

The Dawn

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Highlights of Dawn

Many Christians, distressed by the deteriorating conditions of Churchianity worldwide, conclude that the foretold second coming of Christ is still a long way off, delayed by this century's monumental reversal in the efforts of Christianity to convert the world to Christ. Interestingly, however, many aspects of this trouble upon Christendom fit perfectly the pattern of things in the earth which Jesus described as contemporary with the actual event of his second presence.

What does the Bible say?

The Sign in Heaven

"Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn."—Matthew 24:30

FIVE days before Jesus was crucified, he rode into the city of Jerusalem on an ass and was hailed as king by a multitude of his followers, who shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD; Hosanna in the highest." (Matt. 21:9) Following this triumphal entry into the city, Jesus visited the Temple and exercised his messianic authority by driving out the money changers. Undoubtedly this was a time of high excitement for the disciples; for they would see in these experiences what appeared to be convincing evidence that the one whom they had accepted and followed in the belief that he had come to be king of Israel and of the world was about to begin his reign. This conviction was of vital interest to them because he had promised that if they were faithful to him they would have the privilege of reigning with him.

Jesus remained in the Temple that day and taught the people many important truths concerning his kingdom. He forecast the downfall of Israel's polity and the casting off of the scribes and Pharisees as the mouthpieces of the LORD. While he had just been acclaimed king by many, he knew that the Israelites as a whole, misguided by their hypocritical leaders, were opposed to him and were plotting against his life. Knowing this, he quoted a prophecy of the Old Testament concerning a stone which the builders rejected, but which later became "the head of the corner." This "stone" was Jesus.— Matt. 21:42-44; Ps. 118:22

While the privilege of being associated with Jesus in the kingdom of the LORD was first offered to Israel, this nation had proved unworthy of the honor; so he prophesied that the kingdom would be taken from them and given to a nation "bringing forth the fruits thereof." "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate," he said, in a final word of condemnation, and added, "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD." —Matt. 23:38,39

Revealing words are these! Only a matter of hours before this, many had used this very expression in acclaiming Jesus as their king. While Jesus knew that this was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (Ps. 118:26), he knew also it did not mean that the nation as a whole had accepted him; hence this general acceptance must wait for a time still future. Now the nation was cast off from being the special channel of divine blessings to the world and would go through much tribulation during the centuries to come. Finally, however, their eyes were to be opened to recognize Jesus as their Messiah and king, and then all Israel would join in saying, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD."

Without doubt the disciples heard this prophecy, even as they also heard the words of condemnation against the scribes and Pharisees, who, as Jesus said, were at that time sitting in Moses' seat. Upon leaving the Temple following these hours of truth-revealing discussion, Jesus further prophesied that the Temple

itself would be destroyed—that there would not be one stone left upon another.—Matt. 24:2

When he rode triumphantly into the city as king and was acclaimed such by his friends, the disciples may have thought that his kingdom was about to be established; but now they would know differently. They would know that his real coming as king to Israel and to the world was future, that he was going away and would return, and that not until then would the people as a whole join in the acclamation, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD."

While the thought of a further waiting for the kingdom may have been discouraging to the disciples, they were not stumbled by it. Instead they set about to find out, if they could, how long the waiting period would be and how they would know when it was over. So we find them the next day holding a private interview with the Master. The record indicates that they asked him three leading questions: first, When shall these things be?; second, What shall be the sign of thy coming?; and third, What shall be the sign of the "end of the world?"—Matt. 24:3

The first of these questions, relating to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, was not directly answered by Jesus. But Jesus did answer the two questions concerning the sign of his coming and the end of the world. To get the facts clearly before us, however, it is important to remember that in the Greek text the word *parousia* is used and is mistranslated 'coming'. It means 'presence', not 'coming'. Similarly, it is necessary to a clear understanding of the text to know that the word translated 'world' is *aion* and means 'age', not this planet on which we live. What the disciples really asked was, "What shall be the sign of thy **presence** and of the end of the **age**?"—Matt. 24:3

Why did the disciples ask what sign, or signs, would accompany the Master's second visit to earth? It was because only through the signs which accompanied his first visit and ministry had they been convinced he was truly the Messiah. There was no way of knowing what the Messiah would look like; so the disciples, even as did John the Baptist, had to rely on

signs. But now Jesus was going away, and there was mystery attached to his going. On one occasion he said to the Jews, "Whither I go, ye cannot come." (John 8:21) Vaguely his disciples may have realized that he was to be taken away from them through death. He had given them clear indications of this, explaining, "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world," and, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John 6:51; 3:14; 12:32) To them, however, Jesus was the Messiah and king of Israel, and how could he exercise these offices of glory unless he remained alive? To them it was unthinkable that his enemies would be victorious and put him to death. So they were puzzled.

But despite the things concerning him which they did not understand at that time, there were other points which they did realize. He had just given a clear indication that a time was coming when the nation of Israel would acclaim him as king, as the one who had come in the name of the LORD. To them this meant that he would indeed be away from them for awhile; so they wanted to be sure that when he returned they would know of his presence, even as they had been so highly favored to know of his first presence—a presence which had been revealed by signs. So they asked, "What shall be the sign of thy presence, and of the end of the age?"

A few days after the disciples asked Jesus these questions, he stood before Pilate accused by his fellow Israelites of aspiring to be a king, which, if true and as Pilate would view the matter, would make him guilty of treason against the Roman Empire. Jesus acknowledged that he was destined to be a king: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world," he affirmed. He explained, however, that his kingdom was not of this world, or order (Greek, *kosmos*). (John 18:36,37) In other words, when the time would come for him to commence his reign it would presage the beginning of a new order, or age; so the disciples were quite right in associating the Master's return with the end of this present age. In reality, signs which would

indicate the ending of one age preparatory to the beginning of another would also denote the presence of Christ; for, as we shall see from the Scriptures, it is his return which will bring the age of Satan's rule to an end.

Beginning with Pentecost, and as a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit of truth at that time, the true followers of the Master have understood more clearly what was involved in his going away and are therefore prepared to understand better the manner of his return and the characteristics of his second presence. In a previous study we learned that Jesus died to redeem the world from death and that in the resurrection he was not restored to life as a man, but as a glorious spirit being of the highest order—even that of the divine nature.

Concerning God we read that he is "invisible." Here, then, is a most important reason why we must depend upon signs to indicate the second presence of Christ. It is because, now, being like the Heavenly Father in nature, and no longer a man, he is invisible to human eyes. It is then, an invisible king whose presence in the world to establish a kingdom is revealed by signs. In Jesus' answer to the disciples' question as to what would constitute the evidence of his presence, the Master not only told them what the signs would be but also emphasized the necessity of watching faithfully for those signs so they might know of his return. He explained that the time of his presence would be as a "thief"; hence, while present, he would be unknown to all except the faithful watchers who detected the signs and were able to read them correctly.—Matt. 24:43; Rev. 3:3

When the disciples asked concerning the evidence of the Lord's return, they used the Greek word *semeion*, which is the singular form of the word, and is properly translated by our word 'sign', also in the singular. However, when Jesus answered their question, he made it plain that there would be more than one sign. For example, Luke quotes part of Jesus' reply, saying, "There shall be signs [plural] in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear,

and for looking after those things coming upon the earth: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."—Luke 21:25, 26

In addition to these signs, Jesus mentions others; but for our present study we will confine ourselves to this list, as we believe that it is quite sufficient—when we note the marvelous manner in which they are being fulfilled—to establish the fact that we are even now living in the days of the presence of the Son of man, earth's future king. While Luke quotes Jesus as mentioning signs which would appear in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, Matthew's account of this same statement refers to it simply as a sign that would appear in heaven. The thought is the same, however, for the sun, moon, and stars constitute what we speak of as the heavens.

Matthew's account tells us that when the sign of the Son of man appears in heaven, "all the tribes of the earth mourn," while Luke's report states that, accompanying the signs in the sun and the moon and the stars, there would be "upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity," and that there would be a roaring of the sea and of the waves. Luke explains that the distress of nations with perplexity is due to the fact that the powers of heaven are shaken. The sign in the heavens, therefore, is the fact that their powers over the affairs of the earth are shaken, causing worldwide distress and an almost universal fear of still greater tragedies to come.

What, then, is meant by the statement that "the powers of heaven shall be shaken"? The Apostle Peter was one who heard this great prophecy of the present time directly from the lips of the Master, and later he wrote an epistle concerning the time of the Lord's presence and indicated that one of the evidences thereof would be the fact that "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." (II Pet. 3:10) For, what Jesus described as a shaking of the powers of heaven, Peter explained as a passing away of the heavens, their elements melting with fervent heat. And what Jesus referred to as "distress of nations with perplexity," with the "sea and the

waves roaring," Peter identified as "the earth also and the works that are therein" being burned up.

All of this is, of course, symbolic language—the literal earth "abideth forever." (Eccles. 1:4) It is well to note in this connection that Peter speaks of heavens and an earth that passed away at the time of the Flood; but the literal sun, moon, and stars, and the literal earth remained as they were. The apostle spoke of the heavens and earth which were before the Flood as making up the "world that was." (II Pet. 3:5,6) The Greek word here translated 'world' is *kosmos*, meaning 'order', or 'arrangement'. It was the order of things, the civilization, that existed before the Flood, that came to an end as a result of the Deluge; hence, by following through with this prophetic analogy, we learn that it is the present social order, the present civilization, that comes to an end as a result of Christ's return and presence as the prospective king of the new world of tomorrow.

What, then, is symbolized by the heavens and the earth which pass away at the presence of the Lord? There are scriptures which give us a clue to the proper answer to this question. For example, Jesus, in speaking of some of the elements of the symbolic earth, said that there would be a roaring of the "sea and the waves." Turning to Isaiah 17:12, 13, we read: "Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters."

Comparing this with Jesus' statement concerning the "distress of nations with perplexity," it becomes obvious that his reference to the roaring of the sea and the waves was his way of illustrating the international distress which would result from the presence of the Lord. This language, translated into present-day usage and experience, is graphically descriptive of the international chaos which has been continuously and relentlessly on the increase in this our day. It is a time of acute distress and perplexity; and in the Greek text the word that is translated 'perplexity' really means 'no way out'. And how true it is that the

nations can find no way out of this distress! Every hoped-for remedy, when attempted, results in failure, while the distress continues and increases.

