

# The Dawn

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### The Son of God

EACH YEAR AS we celebrate the birth of Jesus we like to recall the events surrounding his birth, and their meaning to us. We want to tell the story that never grows old to our children. Although the narrative of Jesus' birth brings joy to millions throughout the world and is basic to their faith as Christians, yet most miss out on much of the joy of Christmas because they interpret the results of that miraculous birth in a restricted way. The magnitude of God's grace and love toward mankind is not yet fully understood.

The birth of a child is a wonderful event in the lives of its parents! They are filled with wonder and love as they tenderly gaze upon the new little life they have been entrusted with. However, their love is at first limited because a large measure of love is based upon association and experience. And so, with each passing year, their love and pride in their little child grows, as he grows. One of the most traumatic ordeals which can occur in the life of a parent is the death of a newborn infant. But it is perhaps less traumatic than if the child were a few months or years old, and had been cared for, and had become an integral part of the lives of the family.

To understand the grace and magnitude of the gift which God gave to mankind when he sent his only beloved Son, Jesus, into the world as a tiny babe in Bethlehem, we must be familiar with the lesson of creation. Let your mind go back into the distant past when God, who is from everlasting to everlasting, created the *Logos*. The *Logos* was his first and only direct creation—and how beautiful he must have been! The Scriptures speak of the beauty of Lucifer before he fell, and surely the comeliness of the *Logos* was far surpassing.

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No doubt God's feelings upon creating the **Logos** would have been much like those of a new earthly father. As they worked together, and fellowshiped one with the other, the bond of love grew stronger and stronger with the passing years—as they drew out into unknown eons of time. After the fall of Lucifer from God's grace, the Heavenly Father apprised the **Logos** of his wonderful plan of the ages. It called for a perfect man, born of a woman, to take Adam's place in death. Since he would be born of a woman he would be a human being, and share the nature of humans--no more and no less. In this way he would be a perfect corresponding price for Adam. It was the most serious step we can imagine for the **Logos** to agree to undertake. If this plan did not succeed, mankind would know no release from their lost condition.

The **Logos** did offer to be the one to leave heaven—to go down to earth as a man—to be the willing, corresponding price for Adam. This meant that as the **Logos** he would go out of existence in order that his life force might be transferred to the womb of a woman, resulting in the miraculous birth of a man-child, a perfect human being. As the time drew near for our Lord to depart from his heavenly home, we can envision the Heavenly Father and the **Logos** embracing. This was a painful parting, as all partings are. At that moment an angel was visiting Mary, informing her of the opportunity that God offered to her, to be the mother of the Savior of mankind. (Luke 1:26-35,38) As she accepted God's invitation to be "blessed . . . among women" (vs. 28), in just a moment, the **Logos** vanished from heaven and a new life began in Mary's womb.

Nine months later, Jesus was born in a lowly manger, and the words of the scripture, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given" (Isa. 9:6), had come to pass. The **Logos** was God's Son, his beloved creation, and he was given to mankind in the person of the babe, Jesus. The angels recognized the importance of his birth, and heralded it forth with joy, praising God.—Luke 2:1-14

We find that God protected the little baby from his powerful adversary, Satan, as he grew from infancy to toddler, to young child, to a fine young man twelve years of age, and, indeed, throughout his entire life. With God's protection he grew to manhood and went about his Father's business. (Luke 2:40, 49,52; 3:21,22) The love between the **Logos** and God had grown stronger as they learned more about each other, and in the same way the love between the man



Jesus and his Heavenly Father continued to grow. This bond was broken only briefly—during the three-day period Jesus was dead and buried—but was restored forever, never more to be broken, when God raised him to the divine nature at his own right hand—forevermore!

Upon his resurrection, Jesus was given all power in heaven and earth. At that time the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6,7 began its fulfillment. However, its complete accomplishment will begin with the inauguration of the millennial kingdom. We read: "The government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order

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it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

Let us examine the titles given to the risen Christ by Isaiah the prophet, and see why they are appropriate:

### **Wonderful**

Wonderful indeed is Jesus Christ our Lord since his resurrection! When we consider the work he had already accomplished on our behalf—not only our redemption, but his sublime example that we might walk in his footsteps—and the marvelous works which are yet to come, we can realize that the title, Wonderful, is inadequate to express how magnificent he is!

Wonderful love was demonstrated when he suffered and died for us. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his brethren." (John 15:13) Surely the nation of Israel, as well as the whole world—every individual—will hail him as Wonderful when he whom they pierced returns to judge the world in righteousness. He will display his great love for them in his forgiveness and mercy which will, and has always been, constantly extended to them despite their rejection of him.—Isa. 53:3,4

"Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand."—vss. 4-6,10

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## **Counsellor!**

The resurrected Jesus will be the counsellor of the world during his kingdom, as he is our counsellor now. As the psalmist declares, "He shall judge the world in righteousness, and the people with his truth." (Ps. 9:8) As the king of earth he will not only bring the dead back to life, but will also bring them back into harmony with God. Certainly there is now evident a profound void in the area of good, perfect, kind, and loving and loving counseling, which our Lord will fill by providing the proper advice and assistance necessary to guide men slowly, steadily, kindly, firmly, back to perfection.

## **The Mighty God!**

This is a title which could at first be confusing to us, for it may sound as if the words are speaking of Almighty Jehovah. But closer examination reveals that the word here translated by the phrase 'mighty God' is from the Hebrew word *el* which means 'the mighty one', or 'the powerful one'. *El* signifies a strong or powerful being, and consequently can be applicable to anyone who possesses those qualities. We know that Jesus will indeed be a mighty god in the Millennial Age; in fact he will have complete control of the earth at that time, and all will learn to worship and obey him.

## **The Everlasting Father!**

Here is another bewildering title, since again, it may sound as if it is referring to the Heavenly Father. But if we search deeper into the matter we will find that the Scriptures clearly indicate that Jesus will be father to the world by providing them with everlasting life. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22), explains the Apostle Paul succinctly. Jesus said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10) The principal possession that was lost in Eden was perfect human life. This is what Jesus will give back to mankind—perfect, everlasting, human life—and in doing so, he will be called the Everlasting Father.

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We note that this in no way takes away the honor due to God. He is our great, eternal, Heavenly Father. Jesus repeatedly called attention to his Father's preeminence. He said, "When you pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven," etc. (Matt. 6:9), and again, "I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God, and to your God."—John 20:17

The last title is in many ways the most beautiful:

### **The Prince of Peace!**

Today the world yearns for peace. The cries which would go forth at this end of the age, as foretold in prophecy many centuries ago: "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14; 8:11), are indeed an accurate description of our day. All around us, in every country of the world, there is a great longing and recognition of the need for world peace. And yet the terrible threat of imminent war hangs over earth like a deadly pall. A recent article in a newspaper portrayed the Middle East as a "war waiting to happen."

But in his kingdom, Jesus will indeed bring peace to the troubled world of mankind, just as easily as he calmed the stormy Sea of Galilee. Although he will rule the nations with a "rod of iron" (Rev. 2:27), and will "bind" the kings of earth (Ps. 149:8), yet he will also shepherd them, and tenderly care for his flock. (Isa. 40:10,11) How fitting that shepherds and kings paid tribute to Jesus at his birth—how fitting that he should be of the house of David, the shepherd-king—for he himself would be a shepherd and a king!

Regarding Christ's universal kingdom, we read: "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."—Isa. 9:7

Another description of the glorious kingdom to come was spoken of earlier in this chapter, where we read: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them

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hath the light shined." (vs. 2) This prophecy shows the great need in the kingdom for the Sun of righteousness to shine. The Prophet Malachi said, "The Sun of righteousness shall arise, with healing in his wings." (Mal. 4:2) The rising of the glorious sun of righteousness shall dispel all the noxious vapors of sin and ignorance.

Before world peace can be achieved, there must be peace among families, among neighbors, among villages and cities, among states, and then finally there will be peace among countries. But first and foremost, there must be peace between God and man, bringing peace in men's hearts, before there can be any other peace in the world. And only the Prince of Peace has the wisdom and the power to accomplish this.

This was the purpose for which the babe was born in Bethlehem, whose birthday we celebrate at this time of the year. Jesus himself drew this to our attention (Luke 4:16-20) when he stood up in the synagogue and read, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the LORD." (Isa. 61:1,2) Later he told his disciples that this promised kingdom would not come immediately, but that "this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."—Matt. 24:14

Many thoughts go through our minds at this season of the year. When we think of the grace of God, and of the love of Jesus, our hearts cry out, 'What great things he hath done for us!' And our thoughts continue to reach out, asking, 'What am I, as a follower of Christ, doing here? As a Christian, what is my purpose for being?' The answer comes from the Prophet Isaiah, (paraphrasing): "He has anointed me to preach the Gospel, for the Gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world, to all nations!" This is each Christian's commission.



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In the writings of the Apostle Paul he outlined the manner in which we were called by God, chosen or selected by God through his grace and mercy for the accomplishment of his purpose. Yes, stupendous thought!—we were chosen and called by God to share in the restoration of all which was lost—life, perfection, friendship with God, health, joy, security, peace, and much, much more—and all these promises and hopes were instilled by the birth of Jesus and guaranteed by his death and resurrection!

Paul continued to explain that the nation of Israel had the first opportunity to be chosen of God for the great privilege of the high calling. (Romans, chapter 11) However, they did not acknowledge or follow the words of the prophets who had been sent to them throughout the centuries. Nor did they recognize God's own Son as the promised Messiah when he was sent to them. And so the opportunity went, instead, to the Gentiles. The apostle used the simile of the grafting procedure to depict the way the Gospel went to the Gentiles. They were pictured as 'wild branches' grafted onto the original root—the Abrahamic Covenant—contrary to nature. (vs. 23) It is contrary to nature because the actual process of grafting takes place in the opposite manner—the hybrid branches are grafted onto wild roots.

