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October 2008



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Over a Barrel: The High Cost of Oil

“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

—II Peter 3:10

less we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”—vs. 13

THE WORD OF PROPHECY

The symbolic times in which we live will not be understood by the worldly-wise, while others will scoff at the wonderful promises of God and the nearness of Christ’s kingdom. Peter cautions, “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the

THE APOSTLE PETER WAS

looking forward in time to the closing scenes of this present Gospel Age. He speaks of the passing away of the symbolic heavens and the melting of the symbolic elements of earth’s society in the prophetic ‘day of the Lord.’ At that time, our Lord Jesus would be present to make way for his coming kingdom of peace and truth. “Neverthe-

last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” (II Pet. 3:3,4) Only those who love our Lord Jesus and desire to follow him have the light shined in their hearts, and have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit of God. They study the symbolic language in the light of prophecy and are thus able to identify the foretold events that mark our time. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.”—chap. 1:19

A THIEF IN THE NIGHT

The Apostle Paul provides an important perspective in connection with the foretold time of the end and the events that will take place at that time. “Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”—I Thess. 5:2-5

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

One of the signs that indicate that we are now living at the end of this Gospel Age is the growing concern in connection with the value of the United States dollar. The dollar has been the powerful eco-

conomic standard of nations for over a century. As the purchasing power of our currency decreases there is increased risk of inflation. It takes more dollars to purchase the same commodity that was much cheaper only a few years ago.

The growing concern of runaway inflation is generating a great deal of attention at the present time. The high cost of oil has devastating effects on all segments of life in the United States, as well as in many other parts of the world. Low cost energy was the accepted norm only a few decades ago, but it created an atmosphere of false security among America's oil men and financiers who ignored the growing reality that the country was increasing its dependence on foreign oil supplies at an alarming rate. Domestic production had peaked and was beginning its long-term decline, while oil imports were needed to fill the widening gap between dwindling supply and growing demand.

This shift in foreign supply also created increased risk in connection with the nation's energy and its economic security policies. Oil production has now become a major factor in America's foreign policy and its overall trade deficit. Even during peacetime, the United States spends billions of dollars every year to maintain a powerful military presence in the Persian Gulf region. The importance of petroleum products to the United States economic and energy security may be noted by the readiness to go to war with Iraq in 1991 to ensure access to Persian Gulf supplies.

OVER A BARREL

One of the foremost spokespersons in the

American petroleum industry at the present time is Mr. T. Boone Pickens, who is a wealthy and powerful Texas oil executive and financier. He founded Mesa Petroleum Corporation a few decades ago and, under his leadership, the company grew into one of the largest independent oil companies in the world. Among his many other endeavors, he is also chairman of BP Capital Management which was founded in 1997.

Pickens has spent his whole life in the oil industry and foresees that major changes are necessary to address the problem of dependence on foreign energy sources. He proposes developing alternate means such as natural gas, wind, and solar power to produce energy here at home. He made an interesting observation that in 1970 less than one quarter of the total consumption of oil in the United States was derived from foreign sources, and even at that time he states that there was considerable discussion to lessen that amount. By 1990, the figure had grown to 42% while the seriousness of the growing problem was still being debated. Today he warns that nearly three quarters of the country's total oil consumption is derived from foreign sources and still growing. Pickens pointed out that this is imported at a staggering cost of \$700 billion per year at the present time and that this represents the greatest transfer of wealth in the history of mankind.

A RUDE AWAKENING

In recent months, Americans have been awakened to the fact that energy costs are now out of control and are spiraling upwards at ever higher

rates. They have been made abruptly aware of this, especially when they line up at the pump to fill the gas tanks in their vehicles. They are also reflecting on the cost of heating their homes as the cold winter season approaches.

It is estimated that crude oil production in the lower 48 states has declined by about 45% since its peak was reached in 1970. Although the United States is willing to enter into conflict to protect its petroleum supplies halfway around the world, it is now becoming obvious that there has been no long-term policy to reduce its dependence on foreign source oil. Neither has there been any major effort to improve energy efficiency or developing alternative energy sources. The Strategic Petroleum Reserve contains approximately 560 million barrels of oil that may be tapped into in case of emergency. However, as dependence on imported supplies continues to grow the supply and demand factor diminishes the reserves.

GROWING CONCERNS

With gasoline and oil costing what only a short time ago would have been thought to be unthinkable, the belief is now spreading throughout our petroleum-addicted world that it may get worse. Behind some of this fear is the fact that much of the easy-to-reach supplies have already been found, and that some major suppliers of oil may soon be reaching their production peak. Researchers acknowledge that the earth's oil production will eventually max out, after which time output levels will begin an irreversible decline.

Experts in the industry predict the possibility

that this could happen sometime after 2020.

Added to this possibility is the growing worldwide demand for oil, especially in new consuming nations such as China and India, that may exceed 94 million barrels a day in the next five years. International Energy Agency estimates indicate that global production is between 82 and 86 million barrels per day. This is forcing the issue to obtain supplies from unconventional sources such as Canada's vast oil sands in Alberta which is more difficult, expensive, and environmentally harmful.

SUPPLIES THREATENED

The growing reliance on foreign energy sources is becoming more fragile as terrorists target the supply. The *Los Angeles Times* published an interesting news article (June 28, 2008) entitled "Nigeria Attacks Disrupt Oil Flow" that was submitted by Staff writer Paul Richter. We quote from the article in part which reads, "Clashes with increasingly bold rebels in a key area reverberate through global markets. Amid surging demand for oil, a severe bottleneck has developed in production of high-quality West African crude, alarming world leaders, and demonstrating a new vulnerability in fragile oil markets.

"With production declining elsewhere, consumer nations had been looking hopefully toward Nigeria, but rebels who have waged an increasingly bold campaign in the oil-rich Niger Delta have slashed the country's output in their most recent attacks. 'The deepening disruptions in Nigeria represent a huge hole in world oil markets,' said Daniel Yergin, a top oil expert and chairman of the

Cambridge Energy Research Associates consulting firm, who warns of an increasingly crisis-prone oil economy.

“A nighttime raid by Nigerian militiamen in speedboats forced the shutdown of a Shell offshore platform and shocked the industry, demonstrating that even production facilities far from land are no longer safe. That attack, among others, has cast doubt on whether oil companies will continue investing billions of dollars in a region plagued by violence and corruption. And it has raised questions about whether the Bush administration has done enough to pressure Nigeria’s government to find a political solution to the unrest.

“The disruptions also signaled the sensitivity of the oil markets to political and security pressures at a time of tight supplies, when the smallest fluctuations can quickly drive up prices. Violence regularly disrupts oil flows from Nigeria, Iraq and Columbia; the threat of conflict also hangs over the output of Venezuela, and Iran, Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states, boosting prices. Nigeria’s petroleum infrastructure is threatened by militias motivated by anger that the country’s leadership and international oil companies were not sharing the oil wealth with the impoverished residents of the Niger Delta.

“Though the movement has its origins in political grievances, many experts regard the militias as youthful crime gangs that steal oil, carry out kidnappings and buy weapons in a sophisticated scheme that benefits Nigerian military and civilian leaders as well as warlord commandants. The gangs, whose arms include surface-to-air missiles and

bazookas, have learned how to siphon thousands of gallons of crude into barges and send it to the high seas for sale on the world spot oil markets. Since 2005, attacks have cut 20% to 30% from the nation's oil output. But recently, the oil conflict has combined with labor strikes and other problems to reduce output by 1 million barrels a day.

“The decline in West African production represents a fraction of United States consumption—about 21 million barrels a day, but it has a powerful effect on oil markets at a time when output from Mexico and Venezuela is falling, and Iraq's production languishes below prewar levels. The offshore speedboat raid raised new questions about security in the region. And United States influence is limited by Chinese and Russian interest in the Nigerian market.”