It seems evident, then, that the earth, with its various elements, symbolizes the civil governments and other arrangements under which the peoples of the world have lived in a more or less orderly manner throughout the centuries. Now order is giving way to disorder. Old standards of law and order are giving way to the anarchistic theory that one person has as much prerogative as another to determine what is right and what is wrong. Hence, adding to other phases of worldwide distress is the rapid spread of moral anarchy. How aptly, indeed, does the restlessness of the sea illustrate this breaking down of a world order! The Prophet David, using the same symbolism and referring to the kingdoms of the world as "mountains," tells us that though the mountains "be carried into the midst of the sea," we should not fear.—Ps. 46:2,3

What, then, are the heavens which, up to the due time for the presence of the Lord, exercised power or control over the symbolic earth? A very definite factor in holding together the civilization which we now see falling apart has been the power of religious restraint. This has been true in practically every part of the earth, in heathendom as well as in Christendom. The restraining views and methods have varied in different lands, depending upon the alleged characteristics of the particular god or gods whose laws were made binding upon the people; but practically everywhere, and for centuries, the governments of the earth have controlled the people by making them believe that the laws which they bound upon them had been ordained by a deity or deities whose authority was supreme and whose ability to punish lawbreakers was unlimited.

Now, however, this element of world order is rapidly losing its power to control the people; and one of the great fears of society's doctors, who are trying to keep a dying world alive, is that the onrushing forces of atheism, implemented as they are by powerful anti-religious governments, will completely destroy religious influence in the affairs of men.

This, we believe, is what the Master referred to as the shaking of the powers of the heavens. We know that the literal heavens exercise a tremendous power over the literal earth; hence the symbolism in which ecclesiastical authority over the nations is seen as the heavens is a very apt one indeed. Through the prophet the LORD said, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways." (Isa. 55:9) Here is the thought behind the symbolism of the heavens—they are higher than the earth, and men have been caused to believe that the edicts of the religious institutions of the earth have been above the ways of men, and hence should be obeyed as coming from God.

It is true that God's ways are higher than ours and also that they are true and righteous altogether. But we should remember that a false god is the prince of this world, or, as Paul describes him, the "god of this world." (John 12:31; II Cor. 4:4) This is Satan, the Devil, the archenemy of God and man, and the deceiver of all nations. (Rev. 20:1-3) This unseen "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2) has ruled the world to a large extent through the false religious systems of the earth.

This does not imply that there was nothing good in the laws sanctioned and upheld by the unholy alliance of church and state, for in some respects those laws were taken from the Scriptures. Murder on the part of individuals was prohibited, although legalized murder, called war, was glorified. Theft was forbidden, although in the name of the LORD the people were robbed in many ways by both the civil and religious authorities which held them in virtual slavery. The divine institution of family and home was upheld, and in some other respects the laws of the true God were copied. Good or bad—and partly both—the restraining influences of these higher powers, which reached the people by means of the civil authorities of the day, held civilization together.

It was far from an ideal world, but a semblance of order was maintained, even though largely because of the ignorance and superstition of the people. The people were made to believe that any inclination to disobey the powers that be would lead to

dire consequences—if not in this life, then surely after death. The fear of eternal torture was held over them as a whip to keep them in slavery to a system under which princes grew fat in luxury, and priests grew rich in their exploitation of the people by promising them a quick passage through an imaginary purgatory. It mattered not to the rulers if their subjects were ignorant paupers, so long as they obeyed their dictates without question and kept the peace.

Is it a dark picture which we have drawn? Well, it happened in the Dark Ages—a period which was made dark by the misrule of a counterfeit kingdom of Christ. But it was not to last forever! The light that foretells the approach of a new day gradually began to dawn. Napoleon, whatever his sins may have been, struck a deathblow to the system that ruled the world during the Dark Ages. The discovery of America and the growth of American democracy also helped to break the shackles which had bound Europe. The rapid increase of knowledge along all lines which resulted from the invention of movable type was another contributing factor leading toward liberty.

But, while the almost universal control of the old world by the power which was seated in Rome was broken, the ideology of that system was adopted independently by most of the rulers of Europe. They made state churches out of many of the Protestant systems, uniting with them as they had done formerly with Catholicism. So the powers of the heavens, though now divided, still ruled, still held the people under restraint. (Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:26) This situation continued without much outward change until the beginning of World War I, in 1914.

With the outbreak of the war, forces came into play which began drastically to shake the powers of the heavens—ecclesiastical control—and the aftereffects were not at all what the nations expected. The intermingling of thoughts and viewpoints which was bound to occur when young and thinking men of all parts of the world were brought together—sometimes in the trenches, sometimes in prison camps, and in other ways—had an effect. Doubts were raised in the minds of many as

to whether their side alone had been fighting for the LORD. That the objectives of the war on both sides were not attained caused a further disillusionment, as through the trying years which followed, that stark fact became more and more apparent.

With disillusionment came a worldwide turning to pleasure, legitimate and otherwise. But even more significant, the people of the world, on the whole, not only forgot God, but became unbelievers. The extent to which this is true is now apparent by the fact that in the two most religious countries of the world, the United States and Great Britain, not more than one in ten ever steps inside a church.

But this is not all. Out of that World War came the birth of the first communist government in Russia. From the very start, one of the characteristics of that government was its opposition to religion. And now this atheistic government, seizing the opportunity presented by a weakened world, is expanding its influence beyond Russian territory. A large part of Germany is still subjected to this government-sponsored ideology of unbelief. The shadow is cast over Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and is threatening the Orient and other nations. Meanwhile, the people in the remaining countries of the earth are more open to the growing influence of ideologies which officially reject the thought of being subject to laws which are alleged to have come from a higher power.

It is this situation the world over that is contributing to the fear of those who wish to restore the status quo of pre-1914. The time was when a word from the Vatican would have restored at least an outward semblance of order in Europe. But the powers of the heavens are being shaken, and more and more their ability to hold the old order together is weakening.

This, then, is the sign that is appearing in the symbolic heavens, the sign of the presence of Christ, the prospective king of earth. On one occasion Jesus raised the question as to whether he would find faith on the earth when he came, and now we can see that this question was well justified. (Luke 18:8) And, as Jesus foretold, the people of the nations are mourning, some

because of the distress that has come to them through the universal threat of nuclear war and extinction. Others because they see that the civilization which gave them prosperity and power over their fellows is falling apart.

A very realistic description of this is given us in Revelation, chapter eighteen. The opening verse of this chapter depicts the return of our Lord. John describes him as "a mighty angel," whose power caused the earth to be filled with his glory. First he pronounces doom upon the counterfeit of his kingdom, and bids those loyal to him to separate themselves therefrom, that they be not partakers of the plagues which destroy it. This message has already gone out and many have responded. Now the work of destruction is well advanced, and we can see the beginning of the foretold mourning of those who prospered so greatly under this system.

John writes that the supporters of this system will say: "Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple and scarlet, and decked in gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour [the hour of her judgment] so great riches is come to nought."—Rev. 18:9,10,16,17

The Scriptures are not limited to the use of only one symbolism to illustrate great truths of the divine plan. We have seen how fitting is the lesson of the powers of the heavens being shaken as one of the signs which betoken the second presence of the Lord. We have seen also that in full harmony with this is the Revelator's description of the waning powers of the ecclesiastical heavens, when he tells of the fall and destruction of mystic Babylon. But it is interesting in this connection to note that in the vision of this destruction John sees it "utterly burned with fire."—Rev. 18:8

So it is that fire, as well as shaking, is one of the symbols used to portray the overthrow of various elements of "this present evil world." (Gal. 1:4) For this reason fire is associated with the manifestation of the presence of Christ; that is, he is revealed by fire as well as by the shaking of the heavens. On this point, the Apostle Paul, writing to the Thessalonian church, says, "To you who are troubled rest with

us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."—II Thess. 1:7,8

The mighty angels which are to be revealed with Jesus are undoubtedly the members of his glorified church. The word angel means 'messenger', and these will be messengers with him to dispense the blessings of the new kingdom. But first every vestige of Satan's empire must be destroyed, and all opposition to the laws of God's new world broken. The gathering to himself of those who will reign with him is part of the work of Christ in the first years of his second presence. This is fully accomplished before the old order is completely destroyed; hence Paul's reference to the flaming fire which reveals the presence of Christ when his church is with him, is a sign which is still future. It is closely associated with the fire which destroys mystic Babylon. We can even now see the beginning of the smoldering flame; but Babylon still lives, although dying. Christians who are faithful to their Lord shall be with him before the final phase of her destruction is accomplished.

Now let us observe that it is by both the shaking of the heavens and the flaming fire that the presence of Christ is revealed. Matthew's account of the Lord's prophecy on this point says that when the sign of the Son of man appears in heaven—that is, the shaking of the powers of the heavens, rendering them incapable of adequately controlling the restless masses as they had once done—then all the tribes of the earth would mourn. Following this, "they" see the Son of man coming in the heavens. The text indicates that the mourning of the people commences before they see the real cause of their distress; but to the Lord's own people, the faithful watchers, both the shaking of the symbolic heavens and the distress of the nations in the greatest time of trouble the world has ever known are signs of his presence and of the end of the age. It is important thus to distinguish between our reading of the signs, and the more complete development of them by which the eyes of all

mankind will be opened to discern that it is the return of Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, in preparing to establish his kingdom, that has brought about the destruction of the old order which men call civilization.—Rev. 19:16

In this connection it is well to understand the manner in which the people of all nations will "see" the Lord. We have already noted the scriptures which emphasize that the resurrected Christ, as a personality, cannot be seen literally by human eyes, that both he and the Heavenly Father "dwell in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see." (I Tim. 6:16) But just as the heavens in which the sign of the Son of man appears are symbolic, so also is the sight with which his presence is discerned. The use of the eye as a symbol of discernment is quite common in the Scriptures. Speaking of the ability of his disciples to comprehend certain truths concerning the divine plan which were hidden to others, Jesus said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear."—Matt. 13:16

Later the Apostle Paul, describing the knowledge of the Early Church concerning the first presence of Jesus, when he came as a man to redeem men, said, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb. 2:9) The Prophet Isaiah, writing of Christ and describing him as the "Arm of the LORD," informs us that the Arm of the LORD will be revealed "in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." (Isa. 52:20; 53:1) Job, expressing his confidence in the Creator, said, "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God"—but the Scriptures tell us that actually no man can see God, in a literal sense, and live.—Job 19:26; Exod. 33:20

These are but samples of the many passages of Scripture in which the words see and sight, as well as the eye itself, are used to symbolize discernment. And it is in this sense that every eye will eventually see Jesus in the clouds of heaven.

It means that they will discern the fact of his presence by virtue of the sign in the heavens; that is, that the former powers of ecclesiastical control over the masses have been broken.

But even so, it is well to remember that in our study of the development of the plan of God we are not dealing with minutes or hours or days, but with years and ages. What requires but a few words of Scripture to describe, and a few seconds to read, may, and usually does, refer to that which takes years in development. So it is with the sign of the Son of man which appears in the symbolic heavens. It has already appeared, and, as watchers, we discern it and understand its meaning. The world sees also, and fear fills their hearts because of it; but as yet they do not discern its real meaning; they do not see that it means the presence of a new king of earth, a new spiritual ruling power, the foretold of the new heavens which, in association with a new symbolic earth, will be the new world of tomorrow.