Paul became so exuberant in the consideration of the wonders of God's great mercy and kindness, that he sang out praise to his Heavenly Father: "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the LORD, or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen!"—vss. 33-36

Concluding this chapter on a note of high and glorious praise, he began the 12th chapter by saying, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,

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which is your reasonable service." (vs. 1) In I Corinthians 1:26, lest we feel unworthy of a call to such a high position, Paul said: "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence. . . . That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the LORD."—vss. 26-31; Jer. 9:23,24

"Preach the Word! Be instant in season and out of season." (II Tim. 4:2) Preach the birth of Christ. Preach the good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. Preach that whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved, for there is still a harvest work to be done. But, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"—Rom. 10:13-15; Isa. 52:7

The spirit of Christmas is the spirit of giving—a spirit which stems directly from God, evidenced by the gift to us of his only begotten Son! What is a reasonable gift for us to return to God? The only reasonable gift is the gift of ourselves—our time, talent, our love. As the Apostle James wrote: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works [works of love], is dead, being alone."—James 2:14-17

Let us praise God for his unspeakable gift! Blessed be the name of the LORD!

Tell me the old, old story of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love.  
Tell me the story simply, as to a little child,  
For I am weak and weary, and helpless and defiled.  
Tell me the old, old story, tell me the old, old story,  
Tell me the old, old story, of Jesus and his love. □

Listen to

**"Frank  
and  
Ernest"**

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**WXTA-1330**  
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**DECEMBER:**

**2-Gospel of the Kingdom**  
**9-Peace through Christ's**  
**Kingdom**  
**16-The Prince of Peace**  
**23-Goodwill toward Men**

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

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On Sunday, December 16th, "Frank and Ernest" will discuss a topic of interest to many. Attractive circulars are available for announcing this program, and you are invited to send for as many as you can use. They are free. Address your request to:

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## INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDY LESSONS

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### LESSON FOR DECEMBER 2

## Can I Begin Again?

**KEY VERSE:** *"He arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."*—Luke 15:20

**SELECTED SCRIPTURE:** Luke 15:11-24

THE PARABLE OF the Prodigal Son is designed to emphasize the fact that Jesus showed interest in sinners, and taught that upon the basis of true repentance they could attain the favor of his Heavenly Father.

The important lesson of the parable is that of a father forgiving his erring son and receiving him back into his family. Indeed, a feast was arranged to celebrate the occasion of the prodigal's return. The elder son refused to take part in the celebration, complaining to his father that although he had served him faithfully throughout the years when his brother had been wasting his life, no celebration had ever been arranged for him—no "fatted calf" had ever been killed,

and no opportunity given to make merry with his friends.

This parable clearly illustrates the sin of jealousy in a matter of no less importance than life itself. However, unlike the elder son, the father looked upon the return of his younger son as though he had received him back from the dead. The boy's sin had not destroyed the father's love for him.

But it is important to note that the prodigal son had repented of his wrongdoing, and had returned humbly to his father, not even asking to be reinstated as a son, but merely that he might become one of the servants. Here we have illustrated an important principle in God's dealings with all his intelligent creatures, whether angels or

men, Jews or Gentiles, Pharisees or publicans. Repentance is essential in order to have one's sins forgiven.

God's love for the sin-cursed human race motivated him to send his beloved Son to be a savior and redeemer. But as individuals no one receives any benefit from this except upon the basis of repentance and dedication to do the Father's will. There are two aspects of a sinner's return to God. There is God's part in providing the atoning blood, and there is the sinner's part of repentance and consecration. The Master taught that those who sincerely endeavor to be righteous, have no right to be jealous when sinners repent and are accepted with rejoicing into the favor of God.

The lesson might also be that no matter how outwardly righteous one might be, to take the attitude of the elder brother in the parable would itself indicate an impure heart condition. It would surely reveal a lack of true godlikeness. Our Heavenly Father stands ready to embrace all who return to him in humility and true repentance.

The father of the prodigal son spoke of having received him back from the dead. It was as though the young man had been dead. We can understand the heart rejoicing and sympathetic understanding of this loving father.

But these sentiments are not shared by some who are not willing to concede that sinners who have actually gone into death and will be restored to life, can possibly receive any consideration from the Heavenly Father. How thankful we are to have learned that the love of God is broader than the measure of many human minds which have been distorted by erroneous views concerning him!

The important lesson of the parable is that we are to maintain a sympathetic, loving attitude toward the erring, rejoicing at evidence of repentance or endeavor to walk in the ways of the LORD more perfectly. Our attitude toward those who repent of their wrongdoing should be based upon what they are today, rather than on their erroneous conduct of yesterday. Thus we will be like our Father who is in heaven. □

## What Makes Religion Real?

**KEY VERSE:** *"Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*—**Luke 18:14**

**SELECTED SCRIPTURE:** **Luke 18:9-14**

**H**UMILITY BEFORE GOD and man is an essential trait of character for all who would be pleasing to the LORD. To teach this lesson to his disciples Jesus called a little child into their midst, and said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."—**Matt. 18:2-4**

In an admonition to the elders and to the church as a whole, the Apostle Peter wrote, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall

receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. . . . God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."—**I Pet. 5:2-6**

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. . . . Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, yet did not [snatch at equality with God, *The New English Bible*]; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given

him a name which is above every name." —Phil. 2:3-11

Thus we find that Jesus, Peter, and Paul all enlarge upon the thought expressed in our text, that he that humbles himself shall be exalted. On the other hand, he that exalts himself "shall be abased." This lesson was beautifully set forth by Jesus in a parable, saying: "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher; then thou shalt have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee."—Luke 14:8-10

It is essential to be humble before God. Jesus did not aspire to be equal with God. This is in contrast with Lucifer, who said in his heart, "I will be like the Most High." (Isa. 14:12-14) In keeping

with the divine principles by which God governs his vast universe, the time will come when Lucifer shall be forever abased in the minds of all God's intelligent creatures, and ultimately destroyed. But as Paul reminds us, the Logos, who took the course of humility, has already been exalted to the divine nature, to the right hand of the throne of God.

In the parable of our lesson, the Pharisee and publican went to the Temple to pray. The Pharisee thanked God that he was not like other men—especially the publican. But the publican smote his breast, and begged God to be merciful to him. He went away justified, but the Pharisee did not. (Luke 18: 10-14) The man with humility found God's favor.

Jehovah is himself humble. "Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!" —Ps. 113:4-8

How fortunate it is for us that the LORD is humble. Is our attitude toward God and man also one of humility? □

## What Gives You Worth?

**KEY VERSE:** *"The lord said unto the servant, go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."*—Luke 14:23

**SELECTED SCRIPTURE:** *Luke 14:12-24*

JESUS GAVE THIS parable, relating that "a certain man made a great supper, and bade many." When the supper was ready and the invited guests were summoned to assemble and partake, they began to make excuses as to why they could not be present. The servant of the householder reported this situation to his master, who then instructed the servant to go out into the streets and invite others to come to enjoy the supper. The poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind were to be invited. But when these instructions had been carried out, he told his master that there was still room at the feast.

So the servant was sent into the highways and hedges to constrain people to come to the feast, that the master's house might be filled with guests. He was determined, however, that none of the

originally invited guests who had spurned his invitation should have an opportunity to change their minds.—Luke 14: 16-24

This parable illustrates God's plan for his people during the Gospel Age. Jehovah has made a great feast, relative to the spiritual phase of the kingdom, in which the followers of the Master are invited to share, referred to as "the marriage supper of the Lamb."—Rev. 19:7-9

Originally, the Jewish nation were the LORD's chosen or invited guests, who had been given the opportunity to partake of the feast. But for one reason or another the Israelites of Jesus' day were not ready for the opportunity then offered to them.

At Pentecost, still another call went out especially to the Jewish people. Those who were humble and ready, accepted. But there were not



sufficient guests to fill the house. Therefore the call went to the Gentiles, and throughout the Gospel Age it has continued. In due time the LORD's predetermined number of guests for the supper will be found.

The "certain man" in the parable is Jehovah, and the "son" for whom he made a marriage feast, is his beloved Son, Christ Jesus. Jehovah is indeed the great king of the universe and in his plan for the redemption of the human race he has arranged that his beloved Son will have a "bride," and that there shall be a marriage supper.

It had been predetermined who would have the privilege of participating in the marriage. The many invited guests represented the Israelites, particularly those living at the time of our Lord's First Advent. The majority of these, even as shown by the parable, not only declined the invitation, but evilly treated those who offered the invitation, bitterly persecuting many of the faithful servants of the LORD, both before and after Pentecost.

It is also historically true that in A.D. 70-73 the Jewish nation was destroyed, and thousands killed. But this did not change the king's plan for the marriage of his Son. Invitations have since gone out into the highways—to the Gentiles—giving opportunity for other guests to prepare themselves for the feast and for the marriage.

The parable states that in sending out the general call to the marriage and the feast, both the 'good' and the 'bad' were to be brought in. The thought is that as the Gospel call has gone forth throughout the world, all sorts of people have responded to it. In most instances those who respond are sincere, but many fail later to measure up to all that is required of them.

"Many are called, but few are chosen." This is a point that is emphasized in the Scriptures. The Apostle Peter speaks of making our "calling and election sure." (II Pet. 1:10) The same thought is mentioned by the Revelator when he speaks of those who are with the Lamb as the "called, and chosen, and faithful."—Rev. 17:14 ☐

## What Does Jesus Mean to You?

**KEY VERSE:** *"The thief cometh not, but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."*—John 10:10

**SELECTED SCRIPTURE:** Luke 2:8-12

JESUS, BY VIRTUE of his sacrifice on behalf of the sheep, became the 'door' into the sheepfold. By giving his life for the sheep, Jesus redeemed them from death, and from bondage to the Law; he also demonstrated his love for the sheep, his genuine interest in their welfare. To the sheep this is very important, as it proves to them that they can have confidence in such a shepherd. Anyone who pretends to be a shepherd and is not willing to lay down his life for the sheep is not to be trusted.