SUPPLY LANES THREATENED

Another news item also appeared in *The Los Angeles Times* (June 29, 2008) under the title “Iran Threatens to Block Persian Gulf Oil Lanes.” The article was submitted by Borzou Daraghi, a Times Staff writer who wrote, “The commander of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard said the government might shut down vital oil lanes through the Persian Gulf if the country were attacked by the United States or Israel, according to a newspaper report. Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari warned that if there were any confrontation over Iran's nuclear program, Tehran would try to damage Western economies by targeting oil.

“Naturally every country under attack by an enemy uses all its capacity and opportunities to con-

front the enemy,' Jafari said to the hard-line newspaper Jaam-e-Jam, according to translations of the comments on the English-language website of the semiofficial Fars News Agency. 'Iran will definitely act to impose control on the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz,' through which 17 million barrels of oil passes each day. 'After this action, the oil price will rise very considerably and this is among the factors deterring the enemies,' he said. Iran abuts the strategic strait, and Iranian and Western analysts have frequently said that the country could try to blockade or mine it in the event of a war, a move that would send oil prices skyrocketing.

"Some military analysts say Iran might not be able to hold the waterway, which is 21 miles wide at its narrowest point, in a confrontation with United States warships and aircraft. The West and Iran remain locked in a standoff over uranium enrichment, which Tehran insists is meant to produce fuel for energy production, but which the United States and its allies allege is the cornerstone of an eventual weapons program. The West has threatened a fourth round of United Nations sanctions as well as a tightening of other economic restrictions if the program is not suspended. United States lawmakers are considering resolutions that would require President Bush to increase pressure on Tehran by preventing the export of refined petroleum products and inspecting all persons, vehicles, ships, planes, trains, and cargo entering or departing Iran. U. S. officials also leaked word of a large Israeli military exercise that they described as a prelude to a possible attack on Iran.

"Tehran has reacted angrily to the pressure,

which comes as it considers a package of United States and European-backed incentives meant to entice the government to halt enrichment activities. An escalating war of words has rattled nerves and contributed to rising oil prices. Jafari also warned of possible reprisals against countries that allow the United States or Israel to use their territory or airspace to launch attacks against Iran. 'If enemies from outside the region use the soil of regional countries against the Islamic Republic of Iran, the governments of those countries will be responsible, and it is our obvious right to act in the same way against their military capabilities and abilities of enemies everywhere,' Jafari said."

AIRLINES SURVIVAL

There is much concern that air travel as we know it today will change in the near future. With rapidly rising costs of fuel, airlines are now forced to increase ticket prices, trim domestic flight schedules and impose charges for baggage and other items in an effort to survive. Oil prices have doubled in the last year, and it has been reported that air fares have increased more than 20% across the country since January. Higher fares will inevitably cause some people to stop flying. The Department of Transportation notes a decrease of 3.3% in airline travel in April from the year earlier. Delta Air Lines reported a \$1.04 billion loss and American Airlines a \$1.45 billion loss in the second quarter of 2008, and announced that travelers could expect higher costs as they struggle to maintain service.

GLOBAL INSTABILITY

In midsummer 2008, the price of oil began to

drop, signaling the Federal Reserve's attempt to curb growing fears of inflation. Chairman Ben Bernanke was reported as saying, "The Fed must remain particularly alert to any sign that inflation is getting out of control." Bernanke's remarks suggested that this was a major concern. Oil traders are fearful that the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates which, if they do, means the price of oil will come down and the United States dollar will become stronger.

Other factors such as possible disruptions in output from oil-producing countries and other worries remain as analysts continue to watch for the Fed's next move. Also, statistics show that Americans are travelling less during this summer vacation season when compared with the previous year. Higher energy costs have been a major factor in the decline. Increasing evidence of a slowdown in the United States economy has been interpreted by oil traders as a sign that the demand for oil would continue to weaken in the world's largest oil-consuming nation. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries reported that a sluggish global economy would further reduce demand for the cartel's crude oil.

PREPARATION FOR CHRIST'S KINGDOM

In the featured scripture (II Pet. 3:10), our attention was drawn symbolically by the Apostle Peter to the noise and confusion that would accompany the closing scenes of this present Gospel Age and as one of the dramatic signs that our Lord Jesus was present. In Peter's reassuring words, he writes, "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing,

that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”—II Pet. 3:8,9

GOD OUR REFUGE

Looking down the long stream of time to our day, the psalmist wrote in prophetic words, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.”—Ps. 46:1-3

The psalmist spoke further concerning the events that would be associated with the end of this age. “The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.”—vss. 6-11

TIME OF JUDGMENT

The psalmist and the Apostle Peter spoke in prophetic terms concerning the destruction of earth’s present structure, including its social, political, ecclesiastical and financial elements. This method

has been designed by our loving Heavenly Father as the means to prepare mankind for a new administration which will be based on justice, truth and righteousness, that will be established to take charge over earth's affairs.

During the time of the world's judgment, the faithful members of the Christ will share with our Lord Jesus in the teaching and enlightenment work that will be administered on behalf of the whole sin-sick and dying human family who will obey the laws of the kingdom. Mankind will then be given fair and full opportunity to turn to the Lord and the provisions of his righteous kingdom.

At that future time, earth's population will no longer be deceived by the wiles of Satan and the powers of darkness, of which the Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the church at Corinth. "No marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (II Cor. 11:14) The apostle explains, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [wicked spirits, *Marginal Translation*], in high places." (Eph. 6:12) The Prophet Isaiah speaks of those who would walk in the ways of unrighteousness. He warns, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."—Isa. 5:20

NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH

The poor, groaning human creation will no longer be subject to earth's present institutions which have for the most part been based on human error, pride

and selfishness. We are inspired by the prophetic words of Isaiah, who pointed forward in time to Christ's wonderful kingdom, saying, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." (Isa. 65:17) He confirmed God's wonderful promise, "As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD."—Isa. 66:22,23

The Apostle Peter also spoke of the new social order to be established under the administration of Christ's kingdom. "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."—II Pet. 3:13,14 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

OCTOBER 2—"Forgetting those things which are behind."—Philippians 3:13 (Z. '04-23 Hymn 192)

OCTOBER 9—"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"—Matthew 8:26 (Z. '04-60 Hymn 307)

OCTOBER 16—"He maketh the storm a calm."—Psalm 107:29 (Z. '04-60 Hymn 349)

OCTOBER 23—"Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."—Matthew 20:27 (Z. '04-140 Hymn 275)

OCTOBER 30—"No man can serve two masters."—Matthew 6:24 (Z. '01-61 Hymn 213)

Empowered to Be a Community

Key Verse: *“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*
—Acts 2:4

Selected Scripture:
Acts 2

“another Comforter, . . . Even the Spirit of truth” (John 14:16,17), which would help and assist his disciples and footstep followers after his departure.

The term ‘Holy Spirit’ is used to describe the invisible holy power and influence of God. As early as the second verse of the Bible, we find this power referred to, “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” (Gen. 1:2) It was this power, mentioned here in connection with God’s creative works, which he has used to accomplish the purposes of his plan for mankind. The word Spirit as used in both the Old and New Testaments signifies ‘wind’ or ‘breath.’ In the New Testament, it is translated from the Greek word *pneuma*. This word is familiar to us, as it is the root for such common terms as ‘pneumatic tires’ and ‘pneumonia,’ the definitions of which relate, respectively,

TODAY’S LESSON FOCUSES

on one of the most significant events in the history of the Christian church—the giving of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Pentecost is a Greek word, signifying ‘the fiftieth day.’ Appropriately, this important event occurred fifty days following the resurrection of Jesus. Before his death, Jesus had promised that he would send

to tires filled with air (wind) and disease relating to lack of air to the lungs and related breathing difficulties.

Although breath, air, and wind are invisible of themselves, their influence is not. We constantly see the effect of these in many visible ways. Indeed, without air, our physical bodies and all life on earth would perish. On the Day of Pentecost, God used the literal effect of the wind and air to describe the giving of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. “Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” (Acts 2:2) Additionally, the Key Verse mentions that the disciples began to speak in other languages, thus using their ‘breath’ as influenced by the power of God.