Later, as the sequence of world-changing events continues to emphasize to the people the utter futility of all human efforts to bring order out of chaos, and peace and prosperity out of war and starvation, in the LORD'S own way they will be made to realize the true meaning of what is occurring—that Jesus has come, and as the Arm of Jehovah his first work is to set aside the old order of things which is based upon selfishness, that the people might the more fully realize their need of Christ's coming kingdom. (Ps. 110:1-6) Then they will realize that what they first thought to be a dire calamity concerning which they said, "Alas, alas," was but evidence that the king of a new world order had come and was preparing to establish his righteous kingdom in the earth. □

"Every valley shall be exalted,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low;
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough places plain:
and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed."
—Isaiah 40:4,5

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International Bible Study Lessons

LESSON FOR MARCH 1

Entry into Jerusalem

KEY VERSE: "Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the LORD: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."—*Luke 19:38*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE; *Luke 19:28-44*

THE particular events recorded in this lesson are the Master's presentation of himself as king—riding into Jerusalem upon an ass; and his subsequent visit to the Temple where he performed miracles of healing and exercised his authority to rid the house of God from the blight of commercialism and extortion. The Master knew in advance that it was not then the due time for the establishment of his kingdom, nor for the general work of restoration foretold by the prophets; but he knew also that it was essential that the people of Israel be given an opportunity to accept their Messiah and to enjoy the blessings which are to come to mankind through him.

When Jesus began his ministry, his spirit of consecration to God called for the doing of all that had been written of him in the Old Testament Scriptures—the "volume of the Book." (Ps. 40:7; Heb. 10:7) Faithfulness to his con-

secration vows characterized every move he made. It was his desire to be guided by that which had been written aforetime which led to his riding into Jerusalem as king of Israel. The Prophet Zechariah had written, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."—*Zech. 9:9*

It was in keeping with this prophecy that Jesus arranged his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. For the moment he was acclaimed king by what the Scriptures describe as a "multitude." It was not, however, an official recognition of his kingship by those who "sat in Moses' seat." (Matt. 23:2) It was, rather, an outburst of popular sentiment on the part of the people who had been benefited by his ministry and who knew of his genuine interest in their welfare.

Some of the Pharisees who were in the crowd chided Jesus and demanded that he rebuke his disciples for this show of support, which to them was nothing short of treason against the rulers of Israel.

But Jesus, knowing this had to be accomplished as prophesied, replied that "if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." This of course would take a miracle, but in essence our Lord was saying that God's Word will not fail of fulfillment even if it requires a miracle to bring it to pass.

It was an impressive demonstration that was made by the people as the Master rode through the gates of the city. "All the city was moved," we are told, and the people inquired, "Who is this?" The demonstration was on a sufficiently large enough scale to attract the attention of the city, but apparently the general public did not know what it was about, or who was involved. In answer to their question they were told, "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

Following his entry into the city, Jesus went to the temple. There he taught, healed the sick and drove out the money changers. These activities, like his kingly presentation to Israel, foreshadowed the worldwide services he will ren-

der to Israel and all mankind as "King of kings and Lord of lords." (Rev. 19:16; 17:14) Jesus is to be priest as well as king—a religious as well as a civil ruler. This double role of priest and king was typified by Melchisedec, who was a priest enthroned as king.—Gen. 14:18-20; Heb. 7:1

While it was the Father's will for Jesus thus to foreshadow the glorious works of his coming kingdom, it was not then due time for the actual functioning of his kingdom to begin. The work of redemption had to be accomplished first. Jesus had to become the Redeemer of the human race before he could be its king. By death he had to abolish the sentence of death which stood in the way of man's restoration to life. And Jesus was to have associate kings and priests. These had to be called from the world and given an opportunity to prove their worthiness of living and reigning with him.—Rev. 20:4

So those who then acclaimed Jesus king were doubtless greatly disappointed when five days later he was crucified. In reality the Master's death was the greatest of all the services he rendered at his first advent. Without that service, everything else he did would count for very little—nothing, in fact, so far as the salvation of the world is concerned. □

Teaching in the Temple

KEY VERSE: *"The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner."*—Luke 20:17

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Luke 19:47,48*

IT IS written of Jesus that he "came unto his own, and his own received him not." (John 1:11) This was the immediate cause of the persecution which brought about his cruel and early death. His "own" was the nation of Israel, and while many of the common people of the nation rejoiced in his message, and a few days before his crucifixion enthusiastically acclaimed him king, it was not so with the religious rulers. They enviously hated the Master, and finally succeeded in bringing about his arrest and crucifixion.

Jesus was fully aware that the scribes and Pharisees hated him, and on an occasion near the close of his ministry he related a parable to them which fitted the circumstances so accurately that even they sensed the meaning of it, yet their anger was increased and they became more determined than ever to kill him. The parable was of a householder who planted a vineyard, and then left it in the care of husbandmen while he went into

"far country." When the time came for gathering fruit, the householder sent his servants to the vineyard, but the husbandmen whom he left in charge slew some of them and maltreated the others. Finally, the householder sent his own son, thinking the husbandmen would respect him, but they did not. They slew him also.—Matt. 21:33-46

Jehovah was the "householder" in this parable, and the "vineyard" was the Jewish nation. The husbandmen were the religious rulers of the nation, and the "servants" who were first sent to represent the householder were the prophets. The record is that they killed the prophets, and stoned them who were sent by God. And now they were planning to kill the Son whom the Heavenly Father had sent. After relating this parable, the application of which was so obvious, Jesus quoted the prophecy recorded in our text concerning the stone which the builders rejected.

Jesus himself was that stone. The builders—the religious rulers of Israel—rejected him. Isaiah foretold one of the reasons, saying, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." (Isa. 53:2) Actually, of course, Jesus was perfect, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26) He was kind and sympathetic, and went about doing good. He healed the sick and raised the dead. He encouraged the fainthearted, and extended mercy to sinners. He condemned the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like the publican, and commended the publican because he recognized his sin and humbly asked God for forgiveness.

But these were not the qualities the scribes and Pharisees were looking for in one whom they would accept as Messiah and king. They wanted a Messiah who would not expose their evil practices as Jesus did, one whom they could control as a sort of puppet king; well qualified as a general to raise and command a conquering army, but satisfied to let them rule and exploit the people as they chose. So, from their standpoint, Jesus had no beauty that they should desire him.

To the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus was a misfit, so the builders,

not understanding the kind of building the LORD was erecting, rejected Jesus; they could find no place for him in their own plans, and the LORD'S plan they did not know.

When Jesus let it be known to the Pharisees and scribes that the stone they were rejecting was to become the head of the corner, he added, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21:43) The Apostle Peter, in I Peter 2:4-10, refers to the stone and to the new building which began to be erected with Jesus; he also tells us about the nation to which Jesus said the kingdom, taken from Israel, would be given. "Ye" are that "holy nation," he wrote.

The nation of Israel could have been God's royal or kingdom nation. The promises were originally made to this nation. But because they rejected the prophets, and finally killed the Son, the kingdom was taken away from them, and, starting with Jesus, God began to bring a new nation into being. Many are the promises, particularly in the New Testament, which refer to those who become a part of this new and spiritual nation. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him."—I Tim.2:12 □

Sharing His Sufferings

KEY VERSE: *"This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. . . . This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you."*—Luke 22:19,20

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Luke 22:1,2, 7-23*

THE good works of the Master were not occasional incidents, but his life's habit. He was never too occupied to give heed to the needs of those who came to him for help. Not only did he use the miracle-working power of God which was at his command to heal the sick and raise the dead, but he gave of his own strength as well.

In a general way, Jesus' ministry was on behalf of all Israel. In this respect he considered it a privilege to do good unto all, as later suggested by the Apostle Paul. (Gal. 6:10) However, he was particularly interested in his immediate disciples. These were being prepared to carry forward the work of the Gospel Age after the Master returned to heaven, and part of their training was in the observance of his life of unselfishness in giving his attention and energy so unstintingly on behalf of others.

Jesus said to his disciples, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." (John 14:12) Those who are filled with the Master's spirit of self-sacrifice and are faithful in following him into death by laying down their lives for others will, in the kingdom, share with him in the work of healing all the sick and raising all the dead. The healing of the sick in that day will be permanent, and those who are awakened from the sleep of death shall have the opportunity of living forever if they will be obedient to God's laws. Thus all the true followers of Jesus will truly share with him in doing works far greater than those which he performed at his first advent.

But even now, and in order that we may demonstrate the spirit by which we are controlled, God gives us the opportunity, as min-

isters of the Word, to do all we can toward the opening of spiritually blind eyes and unstopping spiritually deaf ears. We also now have use of the Word of reconciliation to cleanse away the leprosy of sin. Those dead in trespasses and sins may even now, by accepting the Gospel message as proclaimed by the last members of the body of Christ, be awakened to righteousness, and have their mortal bodies quickened by the Spirit to serve the living God.

And now, even as in the days of Jesus, those who zealously lay down their lives in thus seeking to bless their fellow men will not be held in high esteem by the people of our time. But it is far better that the servant of God have the reproaches of the world heaped upon him because of doing good, than to have to confess that, having been called out of darkness into the glorious light of the Gospel of Christ, he had done nothing about it, so far as proclaiming the message to others was concerned.

It would also be tragic for a Christian, in order to avoid the ill will of the world, to refrain from faithfulness in proclaiming the glad tidings of the kingdom. There is no other proper course for followers of the Master to take than to emulate his example of faithfulness. Jesus

was consumed by the zeal of his Father's house, a zeal for doing good, for manifesting the same spirit of divine love which had prompted the Father to send him into the world, that the world through him might have life. For us not to be governed by this viewpoint would manifest a lack of the Holy Spirit, that divine energy by which the faithful followers of the Master are conformed more and more into his image.

The Apostle Peter, through his association with the Master, observing the unselfishness of his life of sacrifice, and the wisdom of his methods, learned well the lesson of love which leads to the laying down of life for others. Peter expressed himself on the subject, saying, "What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, yet take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."—I Pet. 2:20-22

The importance of sharing in his sufferings was highlighted by Jesus when he instituted the symbols of the memorial.

Thy Will Be Done

KEY VERSE: *"Father if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."*—Luke 22:42

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Luke 22:39-53*

AS the evening hours of Jesus' last earthly day began to pass away, his thoughts no doubt began to center upon the circumstances that would surround his death. He knew that he had lived a righteous and upright life in the sight of God and all men. Yet he knew also according to the Scriptures that he must die and that this death would be brought about by crucifixion. In order for him to be thus condemned by any tribunal, whether Jewish or Roman, his enemies would have to misrepresent his character and his teachings. Somehow they would have to make it appear that he was the vilest of criminals and a blasphemer of the true God.

Crucifixion was considered such a horrible and humiliating form of death it was reserved for the very lowest class of criminals. The pains of death were protracted for an especially long period by this method, sometimes lasting for days. The English word excruciating literally means 'from the

cross'. Death was finally brought on by the utter exhaustion, hunger, and thirst of the victim, and sometimes was accelerated by the breaking of his legs.