The voice of the Good Shepherd today is still the voice of truth, the truth that is composed of the great fundamentals of the divine plan of the ages. This voice speaks of the wisdom, justice, love, and power of the Creator, and gives assurance of his design to bless all the families of

the earth through Christ and his church of the Gospel Age. It is a glorious message, and we feel secure in the flock that hears, recognizes, and follows it as they journey in the narrow way toward the heavenly kingdom.

The voice of the Good Shepherd, the voice of truth, is a unifying influence among the LORD's people. Fancy interpretations of obscure portions of the Word intrigue a few for a little while, but often lead to a spirit of separation, certain ones feeling that they have advanced a little beyond the others. The voice of the Good Shepherd never leads to this situation.

The Good Shepherd is more interested in the welfare of all his flock than in himself. This is why Jesus laid down his life for his sheep. Shepherds who do not have this same interest are not true

representatives of Jesus. One who is interested in securing a following for himself regardless of the needs of the flock as a whole is not a true shepherd. He is serving for his own gain, and is styled by Jesus, a 'hireling'.

A hireling shepherd, Jesus explains, will flee when the sheep are in danger of being scattered and destroyed by wolves. A true shepherd will do all he can to protect the sheep—he will lay down his life doing this even as Jesus did, if need be. As a shepherd representing Jesus, his own interests will always be secondary to the interests of those whom he serves.

In the parable, Jesus emphasized that the reason he laid down his life for the sheep is because he 'knew' the Heavenly Father's plan of redemption, and how divine love was manifested therein. Jesus and his Father were one in carrying out the plan of salvation. Jesus' love for the world was the same as his Father's love; and with such a love motivating all that he said and did, he could not be other than a Good Shepherd who would lay down his life

for the sheep. The greater our knowledge of our great Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus, the more firmly we will trust them, and enthusiastically follow the voice of the Good Shepherd.

Jesus further explained that the Father loved him because he loved the sheep. Throughout the centuries many had essayed to represent Jehovah as servants of his people, but for the most part they had sought their own interests, and had persecuted the true prophets whom God specially sent to his people. These were the thieves and the robbers who only appeared to be shepherds. What a contrast was Jesus' attitude! No wonder the Father loved him! His love for each one of us is also in proportion to our love for the brethren.

The Apostle John, wrote: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (I John 3:14) This is an assurance that if we continue to follow the voice of our Lord, we will have life, and "that more abundantly." □

## Is God Fair?

**KEY VERSE:** *"The last shall be first, and the first last."*—Matthew 20:16

**SELECTED SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 20:1-16

WHAT BEAUTIFUL truths concerning the Christian life are illustrated by the "penny" parable when viewed in the light of the Master's own introduction to it! The parable illustrates the basis upon which the called ones may prove worthy of living and reigning with Christ—they must give their all, regardless of how little or how much that may be.

In relating the parable, Jesus anticipated that there might well be some who, when learning of this arrangement, would not be satisfied with it, so he showed just how wrong such an attitude would be. In effect, it would be calling in question the justice and wisdom of God.

The "first" ones to be hired are said to complain because they did not receive more wages than those who had worked fewer hours. The householder's reply to this complaint is in the form of a

simple question: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" An important prerogative of our Heavenly Father is here set forth, upon which the Apostle Paul enlarged. We quote:

"O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?"—Rom. 9:16-21

One of the important lessons of the parable is that none of God's servants has the right to criticize him for the manner in which he bestows his benefactions. The setting of the parable also throws much light on its meaning. Peter, having in mind Jesus' earlier reply to the rich young ruler, asked, "Behold we have forsaken all

and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" This parable was included in Jesus' answer. At its close the expression is repeated: "So the last shall be first, and the first last." Jesus noted that the parable is the explanation of how the 'first is last', and the 'last first', as stated earlier.

Jesus used this expression at another time when alluding to the fact that Israel as a nation, the 'first' recipients of the Gospel, would lose their exclusive position of favor, and Gentiles, those who had been 'last', would have the opportunity to share their blessings. (Luke 13:24-30) When this actually happened a few years later much dissatisfaction was registered by the Jewish brethren. It erupted into the single greatest problem in the Early Church.

Important for all the LORD's people throughout the age is the need to have full confidence in Jesus and in his Heavenly Father—to recognize that they have the right to reward their servants in any way they desire—that whatever rewards they mete out are unmerited. It is by grace that we attain unto the

"great salvation," not by any works of our own.—Heb. 2:3

The amount of work done by the followers of the Master has no bearing on the reward received. This is emphasized in the parable by the exchange of position. The 'first' workers hired put in more hours, but the 'last' ones to be hired were placed in their position and became 'first', while the original 'first' ones became 'last'. However, all receive the penny, emphasizing that the number of hours worked did not enter into the amount of wages paid. The disciple who follows the Master for many years will receive no greater reward in the kingdom than one who has been faithful for a very short period of time—none could work long enough to deserve them. The priceless penny is given to those who demonstrate their faithfulness by giving their all, regardless of how much that might be.

In the parable Jesus emphasizes how wrong it would be for any of us when we understand it, to question God's goodness and justice in making this arrangement. □

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## CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

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### PART ONE OF A TWO-PART SERIES

*We address this article to recent publications expressing doubt concerning what we believe to be a correct understanding of our Lord's second presence.*

*The fact of his invisible presence during the current Gospel Age harvest was considered a foundation doctrine of the truth during the days of Pastor Russell's ministry, well substantiated by the time prophecies of the Bible, and their related fulfillment in his time. Events that have transpired during the more than seventy years since his death have served to reconfirm many times over that his view was indeed correct.*

*We strongly believe this, and here are some of our reasons.*

### Our Lord's Return

**I**N THIS DAY of chaos and threatened destruction by the misuse of nuclear fusion and by environmental pollution, the hearts of the people are filled with fear as they look ahead to what may happen to themselves and to the human race if no solution for the world's troubles can be found. Students of the Bible who have faith in its promises and prophecies believe that the only solution to the problems which have been brought about by human sin and selfishness is the return of Christ and the setting up of his long-promised kingdom of righteousness and peace.

Views concerning this great event in the plan of God are widely variant. Some claim that Jesus returned at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting disciples, and that since then, as each sinner is converted, it constitutes a further coming of Christ, and that when all are converted he will have fully come. We are told that this is the way Jesus

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fulfills his promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [age]."—Matt. 28:20

On the other hand, many claim that Jesus will return to earth as a man and that he will be recognized by the print of the nails in his hands and in his feet and by the spear wound in his side, which he received at the time of his crucifixion. This latter view depends to a considerable extent upon a literal interpretation of certain prophecies, such as that of Revelation 1:7, where we read, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him."

We believe that the truth of the matter, supported by the entire testimony of the Scriptures, lies between these two extreme and opposing views. The first view erroneously renounces the necessity of a personal coming of Christ yet approximates the truth concerning the nature of Jesus, in that it considers him to be so far above humans in nature that he can be said to be present with them without their being able to see him.

The second view holds to the clearly established scriptural fact of a personal return of the Master, but circumscribes the grandeur and possibilities of that momentous event by the unscriptural claim that he returns to earth as a sort of glorified man and not the powerful, invisible divine being which he became when the Heavenly Father raised him from the dead and gave him a name which is above every name.

The Scriptures teach that when Jesus was raised from the dead he was no longer a human, but a powerful divine being, the "image of the invisible God." (Col. 1:15; II Cor. 5:16; I Pet. 3:18) This means that by nature Jesus is now invisible to the human eye, even as God is invisible. It is this divine Christ who returns to earth; hence the fact of his return will need to be recognized otherwise than by seeing him with the natural eye.

True, Jesus did appear as a man to his disciples on several occasions following his resurrection, but this does not mean that he was, by nature, still a human. The circumstances of his few brief appearances prove to the contrary. For exam-

ple, he always appeared in a different body, which would not have been the case had the human body in which he appeared been his real body.

Only once did Jesus appear in a body similar to the one which was crucified, and that was because Thomas made it plain that he would not believe the Master had been raised from the dead unless he could see his wounds. Jesus satisfied his lack of faith, although only this once did the disciples see any wounds, and this appearance is described by the Apostle John as one of the "signs" by which Jesus proved to them that he had been raised from the dead. (John 20:29-31) On the other occasions of Jesus' appearances to his disciples after his resurrection, they did not recognize him by his personal appearance, but by the things which he said and did.

Jesus' appearances to his disciples after his resurrection were of the same nature as those of angels in more ancient times. For example, three angels appeared to Abraham. They talked and ate with him, but they were not humans—although for a time Abraham thought that they were.—Gen. 18:1,2; Heb. 13:2

Jesus was present with his disciples for forty days between the time of his resurrection and his ascension; but during only a very small portion of this time were the disciples able to see him, and then only when he miraculously appeared to them. It is this Jesus, who is able to be invisibly present among humans, who was to return to earth for the purpose of establishing his kingdom of righteousness by means of which the redeemed race of mankind is to have the problems of human selfishness solved, and be restored to happiness and life upon the earth.

### **Jesus' Flesh a Ransom**

Jesus was made flesh in order that he might give his humanity as a corresponding price—a ransom for Adam and his race. The Master said, "My flesh . . . I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:51) Had Jesus been raised from the dead as a human it would have meant that the ransom was



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taken back, and that the world of mankind would not have been redeemed.