The most important effect of God’s Spirit, however, was not in these visual evidences, but in the hearts and minds of the disciples, as they now began to understand his plans and purposes much more fully than before. In none of the disciples was this change more manifest than in Peter. In the last hours of Jesus’ life on earth, even up to the days just prior to Pentecost, Peter clearly was uncertain and confused about the purpose of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Now, however, having received the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, he not only understood these things for himself, but he also immediately began preaching them to those gathered there in Jerusalem.—vss. 14-36

Just as it was with Peter, the inward work of the Holy Spirit—that of enlightening our mind, guiding our words, thoughts, and actions—is to be the primary work of God’s invisible power and influence upon the church, as shown in the closing verses of Acts 2. “They continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.—vss. 42,46 ■

Expansion of the Community

Key Verse: *“The word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.”*
—Acts 6:7

Selected Scripture:
Acts 6:1-15; 8:1-8

FOLLOWING JESUS’ DEATH, resurrection, and the subsequent imparting of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, it was God’s purpose that the early Christian church expand to other areas of the Roman Empire and beyond. The resurrected Jesus, shortly before his ascension to the Father, had given this commission to his disciples, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”—Matt. 28:19

God supervised this expansion and spreading of the Gospel message in a number of ways. First, in order to free up his chosen apostles for these endeavors, he overruled their decision to select seven honest and upright brethren, full of the Holy Spirit, to take care of the more temporal needs of the church and its members as deacons in the church. (Acts 6:3,5,6) Having done this, it was the apostles’ purpose to “give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” (vs. 4) The result of this was, as expressed in our Key Verse, a great expansion of the Word of God,

increased numbers of believers, and obedience to the faith by many.

Another means by which the expansion and growth of the Gospel message occurred was through the deacons themselves. In addition to the temporal and pastoral responsibilities laid upon them, they too found time and had the desire to preach the Word of God. One of them, Philip, we find later preaching the word in Samaria, as far away as Ethiopia in Africa, and in many other cities. (Acts 8:5-13,26-40) The success of Philip's preaching is testified in these words, "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."—vs. 12

Another of the deacons, Stephen, likewise zealously preached the word of the Lord. His message was positively received by many, continuing the expansion of the early church. "Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." (Acts 6:8) Different than Philip, however, Stephen's message also fell upon the ears of the leaders of Israel, who had become enemies of the Gospel. So incensed were they at his preaching (see Acts 7:2-53), they immediately "cast him out of the city, and stoned him." (vs. 58) Yet, the message of Truth once again had spread and expanded.

God continued to overrule the expansion of the Gospel through the very persecution that began with the death of Stephen. "At that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria." (Acts 8:1) This persecution, and the resultant 'scattering' of the church, was God's will, in that it further caused the spreading of the message into entirely new regions. The positive results of this are evident in these words, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."—vs.4 ■

Transformed to Witness to the Community

Key Verse:
“Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”
—Acts 9:17

Selected Scripture:
Acts 9:1-31

earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest:

SAUL OF TARSUS HAD CON-sented to the stoning death of Stephen, and also had been instrumental in persecuting the church. (Acts 8:1-3) In the opening verses of Acts 9, we find Saul once again set to continue what he perceived as God’s will, that of ridding the region of the disciples of Jesus. He obtained authorization from the high priest to go to Damascus, “that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.”—vs. 2

The scriptural record states, “As he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the

. . . And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.” (vss. 3-6) Saul’s initial response, ‘Who art thou, Lord?’ is quite understandable, for truly only a powerful being could have caused such things to occur. Saul knew he must take notice and listen. Immediately the answer was given—this was the risen Jesus, whom Saul had been persecuting through his actions upon the followers of the Master.

Knowing that he had witnessed in a very personal way the mighty power of the risen Lord, Saul wasted no time in turning to him, and at once inquired as to what he should do. He was told to continue on to Damascus, where he would be further instructed. As these things were occurring to Saul, the Lord had also spoken in a vision to one of his disciples, Ananias, saying, “Arise, . . . and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.”—vss. 11-16

The Key Verse states that Ananias obeyed his instructions and met Saul, partially restoring his sight, and conveying the Holy Spirit upon him. What a blessed privilege it must have been for Ananias to be used in this way! He had the opportunity to help Saul make a complete and immediate transformation, from one who had earlier that very day been a persecutor of the Christians, to one who was now a devout follower of Christ.■

Commissioned by the Community

Key Verse: “When they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”
—Acts 13:3

Selected Scripture:
Acts 13

God, through the Holy Spirit, said, “Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” (Acts 13:2) The Key Verse indicates that the brethren of Antioch prayerfully and soberly sent Saul and Barnabas away to begin their missionary journey, a journey which would take them to many different places under varying circumstances, all for the purpose of proclaiming the message of the Gospel of Christ.

As they began their journey, Saul and Barnabas had the custom, much as Jesus had during his earthly ministry, of first going to the synagogues of the Jews. At one of their early stops, the isle of Paphos, they came upon a sorcerer and false prophet, a Jew named Bar-jesus, also called Elymas. He was associated with an official deputy of the country, a Gentile named Sergius Paulus, who desired to hear the Word of God. This false prophet tried

OUR LESSON TODAY BEGINS

at the early Christian church in Antioch, located about three hundred miles north of Jerusalem. Among the members of the church there were Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus. Saul, having received much instruction from the Lord since his earlier conversion was now ready to begin his ministry.

to turn the deputy away from hearing the message. "Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Spirit, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season."—vss. 9-11

How appropriate that the record states here, the first official act of his ministry, Saul was now called Paul (verse 9). The name Paul signifies 'little.' Truly, now that he had become little in his own sight, a humble servant of God, he could be used for great things in the Lord's work. We immediately see the results of his first missionary act, as it is recorded, "Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." (vs. 12) Thus began Paul to fulfill his commission to be the "apostle of the Gentiles."—Rom. 11:13

Shortly after departing from Paphos, Paul (no longer called Saul) and Barnabas came to the region of Pisidia, going once again to the synagogue, where they found the religious rulers reading the "law and the prophets" to the people. (Acts 13:14,15) These rulers then gave Paul and Barnabas the opportunity to speak. It is here we have the first public discourse given by Paul, recorded in verses 16-41. He recounted the entire history of Israel, going back to their bondage in Egypt, their miraculous deliverance, and eventual entrance into the land of promise. He reminded them of how God had destroyed their enemies, had given them judges, and later kings, David being king at the zenith of their history. Paul then spoke of Jesus, of the natural seed of David, as the one who had come to bring salvation to the Jews, but that they had rejected him, and had him killed. Nevertheless, he was raised from the dead by the mighty power of God. Most of the Jews despised Paul's message, but many Gentiles gladly received it, and became followers of the Gospel.—vss. 45-48 ■

Waiting to Live and Reign with Christ

*“I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads; . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”
—Revelation 20:4*

THE PROSPECT OF LIVING

and reigning with Christ is set before his followers in various ways and times. This great blessing is the “prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:14) It is also called the “heavenly calling.” (Heb. 3:1) It points to the spiritual reward for the faithful followers of our Lord Jesus, and an “inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” (I Pet. 1:4) To receive this reward we must be totally consecrated to serve our loving Heavenly Father

even as the Apostle Paul wrote. “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”—II Tim. 2:11,12

In our text, the revelator describes those whom he saw reigning with Christ and says that they were the ones who had been ‘beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.’ This illustration is used in the Scriptures because there are certain aspects of the Christian life that are not pleasing to the flesh, experiences from which the flesh shrinks. These experiences must be borne with fortitude if we are to ‘live and reign with Christ.’