For Jesus, such a death by crucifixion would carry with it, in the minds of many, a double significance: first, it would imply that he was a criminal in the sight of his fellow men—those whom he loved so dearly, to whom he had ministered so unselfishly, and for whom he was actually laying down his life. Secondly, it would also carry with it the thought that he was accursed of God, being punished as a blasphemer and one who had dishonored the name of Jehovah. This was to be his lot, Jesus could see, even though he had endeavored throughout his entire ministry to magnify and honor the name of his Father in all that he said and did. What a fate for one who had come to earth for the very purpose of demonstrating God's love, of glorifying his name, and

of providing redemption and salvation for the human race! No wonder Jesus was overcome with anguish and grief as he contemplated the scene that lay just ahead.

Did this indicate weakness on Jesus' part, or a lack of courage? No! Looking back upon his ministry, we see how thoroughly Jesus was dedicated to the accomplishment of the Father's purpose and the tremendous determination and will power that marked his efforts. Time and again he had shown no fear of the authorities as he taught the people, and on many occasions had found it necessary to speak out openly against them. However we interpret Jesus' request to have the cup removed, surely, then, it could not contain any element of weakness or lack of courage.

Our Lord's reaction to Gethsemane's cup was that of one possessed of perfect virtue and of an infinite capacity for love and justice. These would combine to make him keenly aware of the shame that death by crucifixion would heap upon him and of the unjust nature of the accusations. Possessed as he was also of such perfect sensibilities and tender feelings, he would be especially susceptible to the cruel pain and physical suffering of the cross. But above all else was the thought that he was

to be slain as a blasphemer and opponent of God—the one whom he loved so supremely and whose character he had revealed. This seemed almost too much for the Master to bear.

It was this shame and ignominy which attached to death by crucifixion and the wholly unjust suggestion that he was cursed of God, that we consider the primary aspect of Gethsemane's cup. In his petition to the Father, Jesus was merely requesting that, if it were possible, his impending death be brought about in some other way than to bring such disgrace upon one who had been so faithful in revealing the Father and leading men to him. Let us not fail to take note that in this request, as fervently as the desire was expressed by the Master, it was accompanied by the qualifying words, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."

In Matthew's account of this experience we note two further prayers, which express how full submission to the Father's will became dominant: "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." (vss. 42, 44) Yes, at the end, Jesus was fully resolved to accept the Father's will, to which he then obediently submitted. □

On Trial?

KEY VERSE: *"The elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? Tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe."*—Luke 22:66,67

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Luke 22:54-71*

JESUS knew this question was asked in derision and an answer would only bring mockery. Apparently his claim to Messiahship merely, in Jewish thinking, would not have involved any major crime against the Mosaic Law, Jewish theology, or even the civil authorities, so Jesus led them into a line of questioning that would give them better grounds for bringing charges against him. He replied, "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God."—vs. 69

Upon hearing this statement, his enemies were greatly aroused and pointedly asked him, "Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am." These words in the estimation of the priests and scribes constituted a statement of blasphemy, and became the false charge upon which they based their demand for Jesus' execution.

Paul speaks of the great contradiction of sinners against Jesus, and these contradictions can be seen in connection with the fact of his being the Son of God. (Heb. 12:3) This issue arose in Jesus' life at the very beginning of his ministry. At the time of his consecration and baptism his Heavenly Father assured him of his sonship—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. 3:17

But this blessed reality was not to go unchallenged. Forty days later, as Jesus came out of the wilderness following his long fast, he was tempted by Satan, who began his campaign of contradiction by raising the question of the Master's sonship—"If thou be the Son of God." This was suggesting to Jesus that it would be well for him to establish his claim of sonship. There was subtlety in this, for Satan doubtless knew that according to the Jewish viewpoint such a

claim was considered to be blasphemy, and blasphemy was punishable by death.

Jesus knew this viewpoint of the Jews as well as Satan did, but he also was assured of his sonship, and would not tempt his Father by seeking additional proof. Besides, he knew that the principal feature of his ministry was to die for the sin of the world. Why should he then deny the great truth of his relationship to God in order to safeguard his life? Jesus resisted the tempter, but the campaign of contradiction was continued, and it comes to be very closely associated in our minds with the commemoration of his death. When he was brought before Israel's high priest the religious rulers of the nation evidently planned to trap Jesus on the point of his claim to being the Son of God.

One of the methods by which the Heavenly Father furnishes strength to those who are faithful to him is by preparing them in advance for the trials which he knows they will experience. It was so with Jesus, and particularly in connection with this matter of his sonship. It was only a short time before this that the Heavenly Father had reassured him concerning it. This was on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was there the

voice from heaven had said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matt. 17:5) Undoubtedly Jesus heard these words as well as the disciples; and being such a short time prior to his appearance before the high priest, they would be very vividly remembered, hence when he was asked, "Art thou then the Son of God?" the Master was able with great fortitude to answer, "Thou hast said!"—Matt. 26:64

It required both faith and courage to reply in this direct, truthful manner. It required faith in the assuring words of the Heavenly Father, and courage to face the certainty of the death sentence which would be imposed on the strength of this confession of "guilt." But Jesus passed the test, and became an example for us. We may never be called upon to give a testimony concerning the truth which will directly result in a death sentence. Nevertheless, in ways less dramatic there are issues which arise almost daily to test the sincerity of our consecration and that give us an opportunity to answer either in a way to avoid or to accept the privilege of sacrifice. The deciding factor in meeting every situation should be, What is the will of God? And such is not always the most pleasant for the flesh. □

Christian Life and Doctrine

TIMES AND SIGNS—PART 9

The Rise and Fall of the Antichrist—Part III

“Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.”—II Thessalonians 2:8

IN ORDER to understand clearly, prophetically, and historically, what is involved in the rise and fall of the Antichrist, it is essential to recognize that it is not an individual. It is, rather, the union of church and state which was established in the old Roman world, resulting in the transformation of pagan Rome into papal Rome.

The growth and acceptance of this system was not sudden, but gradual, covering a period of centuries. Were we left with only the records of the historians from which to decide upon an exact date for the establishment of the Antichrist, we would find it difficult. But in this the prophecies come to our aid. As we learned in our previous study, the length of time prophetically assigned to this system is 1,260 years. We have also learned that it was Napoleon who, in 1799, dealt the shattering blow to the once undisputed power and authority of church-state unionism as it has been represented in papal Rome.

So, by using the measuring rod of 1,260 years, and

counting backward from 1799, we come to the year A.D. 539, as the date when, prophetically, the Antichrist began to reign. It is important that we recognize this as a prophetic date, for in the examination of other prophecies we will find this is a starting point for still other time measurements in the plan of God. Otherwise the exact date when the mystery of iniquity began to reign would be of less consequence.

However, since the Bible points to the year A.D. 539, a glance at history reveals that an important development in the rise of papacy did occur there. In the disputes between the Eastern and Western Empires, the church occupied more and more of a commanding position. Concerning the conquering of Italy in A.D. 539 by Justinian I, a Roman Catholic writer states:

“Under these circumstances it happened that the emperors . . . lost all actual power, and remained only in name the masters of the government. while the popes, in virtue of the needs of the moment, came practically in possession of that supremacy over the Roman domain. . . . In this legitimate way, the temporal power and sovereignty of the pope was, by divine providence, gradually established.”—**The History of the Catholic Church**, Vol. 1, pp. 250,251

While it was thus in A.D. 539 that the church-state rule had its small beginning, it was not until A.D. 800 that this system was exalted to undisputed power and officially designated the Holy Roman Empire. The pope, who crowned Charlemagne, was then recognized as himself ‘king of kings, emperor of emperors’, ‘another god on earth’. The 1,000 years from then until Napoleon defied the pope and shattered his civil power, is claimed to this day as the papal millennium—the thousand years of messianic

kingdom glory foretold in the Bible. This false claim helps to establish the identity of the Antichrist.

Gradual Fall of Antichrist

In II Thessalonians 2:7, the Apostle Paul, writing concerning his own day, said, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." He did not mean by this that the Antichrist was already in existence and exercising control in the affairs of men. But Paul, with the discernment given him through the Holy Spirit, could recognize the selfish ambitions of many of the professed believers in the Early Church which would, when favorable circumstances arose, lead to its development. —II Thess. 2:3, 4

Just as the inception and development of this church-state power was obscure and gradual, so is its deterioration and fall. However, and as we have seen, there were certain definite advance steps of progress in its rise; and this is true also in its fall. The Protestant movement, beginning particularly with Luther, had its weakening effect upon papacy; although the early reformers did little to destroy in the minds of the people the error of church-state unionism. In fact, the denominations started by these reformers usually joined hands with the governments in the countries of their origin.

The most significant turning point toward the downfall of the Antichrist was the taking away of its temporal power by Napoleon. It is this that is referred to in Daniel 7:26, which reads, "The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." Notice in this prophecy three developments are foretold. First, the 'dominion' is taken away; secondly, it is 'consumed'; and thirdly, it is 'destroyed' "unto the end." Here is a sequence of events which blend into one another in their work of destruction unto the end, until that system is completely and forever destroyed.

It is probable that the Apostle Paul had this very prophecy in mind when, in our text, he describes Antichrist's destruction. He wrote, "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming." Paul enlarges upon Daniel's prophecy, explaining the manner in which the consuming and destruction will be accomplished. It will be consumed, he says, by the spirit of his mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of his coming.

There is a slight variation in the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words translated 'consume' and 'destroy' in these prophecies of Daniel and Paul, but basically they describe the same sequence in the fall and ultimate destruction. The Hebrew word translated 'consume' in Daniel's prophecy literally means 'to desolate'. The Greek word rendered 'consume' in Paul's prophecy means 'to use up'. The word destroy in Daniel's prophecy is the translation of a Hebrew word meaning 'to perish', while Paul used a Greek word to describe this complete destruction of papacy which means 'to render utterly idle or useless'. Thus we are presented with the thought of a gradual process of destruction, culminating, of course, in an ultimate and complete downfall. This period of consuming and final destruction is presented in the prophecies as beginning at the time dominion is taken away; that is, A.D. 1799. It is from then onward, in particular, that we are to look for the consuming phase of destruction.