But the Scriptures show that while Jesus was put to death in the flesh he was made alive in the Spirit, or as a spirit being. (I Cor. 15:44-47; I Pet. 3:18) Jesus had previously explained to Nicodemus that one who is born of the Spirit can come and go as the wind, that is, be invisible to the human eye and have great power. He proved this to be true in his own case, for after his resurrection his disciples could not tell from whence he came or whither he went when appearing to them.—John 3:8

That Jesus still has the power to appear to humans as he did to his disciples following his resurrection from the dead we do not dispute. However, the Scriptures do not say that his return to earth will be revealed to the world in this manner. His appearances to his disciples following his resurrection were evidently intended to establish in the minds of the disciples the fact that he had been raised from the dead; but this fact having been established we have no reason to expect their repetition.

In Romans 1:20 we read concerning God that "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." Here is a key which will help us to understand the significance of the prophecies pertaining to the return of Christ. He is now invisible to human eyes, even as the Heavenly Father is invisible; hence at his return he can be recognized only by the visible things which transpire and which can be identified through the prophecies of the Bible as the "signs" which were to mark his second visit to earth.

Let us state the matter in another way. We believe in the existence of God, not because we have ever seen him, but because we see his works. With our limited abilities we survey the vast universe and we say there must be a powerful, all-wise Creator back of this. Similarly, in the divine Word we find set forth an impressive array of events which were to

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take place in the world following the return of the divine Christ; hence, if we can see that many of these events are already taking place, the logical conclusion is that that which the Bible describes as Christ's second visit to earth must already be a reality.

### **God of this World Invisible**

The Scriptures teach that there is a personal Devil, yet no human has ever seen him; but we have all seen the result of his nefarious influence. The Apostle Paul informs us that Satan is the "god of this world," the one who now works in the hearts of the "children of disobedience." (II Cor. 4:4) Paul also explains that Satan is a spirit who is the "prince of the power of the air." (Eph. 2:2) Jesus spoke of Satan as the "prince of this world." (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) If we believe the Bible we must realize that this powerful being has, throughout the centuries, been exercising control over the affairs of men.

The Devil is the invisible ruler of "this present evil world." Peter declares that he goes about as a "roaring lion" seeking whom he may devour. (I Pet. 5:8) This clearly indicates that Satan's field of operation is right here on earth; yet even those who realize this most fully have never heard him literally "roar."

With the return of Jesus, and as a result of his presence, a new world, or social order, is ultimately to be instituted, and in this new social order Jesus will be the king, supplanting the rulership of Satan. In vision John saw an angel come down from God out of heaven and lay hold upon Satan and bind him with a mighty chain. Following this, Christ and his church are seen to reign for a thousand years. As Satan, who is bound, is invisible, certainly the agencies which bind him, likewise must be invisible.—Rev. 20:1-4,6

Satan's power and influence in this, the present evil world, are no less potent because of his invisibility. On the contrary, it has given him a certain advantage in that, unseen, he has been a powerful force for evil. Thus he has

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been able to make his influence felt in the council chambers of the rulers and princes of earth, and to a considerable extent direct their affairs. Jesus' rulership will also be an invisible one, exercised through human agencies. He will rule the people with a rod of iron; but he will rule them in righteousness and not in unrighteousness as Satan has done. Even as the evil results of Satan's rulership are now easily discerned, so Jesus' reign will be recognized by all mankind through the righteous results that will be accomplished.

### **Truth Concealed by a Mistranslation**

Important truths pertaining to the manner of our Lord's return have been long hidden by a mistranslation. As we all know, the Bible was not originally written in the English language, hence we who use the English language must depend upon translations from the original Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. While in most instances in our English Bibles very little of the richness of meaning has been lost through mistranslation, there are exceptions in which profound truths of the divine plan have been long hidden by unwitting mistranslations.

One of these exceptions is in the case of the Greek word *parousia* which is used by Jesus and the apostles to describe the Master's second visit to earth. In our *King James Version* of the Bible this word is almost universally translated "coming." The result of this has been that many students of prophecy have attempted to interpret the prophetic signs pertaining to our Lord's return as denoting that his coming was near. However, the true meaning of this Greek word is 'presence', and it follows that the fulfilled signs of the Master's *parousia*, or presence, indicate that he is already here.

When, for example, the disciples inquired of Jesus, "What shall be the sign of thy coming [*parousia*, 'presence']?" (Matt. 24:3) they were not asking how they might know in advance when he would come, but how they would know of his presence when he had come. In other words, they

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wanted to know what visible things they were to look for as tokens that the invisible Christ had returned and that his kingdom would ultimately be established.

Archeological discoveries reveal that the Greek word *parousia* was used in ancient times to describe the visits of kings and emperors to various cities and provinces of their realms. One such discovery shows that taxes to pay the expenses of such a visit were raised by the issuing of a special "*parousia* coin." How appropriate, then, that this word should be used in connection with the visit to earth of the King of kings, and Lord of lords! (Ps. 8:4) But, as in the case of the earthly rulers whose visits are thus described, so with Jesus, *parousia* does not merely mean the moment of coming, but covers the entire duration of the visit.

The first presence of Jesus, when he was here on earth as a man, lasted in all but thirty-three and one-half years. He remained forty days longer as a divine being, invisible to the world, and then he returned to the heavenly courts. There are many prophecies in the Old Testament concerning Jesus' first presence. Some tell of his birth, some of one or another part of his life and ministry. Some tell of his death as man's Redeemer. The fulfillment of these prophecies did not, as a rule, run concurrently.

The prophecies and promises of Christ's second visit to earth likewise cover a great variety of events, culminating in the destruction of death and Satan. The fulfillment of some of these prophecies runs concurrently, but in other instances there is a sequence of events. This calls for carefulness in our study of the prophecies relating to Christ's second visit lest we fall into the mistake of expecting them all to be fulfilled at a given moment of time, or within a relatively short period of time.

### **Manner of His Presence**

Jesus said to his disciples, "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the light-

ning [Greek, **astrape**, 'bright shining'] cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall the coming [**parousia**, 'presence'] of the Son of man be." (Matt. 24:26,27) By these words Jesus is conveying to our minds that his coming and presence were not to be like that of a human. He was to return as a great divine being, the express image of his Father's invisible person. You won't find me, Jesus is saying, hidden away in some secret chamber, as you might find a man or a woman. Rather, you will discern my presence even as you discern the existence of God himself, and that is by the great things which you ascribe to him.

And so it is. We behold the sunshine and the rain, watering the earth and warming it that it may bring forth and provide for those upon it. So Jesus explained that we would know of his second presence because it will be like the lightning, or bright shining, which, similar to the sun, comes out of the east and shines even unto the west. The blessings to be dispensed to humankind after being brought forth from their graves during the time of Christ's presence are represented as coming to the people because the "Sun of righteousness" shall arise, bringing healing and life to the peoples of earth.—Mal. 4:2

### **An Increase of Knowledge**

As we have noted, Jesus explained that his second presence would be like a bright shining. (Matt. 24:26,27) Here unmistakably is the idea of enlightenment, symbolizing increasing knowledge. The Prophet Daniel, describing conditions which were to obtain in the "time of the end," declares among other things that "knowledge shall be increased." (Dan. 12:4) The "time of the end" here referred to is the period in which the rule of sin, selfishness, and death is to be brought to an end as a result of Christ's return and second presence. The world is even now experiencing this foretold increase of knowledge; but, because fallen man does not have the wisdom to use it properly, chaos results, even threatening the destruction of the human race.

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Due to man's unwisdom and selfishness, his great strides in knowledge have already led to what the Prophet Daniel described as a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." (Dan. 12:1) In speaking of this same time, Jesus said there would be tribulation on the earth so great that unless it was shortened no flesh would survive. We face this very situation today. The misuse of nuclear fusion, as well as the pollution of our environment, could well cause the destruction of all living things on the earth. Indeed, only divine intervention through the establishment of the long-promised kingdom of Christ will prevent this.

Through the agencies of Christ's kingdom, when established, the increase of knowledge will be a great boon to humanity, especially in the fact that then it will include an understanding of God and of his love in providing redemption from sin and death through the sacrificial work of Jesus. The long reign of sin and death under Satan, the prince of this world, is described in the Bible as a nightmare of darkness. The Prophet Isaiah wrote, "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." And in contrast we read concerning the time when Christ's kingdom will be governing in the affairs of men, "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."—Isa. 60:2,3; Luke 2:32

In John 1:9 it is said that Jesus is that "true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The prophecies clearly show that the complete fulfillment of this promise will be during the second presence of Christ; that ultimately the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:9) Not until the end of the reign of Christ and his church will this prophecy be completely fulfilled.

### **"He Cometh in Clouds"**

In Revelation 1:7 we are informed that Jesus returns in clouds, and that every eye shall see him. As Christ is a divine

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being, the express image of God himself, humans can see him only through the incidents and events which accompany his return. The time will yet come—and that time is not far off, we believe—when these events will be of such a pronounced character that all will readily recognize their true significance.

In Joel 2:1,2 there is further reference to the "clouds" which become so distressingly ominous in the period of Christ's presence prior to the establishment of his kingdom. Here we are informed that this period is not to be a time of peace but, rather, the reverse. It is to be "a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations."

It will be noted from this that the clouds here mentioned by the prophet really consist in this case of "a great people and a strong," the like of which has never before been known. This is evidently a reference to the uprising of the discontented of mankind in such tremendous numbers as to cause civilization to crumble and fall under the impact of the revolutionary struggle they precipitate.

These clouds of trouble are even now forming. Already the people of earth are filled with fear because of them, although as yet they do not "see" the Master's presence as being associated with the forces which are gradually destroying "this present evil world." Jesus said that there would be great mourning because of his presence, that there would be upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity. (Luke 21:25, 26; Matt. 24:30) How perplexed the people of earth are today! No permanent solutions can be found for the many baffling problems which combine to fill the world with chaos, and the hearts of the people with fear.