Under Roman law, crucifixion was also practiced, but some prisoners destined for the death penalty were beheaded. According to tradition, the Apostle Paul was one of these, but not many of the early Christians were literally beheaded. Certainly none in this end of the age have been subjected to this sort of punishment. The expression is used in a figurative sense, even as crucifixion was thus used by Paul when he wrote, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”—Gal. 2:20

ONE BODY: MANY MEMBERS

Beheading and crucifixion both describe the taking of life, but each from a different standpoint. In the crucifixion symbol we are represented as taking up our cross and dying daily with Christ until the death of the flesh is fully consummated. The beheading symbol highlights the fact that we

surrender our will to the Lord, and accept Christ as our head. Thus the ‘old man’ dies, while the ‘new man’ follows the directives of its head, endeavoring to be obedient to his every wish. In his letter to the brethren at Corinth, Paul reveals many of the things involved in our beheading. He uses the figure of a man to represent Christ and his church. In this illustration, Jesus is the head of the body, and the individual members of the church are represented by the other parts of the body.

This is a simple illustration, yet it has vital meaning for all those who aspire to live and reign with Christ. “As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.”—I Cor. 12:12-14

BAPTIZED INTO DEATH

We become part of the body by means of baptism unto death, or burial, that symbolizes the burial of our own will and the acceptance of the will of Christ, our new head. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Rom. 6:3) We thus know in advance that when we accept the headship of Jesus, by being baptized into his death, we place ourselves in a position to die.

We know that Christ’s will for us is the same as was the Father’s will for him. Paul explains, “I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man;

and the head of Christ is God.” (I Cor. 11:3) Jesus buried his will into the will of his Father—“Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” (Ps. 40:7,8) Jesus knew that the Father’s will for him as outlined in the Scriptures, was that he must die. He may not have understood this clearly prior to his consecration but did soon thereafter, and the entire course of his ministry was one of daily ‘dying,’ until on the cross he cried, “It is finished.”—John 19:30

We are baptized into Jesus’ death as members of his body. It is not only the death of our own wills in the acceptance of the headship of Christ, but eventually the actual death of our fleshly bodies also, which are presented as living sacrifices and made acceptable through the merit of Christ. (Rom. 12:1) This is a serious step to take, and it is only by Divine grace that anyone is able to carry through victoriously to the end. But great is the reward for those who do, for they shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years.

ACCEPTING THE WILL OF GOD

The Apostle Paul reminds us of the unity and cooperation of the various parts of the body. He asks, “If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”—I Cor. 12:15-18

Every consecrated follower of Jesus is presented with a heart-searching lesson in humility and the acceptance of the Lord's will. There is nothing in worldly associations to compare with this. It is contrary to the natural trends and desires of the fallen flesh. In the world, no one is condemned for ambitiously seeking a place of prominence and authority among his fellows. Having accepted Christ as our head and becoming members of his body, we leave the choice with the Heavenly Father as to just what place we will occupy in the body. Can we imagine the hands and feet of a natural body arguing as to which should become the eye? This may seem unusual, but Paul brings this to our attention to impress upon us the need of accepting the will of the Lord in this, as well as in all other matters relative to our living and reigning with Christ in his kingdom.

No member of the body of Christ should undervalue in any manner the importance of all the other members. This is a lesson in humility and brotherly interest in all the body members. Those who are truly of the body regardless of the position they may occupy, will highly esteem every other member regardless of the lowly position some of them may seem to occupy.—Phil. 2:3,4

It is a special blessing to be called for a part in this body, and it came about by the grace of God through Christ Jesus. Since the Father has placed every member in the body as it has pleased him, how fitting that we recognize the importance of all our brethren in Christ regardless of their abilities or the place which God has assigned to them.

Paul suggests the proper viewpoint in this matter, saying, "Those members of the body, which we

think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”—I Cor. 12:23-26

CHRIST OUR HEAD

How different this often is from the backbiting efforts seen in the world to attain positions of honor and authority among men. A tremendous change must take place in the human heart for one to be truly ‘beheaded’ and accept the true headship of Christ. This implies humbly submitting to the Divine will, and rejoicing to associate with those whom the Lord has called, regardless of their talents or how they may measure up to our particular ideals.

Even of Jesus it was asked, “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?” (John 7:48) His disciples were plain people with the possible exception of the Apostle Paul who was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. We could name few among the Lord’s people who were not of the humbler walks of life. These lowly, unknown ones from the world’s standpoint are all of a royal line, and children of the loving Heavenly Father. They are in training, in the words of our featured scripture, to live and reign with Christ a thousand years.

BEARING WITNESS

In Paul's use of the body illustration, he makes it clear that every member in the body has a work to do. Looking to the head for guidance, we hear him say that we are to be his witnesses. The Truth is to be ministered to one another, and to the world. This important work of bearing witness to the Truth helps emphasize the need for the harmonious working together of all the members of the body. Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."—John 17:17-21

The world will not understand that God sent Jesus to be their Redeemer and Savior until his righteous kingdom is set up. The members of the prospective church are now in training for that future work of enlightening the people. Our Lord is giving us practical lessons to test our enthusiasm for his cause, and by witnessing to his great plan and purpose. As beheaded followers of the Master, we must be members of his body, else we would have no head. Those who have been symbolically beheaded will labor together in the common work. As individuals, we bear witness to the Truth, but if we are to live and reign with Christ, we must learn to be subject one to another and especially to our new Head, Christ Jesus. In our beheading, we give up our own

plans and ways, and earnestly seek the plans and ways of the Lord that we may work in harmony with him and with fellow members of the body.

TESTS OF OBEDIENCE

The influence impelling us to faithfully carry out our consecration vows is love. The message we bear is so wonderful that it is a joy to tell others about it, but the results are not always joyful. The world is in darkness and hates the light. As we let our light shine, the world frowns upon us, and we are not accepted among our friends as we once were. Some may speak evil of us, and these experiences are not pleasing to the flesh. However, we continue to adhere as best we can to the righteous principles of the Truth.

Paul cautioned, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. 6:9,10) Witnessing for Jesus and for the Word of God is not an incidental thing in the beheaded Christian's consecrated life, but our chief vocation and chief business.

Jesus provided an important lesson in his Parable of the Sower. In his reference to the seed which fell among thorns, he said, "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." (Matt. 13:22) Here is the case of one who has progressed to the extent of bearing Christian fruit, and then allowing other interests to enter in to the point of becoming unfruitful.

There is also the danger of discouragement. The cold indifference of the world to the Gospel of the kingdom does not inspire enthusiasm, but has a tendency to dampen zeal. We may labor for years, and see no tangible results from our witness work. Under these circumstances, the flesh would say, What's the use? Why should I continue to spend my time, strength and money when nothing is being accomplished? But the new mind, consulting the head, is reminded that the results of our witness work are not our responsibility, but that it is God who gives the increase.—I Cor. 3:6,7

We are not invited to witness for Jesus and the Word of God because our help is needed, but because we need the opportunity thereby to prove our zeal for the Truth. We joy in the fact that God intends to bless all the families of the earth, a joy that impels us even now to tell as many as we can about it. The only ones who will live and reign with Christ a thousand years are those who demonstrate their enthusiasm for the purpose of that reign.

BEWARE OF TEMPTATIONS

A temptation which may come upon some in connection with the witness work is the inclination to boast of the great works they are doing. We might feel a sense of great satisfaction that we have done so much for the Lord even though we may not have expressed our feelings to others. If we find ourselves being tempted along this line we should recall Jesus' parable in which we are represented as "unprofitable servants." (Luke 17:10) If we have spent much time and strength in the service of the Lord, it is only that which we agreed to do when we

made our consecration vows to him. We have nothing to boast about, for we are still ‘unprofitable servants.’ What marvelous grace is here shown, that the Lord has taken us into partnership with him, and is making us one of his coworkers.

On the night Jesus was born, God used the angels to make the announcement to the shepherds. First, one spoke proclaiming the glad tidings, and then a whole multitude of the angelic host sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:1-14) God could have arranged for the angels to daily proclaim the glad tidings of the kingdom, and with a display of glory that the world has never known. How insignificant and weak our efforts seem when we compare them with what God could do in other ways, but for the fact that he is giving us an opportunity to prove that we are worthy to live and reign with Christ a thousand years.