Paul wrote that this wicked system would be consumed by the Spirit of the Lord's mouth. This seems clearly to be a symbolic reference to the Word of God, the Bible, and the result its truths would have. One of the desolating works of papacy during the height of its power was to prevent the general use of the Word of God. To possess and read the Bible was a crime calling for torture and death as a punishment. But with its dominion taken away it could no longer

(Continued on page 37)

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FLORIDA Cypress Gardens	WGTO 540	7:30 a.m.	Berwick	WBRX 1280	12:00 noon
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GEORGIA Vidalia	WVOP 970	1:00 p.m.	Pottstown	WPAZ 1370	12:45 p.m.
HAWAII Honolulu	KNDI 1270	11:45 a.m.	SOUTH CAROLINA Beaufort-Fri.	WVGB 1490	5:00 p.m.
ILLINOIS LaSalle	WLPO 1220	9:45 a.m.	Charleston	WOKE 1340	7:06 p.m.
Rockford	WXTA 1330	6:15 a.m.	Lancaster	WAGL 1560	9:00 a.m.
West Frankfort	WFRX 1300	9:15 a.m.	TEXAS Fort Worth	KFJZ 870	6:15 a.m.
INDIANA Hammond	WJOB 1230	8:30 a.m.	Pearsall	KVWG 1280	9:15 a.m.
LaPorte	WCOE-FM 96.7	10:00 a.m.	VIRGINIA Richmond	WGGM 1410	7:45 a.m.
KANSAS Goodland	KLOE 730	8:15 a.m.	WASHINGTON Clarkston	KCLK 1430	10:00 a.m.
KENTUCKY Bowling Green	WLBJ 1410	8:00 a.m.	Everett	KWYZ 1230	9:30 a.m.
Winchester	WHRS	10:30 a.m.	Spokane	KUDY 1280	9:45 a.m.
MARYLAND Baltimore	WCBM 68	6:45 a.m.	Tacoma	KAMT 1360	7:30 a.m.
MAINE Portland	WDCS-FM 106.3	9:45 a.m.	Yakima	KUTI 980	6:45 a.m.

WISCONSIN
Milwaukee WNOV 85.6 7:00 a.m.

WYOMING
Cheyenne KSHY 1370 10:15 a.m.
Sheridan KWYO 1410 12:00 noon

PUERTO RICO
Aguadilla WABA (Fri.) 8:00 p.m.

U.S. BROADCASTS-SPANISH

ARIZONA
Nogales KFBR

FLORIDA
Miami WRHC 8:30 a.m.

CANADIAN BROADCASTS

ALBERTA
Wetaskiwin CJOI-1440 7:45 a.m.
Lethbridge CJOC-1220 7:15 a.m.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Abbotsford CFVR-810 8:30 p.m.
Castlegar CKQR-760 8:45 a.m.
Duncan CKAY-1500 9:00 a.m.
Duncan CKAY-1500 7:30 p.m.
Grand Forks CKGF-1340 9:00 a.m.

LABRADOR
Churchill Falls CFLC-FM 97.9 7:15 a.m.

MANITOBA
Winnipeg CKJS-810 9:00 a.m.

NEWFOUNDLAND
Corner Brook CFCB 570 7:15 a.m.
Deer Lake CFDL-FM 97.9 7:15 a.m.
Goose Bay CFLN 1230 7:15 a.m.
Port au Choix CFNW 790 7:15 a.m.
Pt. aux Basques CFGN 1230 7:15 a.m.
St. Andrews CFCV-FM 97.7 7:15 a.m.
St. Anthony CFNN-FM 97.9 7:15 a.m.
Stephenville CFSX-910 7:15 a.m.
Wabush CFLW-1340 7:15 a.m.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
Yellowknife CJCD-1240 9:00 a.m.

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

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

SASKATCHEWAN
Prince Albert CKBI-900 7:30 a.m.
Weyburn-Estevan CFSL-1190 7:15 a.m.

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

OVERSEAS BROADCASTS

BRITISH ISLES
Radio Caroline-Tues. KHZ 962 8:45 p.m.

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

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

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

ITALY (Italian)
Europa Radio Milano 83.3-FM 11:30 a.m.
Euro Tele Radio Calabria-Fri. MHZ 102 5:30 p.m.
Radio Corleone Centrale FM-88-500 FM-92 11:00 a.m.

MEXICO (Spanish)
Mazatlan XEQC 8:30 a.m.

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

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

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

PHILIPPINES
Manila-Sat. DWXX 1026KH2 7:15 p.m.

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

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

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

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

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

The Bible Answers

Regular Television Broadcasts

We regret that we are unable to furnish the day and time of many of the broadcasts for the following stations. Where they are known, they have been given:

CALIFORNIA				MICHIGAN		
Chico (Sun.)	KMPN-5	8:30 p.m.		Ann Arbor (Sun.)	WIHT-31	12:00 noon
FLORIDA				MISSISSIPPI		
Miami	WKID			Jackson	WAPT	
Jacksonville	Channel 17			MISSOURI		
GEORGIA				Springfield	KOLR	
Albany (Sun.)	WTSG-31	9:30 a.m.		NEW MEXICO		
Atlanta	WATL			Roswell	KSWS	
ILLINOIS				NORTH CAROLINA		
Champaign-Springfield	WBHW			Hickory	WHKY	
IOWA				OHIO		
Cedar Rapids	KTS-13			Dayton	WHIO	
Mt. Vernon-Lisbon (every weekday)	WMVL Cable	7:00 a.m.		TEXAS		
				Lubbock	KCBD	
				WEST VIRGINIA		
				Logan (Mon.)	Channel 12	
				GUAM (Sun.)	KUAM	9:00 a.m.

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

(Continued from page 31)

prevent, except in limited areas, the free circulation of the Bible, and it was soon after the turn of the nineteenth century that Bible publishing societies began to be formed. During the years since, the world has been almost literally flooded with Bibles, and in all the principal languages. Today one of the large Bible societies has an office and supply depot right in the center of Rome!

The printing and circulation of Bibles has not, of course, converted, or even enlightened to any extent, many of the ardent supporters of Antichrist. The Bible has been styled the 'torch of civilization', and the light from this torch has sufficiently illuminated the non-papal world as to greatly strengthen its determination to prevent the dominion of the mystery of iniquity being reestablished.

While Napoleon wrested temporal power from the pope in 1799, and the title, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, was shortly thereafter cast aside by Francis II, the pope continued to be a nominal ruler over Rome until 1870, when even this was taken away from him. We repeat, in order to realize the full significance of these events, it is essential to bear in mind that the Antichrist is not just a church or a government, but the union of the two—the system in which civil governments accepted the headship and dictation of a religious overlord.

We know from the prophecies that eventually every government of this present evil world, and every church system, will be destroyed. We know the LORD will turn to the people a pure message of truth, and that this will enlighten all mankind enabling them to call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with "one consent." (Zeph. 3:9) Then the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the earth!

But these are developments which will follow the consuming and destruction of Antichrist. Indeed, the prophetic picture of enlightenment and blessing through the

true kingdom of Christ will not become a complete reality until the end of the millennium. What we are to look for now, and what we see, is the steady consuming and destroying of the Antichrist system, the shattering of the church-state concept of government as a factor in world affairs. True, many religious leaders are doing all they can to influence the course of governments. So does big business; so do the liquor interests; the cigarette manufacturers; the racketeers. Nearly every segment of society, in all countries, brings what pressure it can to bear on government; and the churches are no exception.

But the fact that religion is on the outside, so far as official recognition is concerned, and limited to whatever methods it may have to influence civil rulers rather than being in a position to dictate to them, highlights the tremendous change that has taken place since 1799. Then the pope was humiliated when Napoleon refused to go to Rome to be crowned by him, because up to that time he had been the overlord of kings.

From 1870 to the rule of Mussolini in Italy, the pope was a prisoner in the Vatican. Through a concordat with the fascist dictator, the pope was given Vatican City as a domain of his own, and he is now ruler of this little bit of territory. He has sent his ambassadors to whatever countries would accept them; and in turn, many nations have sent their ambassadors to the Vatican. But this does not mean he has been reestablished as the religious overlord of the Holy Roman Empire, for that empire no longer exists in any form, holy or otherwise.

The Catholic Church, through its cardinals, bishops, and priests, is still a potent influence in many countries of the world. There is, perhaps, no better information-gathering organization in the world, and many nations find it to their advantage to have ambassadors at the Vatican. It will be recalled that President Franklin D.

Roosevelt sent a personal representative to Rome just to gather whatever vital information might be available through Vatican sources. President Truman continued this arrangement. President Eisenhower hinted at the idea of the State Department sending an ambassador, but the Protestant leaders in this country raised such a storm of opposition that he gave up the idea.

No, the pope has not regained his temporal power, except in a very nominal sense, and in a territory so small as to be without vital significance in the world of today. The Catholic Church no doubt cherishes the hope of one day regaining at least a semblance of the civil power she formerly exercised. This is true also of the Protestant churches, particularly the fundamentalist groups. (Rev. 17:5) The clergy of the modernist Protestant denominations, for the most part, no longer in their hearts believe in eternal torture; although only occasionally does one come out openly and say so. This doctrine is still part of their creeds, as are all the other doctrines that clung to the Reformers when leaving the 'mother' church.

The desolating doctrines of papacy are indeed lasting. Take, for example, the very core of the Antichrist ideology; namely, church-state unionism. The Protestant clergy, at least in the United States, profess to abhor the church-state concept of government, and they are doubtless sincere. What they do not realize is that in setting up this system, the Antichrist destroyed the true concept of Christ's kingdom, and the Reformers never restored it.

Protestant churches today do not, as a whole, look for nor do they expect Christ to establish a literal kingdom, or government, to rule in the affairs of men. To them the kingdom of Christ is merely a righteous, wholesome influence in individual hearts and lives. Their hope, vain though it may be, is that eventually there will be enough hearts in the world thus filled with righteousness and love

to control the affairs of the world. It is this that they have in mind when they offer the Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."—Matt. 6:10

In their efforts to bring about Christ's kingdom in this manner, they do not hesitate to meddle in a mild way in politics. They endeavor to get good laws passed, and by other means improve world society. While they deplore the union of church and state, they are quite willing to use civil governments in any way they can to accomplish what they have decided are good ends. They do not realize that in this they are practicing a mild form of papacy's church-state doctrine.

The Increase of Knowledge

In our text Paul says, not only that the Wicked one would be consumed by the Spirit of the Lord's mouth, but also that it would be destroyed by the brightness of his coming. The Greek word here translated brightness is **epiphania**, meaning to make manifest by bright shining. The word coming is a translating of the Greek word **parousia**, meaning 'presence'. The Man of Sin, then, is to be finally destroyed by the bright shining of the Lord's presence.

This bright shining is not a glare of light, as from fire, but is symbolic of knowledge, understanding, and truth. Daniel prophesied that in the time of the end there would be a great increase of knowledge, and much running to and fro. (Dan. 12:4) In this prophecy, mention is also made of a "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." (vs. 1) Actually, the increase of knowledge which has suddenly come to the world in the time of the end has been a potent contributing factor in bringing about the foretold time of trouble.