(Continued on Page 37)

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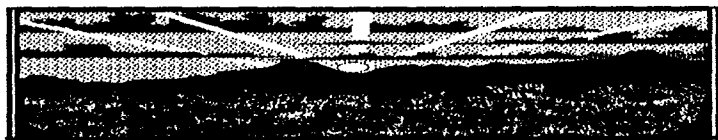
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# "FRANK AND ERNEST" . . .

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### ARKANSAS

Little Rock KAAV 1090 6:30 a.m.

### CALIFORNIA

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 Sacramento KJAY 1430 10:00 a.m.  
 San Francisco KEST 1450 3:30 p.m.  
 Tehachapi KTFI-FM 103.1 10:15 a.m.

### FLORIDA

Jacksonville WXTL 1010 7:45 p.m.  
 Orlando WVCF 1480 4:30 p.m.

### ILLINOIS

LaSalle WLPO 1220 9:45 a.m.  
 Rockford WRRR 1330 6:15 a.m.  
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### INDIANA

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Goodland KLOE 730 7:15 a.m.  
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Bowling Green WLBJ 1410 8:00 a.m.  
 Winchester WHRS 10:30 a.m.

### MICHIGAN

Detroit CKLW 800 7:45 a.m.

### NEW JERSEY

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

### NEW MEXICO

Los Alamos KRSN 1490 6:45 a.m.

### NEW YORK

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

### PLEASE TAKE NOTE

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

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Cincinnati WNOP 740 9:00 a.m.

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### PENNSYLVANIA

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

### SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston WOKE 1340 7:06 p.m.  
 Beaufort (Fri.) WVGB 1490 2:00 p.m.

### VIRGINIA

Richmond WGOM 1410 7:45 a.m.

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 Tacoma KAMT 1360 7:30 a.m.

### WISCONSIN

Milwaukee WNOV 85.6 7:00 a.m.  
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### MANITOBA

Winnipeg CKJS 810 9:00 a.m.

### QUEBEC

Montreal CFMB 1410 5:15 p.m.

### SASKATCHEWAN

Weyburn CFSL 1190 8:45 a.m.

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## Overseas Broadcasts

### BRITISH ISLES

Radio Caroline (Tues.) KHZ 819-AM 8:45 p.m.

### BRITISH WEST INDIES

Grand Cayman Radio Cayman 9:30 a.m.

Trinidad Radio Trinidad 610 10:30 p.m.

### ECUADOR (Spanish)

Quito Radio Anoranza (Sat.) 99.7-FM 8:45 a.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)

Culiacán Ranchera XECQ 8:30 a.m.

### NEW ZEALAND

Dunedin 4XD 11:15 a.m.

### NIGERIA

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

### PANAMA (Spanish)

Panama City HOQ 1250 10:30 a.m.

### PHILIPPINES

Manila (Sat.) DZAM 1096 KHz 7:15 p.m.

### SOUTH AFRICA

Joubert Park (Thurs.) SWAZI Music

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

### SRI LANKA

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

### TONGA

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

### URUGUAY (Spanish)

Montevideo Radio El Espectador 810 9:15 a.m.

Ye are the light of the world. . .



## .... WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

**"The Bible Answers" television programs are aired each Sunday afternoon from 12:00 to 12:30 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, on the stations listed below. The times, days and channels of those listings marked with an asterisk (\*) can be found in your local newspaper.**

### Canadian Broadcasts

#### ALBERTA

Brooks CIBQ 1340 9:00 a.m.

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan CKAY 1507 9:00 a.m.

Duncan CKAY 1800 7:30 p.m.

Nanaimo CHUB 1570 9:30 p.m.

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

#### MANITOBA

Winnipeg CKJS 810 9:00 a.m.

#### QUEBEC

Montreal CFMB 1410 5:15 p.m.

#### SASKATCHEWAN

Weyburn CFSL 1190 8:45 a.m.

Estevan CJSL 1280 8:45 a.m.

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Dunedin 4XD 11:15 a.m.

#### NIGERIA

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

#### PANAMA (Spanish)

Panama CHQ 1250:30 a.m.

#### PHILIPPINES

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

#### SOUTH AFRICA

Joubert Park (Thurs.) SWAZI Music  
Radio 1400 & shortwave 49 & 60 9:00 p.m.

#### SRI LANKA

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

#### TONGA

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

#### URUGUAY (Spanish)

Montevideo Radio El Espectador 810 9:15 a.m.

## **God's Hand over Israel**

But how, some may ask, will the people in general be made to recognize that these worldwide troubles are the death throes of the present social order and are caused largely by the presence of the king of the new world? The Scriptures indicate that one of the ways in which this will be brought about will be through divine intervention on behalf of the Jewish people in Israel. The experiences of the Jews throughout these days of trouble constitute additional evidence of Christ's second presence. It is the time, according to the Scriptures, when their land was to be restored to them. What has occurred along this line since 1914 is miraculous, and without doubt has been in preparation for the blessings which will be theirs in the messianic kingdom. This regathering of Israel was prophetically due at the very time when the nations as a whole were being gathered to the final destructive battle of Armageddon. Joel 3:1,2 reads, "Behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land."

This prophecy indicates that, while the Jewish people would be restored to their land, it would be amidst a time of trouble for them as well as for the nations in general; and other prophecies indicate that additional trouble is in store for them—which is not difficult to foresee, in view of the circumstances which have existed for several years, and which still exist.

It is not wise to go into detail concerning events which have not yet transpired, but the Scriptures do make it plain that near the end of the death-struggle of the nations, with virtual annihilation threatening them through the misuse of modern military implements of war and nuclear fusion, there will be an attack against the Israelites in their Promised Land,

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and that then the LORD will intervene on their behalf, rescue them from their enemies, and through their resurrected prophets and other worthies of ancient time establish his kingdom as a literal governing power over the whole earth.

Ezekiel 38:14-23 presents some of the details of this final trouble. The etymology of the names given to Israel's enemies in this prophecy indicates that they are used prophetically to identify armies, particularly of Europe and the Middle East. The prophecy shows that these forces eventually will attack the Jewish people. Agreeing with the prophecy of Joel already quoted, Ezekiel explains that the clouds are the anti-God forces which finally will threaten the destruction of the returned Israelites.—Ezek. 38:16

It will be a time of "shaking," the prophet explains. But the promise is that the LORD will deliver his ancient people, and that through this deliverance the "eyes" of the nations will discern the presence and the power of the new king of earth who, as the agent and right hand of Jehovah, will be directing the issue. (Ps. 110:5) Thus will all eyes discern the presence of Jesus in the clouds (Rev. 1:7) and become convinced of his majesty and glory through the new kingdom arrangements which will then be put into operation.

This same series of events will lead to the opening of the eyes of the Israelites. We read, "So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen [nations] shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel." (Ezek. 39:7) What a change this will bring about in the outlook of the Israelites! The defense of Israel by divine power will be merely the first manifestation of the operation of the new world powers. From then on the kingdom agencies will rapidly calm the storm of human passions, which by that time will have brought the people of the whole earth to a state of desperation and despair. (Concluded in January) ☐

### THE GOLDEN THREAD SERIES—PART 11



### When Dreams Come True

**T**HE SEVEN YEARS of plenty had passed, and the famine began to spread itself across the land. The people cried to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said, "Go unto Joseph: what he saith to you do." And Joseph opened all the storehouses in Egypt and sold to the Egyptians.

Soon, "all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because the famine was so sore in all lands." (Genesis 41:53-57) Joseph was now in a position of great power in the mighty kingdom of Egypt, and his influence spread even over other nations. He had to use wisdom and careful planning to distribute the food fairly, and to be sure it would last until the end of the seven long years of famine. Pharaoh was very pleased with the orderly way Joseph carried out these important responsibilities.

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When the famine struck Canaan, Jacob—Joseph's elderly father—was still living. He learned that food was available for purchase in Egypt. His family was hungry, without much to satisfy them. So he said to his sons, "Go down into Egypt and buy for us there that we may live, and not die from starvation." And so Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. (Genesis 42:1-3) The youngest, Benjamin (who was Joseph's full brother), Jacob kept at home because he did not want to send him into probable, or even possible, danger.

Benjamin was very dear to his father, not only because he was his youngest son, but also because he was the son of his dear wife, Rachel, who died when he was born. Jacob supposed that Joseph, Rachel's only other son, was dead too. Benjamin was, he thought, the only living tie Jacob had to link him with his beloved wife, Rachel, and he did not want to take any chances of losing him.

Therefore, only the ten older brothers made the journey to Egypt. Since "Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth [in wonderful fulfillment of his dreams!] And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them," but they did not recognize him. He spoke to them through an interpreter, so they believed he was an Egyptian. (Genesis 42:23) When they asked to buy food, he spoke roughly to them, and accused them of being spies who were trying to find out if the famine had made Egypt weak enough to invade. They insisted they were not spies—that they had simply come to buy food for their families—that they were all sons of one father. They described themselves as "twelve brethren, and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not." This reference to himself must have touched Joseph's heart, and he designed a test to see if they had changed since that time so long ago when they had sold him into slavery.



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At the time when they had sold Joseph to the merchants, his brothers had given no thought to how much Joseph would suffer, although he had cried to them, and had pleaded with them not to kill him, or to sell him. Neither did they consider how pained Jacob would be to lose his dear son. Their only thought concerned how much they hated Joseph!

Would they once again think only of themselves, or had their hearts softened with love for their father and for Benjamin? The test Joseph made of his brothers was this: he kept one brother, Simeon, a prisoner in Egypt, while the other nine men returned home with the food. Simeon would be let free only after they brought Benjamin to Joseph.—Genesis 42:6-20

This was a very hard demand. The brothers talked it over among themselves, not realizing Joseph could understand all they were saying. They admitted they had been guilty of mistreating and abusing Joseph, and decided this distress had come on them as a result. Joseph left the room and wept. Now he knew if it distressed his brothers to put Benjamin in danger, they had indeed changed. But he continued to put them to the test.