LIVING IN HARMONY

The Heavenly Father’s plan and purpose for blessing the world is prompted by his great love. To be in harmony with him, our efforts to cooperate in his plan must also be motivated by the same spirit of love. This is the vital lesson Paul so effectively set forth when he wrote to the Corinthian ecclesia. “Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”—I Cor. 13:3

Paul understood this was one of the ways of expressing the terms of the narrow way in which he was faithfully walking. He knew that we cannot

lay up treasures in heaven except through the sacrifice of all that we have for the blessing of others and to the glory of God. Unless our giving and our sacrificing is prompted by the spirit of unselfishness and love, it will profit us nothing, and that no treasure will be laid up in heaven. The apostle pointed out that giving our bodies to be burned is what is involved in our being beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—Rom. 12:1

SACRIFICIAL LIVES

Presenting bodies in sacrifice is a thought which Paul learned from the services of the typical tabernacle, in which animal sacrifices were burned on the brazen altar in the court. In its antitypical sense, this represents those Christians who are also called to offer their bodies to be burned, not on literal altars and by literal fire, but on the altar of God's service. This is shown in the fiery trials of hardship and persecution which must inevitably accompany such sacrifices. There is no other way into the glories of the kingdom to live and reign with Christ a thousand years. There would be no profit in sacrifice, and no laying up of treasures in heaven if we do not have love.

The more fully we are filled and controlled by love, the greater will be our determination to give all that we have and are in sacrifice, knowing that it will be acceptable to God through our faith in the precious shed blood of Christ on our behalf.

Love not only prompts us to greater sacrifice, but it controls the way we sacrifice and serve. The Apostle Paul further stressed, “Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”—I Cor. 13:4-7

As members of the body of Christ, we serve one another. Are we doing it kindly, and sympathetically? Are we patient with others’ weaknesses as we would like them to be patient with ours? Is the spirit of kindness manifest in our witnessing to the world? Love should enter into and control all of our activities and all of our associations. To the extent that it does, we will not be envious of others, will not be boastful and puffed up, our conduct will be such as becomes the children of God, we will not be easily provoked, nor insisting on our rights, nor will we think evil of others.

Love, filling our hearts and controlling our words and acts, is the single great principle and power which makes our feeble efforts in the Heavenly Father’s service acceptable to him because of our faith in the shed blood of Christ. If we are truly beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God, it is because we are motivated by the very spirit of love. This is why we may confidently hope for the glorious prospect of living and reigning with Christ a thousand years. ■

Elisha, the Man of God

“Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat: . . . and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. . . . Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.”

—I Kings 19:16,19,21

THE FIRST MENTION OF ELISHA

in the Bible is in I Kings 19. Here we find his predecessor, Elijah, dwelling in a cave at Mt. Horeb (Sinai), hiding from his enemies. It was here that the Lord commanded Elijah to go into the wilderness of Damascus and to accomplish certain things. On his way through Canaan toward Assyria, Elijah found Elisha engaged in plowing a field with twelve yoke of oxen. This indicates that Elisha was a man of considerable means.

Elijah then cast his mantle upon Elisha, showing that he was the one whom the Lord had chosen to become the prophet of Israel to succeed Elijah. Elisha then disposed of his goods, his oxen, etc., and left his farm and all that

he had and followed Elijah and ministered unto him. The mantle literally represented an investiture with the prophet's office and adoption as a son, even though he was not to assume the official duties of the office of prophet until the death of Elijah.

ELIJAH'S MANTLE A PICTURE

This mantle of Elijah was made of skins as indicated by the *Revised Standard Version* of II Kings 1:8: "He wore a garment of haircloth, with a girdle of leather about his loins." The mantle of Elijah may represent not only the anointing of the Holy Spirit but also, being made of animal skins, may picture the robe of righteousness made available for us to cover our sins and imperfections.

This association of the merit of Christ with the Holy Spirit of anointing is made in Psalm 133, which alludes back to the anointing of the priesthood of Israel. There we see that the anointing oil was poured upon the head of Aaron the high priest, and it ran down upon the garment. So it is that the anointing that we have received has come to us because we are under the robe of Christ's righteousness. Both the anointing and the merit, or robe of righteousness, therefore, seems to be represented in the mantle of Elijah.

ELISHA'S MINISTRY BEGINS

Following the event of the calling of Elisha by Elijah, we hear nothing more of Elisha for six to eight years until the time for Elijah to be taken away, caught up with a flaming chariot. This is recorded in II Kings, chapter 2. Following the departure of Elijah, Elisha then began his ministry as the

anointed prophet. He lived a long and productive life in the service of the Lord, performing greater works than that of Elijah. Elijah had promised him a double portion of the Spirit, and so Elisha lived twice as long and performed many more miracles than Elijah, some even after his own death.

Elisha's first miracle was the purifying of the waters of Jericho recorded in II Kings 2:18-22. Some of the other outstanding events in his life of preaching reform were the restoring of the Shunamite's son to life and purifying the deadly pottage at Gilgal. Naaman, the chief captain of the armies of Assyria whose leprosy was cleansed by washing in the waters of the Jordan is recorded in II Kings, chapter 5. There is only one reference to Elisha in the New Testament, in Luke 4:27, referring to the cleansing of Naaman the Syrian.

THE FLOATING AXE HEAD

Next we come to II Kings, chapter 6, where we have the very interesting account of the floating axe head. We would like to look at this particular event carefully and see what lessons the Lord may have here that would be of benefit to his people today.

We notice, first of all, that Elisha's ministry was that of a reformer, teaching the people to turn from sin and idolatry and to be obedient to the God of Israel and the Law. The Lord did not provide us these recorded events in the life of Elisha just to fill up space in the Bible. In examining them, not so much as types but as object lessons for us, we are convinced that he intended these experiences to provide valuable lessons for us, the true Israelites, concerning the moral and spiritual conduct of the Lord's people.

Let us consider then II Kings 6:1-7: “The sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go. So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed. And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.”

THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS

First, one might wonder just who the ‘sons of the prophets’ are that are referred to here. The sons, or students of the prophets, was a religious fraternity having its beginning back in the days of Samuel. This school of the prophets was instituted by Samuel in his old age, and its purpose was to provide Israel with young men familiar with the teachings of the Law to watch over the religious and moral interests of the people. (I Sam. 19:18-20) Gradually, over a period of many years, schools of the prophets were set up in all of the major cities of Israel. Those who attended these schools lived in a communal arrangement, separating themselves from the rest of society, so far as their religious training was concerned, but mingling with the people as they fulfilled their missions of religious and moral uplift.

Here, in the days of Samuel, the Lord was picturing by these schools of the prophets a situation that would be true of the church during this Gospel Age. Just as Samuel instituted the school of the prophets, so Jesus came at his First Advent and established another 'fraternity' which we refer to as the 'school of Christ.'

The first school of prophets was set up at Naioth in Ramah. Naioth means 'residence,' or 'house,' while Ramah means 'that which is above,' or 'heaven.' How true it is that our home is in heaven, and we dwell together with Christ in heavenly places. As these prophetic schools were established in every large city throughout the area of Israel, so it is that the Lord's people have been established in little groups throughout the land. We come together so that we may sit at the feet of the great teacher Jesus, to be taught of him concerning the Word of God. We are not the sons of prophets, however, but rather the sons of God.

TRAINED IN THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST

Just as the sons of the prophets separated themselves from the people at large in receiving their religious training, so we also must come apart from the world if we are to be taught of the Lord. Yet we are still in the world, and we, like the sons of the prophets, must be doing a work of religious and moral reform. The prophet Isaiah tells us what our work in the world is in Isaiah 61:1,2: "The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; . . . to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the ac-

ceptable year of the LORD.” If we are thus being taught by the Lord in the school of Christ, then we must also be faithful ministers of the Truth in our day-to-day contact with the world.

As time went on in this fraternity of the sons of the prophets established by Samuel, the authority over this arrangement was passed down through several of God’s prophets until the latter part of the period of the kings. Elijah became the overseer of this arrangement, following which this authority was passed on to Elisha.