Jesus quoted Daniel's prophecy pertaining to the

time of trouble, and placed its fulfillment at the time of his second presence. (Matt. 24:3,21) In Luke's report of Jesus' prophecy he describes the time of trouble, or of tribulation, as "distress of nations, with perplexity." One aspect of this tribulation, Luke reports, would be that "the powers of the heaven shall be shaken." —Luke 21:25,26

The 'heaven' here is figurative. It symbolizes spiritual control. Just as the new heavens and the new earth are symbolic of the spiritual and earthly phases of Christ's kingdom, so the heavens and the earth "which are now," as Peter wrote, symbolize the spiritual and earthly aspects of the present world, or social order. (II Pet. 3:7,13) The shaking of the powers of the present symbolic heavens suggests the weakening of the power of spiritual control in the affairs of men. —Heb. 12:26-28

Starting at the top in identifying the present symbolic heavens, we are obliged to name Satan, the "prince of this world," and the "god of this world." (John 12:31; II Cor. 4:4) Paul also speaks of Satan as the "prince of the power of the air," the present spiritual domain. (Eph. 2:2) Paul says further that Satan is the "spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Associated with Satan are the fallen angels, so we have the expression, "the Devil and his angels." —Matt. 25:41

The Devil and his angels do all they can to mislead individual servants of the LORD. It is, of course, a startling thing to say this or that institution is under the influence of the Devil. However, the Scriptures give us a safe guide by which to determine this matter, which is, "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:16,20) Let us, then, go simply by the fruits as evidenced by the teachings and practices of religious institutions.

When we think of all the various brands of heathen religions with their superstitions, their idol worship, their

multiplicity of gods, we cannot say these are the fruit of our loving Heavenly Father's influence. If we honestly face the facts we have to acknowledge that all heathen religions and the institutions through which they function, are the handiwork of the god of this world, Satan, the Devil.

Going back into the Dark Ages when the abomination of desolation was set up, what do we find? The doctrines of this system were eternal torture; purgatory; the mass; the trinity; church-state unionism; and salvation through masses, indulgences, and purgatorial sufferings. Were any of these of the LORD? Was it possible for a human mind to invent anything so fiendish as the doctrine of eternal torture? Who inspired this diabolical thing? Surely none but the Devil. And it was through the fear inspired by these doctrines that the people were held in restraint. These were the powers of heaven that held undisputed control over the Roman world for 1,260 years.

Individuals, of course, are not involved in this matter. It is institutions we are examining. And what about the major Protestant organizations? Are their doctrines of the LORD? Their beliefs are in many ways the same as those of the Catholic Church—eternal torture, the trinity, and so forth. While they speak of Jesus and the Redeemer, they insist Jesus was God, and therefore could not die. Could these God-dishonoring doctrines be inspired by our loving Heavenly Father? We think not, and yet it has been largely through the fear engendered by these doctrines that the Protestant religion has held the people under a measure of restraint.

But Jesus said that in the time of great tribulation, brought about through the increase of knowledge in the hands of selfish and fallen man, the powers of heaven would be shaken. Has this in any manner begun to take place? We think so, and to a degree that helps us the more clearly to

see that 'mystery of iniquity' is, indeed, being destroyed by the bright shining of the Lord's presence.

The first destructive outbreak of the great tribulation of the prophecies occurred in 1914. At that time, while papacy had lost its temporal power, most of the old Roman world was governed by hereditary ruling houses; united in certain instances with one or another state church. In Russia it was the Greek Catholic Church; in Germany, the Lutheran. These were vital remnants of the original church-state organization. But, with one crushing blow, continuing over a period of only four years, these were destroyed!

The revolution in Russia brought an end to the powers of spiritual control in that country. The Emperor of Germany lost his crown, and, in that country also, the church-state system died. All Europe was in turmoil during the intervening years until the beginning of the second global war. Fascist dictatorships thrived in Italy and Germany. Austria was taken over by Hitler and other revolutionary changes occurred. Then came the Second World War, and in its wake the downfall of the House of Savoy in Italy, and the further spread of atheistic communism in Eastern Europe. By this time, religious influence in world affairs was at such a low ebb that the newly formed United Nations could not, and to this day, does not have its sessions opened with prayer; nor is the name of God in its constitution.

Meanwhile, the increase of knowledge continues to expose the old superstitions which restrained the thinking and actions of the people. This has been particularly noticeable in connection with the youth of the world. Even the proper and scriptural moral standards of conduct are now widely flouted, and in almost all segments of society there is a deterioration of morality which is causing millions to fear the ultimate outcome.

Yes, the powers of heaven are being shaken. This is the present heaven patterned largely after the example of the Antichrist system of spiritual control. It means further progress in the destruction of the mystery of iniquity. Actually, of course, the church-state combine, so far as vital control in world affairs is concerned, is destroyed. There are still remnants of the civil powers remaining which committed fornication with the woman—the apostate church. (Rev. 18:3) And the woman herself, as well as her daughters, still remain. But with knowledge increasing on every hand, these, in the general average, will continue to lose their power over the minds of the people, although there will doubtless be impressive exceptions.

But this is merely in preparation for the setting up of a new and righteous social order, which will be the kingdom of Christ. Then the power of the new heavens will be in control. The exalted Jesus will be the Head of this new spiritual rulership, and with him will be his faithful followers. Their human representatives will be the Ancient Worthies—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets and other faithful ones of past ages.

From these new spiritual rulers, through their human representatives, will emanate the truth concerning our loving Heavenly Father and his gracious plan of salvation; the plan which will offer to every son and daughter of Adam a full opportunity to repent, accept Christ as the Savior, obey the laws of his kingdom, and live forever! Then the people will learn the true source of the eternal torture blasphemy. They will learn purgatory was merely a figment of the imagination. They will learn there is but one God—not three—and one Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.— I Tim. 2:3-6

The laws of that new kingdom will be just and

righteous. Those who continue willfully to disobey will die in the second death. No one will be burned at the stake, nor will any be tortured on a rack. Even when the death penalty is decreed because of continued willful disobedience on the part of the incorrigible, it will be administered in love.

Then the people will know that God is love. The new heavens will declare the LORD'S righteousness, and all the people will see his glory! (Ps. 97:6) The nightmarish doctrines of the past will then be dispelled from the minds of the people, and they will learn, instead, the true principles of righteousness and love. In obeying those principles, they will live rejoicingly forever. This will be the case because "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." — Dan. 7:27 □

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Christian Life and Doctrine



The Story of Esther

ESTHER'S father and mother had died, and her cousin Mordecai "took her for his own daughter." "The maid was fair and beautiful," the record states. (Esther 2: 7) Among all the virgins who were brought before Ahasuerus from whom to select a new queen, Esther was the one chosen. "Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king."—vs. 18

Esther, acting on the advice of her cousin, had not revealed to the king that she was related to Mordecai, and therefore a Jewess. Soon, and doubtless also in the providences of the LORD, Mordecai learned of a plot against the king's life, informed Esther about it, who in turn reported it to the king in Mordecai's name. This placed Mordecai in high standing with the king.—vss. 21-23

Chapter three unfolds another facet of this remarkable story. It tells of one of the king's servants named Haman, and how the king promoted him "above all the princes that were with him." His exaltation was the preparation by Satan of a plan to destroy the Jewish people. Ahasuerus commanded that all his servants should bow down to Haman, "but Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence."—vs. 2

"Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?" (vs. 3) In replying to this question Mordecai said that he was a Jew, explaining probably that it would be contrary to his religion to bow down to any man, especially a Gentile.

When this information was given to Haman, an insane madness seized him, and he planned to punish, not only Mordecai, but to destroy all the remnants of the Jewish nation still in the land. Haman reported the circumstances to the king in such a way as to make the Jews seem an utterly pernicious, worthless, and dangerous people. (vs. 8) The falsehoods told to the king were much like those reported against the Jews in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah by the people of Samaria.—Ezra 4:11-16

Haman asked the king for a decree authorizing, at a time appointed, the destruction of all the Jews in the land, offering to pay into the king's treasury ten thousand talents of silver, probably from the booty expected to result from the slaughter. (Esther 3:9) The king consented, and "took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman" to be used in signing the many copies of the decree that would need to be dispatched throughout the various provinces of the realm. (vss. 10-15) The king's ring has the royal seal attached to it, which carried the full authority of the empire behind it. Additionally, he granted Haman all the property of the Jewish families executed. In the East, confiscation usually follows execution. The lives of the whole Jewish people were given into his hands.

At this point in the story it would seem as though Satan had triumphed, that the Jews would certainly be destroyed. But God was watching over them. The strange chain of circumstances by which they were delivered from this plot is one of the most interesting and astonishing accounts in human history. Chapter four reveals that when Mordecai received word of Haman's plot against him and his people he rent his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city streets with a great and bitter cry.—vs. 1

Mordecai even came before the king's gateway to the palace, although none could enter the palace clothed with sackcloth. Indirectly the mourning and wailing of Mordecai was reported to Esther. She demanded to know the reason for this untoward behavior. The chamberlain, Hatach, had to go out into the city streets to meet Mordecai, who laid the matter before him, showing him a copy of the decree. He asked Hatach to show the decree to Esther and urge her to make supplication to the king to release the Jews from such a doom.—vss. 5-9

But here arose a difficulty which seemingly made it impossible for Esther to present a petition to the king. The law was that none could enter into the king's presence, in the inner court of the palace, without the king's invitation. The penalty for disobeying this law was death. The only exceptions were those to whom the king would hold out the golden scepter to signify that the caller could come in and present his petition. Esther stated this rule to Mordecai, explaining that she had not been called by the king for thirty days, which apparently indicated to her that for the time being she was not standing very high in his favor. The situation seemed desperate.

When Esther's reply reached Mordecai he realized the seriousness of the situation, but felt sure from the prophecies that God would not allow his people to be destroyed. So he sent word to Esther, saying that if she was not willing to risk her life for her people then deliverance would come to them from some other source. He warned, though, that in such an event, she could not hope to escape, for she also came under the decree of destruction. This message was very emphatic, referred to in the record as a "command."

But withal, Mordecai had words of great encouragement for Esther. "Who knoweth," he said, "whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (vs. 14) The LORD'S people in all ages have been greatly strengthened in the performance of their privileges and duties by the realization that the providences of God were definitely operating in their lives.

Doubtless Esther and her cousin had both been watching the meaning of her exaltation to be queen. Indeed, Mordecai had engineered it, and obviously for the very purpose of being in a position to make conditions throughout the realm more favorable for his people.

Now he sensed how wonderfully the LORD had blessed his efforts, and the suggestion to Esther that God was responsible for the position she occupied, gave her the needed courage and determination to risk her life for the salvation of her people. She sent word to her cousin to have all the Jews of the city fast for her, which doubtless included prayers on her behalf. She added, "I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."—vss. 15,16

On the third day from the beginning of the fast the time had come to act. Esther put on her royal apparel and stood in the inner court of the palace, opposite to the entry of the throne room. The usual location of the throne in this room was such that from the raised position of the dias the king could look beyond the door into the court, so he saw Esther standing there waiting for an indication from him that she was welcome to enter his presence. What a tense moment it must have been for this beautiful queen!