Very unwillingly the nine brothers left Simeon in prison in Egypt, taking their animals home loaded with sacks of food. Joseph had ordered his servants to return the money they had paid for the food, and to put it into the top of each sack. When the brothers discovered the coins, they were all afraid, feeling certain they would be chased and caught as thieves. But no one followed them, and they arrived home safely.

They explained to Jacob the strange events that happened in Egypt. They told their father of the governor's decision that Simeon be kept as a hostage until Benjamin was shown to Joseph, to prove their statement that the eleven men were all sons of one man—Jacob. (Genesis 42:29-34) Jacob was brokenhearted at the thought of Benjamin's going to Egypt, and the serious problems he might encounter there. He absolutely refused to let him go.—Verses 35-38

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But, as time passed and their supply of food diminished, and still the famine continued on and on, Jacob told his sons that another trip to Egypt was altogether necessary. Judah reminded his father that it would be useless for them to return to Egypt for grain unless Benjamin went with them. In the end, after Judah had promised faithfully to be personally responsible for the safety of Benjamin, Jacob allowed them to take their youngest brother with them.

Jacob, wanting to show his friendliness and goodwill toward the governor, prepared a present for him of spices, honey, almonds, and other nuts, and soothing balm. And he also instructed his sons to take with them the money for the original purchase, as well as for the new supply of provisions. (Genesis 43:1-14) As he sent them away, he gave them this blessing: "God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin."

Once again, when they reached the land of Egypt, they were brought before the governor. "And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, for these men shall dine with me at noon." Since they were taken to Joseph's residence they were afraid that Joseph was tricking them, possibly to force them to serve him as slaves. But after talking with Joseph's servants they were assured that they really were to be his guests for dinner.

Even Simeon had been released from prison and restored to them. While they were waiting for Joseph to arrive they were made comfortable by the servants, and their animals were fed and cared for. And when Joseph came home, they gave him the presents, "and bowed themselves to him to the earth." The dream God had given to Joseph in his boyhood was certainly becoming a clear reality!

Joseph had placed his brothers at the dinner table in the order of their birth. The brothers quietly expressed amazement to each other at the seating arrangement of the dinner table—they were in the proper order, from the eldest to the

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youngest. How did this Egyptian ruler know their ages? And why was Benjamin given five times as much as the others? But they soon forgot their questions and entered into the spirit of the dinner "and were merry" with Joseph."—Verses 32-34

During the meal, Joseph asked them questions about their father's health. He especially enjoyed talking to his younger brother, Benjamin, and blessed him, saying, "God be gracious to thee, my son." He had to excuse himself and go into his chambers where he wept for joy at seeing Benjamin. He washed his face so no trace of his tears could be noticed. He was still not fully convinced of their loyalty to his father, and it was not yet time to reveal himself to them as their brother.

The next morning everything seemed to be going well. All eleven prepared to leave Egypt for home with their new supplies. But Joseph wanted one final proof of their concern for Benjamin and their respect and regard for his father. As the bags of grain were being loaded onto the brothers' donkeys, he instructed his servant to put his own silver cup into Benjamin's sack of grain. He was then to follow after them and accuse Benjamin of stealing the cup. Just when they were relieved to be back together, and safely on their way home with supplies, this new evil suddenly struck them. They were brought back to Joseph, and again fell on the ground before him.

When Joseph announced his decision that Benjamin would be required to remain in Egypt as a slave, since he was the "thief," Judah acted as spokesman for the family. He boldly begged Joseph not to hold Benjamin responsible, explaining that if they returned home without him, his father, Jacob, would die from sorrow. Judah then offered to take Benjamin's punishment and stay in Egypt as Joseph's slave. "Let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord"; and then he said, "Let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? Lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father."—Genesis 44:33,34

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Joseph was satisfied now. He was completely convinced that his brothers had changed their ways and now were filled with concern for their father and for Benjamin. He ordered everyone to leave the room. "He wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now be not . . . angry with yourselves: for God did send me before you to preserve life."—Genesis 45:2,5

At first they were terrified to think perhaps Joseph intended some sort of revenge for the great wrong they had done him. But there was no need for them to fear—Joseph had already forgiven them. He realized that it was God who had sent him there to make him a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt, and to save the lives of his family. (Genesis 45:1-8) Joseph put his arms around his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. "He then kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him."—Verses 14,15

And when Pharaoh heard that Joseph's family was there, he was very pleased. He gave them wagons to bring all their families into Egypt to live until the famine was over. He gave them food for their journey, and he presented them with beautiful clothes. But to Benjamin, Joseph gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment!

The eleven brothers, when they arrived home in Canaan, told Jacob, "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." (Verse 26) They told him all the words of Joseph which he had said unto them. And when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, Israel said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive." (Verse 28) And God said, "I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again."—Genesis 46:4

Jacob lived in Egypt for seventeen years before he died. He made Joseph promise to bury him in Canaan where his fathers were buried before him. Joseph kept this promise.

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Jacob's funeral procession was probably one of the most splendid of all time! It included "all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt. And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company!"—Genesis 50:7-9

After Jacob's death, his brothers were afraid that now Joseph would carry out his revenge against them. They sent him a message, saying, "Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren. And Joseph wept when they spoke unto him. Joseph said unto them, Fear not, I will nourish you, and your little ones, and spoke kindly unto them." He continues, "God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."—Genesis 50:15-21,24

There are some very interesting comparisons we can make between Joseph and our Lord Jesus, whom Joseph pictured in type. Just as Joseph went into the unfriendly country of Egypt, so our Lord Jesus came here to earth from his heavenly home. Joseph was put in prison after he went into Egypt. And Jesus, after coming to earth was also put in prison. But it was much worse than the prison in which Joseph had been kept. Jesus was put into the grave, the great prison-house of death.

As Joseph was freed from prison and made a ruler, so Jesus was freed from the prison-house of the grave, and he will become a great ruler, too. He is the great king who will rule over all the earth. Just as Joseph provided food to keep all the people alive, so Jesus will provide food which will give life to everyone on the earth. The food which Jesus will provide will be so nourishing that the people who eat it will live forever! The Bible calls it the Bread of Life.

For additional lessons and comparisons, see ***"The People of the Bible,"*** pages 80 and 81.

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## QUESTIONS

1. What dreams were fulfilled by the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine?
2. How did Pharaoh take advantage of his foreknowledge that there would be seven years of famine?
3. Who was put in charge of food distribution?
4. Did the famine affect the nation of Israel as well as Egypt?
5. What did ten of Joseph's brothers do when they heard food could be bought in Egypt?
6. From whom did they request food? What dreams were fulfilled by these requests?
7. Did the brothers recognize Joseph?
8. When did Joseph reveal his identity to them?
9. Why did Joseph's father, brothers, and their families move to Egypt?
10. Whom did Joseph picture?



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## WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

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**DECEMBER 6**—"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."—Proverbs 25:28 (Z. '01-295 Hymn 183)

**DECEMBER 13**—"Lay not this sin to their charge."—Acts 7:60 (Z. '01-331 Hymn 63)

**DECEMBER 20**—"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth."—II Timothy 2:15 (Z. '02-318 Hymn 22)

**DECEMBER 27**—"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."—I John 5:21 (Z. '02-284 Hymn 256)

### "God Is No Respector of Persons"

**A**CTS 10:34,35 READS: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." These words were spoken by the Apostle Peter at the conclusion of a wonderful experience which marked a great change in God's dealings with men, when the Holy Spirit came upon Gentiles for the first time. It was a change in the sense that it was a step forward in the outworking of God's marvelous plan of salvation.

The Jews had been God's favored people for centuries. Being the natural seed of Abraham they fell heir to the promises which Jehovah had made to them through that patriarch. In Psalm 105:9-11 we read these words: "Which covenant he [God] made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance."

The Israelites enjoyed basking in the sunshine of God's love. Nevertheless, they refused to live up to their obligations to Jehovah. Surely, they said in their hearts, this favored arrangement will continue forever. When, in due time, their iniquity came to the full in their rejection of the Messiah, whom they hanged upon a cross, their house was left desolate. The predetermined time of seventy symbolic weeks of favor had run out; God's special protection and care over that nation was withdrawn completely.—Dan. 9:24

Only a remnant of Israel were considered worthy to pass from the house of servants to the house of sons, or to aspire to the higher spiritual promises and blessings. The rest, being blind, were rejected as unfit. They were not only unworthy

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to receive the high calling of God, but also were unworthy to continue to remain under the Law Covenant blessings.

During the centuries that Israel had ridden the crest of divine favor they had looked down upon the other nations as Gentile "dogs." This was a deep-rooted tradition in every Jewish heart. Jesus, himself, referred to it in his conversation with the woman of Canaan, who desired to have her daughter healed, and requested this special blessing of Jesus.—Matt 15:22-28

The apostles did not escape this influence either, as is clearly shown on the occasion when Peter was chosen to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. The LORD had to especially prepare Peter to be used as his agent in this matter. Peter had climbed to the housetop for meditation and prayer, when he had a vision sent to him by God. In this revelation a large sheet was let down from heaven filled with all kinds of unclean animals. And a voice spoke to Peter telling him to rise, slay and eat the animals. But Peter answered, "Not so, Lord."—Acts 10:14

From his words it is evident that he recognized from whom the instruction had come—from his Lord, Jesus Christ. He said, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing . . . unclean." The voice countered, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." This scene had to be repeated three times before Peter could accept that, in spite of the fact that the Jewish Law forbade the eating of unclean food, he was to partake of the unclean animals because "what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

Immediately after this amazing turn of events, Peter went down to the ground floor of his home where he found three Gentile men awaiting him. They had a request from their master, Cornelius, who required Peter's presence in his home. Peter suddenly began to realize that the vision of the unclean animals meant that the LORD expected him to accept the invitation to the home of this Gentile man, and that he was not to consider him 'unclean'. He hastily assembled



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six brethren to go with him, and started on his journey to the home of Cornelius.