Returning to II Kings, chapter 6, we are able to see how Elisha represents the Lord, our great teacher, while the sons of the prophets picture the church. With this in mind we are then able to draw the lesson from this experience. The lesson is primarily that of consecration.

GOING DOWN TO THE JORDAN

In verses 2-4 of II Kings 6, we see the sons of the prophets going down to the Jordan for the purpose of building a house to dwell in. Likewise, at the outset of our Christian experience it was necessary for us to go ‘down to the Jordan’ and there, by faith, be cleansed by the precious blood of Christ. We remember how our Lord at the age of thirty came to the Jordan and there gave expression to his complete submission to the will of the Father. “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” (Heb. 10:9) This must have been the attitude of each one of us when we offered our little all to the Lord. That offering was lean and poor, and did not appear as much in the eyes of men, but the Lord saw in the heart of each one of us a sincerity, a

devotion to his will, and he valued this more highly than gold and silver.

Throughout the Old Testament, the lower Jordan, from Galilee to the Dead Sea with its salty and polluted waters, has pictured the curse or condemnation placed against mankind, all of whom are represented in the Dead Sea, the condition of Adamic death. This picture was carried forward to the New Testament when Jesus came to John at Jordan and was baptized in the salty and polluted waters of that river. This pictured the fact that three-and-a-half years later on the cross Jesus would take Adam's place in death, releasing mankind from the curse, and in due time the symbolic waters of the Jordan will be smitten and rolled back, that the people may pass over into the anti-typical Canaan, the new age. This was pictured by Joshua leading the Israelites through the Jordan into Canaan centuries earlier.

Before this can take place, however, the work of the Gospel Age must be completed. Now, the benefits of our Lord's sacrifice are applied on an individual basis, according to faith. By faith, we have been lifted up and freed from the condemnation in Adam and we walk in newness of life. Going down to the Jordan represents our voluntary consecration to God and subsequent cleansing in the merit of his sacrifice, our justification.

BUILDING THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

Having come down to the Jordan, the sons of the prophets were to take thence everyone a beam (log) and make a place to dwell in. So it is that we, having come to the Jordan in consecration, then set out on

the lifetime work of preparation for our place in the house of the Lord. Each one of us is represented as a beam. This reminds us of our Lord's words in Revelation 3:12, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God."

Just as Elisha accompanied the sons of the prophets and instructed them in this work, so our Lord is present with us as our High Priest and Advocate, our exemplar and our teacher, and we look to him for instruction regarding this work of preparation going on in the life of each one of us.

OUR STEWARDSHIP—PICTURED BY THE AXE

Let us consider verses 5 through 7: "As one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed. And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it."

We know that in building a log dwelling such as the one referred to here, the only tool that was necessary was an axe. It was used to cut down the tree, then to skin the bark off the log. The log was then notched on each end so it would be properly interlocked with the logs from the other walls, at right angles. The axe did 'everything' in preparing each of these beams that were to go into this house. It fittingly represents everything over which we have been made a steward for the purpose of preparing the New Creature so that it may in due time, on the other side of the veil, take its place as a beam in the house of the Lord—as a 'pillar' in the temple of our God.

We notice in our text that this was a ‘borrowed’ axe. It did not belong to the one who was using it. All that we have belongs to the Lord—it does not belong to us! We turned it all over to him when we made our consecration. However, he gave some of it back to us and appointed us stewards over these things. We must use all that we have received from the Lord—our talents and abilities, our material possessions, automobiles, our homes, etc.—in a way that would be in the best interest of the New Creature. All of these things over which we have been made stewards, if used properly, will contribute to the work of preparation of ourselves as a ‘beam’ for the house of the Lord.

We see a further picture here in our text. Elisha caused the axe head to come up from the bottom of the Jordan and to float on top of the water. Elisha took it out of the water and gave it to the one who was using it. Yes, our natural abilities, talents, etc., our worldly possessions, our homes and automobiles, all look more or less the same as those of our neighbors and friends. The difference is in the fact that our axe ‘floats’ while theirs does not. In other words, what we have has been given to us by the Lord, lifted up from the waters of the Jordan, out from under the curse, and sanctified for our use. We are told in I Corinthians 4:2, “It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” We must do all as unto the Lord.

STEWARDSHIP IS ALL-INCLUSIVE

Let us examine this matter of stewardship further. Stewardship means to be given charge over

that which belongs to another. The axe that the Lord has loaned to each one of us for our preparation as New Creatures involves more than just our natural talents and temporal possessions. In I Peter 4:10 we read, “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” The knowledge of the Truth is a gift over which we have been made stewards and Peter here tells us that to fulfill our stewardship in this respect means we must minister the Truth one to another, and thus build one another up in the most holy faith.

How all-inclusive our stewardship is! We see that everything which has to do with our lives has been provided by the Lord, and sanctified for our use in the preparation of the New Creature as a beam in the house of the Lord. Let us see to it that we use our axe properly—cutting off the bark of dross, getting rid of the rotten spots, cutting off the little branches of sin and smoothing out the sharp corners of our character.

LABOURERS TOGETHER

A final lesson that may be drawn from this little incident in the life of Elisha is that referred to by the apostle in I Corinthians 3:9, “We are labourers together with God.” We see the sons of the prophets under the leadership of Elisha bending all their energies to the work at hand, each of them shaping and preparing their individual beams for the building of their house. While the primary concern of each one is their own beam which they are preparing, still they could never finish this construction

job if they were not working together all the way through.

We learn from this that our present work is primarily an individual responsibility—"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12) Yet we must keep our spiritual eyes set upon the building as a whole and its final assembly on the other side of the veil. The Lord is pleased to have us manifest interest in all of the preparatory work of this spiritual house. What a blessed opportunity we have as ecclesias to work together one with another, and with our brethren in the Truth movement as a whole—the privilege of cooperating fully with our brethren throughout the earth and to have a share in the ministry of disseminating the Gospel message.

We are reminded of the apostle's word in Ephesians 2:19-22, "Now therefore we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Just as Elisha was there to oversee the construction of that typical house, so our High Priest and Advocate is with us, and with all those who are engaged in this work of preparation for a place in the spiritual house of God. Jesus has given us the blueprints in his Word, and we must follow these blueprints carefully. May our Lord help each one of us in this work. ■

From Darkness to Light

*“His lightnings
enlightened the
world: the earth
saw, and
trembled.”
—Psalm 97:4*

THE LANGUAGE OF THE

Bible is often punctuated with highly descriptive and meaningful symbols. In both the Old and New Testaments we find numerous word pictures and illustrations that have been used to describe future events, some of which are now taking place during the closing years of this present Gospel Age. One of these symbols is light, or enlightenment. In this psalm, the writer looks down the long stream of time and speaks of the kingdom of truth and peace that we believe will soon be established over all the earth. This is promised to take place when the present calling, selection and testing of the members of our Lord’s bride class has been fully completed.

FORETOLD EVENTS

The psalmist points forward in prophetic terms by saying, “The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.” (Ps. 97:1) The present day sin-sick and dying human

family will surely rejoice under the administration of Christ's future kingdom that will bring life, peace, and happiness to all of the obedient of mankind. "Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation [establishment, *Marginal Translation*] of his throne." (vs. 2) Beyond the present scenes of violence, death, and corruption that now fill the earth, our attention is drawn to the just provisions of the kingdom that will be established on the sure foundation of 'righteousness and judgment.'

