conger, N.E., 49505
Phone: (616) 365-2635

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 15,16—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA. For information contact: Mr. Charles Martig, 94 South Harrison St., Pittsburgh, PA 15202
Phone: (412) 734-9269

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA, October 15,16—Masonic Temple, 858 Marsh St., San Luis Obispo. Make reservations early by contacting either Lynn Murray: (805) 544-3037; or Helen Franklin: (805) 541-0132, for assistance.

HUNTSVILLE, AL, October 21-23—Holiday Inn, Research Park, 5903 University Drive, Huntsville, AL 35806. This is the first convention the newly-formed class has arranged. Contact Sandy Cothren, 1912 Stevens Drive, Huntsville, AL 35812, for information and program. Reservations may be made directly with Holiday Inn by calling (800) 845-7275 and identifying yourself as being with the "HBS block" of rooms. Or, contact Sandy Cothren as suggested above.
Phone: (205) 551-0696

ORLANDO, FL, October 29,30—Garden Club of Sanford, 200 Fairmont Drive (Corner of Hwy. 17-92), Sanford. Contact: Helen A. Jeuck, 587 Queens Mirror Circle, Casselberry, FL 32707
Phone: (407) 699-8303 ■