After arriving there, and introductions had been made and the situation explained, Peter began to preach to them. He spoke concerning the great God of Israel who was carrying out a far-reaching plan of salvation centered in his Son, Christ Jesus. And he told them how Jesus died for the sins of all the people in order that they might live. Then he showed them that only through Jesus can come forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God, the Father.

When Peter had concluded his message an astonishing thing happened. The very same blessing which had come upon the Jewish believers at Pentecost was repeated in the house of Cornelius upon Gentile believers. They received the Holy Spirit! (Acts 10:25-48) The thrill of this marvelous experience caused Peter to make the statement recorded in verse 34. Peter could understand that now God was accepting Gentiles into his special favor, and that they would receive the same blessings as their Jewish predecessors who became Christians.

The acceptance of Gentile believers into the church caused quite a stir among the Jewish brethren. Up until that time the church had been strictly Israelitish. Some believers who had come from the sect of the Pharisees introduced the suggestion that Gentile believers should be circumcised and instructed to keep the Law of Moses, in order to be acceptable as brethren in Christ.

Paul and Barnabas, who evidently were a little more enlightened than some of the other disciples concerning this new feature of God's plan, contended with them in an endeavor to show that it was not the way of the LORD to insist that the Gentiles keep the Law. They explained that Gentiles were now acceptable on the same basis as the Jews were. And since Jews had discovered that they could not become justified before God through the works of the Law, neither would Gentiles find justification through the Law. They had

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learned that righteousness and acceptance by God was possible only through faith in Jesus and by following in his steps.

This new truth which was just dawning upon the infant church was strong meat to some of the Jewish brethren. And their suggestion was an attempt to modify the LORD's arrangement, to make it more palatable by insisting the Gentiles must follow the ordinances of the Law. However their suggestion met with the LORD's disapproval, and this message was conveyed through his chosen servants. Even Peter came to the defense of Paul and Barnabas, contending that the Gentiles were now just as acceptable to God as were the Jewish brethren simply through faith in Christ.

Paul expressed the will of God in this respect with these words, "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same LORD over all is rich unto all that call upon him." (Rom. 10:12) What a tradition-shattering statement this was upon the Jewish ear! For eighteen long centuries they, as a people, had enjoyed the special blessings of God, which they thought would continue forever. Yet the great Apostle Paul, himself a Jew, enlightened concerning the works of God and his ways, made a clear statement that no longer is there any difference in God's sight between Jews and Greeks [Gentiles]—absolutely none whatsoever! This unique idea entirely cast away tradition—it rid men's minds of the cobwebs which beclouded the issue concerning God's outworking of his plan on behalf of **all** people. But let us note what a peculiar turn events then took.

In another incident, Peter was again the chief actor. He who was so wonderfully used to open the high calling to the Gentiles, and who testified that God had revealed himself to be an impartial God, was now cast in an opposite role. Peter went to Antioch to enjoy the fellowship of the church there. It was predominantly a gathering made up of Gentiles, with only a few Jewish Christians. While they were enjoying a meal together, the Apostle James and a few other Jewish brethren came down from Jerusalem to drop in unexpectedly on the Antioch church. The account tells us that when

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Peter saw James and the Jewish brethren come into the gathering, he feared what the Jewish brethren would think when they discovered Peter eating with Gentiles. This, of course, had been forbidden under the Law arrangement. He feared those of the circumcision, and so immediately he separated himself from the Gentiles.—Gal. 2:11-21.

The Apostle Paul, who was also on the scene, noted this hypocrisy on the part of Peter, and immediately he reproved him. Had Peter learned the lesson that God was truly no respecter of persons? He himself had declared this wonderful statement! He himself was used on that special occasion when God demonstrated this great truth to him openly by shedding abroad the Holy Spirit upon Gentiles! Yet here was Peter, under a different set of circumstances, behaving himself contrary to the LORD's definite and plainly stated instructions at the time he had showed his acceptance of Cornelius and his household into the body of Christ. The great Apostle Peter should have been teaching others concerning this truth. Instead, it was very difficult for him to accept the lesson. On this occasion he showed his weakness along this line.

How did the Apostle Peter react to this reprimand by Paul? Peter later called him his beloved brother! (II Pet. 3:15,16) Peter had accepted the reproof in the right manner, and to him Paul was a "beloved brother" who loved him enough to help him stay on the right pathway. The LORD's Word tells us, "Let the righteous . . . reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head." (Ps. 141:5) Again in Proverbs 19:25, "Reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge."

Once Jesus was invited to the home of a chief Pharisee for a dinner. A sick man was brought to Jesus and he healed him immediately. While he sat there at the meal Jesus told them a parable, the lesson of which was humility. (Luke 14: 8-11) It concerned an invitation to a wedding. When you arrive at the wedding, he instructed his listeners, do not seek the chief seat. If you do, perhaps a more important man than yourself may come in. Then the host will show him to

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your seat and say to you, "Pardon me, but the seat you are occupying is a chief seat which was reserved for this important gentleman. Would you mind letting him have that seat, please. Your seat is way over there—one of the lesser seats in the room." We continue to paraphrase Jesus' words: "Rather, when you are invited as the honored guest at a dinner, look for the least important seat in the banquet hall—the humblest seat, one way over in a corner. Then when the host notices that you have arrived, he may ask you to rise, escorting you to the place of honor. In this way everyone will recognize your true character of humility. They will also realize the wise choice the host made in bestowing particular favor and honor upon you." "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—vs. 11

Because of his simplicity and guilelessness, Jesus' words and teachings were stamped with heavenly wisdom. Once again he turned to the host to continue his lesson. He spoke another parable, saying, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."—vss. 12-14

Then he spoke still another parable—the parable of the great supper: "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. Another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then

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the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." \* Luke 14:16-24

The ones bidden to the "great supper" are described in this parable in the same manner as when he gave advice to his host concerning whom he should invite to his home for special occasions—"the blind, the maimed, the poor, and the halt." The master of the house desired to have his house full so that he may provide his guests with a feast. His servant went into the highways and byways to urge whoever would to come to the wonderful supper which had been prepared.

The interpretation of this parable concerned the leaders of the Jewish nation who had spurned the invitation Jehovah had offered to them through Jesus. The call then went out to those represented as the poor, maimed, halt and blind—yes, to the Gentile "dogs." His servants went out into the highways and byways—beyond Jerusalem's environs—so that the full number would come in.

The Apostle Paul offers us help in interpreting the lesson of the parable. He said, "Ye [Gentiles] see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things . . . the weak things . . . the base things . . . things which are despised . . . and things which are not [esteemed by men] God hath chosen to bring to nought things that are [esteemed by men] that no flesh should glory in his [God's] presence." (I Cor.1:26-29) This revelation of the character of God was evidence that he was no respecter of persons. All who were of the right heart attitude and who would respond to the invitation would be

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drawn to occupy a seat at that great supper. Such has been the case throughout the Gospel Age, and it still is true today.

Jesus recognized this great truth. On one occasion he made particular note of his followers as they gathered about him. He could readily perceive that they were those whom society had cast off as undesirables. They had been attracted by the message and were drawn to follow him. How did he feel—this sinless Son of God who had come down from the ivory palaces to this sin-cursed earth—when he saw that the lowly individuals of society were drawn to him, and to the Heavenly Father through him?

In prayer he said, "I thank thee, O Father, LORD of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Matt. 11: 25,26) Jesus thanked his Father for this revelation of his wonderful character. God was pleased to invite the blind, the poor, the maimed, and the halt, the babes, and to reveal to them his wonderful spiritual truths, setting aside the wise and the prudent of Israel.

Whom has the LORD touched with his great favor in our day? God was no respecter of persons in Jesus' day, or in the Apostle's day, and he still is unchangeable in that respect today. The Apostle James said. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"—James 2:5

The Lord's counsel to his host, the Pharisee, as well as the lesson of the parable of the great supper, was intended to inspire us to Godlikeness. God invites to take part in his great favors those who cannot repay him. He counseled his host to do the same. The ultimate objective of the LORD's dealings with all people, either in this age or in the age to come is that they must develop this same Godlikeness in their characters or they will be unfit to receive eternal life.

When Saul was chosen for the position of king of Israel, we read of him that "there was not among the children of

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Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." (I Sam. 9:2) What a man to choose for a king—a majestic leader of the people! Yes, he would be a man whom Israel could look up to as general of their army; one who would lead them from victory to victory. But shortly after Saul was chosen to be the first king of Israel, he disobeyed the LORD's instruction to utterly destroy all the Amalekites and every living thing, including the animals. He saved the king, Agag, and he permitted the people to set aside some of the choicest cattle for a purpose which he invented in his mind. When he was questioned concerning this breach of the LORD's commandment, he replied that he had saved the best animals to offer as a fitting sacrifice to Jehovah.

Samuel's reply was this: "To obey is better than sacrifice." (I Sam. 15:22) God puts a premium upon obedience, rather than upon sacrifice. The Apostle Paul told us that if we gave all our money to the poor, or gave our bodies to be burned, if we did not have an obedient heart—which is love in its fullest sense—it will avail us nothing. We will be as a "tinkling cymbal" (I Cor. 13:1), and no more.

The LORD did not have respect for Saul, the king, although from his outward appearance he was a handsome, outstanding man, a true leader of the people. But when the LORD looked upon his heart, King Saul was rejected from kingship, and his house rejected forever as the lineage from which future kings of Israel would be chosen.