Not only was Esther's own life at stake, but the lives of her people as well, including Mordecai. Her faith in the watch-care of Israel's God over his people was rewarded, for the king extended his golden scepter, indicating that Esther should come in to him to present any matter she might have on her mind. She touched the top of his scepter as she bowed into his presence, which was an acknowledgment of the king's authority, and a gesture of her own obedience and submission to him. The king was more gracious to her than she could have dared hope, for he offered to grant her anything she wished up to half of his kingdom.
—chapter 5:1-3

It must have been strengthening to her faith to have the king make so generous an offer; for, after all, she had a very large and serious request to present to him. The destiny of thousands of her people who had been ordered slaughtered was involved, so she proceeded cautiously. She did not at once reveal to the king the nature of her request, but instead invited the king to a banquet which she had prepared. She also requested that Haman be present at the banquet. She felt that the king would understand that this was but in preparation for her real petition, and he did. At the feast he asked her about it.

King Ahasuerus gave instructions for Haman to make haste to appear with him at the feast which Esther had prepared. While partaking of the wine, the king pressed Esther to make known her request, assuring her again that he was prepared to grant her anything up to half of his kingdom. But Esther was still cautious, and wise. Instead of divulging at once the favor she desired of the king, she asked that he and Haman join her the next day for another feast, promising that then she would make known her request.

Haman left the feast with a very exalted opinion of his own importance. He thought that surely he must be on the road to a very high position in the government in order to be thus honored by the queen. "Pride goeth before destruction," the Scriptures tell us. (Prov. 16:18) Instead of wondering what could be the motive for such unusual honor—for so it seemed—being bestowed upon him, Haman gloated over his experience, and especially in the fact that he had been invited to appear with the king at another feast on the following day.

But Haman's joy was somewhat lessened by the fact that as he left the king's palace and passed by Mordecai in the king's gate, this obstinate Jew—as he had concluded him to be—refused once more to recognize him. (vs. 9) But for the moment Haman refrained from any outward act of violence. When he reached home he sent for his friends, and his wife, Zeresh, and told them of the remarkable thing which had happened to him,

rehearsing, as a reminder to them, the wonderful way he had previously been promoted by the king; gloating over the fact of the further invitation for the next day.

But with it all he was depressed and frustrated, and said, "All this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." (vs. 13) Quickly Haman's wife, who seemingly would stop at nothing in order that her husband might be happy, suggested that a gallows be erected on which Mordecai could be hanged. And to this all his friends consented, as the account shows. Do this, she said to Haman, then "go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet." In other words, why should a mere Jew stand in her husband's way of complete satisfaction and joy? (vs. 14) This solution to his frustration appealed to Haman, and he gave orders to have the gallows erected.

That night King Ahasuerus was unable to sleep. To pass the time away, and probably also with the thought of inducing sleep, he commanded that the book of records of the affairs of state be brought and read to him. In the reading he was reminded of the time when Mordecai had reported a treacherous plot against him, and thereby had saved his life. He inquired, "What honor and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him."—Esther 6:1-3

Whether as a matter of custom, or as a token of genuine appreciation, the king decided that some great honor should be bestowed upon Mordecai, and inquired who was in the court, as though to choose one who would properly carry out his instructions in this matter. Perhaps the king had even heard the approach of footsteps, and knew that some high dignitary in his government must be in the court.

Ironically it was Haman, seeking an audience with the king to get permission to hang Mordecai. But before Haman could voice his request, the king asked him what, in his opinion, should "be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" (vs. 6) Haman concluded that surely the king must be

referring to him, so outlined a procedure which he thought befitting to a personage so illustrious as to be the only guest to share two feasts prepared for the king by the beautiful queen, Esther. He said to the king:

"Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honor, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor."—vss. 8,9

Even while speaking these words Haman was doubtless gloating over seeing himself thus being honored by the king, concluding also that one standing so high in the king's favor would have no difficulty in obtaining consent for the murder of Mordecai. But his selfish and murderous delight was shortlived, for hardly had he finished outlining the procedure when the king ordered him, as one of the most noble princes whom he had recommended to carry out the ceremony, and naming Mordecai, the Jew, as the man whom he was thus delighted to honor!—vss. 10,11

Haman obeyed the instructions of the king, humiliating though it was to do so. Then he hastened home "mourning, and having his head covered." (vs. 12) He related to his wife and friends what had happened to him, but this time they had no comforting words to offer, nor suggestions to make as to how he might counter the king's action and get rid of Mordecai. Instead, they said to him, and very truthfully, "If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him."—vs. 13

How right they were! Doubtless the background of this prediction was their knowledge of the manner in which God had protected his people throughout their captivity in Babylon, and

in connection with the return of many of them to Jerusalem. They probably knew of the experiences of the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace, and of how Daniel had been delivered from the mouths of the lions. From what they knew of the past they realized that the Jews had a power to protect them with which it was not wise to trifle.

Evidently Haman's wife and friends had overlooked this when they suggested that Mordecai be hanged. Or they might have reasoned that the Jews who did not return to Jerusalem when given the opportunity were no longer subject to the care of their God. But when they realized the very strange turn of events which compelled Haman to be the instrument in honoring Mordecai instead of hanging him they sensed what was happening and advised Haman accordingly.

Even while Haman's wife and friends were warning him against making further attempts against Mordecai, the king's chamberlains came and hurried him away to attend "the banquet that Esther had prepared." (vs. 14) At this second banquet the king again asked Esther to present her petition. "Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request; for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain and to perish."—Esther 7:1-4

The king had not expected a request of this sort. First of all, he had not known that his queen was a Jewess, and perhaps for the moment did not associate her petition with Haman's decree that all the Jews in the realm be slaughtered. But he loved the queen, and regardless of who was involved he demanded further information. Then it was that Esther pointed out Haman as being the man responsible for the plight of her people. She said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman."—vss. 5, 6

"Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen," and well he might be. (vs. 6) The king, too angry to reach at once a conclusion as to what should be done, left the room and went out into the palace garden to consider the matter. Two sur-

prises had been presented to him by his queen, and all in a very few words. He learned that Esther was a Jewess, and that his trusted Haman was a wicked plotter. No wonder he needed a little time to think things over.—vs. 7

Meanwhile Haman used these moments of escape from the king's wrath to petition Esther for his life. In his anxiety he even threw himself across the couch on which she was reclining, and there the king found him when he returned from the palace garden. Attributing an evil motive to this, the king said, "Will he force the queen also before me in the house?" At the king's bidding his servants quickly rushed in, covered Haman's face, and at the king's command he was hanged on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai.—vss. 8-10

Now there was no doubt in the mind of any Jew at the time who knew the circumstances that Esther had come to the kingdom "for such a time as this." Nor did the king love her any less when learning that Esther was a Jewess. She now explained to the king her relationship to Mordecai, and he was exalted to take the place of Haman in the government, while Esther was given Haman's house, which she turned over to Mordecai.—Esther 8:1,2

But the threat against the Jews of the realm had not been fully set aside. The law of the Medes and Persians was "that no decree nor statute which the king established could be changed." (Dan. 6:15) King Ahasuerus' decree calling for the slaughter of the Jews could not be changed. The best that he could do was to authorize his new prime minister, Mordecai, to issue a counter decree.

When the fatal time arrived, there was a mild sort of civil war in which the enemies of the Jews suffered most. But it was soon over, and the vast majority of Esther's people were saved. See chapters eight and nine.

The Jews still commemorate this great victory over their enemies by the Feast of Purim in memory of their deliverance through the outworking of God's providences. □

Christian Life and Doctrine

Remembering Jesus

IT IS especially appropriate in partaking of the Memorial emblems and in our preparation for this holy "supper" to recall at what great cost redemption from sin and death was provided. Think of our Heavenly Father's love in giving his only begotten Son to suffer and die! And think of what it cost Jesus in terms of mental suffering to be our Redeemer and the Redeemer of all mankind! To call to mind these examples of divine love and compassion for the sin-cursed race should beget in us a renewed determination to be faithful in carrying out the terms of our consecration to do God's will.

While we can rejoice that Jesus' personal suffering was completed on Calvary more than nineteen hundred years ago, the Memorial emblems will remind us that we have not yet completed our sacrifice, and that it is our privilege to fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ. (Col. 1:24) And to remember Jesus as our exemplar in faithfulness and in suffering should be a great incentive to us to continue following him. Paul wrote, "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."—Heb. 12:3,4

Not having as yet resisted unto blood is a figurative way of saying that we have not yet fully given up our lives; have not yet been "faithful unto death," as Jesus was. (Rev. 2:10) When we compare ourselves with Jesus we realize how little we have suffered, and are suffering. This is due in part to the changed attitude of the world toward those whose religious beliefs do not conform to those generally considered to be orthodox. There are still those, of course, who would inflict the death penalty on 'heretics' if civil governments would cooperate.

The Memorial season is an appropriate time to reexamine our own position. Are we facing up to our privileges of sacrifice as faithfully as we intended to do when we first entered the narrow way; or are we, unwittingly, perhaps, taking an easier way? As we consider Jesus at this Memorial time, we will all want to make sure that we are among those who continue voluntarily to keep our sacrifice on the altar, regardless of the cost in terms of inconvenience, weariness, misunderstanding, and even suffering, rather than to wait for circumstances to wrest from us that which we offered to the LORD at the time of our consecration.

These thoughts will naturally come to mind as we consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself. It is only those who endure unto the end who will receive the great salvation. "Ye have need of patience," wrote Paul, "that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." (Heb. 10:36) James wrote, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation [testing]: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the LORD promised to them that love him."—James 1:12

The Hebrew brethren, when they were first "illuminated," "endured a great fight of afflictions," but this was not enough. (Heb. 10:32) Our first-love zeal for the LORD and for his service should be continued day by day, year by year, even unto death. "Let us not be weary in well doing," Paul wrote, "for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." (Gal. 6:9) To consider Jesus, and the contradiction of sinners which he endured, should do much to prevent our becoming weary and fainting in our minds.

Those enlightened by present truth know that we are living at the end of the age, when the Master is again present as the chief reaper in the harvest work. We have even reached the closing years in the ending of the age. How many more years we will have the privilege of partaking of the Memorial emblems we do not know, but we are assured that the fruition of our hope is near. The consciousness of this should give added meaning to this year's Memorial Supper, and cause us to redouble our efforts

in the weeks and months ahead to consider him, and to be like him.

The blessed hope of again being in the actual presence of his Father was one of the joys set before Jesus which enabled him to endure the cross and despise the shame. Paul tells us that Jesus is now "set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2) Jesus promised, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."—Rev. 3:21

This, then, is one of the joys set before us, and what a powerful incentive to faithfulness it should be! And now that he who was to come has come, the time is very near—so very near—when we shall see his face. John wrote, "We shall see him as he is." (I John 3:1-3) What a glorious morning of joy that will be in contrast with the present experience of suffering! When we have entered into his presence with joy, and are partaking of his cup with him in his kingdom, how light our present trials will seem as we look back upon them from that vantage point of glory!

As we contemplate the glory to follow the present privilege of suffering with Christ, we get an urge to pray for the LORD to hasten the time. Yet we know that he has his own due time, and that he knows best just what experiences we need; just what tests of patience and devotion are essential to prepare us to occupy the place prepared by Jesus, so we say to our aching, longing hearts, "Be calm, and sink into his will," assured that the time appointed by divine wisdom is best.