However, the structure of earth's present rulership which has been established by men and based on selfishness and pride must be destroyed to make way for the promised kingdom, as we read, "A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about." (vs. 3) "The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth."—vs. 5

THE PEOPLE ENLIGHTENED

Our featured text emphasizes that light, which is associated with the Truth, will shine forth from one end of the earth to the other. Its enlightening rays will educate and make known to earth's inhabitants the ways of the Lord and his laws. "His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled." (vs. 4) Some will 'tremble' and not realize that the time has come for the kingdom of Christ to be set up, take control over the affairs of earth and to erect a new and better world upon the ruins of the old one that will be destroyed. God's plan and purpose is to be accomplished, and the prophecies of the Bible show clearly that the

long-promised kingdom of the Lord will be established and take the place formerly occupied by the selfish and proud institutions of men.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

God has established certain laws in harmony with which he operates and those who come into conflict with these laws reap the penalty of their course in due time. At the close of this age, man is reaping the result of six thousand years of sin, selfishness, and pride. Thus, the Scriptures speak of our day in prophecy and the closing years of this present Gospel Age in various ways of destruction. It is called “the day of vengeance” (Isa. 63:4), “the day of wrath” (Zeph.1:14-18), “a time of trouble” (Dan. 12:1), and in various other symbolic terms.

The Prophet Malachi wrote of this time, “Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” (Mal. 4:1) The Prophet Joel said, “Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; 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.”—Joel 2:1,2

Jesus spoke of this time as one of great tribulation and distress among nations. “Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of

the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."—Matt. 24:21,22

INCREASED LIGHT

The prophetic 'lightnings,' of which the psalmist spoke in our featured scripture text, is a symbol which illustrates the increase of knowledge as a sign of our day in prophecy.

The Prophet Daniel wrote, "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."—Dan. 12:1

Many prominent statesmen and historians now recognize that there is a relationship between an increase of information and the present day scene of chaos and unrest. The worldly-wise understand that the enlightening influences of our day are contributing factors that have influenced the common people to demand more freedom. However, they do not see that this increase of knowledge marks our day as a special time, and in fulfillment of scriptural prophecies which were written many long centuries ago. God's due time is drawing near for the long-promised establishment of Christ's kingdom over all the earth.

DEMAND FOR RIGHTS

For centuries, the thought was generally held among earth's elite, and people of power, that knowledge in the hands of the common people was

a dangerous thing. They feared that it could threaten the established rights and privileges of the hereditary ruling classes. Every possible effort was made to keep the people in ignorance especially during the period of the Dark Ages. But the time arrived in the later centuries of this Gospel Age when God advanced his ultimate purpose for his human family, and made it possible for the common man to obtain knowledge and education. These symbolic lightnings began to enlighten the world, and it has had a major effect in connection with the present conditions of unrest and clamor in the nations of earth.

Symbolic lightning thus becomes more meaningful especially in connection with Joel's prophecy which describes this time period as one of 'clouds and thick darkness.' Lightning flashes manifest during this cloudy day are associated with the great principles of truth and justice, and are brought into contrast with the world's present disorder. A flash of lightning may disclose error concerning either the social, political, financial, or ecclesiastical segments of the world's order. Long-held governmental views and practices of the past are questioned, and the masses are incited to press for better conditions to which they feel justly entitled.

Never before have such conditions prevailed in earth's society, and there is ominous and increasing dissatisfaction and unrest. The current of popular opinion throughout the earth is now being directed in a revolutionary and anarchistic direction. The rulers, as well as the ruled, have long since given up hope that the old established order of things can ever be entirely reestablished. The question is now

being asked how can the world prevent being completely engulfed in anarchy and turmoil?

DARKNESS REVEALED

The prophetic lightning flashes are helping to reveal corruption of all kinds in the world, and dishonesty in high places. This is emphasizing a greater need for more radical changes to be made in the world's business and economic structures. The question becomes how to right these wrongs. The result is seen in conflicting ideas, voices, theories, and threats. These all add to the confusion and increase the trembling within earth's social structure, and this serves to weaken the powers of the symbolic heavens and earth. Our present chaotic world is trembling even as the psalmist's prophetic words proclaim in our featured text.—Ps. 97:4

GLAD TIDINGS

During these closing years of the present Gospel Age, the attitude of those consecrated followers of our Lord Jesus who are endeavoring to be faithful amidst the present turmoil and confusion among nations is not to be one of fear and doubt. They are privileged to proclaim the wonderful message concerning our Heavenly Father's plan of reconciliation for his human creation. The Prophet Isaiah addressed this point and wrote, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion."—Isa. 52:7,8

The Lord's people know that our loving God has all things under control and that he has commissioned his Son, our Lord Jesus, to establish his kingdom over the earth, and that its righteous rule will bring blessings of life and peace to the world. Although we are distressed by the present turmoil in the world, we know that the outcome will in due time be glorious. We thus continue to lift up our heads in confidence, and trust as we proclaim our Father's ultimate plan to bless all men.

We believe that not only is the deliverance of the faithful members of our Lord's bride in the first resurrection near, but that the deliverance of the whole earth from the bondage of sin and death also draws near. Through the enlightenment of prophetic scriptures pointing down the stream of time to our day, the Lord's people are given a blessed knowledge of the Divine plan. This enables them to see both the necessity for God's present method of Divine discipline upon the world, and also the peaceable fruits of righteousness which they may attain in the process.

We have full confidence in God's ability to bring order out of confusion. We understand the reason for the judgments of this day, and that our God speaks from heaven and from his high place of authority and control. We give thanks that the time is near when he will bring to an end the unrestrained human selfishness and pride that marks today's world, and establish his kingdom of peace and harmony in its place.

DISCERNING THE TIMES

Lightning flashes that are portrayed in the prophecies of God's Word are symbolic of knowledge

along all lines as it affects the general course of human history and behavior. Spiritual Truth as it applies to God's will for his own special people is revealed through the Scriptures, and is being disseminated by the consecrated followers of the Master.

To understand the prophetic meaning of the times in which we are now living is to be regarded as a special favor from the Heavenly Father. Our attitude should be one of much gratitude toward him for the Truth that he has granted us the privilege of understanding. Our gratitude should be manifest by an increasing zeal, and the desire to help bring that Truth to the knowledge of others in a very dark world. Our eyes of understanding should discern clearly the day of the Lord that we now see in progress. Faith in his Word guides our eyes of understanding through the word of Truth, and enables us to see the glorious outcome which will be the kingdom of our dear Lord Jesus.

MEANINGFUL SYMBOLS

The day of the Lord's wrath has stages of gradual development. Its general character is that of a struggle between the forces of light and darkness, of liberty against oppression and of truth against error. It is widespread in its application, and universal in its ramifications. No one symbol could fully describe it. The Prophet Zephaniah described this process as the "fire" of God's jealousy. "Wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire

of my jealousy.” (Zeph. 3:8) However, the prophet then reveals God’s wonderful plan for enlightening his human family with knowledge and understanding. “Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.”—vs. 9

Another of God’s prophets used the word “whirlwind” to describe this time. He wrote, “The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.” (Nah. 1:3) Then, in other symbolic language, the prophet wrote, “Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.”—vss. 6,7

From still another perspective, the prophetic Day of the Lord is referred to by Isaiah as a great storm. “Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.” (Isa. 28:2) When describing the destruction of the ecclesiastical segment of earth’s society, the prophet said, “All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.” (Isa. 34:4,5) Isaiah spoke of the day of God’s vengeance again, and

said, "I have trodden the winepress alone: and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come."—Isa. 63:3,4

Jeremiah used the "sword" as an illustration to describe God's wrath against the proud and selfish institutions devised by men. "Lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts. Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth." (Jer. 25:29,30) The whole earth will be affected by the events taking place during the time of God's vengeance. "A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD."—vs. 31

PROUD HEARTS ARE HUMBLED

The human family is generally unaware of the true significance of the events that are now taking place and that are associated with the day of God's wrath against earth's proud and selfish institutions. The destruction is being permitted so that

men's arrogant hearts may be humbled and thus prepared for the righteous kingdom which is to assume control over earth's affairs. They are blinded to God's ultimate plan and purpose and do not understand that in his wisdom he will permit the present trouble to spread and involve the entire world.