The LORD sent Samuel on a mission to choose a successor to Saul. "Fill thy horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons." (I Sam. 16:1) Samuel obeyed immediately, although with some fear and trepidation. But he was assured by the LORD that all would be well. He asked Jesse to call his sons forward to see which one would be the logical successor to the throne. From the oldest on down to the youngest, seven fine young men passed before Samuel. Samuel looked

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upon the eldest son and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before [me]." "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature: because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."—vss. 6,7

Then the second one came before Samuel, and all the men passed by, right on down to the seventh son. All were rejected. "Are here all your children?" asked Samuel. "There remaineth yet the youngest," answered Jesse, "and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him." (vss. 10,11) David was not considered important enough to be present for that momentous occasion when the LORD's choice for king was to be made. When David arrived, "the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he."—vs. 12

King David was a wonderful man—a man after God's own heart. (Acts 13:22) He was one of the few kings of Israel who found favor in God's sight. But at one time in his life he committed grievous sins against the LORD. (II Sam. 11:2-27) He took Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, to be his wife, after having put Uriah in a position in the army where he was certain to be slain. For this transgression, the LORD punished him severely; although he was spared the penalty prescribed by the Law for this sin—which was death.

The LORD was no respecter of persons. Even though he was the king, David was rebuked by Samuel the prophet, and for his grave misdeeds was punished by the death of his and Bathsheba's first son when he was just an infant. But because he admitted his guilt, accepted his punishment, and was unreservedly repentant and humble before the Creator, he was returned to God's favor in due time.

James spoke to the matter of respecting persons. (James 2:2-9) The incident he related, and which we quote here, concerned the attitude of the Christian church. James said: "If there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile



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raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Harken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? . . . If ye fulfill the **royal law** according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted [convicted] of the Law as transgressors."

We know that this lesson did not only apply to the church in the days when James lived. It is still true today, else the scripture would not be preserved. What powerful words, well worth repeating: "If ye fulfil the **royal law** according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: but **if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin**, and are convicted [convicted] of the Law as transgressors." James indicated clearly how serious this matter is. If we show partiality to those who are personable, well dressed, more highly educated, more successful in this life, and shun those who are less 'well heeled', we are guilty of committing sin, and are convicted as transgressors under God's law.

On page 100 of the sixth volume of Studies in the Scriptures, entitled "**The New Creation**," Brother Russell, wrote concerning the "wisdom" which is "without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17): "This heavenly wisdom is declared to be without partiality. Partiality would imply injustice, and the purity and peace and gentleness and mercy and the good fruits of the spirit of wisdom from above lead us to be no longer respecter of persons, except as character demonstrates their real value. The outward features of the natural man, the color of the skin, etc., his nationality or what have you, are ignored by the Spirit of the LORD, the spirit of wisdom that comes from above—it is impartial and desires that which is pure, peaceable, gentle, true—wherever found and under whatever circumstances exhibited."

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What wonderful counsel! His words are a fitting climax to the scriptures and incidents we have been considering in this study on impartiality. The wise advice given to us by our Pastor emphasizes how wrong it is when partiality is exhibited in the church. The Spirit of the LORD directs us to recognize true character, "under whatever circumstance or condition it is found"; **only** this judgment has any worth in the LORD's sight. A character replete with the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit is 'premium quality' with our Heavenly Father. "Them that honor me [and my principles] I will honor." (1 Sam. 2:30) If we obey and honor God by keeping his commandments, then the LORD will honor us with "glory, honor, and immortality, eternal life."—Rom. 2:7

The Revelator adds his testimony concerning the impartiality of our God in his selection of a bride for his Son, Jesus Christ. John wrote, "They sung a new Song, saying, 'Thou art worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals: Because thou wast killed, and didst redeem to God, with thy blood, out of **every Tribe, and Tongue, and People and Nation**; and thou didst make them to our God a Royalty and a Priesthood, and they shall reign on the earth.'" (Rev. 5:9,10, Wilson's **Emphatic Diaglott**) The selection has been a general one, not one limited to the elite among nations! No, not even to one particular, superior nation! Those who have been invited to this high station come from every kindred, every tongue, and people, and every nation; and that description is all-inclusive!

This composite body of Christ will have representatives from every sort of people who have lived during the Gospel Age. They will so well represent all mankind that they will be able to rule impartially and justly, when together with Jesus they begin the great work of blessing all the families of the earth. All—both Jew and Gentile—will then have a full, free opportunity to learn the character of their God. They will learn that God—their God—is an impartial God. They will discover that everywhere, in every nation, those who work righteousness, the LORD will approve. □

### "I Wish I Knew What To Do!"

HOW often we hear this statement made by those who are zealous for making known the glad tidings of the kingdom. May we suggest that one thing practically all can do is send one or more "Dawn" gift subscriptions to their friends. Just think, one gift subscription means that The Dawn enters the home twelve times during the year as your messenger of truth. Isn't this something worthwhile doing? Each subscription is only one dollar, and you can have six entered for five dollars. And it is simple to do when you use the coupon below.

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## ENCOURAGING LETTERS

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### Free from Fear

Dear "Frank and Ernest": I was so depressed with what is going on in our country, that I decided to turn on the radio. It so happened that you were about to start your program over DZAM, Philippines Christian Radio, so I decided to listen. I was so enthralled with what you were saying that I soon realized that a burden was being lifted off me. From there I became an addict to your program, so that I was looking forward for your next broadcast. Now I know where to turn to when I'm 'down'. Even if some quarters say another threat of insurgency is again threatening our country, I'm no longer afraid. God will always be there to see that the good are protected from harm. Please keep on with your good program. It's needed here. Very sincerely yours.—*Philippines*

### Better Bible Study

Dear Bible Students: Thank you for introducing me to your publication, "**The**

**Dawn.**" Please renew my subscription, and also would you please send me Volume 1 of Studies in the Scriptures—"The Divine Plan of the Ages." I have learned a lot from your magazine because it helps me to **study** the Bible instead of just reading it. Thank you very much.—*MI*

### A Hunger to Study

Dear Sirs: Your books and booklets have opened my eyes to the truth and have freed me from many concerns for lost loved ones. They have given me a hunger to study the Scriptures and learn more of God's glorious plan for all mankind. Thank you again, and God bless your work.—*VA*

### Spreading Comfort

Dear Sir: Please send me 100 copies of your booklet "**Hope.**" (It has the bluebird on the cover.) I use these on all my condolence calls and in sympathy cards. It meant so much to me when I found one in my mailbox when my

brother died. Many others have been comforted by it. Thank you so much. Sincerely yours.—TX

### **Sense of Tranquility**

Dear Dawn Bible Students: I have received many different religious books and magazines, but not until I became a **Dawn** subscriber have all the misconceptions I have had been made clear. It is a joy to read and I look forward to its arrival every month. I also have books I ordered from you and whenever I need guidance and comfort I read and re-read them and experience a feeling of tranquility. God's blessing on you. Sincerely.—AR

### **So Very Plausible**

Gentlemen: I viewed your very interesting program today on a TV station out of Daytona Beach, Florida. Please send me your booklet about the coming kingdom of God on earth. This seems so very plausible to me since we're told to pray for "thy kingdom [to] come. Thy will

be done on earth as it is in heaven." Thank you.—FL

### **In Times of Loneliness**

Dear Friends in Christ: If possible I would like 50 copies of "**Hope**." I have recently had occasion to see a number of family members of other denominations lose their loved ones. They are filled with such grief and confusion as to what it is all about from the standpoint of the future, even though they claim to be Christians. I have a copy of "**Hope**" which I have had for so long, I can't remember how I came into possession of it. In the past we have enjoyed reading and re-reading it. Recently I lost my husband, and in times of loneliness, I read it and it gives such comfort and peace. I feel that it is so beautifully expressed that it is much needed in the hands of many unbelievers, as well as believers, in these times in which we live. I too enjoy **The Dawn** magazine. Thanks for all that you are doing for Him. God bless your ministry.—NJ □

**"Call unto me, and I will answer thee."—Jer. 33:3**

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## OBITUARIES

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

Sister Ione Klusack, McLean, VA—March 3.

Brother Anthony V. Chierico, New York, NY—October 5. Age, 81.

Brother Robert McClellan, Hope, IN—October 8. Age, 64.

Sister Helen Jensen, Milwaukee, WI—October 21. Age, 67.

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***"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land."***

***Jeremiah 33:14,15***

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## SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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### **Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ**

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

**D. Bruce**  
Boise, ID                      December 1,2

**R. Gorecki**  
Phoenix, AZ                  Dec. 29-Jan. 1

**T. Passios**  
Phoenix, AZ                  Dec. 29-Jan. 1

**Jos. Panucci**  
Phoenix, AZ                  Dec. 29-Jan. 1

*"Thou shalt call his name JESUS:  
for he shall save his people  
from their sins."—Matthew 1:21*

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## CONVENTIONS

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

**PHOENIX, AZ, December 29, 30, 31, January 1**—Quality Inn, 2420 W. Thomas Rd. Contact: Lloyd Gaddy, 415 East Euclid, 85040  
Phone: (602) 276-2284 or 254-7766

**ST. PETERSBURG, FL, January 13**—Majestic Park Homes, 8300 Seminole Blvd. (Alt. 19) Seminole. Contact: Stella Slavich, 3847 Tarpon Pointe Circle, Palm Harbor 34684  
Phone: (813) 786-3796

**PALO ALTO, CA, January 26, 27**—San Jose Masonic Lodge, 2500 Masonic Drive, San Jose. Contact: Mitchell Blicharz,  
Phone: (408) 356-7973

**ROCKLAND, NY, February 24**—Bear Mountain State Park, Overlook Lodge, Bear Mountain, NY. Contact: Dawn Shallieu, 1041 Johnston Drive, Watchung, NJ 07060