In the latter part of the twenty-second psalm, the opening words of which Jesus uttered audibly while hanging on the cross, he is shown as exulting over the triumph of his Father's cause, and foretelling that as a result of his sacrifice the time would come when all the ends of the earth would turn unto the LORD. (vss. 27,28) Under those trying circumstances Jesus' thoughts were upon others. Even when he had been "brought unto the dust of death," he rejoiced in the purpose of his suffering, rejoiced that

all the families of the earth were to be blessed.—vs. 15

May it be so with us as again we commemorate Jesus' death. May we remember, and be glad, that the great and ultimate purpose of that which we memorialize is the reconciling of the world to God, and let us rejoice that this purpose will be accomplished. This is God's viewpoint, for he loved the world and gave his Son to be the Redeemer. Jesus also loved the world, and gave his life that the world might live. May the Memorial Supper this year help to fill our hearts with the same love, and with the desire to comfort all who mourn, and increase our longing for the time when we will have the glorious opportunity of association with Jesus in restoring all the willing and obedient to health and life, and of establishing global peace and happiness. □

1987 Memorial Supper Date

THE proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 12th.

We have a complete Memorial service available for isolated brethren or for any who care to have it, on both audio and video cassette. The audio cassette service can be purchased for \$3.00, or is available on loan. Write to: Recorded Lecture, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. The video cassette Memorial service can be purchased for \$6.00, or is also available on loan upon request to: Dawn Video Cassette Service, P.O. Box 4355, North Hollywood, CA 91607.

We are pleased to announce that a new Memorial Service on video cassette has just been completed. It was especially prepared for brethren who will be alone on Memorial evening, or small groups or classes where a video player is available. For more information, see the announcement above.

Talking Things Over

A Report on the Activities of the Friends in Athens, Greece

THE Athens Class has been engaged in an effective witness of the Gospel in their part of the world during the year 1986. One of their major activities was advertising in the local newspaper. Various booklets which have been translated from English into the Greek language were used, among which were: "**Where Are the Dead?**," "**God and Reason**," "**Israel in History and Prophecy**," and "**Archeology Proves the Bible**." In response to these ads, 725 letters were received, each of which was answered by return letter, 2,271 booklets, 6,500 pamphlets, as well as **The Dawn** magazines were also sent to these correspondences. Additional to this, twelve sets of **The Studies in the Scriptures** were sold.

The Greek **Dawn** is printed every two months, with various sections translated from the English **Dawn** of the same months, such as: Christian Life and Doctrine articles, the International Bible Study Lessons, and other articles such as the Highlights, and Encouraging Letters.

As a result of these activities, a new brother came into the Athens Class during the year, and symbolized his consecration by water immersion. Because of this we all greatly rejoice.

The dear brethren in Athens and other parts of Greece give thanks for this opportunity of witnessing, and express their warmest Christian love to all who share the great privileges of service to the truth and our dear Heavenly Father.

Yours in the blessed hope,
Brother Pantel Hatgis

An Open Letter from Brother Panucci about the South American Convention

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."—Psalm 133:1

CERTAINLY this is what we, with the LORD'S help, anticipate during the three-day convention in Buenos Aires, Argentina—Convention March 13,14,15, 1987.

Chronologically, South America has been one of the last continents to receive the truth, and we are happy to know that God's Word is clear in its assurance to the eleventh-hour workers that they shall receive the same reward as those who entered the vineyard earlier. In that part of the world, despite the fact that countries such as Peru, Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay have been under the influence of orthodoxy for so long a time, there are a few devoted to the truth who have been serving the promulgation of its message for a number of years.

We are happy to report also that an encouraging number of people have come in contact with the truth within recent months through the "**Frank and Ernest**" radio program broadcast from Montevideo, Uruguay, and Lima, Peru, and also through the first volumes sent to them. From newspaper advertisements in Argentina and Brazil we have already received over 1,200 requests for the booklet, "**Why God Permits Evil.**" While at the convention we will try to establish a program for follow-up work to be promoted by the various brethren living in those areas.

During our visit there last spring, some brethren expressed a desire to have a convention in Buenos Aires, which would enable them to meet one another, some for the very first

time, to enjoy fellowship together and with the North American brethren who could attend. One of the primary reasons for organizing this convention is not only to allow the brethren to meet each other in person, but to discuss how we can further the promulgation of the truth in their countries.

The convention program includes speakers from Peru, Argentina and Brazil, as well as five speakers from the United States. There is a pronounced spirit of Christian love on the part of these dear brethren and the ones who will do the translating, to make an effort to go to a far continent to serve in this way. To our mind it re-echos the words of I John 3:14, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

We pray that the LORD will bless this convention, and it will result in the honor and glory of his precious name, and be a blessing to all that will attend. We ask that you remember us in your prayers.

Joseph Panucci



Obituaries

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

Brother Maurice Schuster, Boring, OR—November 13. Age, 88.

Brother Orville W. Lowe, Bartlesville, OK—December 11. Age, 73.

Sister Catherine E. Kubik, Santa Rosa, CA—December 29. Age, 67.

Brother Anton C. Frey, Staten Island, NY—January 12. Age, 91.

Brother Clifford Maycock, Los Angeles, CA—January 18. Age, 79.

Sister Elsie Binda Pukas, Los Angeles, CA—January 24. Age, 71.

"Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."—Revelation 14:13

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts

MARCH 5—"If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."—Philippians 4:4—Z '03-9 Hymn 182)

MARCH 12—"The end of the commandment is love from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an undissembled faith."—I Timothy 1:5
Diaglott (Z'00-360 Hymn 172)

MARCH 19—"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."—I Pet. 1:14,15— (Z'03-55 Hymn 218)

MARCH 26—"We are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others."—I Thess. 5:5,6— (Z'03-70 Hymn 239)

For your newspaper:

To the right is a suggestion for a small advertisement in your local newspaper. This outline is designed for three and one-half inches in one column.

* * *

March Special

On Sunday, March 22nd, "**Frank and Ernest**" will discuss a topic of interest to many. Attractive circulars will be made available to you for announcing this program, and you are invited to send for as many as you can use. They are free. Address your request to: **The Dawn, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.**

"Frank & Ernest"

Listen to these interesting topics to be discussed on

Sundays on
KLOE-730
8:15 a.m.

Mar. 1-The Church
Mar. 8-Sheep and Goats
Mar 15-Jehovah, Creator & Father
Mar. 22-The World on Fire
Mar. 29-Israel in Prophecy

SEND FOR the free booklet offered after each broadcast: "Frank & Ernest" Box 60, Dept. N New York, NY 10116

Speakers' Appointments

MINISTERING THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF CHRIST

These speakers are routed through the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn or by classes associated with the pilgrim services. Their visits are furnished free upon request whenever possible. Write to: Dawn Bible Students Association, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

W. Austin San Luis Obispo, CA	March 8	T. Passios Chatham, Ont.	March 15
B. Brown Buenos Aires, Argen.	March 13-15	E. Penrose Kansas City, MO	March 1
G. Jeuck Buenos Aires, Argen.	March 13-15	St. Louis, MO	3
K. Fernets Edmonton, Alta.	March 28,29	Indianapolis, IN	5
E. Lamel Riverside, CA	March 15	L. Post New Haven, CT	March 15
J. Panucci Buenos Aires, Argen.	March 13-15	H. Snyder Middletown, NY	March 22
G. Passios Allentown, PA	March 15	J. Tate Berwick, PA	March 22
Pottstown, PA	March 15		

"They that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." —Malachi 3:16,17

Conventions

These conventions are listed at the request of the individual classes who are sponsoring the gatherings.

FLORIDA CONVENTION
MARCH 7,8,9—Howard Johnson
Orlando, FL., Contact: Stephen

Jeuck, 471 Kentia Rd., Cassel-
berry, FL., 32707
Phone: [305] 834-7592

ROCKLAND, NY, March 8—
Bear Mountain State Park, Overlook
Lodge, Bear Mountain, NY.
Contact: Dawn Shallieu, 1041
Johnston Dr., Watchung, NJ 07060

**NEW ORLEANS, LA, March
14,15—**Airport Howard Johnson's
Motel, 6901 Veterans Memorial
Blvd. Contact: Mrs. Samuel Heron,
4513 St. Anthony 70122
Phone: (504) 288-1553

CINCINNATI, OH, March 15—
The Harp's Home, 2609 Merrittview
Lane, 45231
Phone: [513] 825-0183

**FRESNO PRE-MEMORIAL
CONVENTION, March 27-29—**
Episcopal Conference Center,
Oakhurst, CA. Contact: A.W. Abra-
hamsen, 4689 Shields Ave. 93726

**GROTON, PRE-
MEMORIAL CONVENTION,
March 29—**Groton Municipal
Bldg., 295 Meridian St., Bring your
"brown-bag lunch." Contact: Jewel
Franco, 29 Cutler St. 06340 for in-
formation.

**EDMONTON, ALTA, CANADA
March 29—**For information, con-
tact James Friesen
Phone: 434-5961

**ALBUQUERQUE PRE-
MEMORIAL CONVENTION,
April 3,4,5—**Radisson Inn, 1901
University S.E., Albuquerque, NM.
For information: Roberta H. Buss,
P.O. Box 9172, 87119
Phone: [505] 877-2866

**DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL
CONVENTION, April 4, 5—**Ma-
comb Community College, 14500
12 Mile Road, Warren, MI

**LOS ANGELES, CA, April
19—**Golden State Masonic Lodge,
933 So. Hoover St., Los Angeles.
Contact: Wade Austin, 21207
Wilder Avenue, Lakewood 90715

BOISE, ID, April 24-26—
Holiday Inn at Airport. Write: Mrs.
Allan H. Allers, 2438 Bruins Circle,
83704
Phone: [208] 375-6873

**NEBRASKA BIBLE STU-
DENTS, April 25,26—**Crown
Hall, 8345 Crown Point Avenue,
Omaha. Write: M. Rosswick, 1317
West 6th, Grand Island 68801
Phone: [308] 384-2175

PITTSBURGH, PA, April 26—
Seton Center, 1900 Pioneer Ave-
nue. Write: Chas. Martig, 730 Duns-
ter St.
Phone: [412] 563-6110

**GARY AREA CONVENTION,
May 2,3—**Holiday Inn, Hwy. 30,
Valparaiso, IN. Contact: J. Ulicni,
6703 Tyler Ave. Merrillville, IN 46401
Phone: [219] 769-5647

AGAWAM, MA, May 17—Ra-
mada Inn, 161 Bridge St. at I-91,
Warehouse Point, CT. Mrs. Leslie
Hindle, 39 Park Hill, Broad Brook,
CT 06016 Phone: [203] 623-6591

**BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL
CONVENTION, Albion,
Michigan, July 25-30.**