The revelator used many powerful symbols to describe these great events that are to accompany the day of God's wrath and vengeance over the nations. "There were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."—Rev. 16:18-21

WIND, EARTHQUAKE AND FIRE

The experiences of Elijah may illustrate in some respects the various stages that would mark the great Time of Trouble and Day of the Lord in the closing scenes of the Gospel Age. The symbolic terms that were outlined to him indicate three stages of trouble—the winds of war and strife, a shaking and resulting upheaval of the nations, and the consuming fire of anarchy.

Elijah was concerned that he alone was left as a prophet of God. "He said, I have been very jealous

for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” (I Kings 19:10) Elijah was informed that he was not alone. “I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.”—vs. 18

God then gave Elijah important instructions, “He said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.”—I Kings 19:11,12

A STILL SMALL VOICE

The ‘still small voice’ that Elijah heard may relate to the psalmist’s words, “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” (Ps. 46:10) “He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.” (Ps. 107:29) The Prophet Isaiah also looked forward to that time, “It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”—Isa. 25:9

Various symbols are used to describe certain features associated with the momentous events in the

Day of the Lord. The Heavenly Father takes full responsibility for the overthrow of this present evil world, and he accomplishes this great work through the prophetic increase of knowledge, and the flashing of his lightnings. The trembling earth is a comprehensive symbol associated with wind, earthquake, fire and in various other ways, but it will continue to tremble until its final collapse. The kingdom of Christ will then be established in its place.

WE ARE NOT IN DARKNESS

The Apostle Paul spoke of our time and related it to birth pangs which come upon a woman when she is about to give birth to her child. This suggests that the great Time of Trouble and Day of the Lord would not come all at once, but in spasms with periods of easement inbetween. “Of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”—I Thess. 5:1-6 ■

—The eye of faith can always pierce the clouds of affliction to see the sun beyond.

Cumbered with Much Serving

Christ never asks of us such arduous labor
As leaves no time for resting at His feet;
This waiting attitude of expectation
He oftentimes counts a service most
complete.

He sometimes wants our ear, our rapt attention,
That He some sweetest secret may impart;
'Tis always in the time of deepest silence
That heart finds fullest fellowship with
heart.

We sometimes wonder why
the Lord has placed us,
Within a sphere so narrow, so obscure,
That nothing we call work
can find an entrance;
There's only room to suffer—
to endure.

Well, God loves patience;
souls that dwell in stillness,
Doing the little things, or resting quite,
May just as perfectly fulfil their mission,
Be just as useful in the
Father's sight,

As they who grapple with some giant evil,
Clearing a path that every eye may see:
Our Savior cares for cheerful acquiescence
Rather than for a busy ministry.

And yet He does love service, where 'tis given
By grateful love that clothes itself in deed;
But work that's done
 beneath the scourge of duty,
 Be sure to such He gives but little
 heed.

Then seek to please Him
 whatso'er He bids thee,
 Whether to do, to suffer, to lie still;
 'Twill matter little by what path
 He leads us,
 If in it all we sought to do
 His will.

—Poems of Dawn

OBITUARIES

The following brethren have recently finished their Christian course. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to their family and friends in the loss of these dear ones.

Sister Rose Laczkowski, Dearborn Heights, MI—
 August. Age, 92

Sister Bonnie Bordes, Southfield, MI—August 21.
 Age, 94

Sister Iola Buker, Vancouver, BC—August 27.
 Age, 90

Sister Pearl Murray, Los Angeles, CA—August 27.
 Age, 86

Sister Kathy Houle, Mt. Clemens, MI—Septem-
 ber 2. Age, 52

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The speakers listed below are invited by individual classes, or their services have been arranged by their home classes:

T. Alexander

Orlando, FL October 18,19

W. Austin

Orlando, FL October 18,19

M. J. Balko

Louisville, AL October 12

E. Blicharz

Atlanta, GA October 12

C. Chandler

San Luis Obispo, CA
October 18,19

B. Eckholt

Pittsburgh, PA October 4,5

L. Davis

San Luis Obispo, CA
October 18,19

M. Davis

San Luis Obispo, CA
October 18,19

T. Krupa

Orlando, FL October 18,19

S. Mengos

San Luis Obispo, CA
October 18,19

J. Mottie

Pittsburgh, PA October 4,5

M. Nekora

San Luis Obispo, CA
October 18,19

J. Trzeciak

Pittsburgh, PA October 4,5

T. Trzeciak

Pittsburgh, PA
October 4,5

T. Ruggirello

Orlando, FL October 18,19



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CONVENTIONS

These conventions are listed by request of classes who sponsor them. So your convention can be placed in these columns in time, make your request in writing three months before the date of the convention to Dawn Magazine, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 4,5—
Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136 West Newton, PA.
Contact G. Balko, 308 Burger Street, West Newton, PA
15089. Phone: (724) 872-6418

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 11,12—
Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue,
Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact J. Houlmont, 6825
Clubhouse Drive West, Canadian Lakes, MI 49346.
Phone: (231) 972-4259

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 18,19—Garden
Club of Sanford, 200 Fairmont Drive (Corner of Hwy
17-92), Sanford, FL. Contact J. Kuenzli, 330 Jasmine
Road, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 831-2098

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 18,19—
Masonic Temple, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo,
CA. Contact M. Allard, 637 Shamrock Lane, Pismo
Beach, CA 93449. Phone: (805) 773-2962

**DETROIT/METRO DETROIT JOINT GATHER-
ING, October 19—**Pleasant Ridge Community Center,
4 Ridge Road, Pleasant Ridge, MI. Contact M. Nemesh.
Phone: (248) 879-1814

**SAN DIEGO CONVENTION, November 27,28,29,
30—**Alliant University, 10455 Pomerado Road, San Di-
ego, CA 92131. For hotel reservations (7 miles north),
contact La Quinta Inn (858) 484-8800, specify "Bible
Students." For on-campus college dorm, contact B. Bach
(619) 445-4879. Other information, contact R. Rice,
13084 Treecrest Street, Poway, CA 92064. Phone: (858)
486-0381

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 7,8,9—Clarion Hotel-Altamonte Springs, 230 West State Road 436, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. Phone: (407) 862-4455. Specify "Florida Bible Students" for special rate until February 20. Other information, contact J. Wesol. Phone: (407) 699-1829

Glory, My Home

*'Mid scenes of confusion and creature complaints,
How sweet to my soul is communion with saints,
To know at the banquet of blessing there's room,
And feel in the presence of Jesus at home!*

*Home! home! sweet, sweet home!
Prepare me, dear Saviour for glory, my home.*

*Sweet bonds that unite all the children of peace;
And thrice precious Jesus, whose love cannot cease;
Though having thy presence wherever I roam,
I long to behold thee in glory, at home!*

*Home! home! sweet, sweet home!
Prepare me, dear Saviour for glory, my home.*

*While here in the valley of conflict I stay,
O! give me submission and strength as my day,
In all my afflictions to thee would I come,
Rejoicing in hope of my glorious home!*

*Home! home! sweet, sweet home!
Prepare me, dear Saviour for glory, my home.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

THAT THE CHURCH IS “THE TEMPLE” OF THE LIVING GOD —peculiarly “his workmanship;” that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel Age—ever since Christ became the world’s Redeemer and the chief “corner stone” of this temple, through which, when finished, God’s blessings shall come “to all people,” and they find access to him.—I Cor. 3:16,17; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29

THAT MEANTIME THE CHISELING, SHAPING, AND POLISHING of the consecrated believers in Christ’s atonement for sin progresses, and when the last of these “living stones,” “elect and precious,” shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.—Rev. 15:5-8

THAT THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD lies in the fact that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God “tasted death for every man,” “a ransom for all,” and will be “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” “in due time.”—Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; I Tim. 2:5,6

THAT THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH is that she may be like her Lord, “see him as he is,” be a “partaker of the divine nature,” and share his glory as his joint-heir.—I John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; II Pet. 1:4

THAT THE PRESENT MISSION OF THE CHURCH is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God’s witness to the world; and to prepare to be the kings and priests in the next age.—Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6, 20:6

THAT THE HOPE FOR THE WORLD lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ’s millennial kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church—when all the willfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 35