

# The DAWN

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## **BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD**

***“What shall they do  
which are baptized for the  
dead, if the dead rise not at all?  
Why are they then baptized for the dead?  
And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?”  
—I Corinthians 15:29,30***

**S**EVERAL MONTHS AGO the news media in New York City carried an article entitled, “Mormons, Jews agree to remove names of baptized Holocaust victims.” We quote from this story as follows:

“Jewish and Mormon leaders signed an agreement yesterday that will remove the names of about 380,000 Holocaust victims from the church’s lists of people who have been baptized as Mormons after death.

“The brief signing ceremony was intended to end a controversy that arose after some Jewish survivors learned last year, to their shock and surprise, relatives had been baptized into the Christian faith after they perished in World War II’s Nazi death camps.

“Monte J. Brough, a member of the Mormon Church’s Presidency of the Seventy, said the posthumous baptisms were a mistake that violated church policy. Baptism is a basic Mormon tenet,

but only ancestors of church members are normally entitled to posthumous baptism, he said.

“The six-page agreement, approved by Jewish organization leaders about two weeks ago, calls for all of the Jewish Holocaust victims’ names to be removed from the church’s vast International Genealogical Index.

“‘On the 50th anniversary of our liberation and our escape . . . what could potentially have been a bigger problem was solved in a most positive and most agreeable manner’, said Ernest Michel, chairman of the World Gathering of Holocaust Survivors, one of five Jewish groups involved.

“Michel became a leader on the issue after discovering last year that his parents, who died at Auschwitz, and other relatives were among those who had been posthumously baptized as Christian.

“‘I must tell you that I was incensed—I had no other reaction’, Michel told a small group of rabbis and other Jewish leaders at yesterday’s ceremony.

“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints maintains the world’s largest genealogical library, with some two billion names of people of many faiths and nationalities. The purpose, Brough said, is to ‘unite extended family members in an eternal bond’. Brough is executive director of its Family History Department.

“Of the two billion names in the IGL, about 200 million have been baptized by living proxies who are members of the church. Most were from North America, Western Europe and Asia, he said. Most of the six million Jews killed in the Holocaust were from Germany and Eastern Europe.

“Brough, . . . said the 380,000 names had been given the ‘temple ordinance’ of baptism by nine well-meaning but over-zealous Mormon record-gatherers.

“It will take several months for IGL computers to find and eliminate all the baptized names’, Brough said. ‘Once removed, they will not appear in any IGL records’.”

What is the meaning of I Corinthians 15:29,30? Is it to be interpreted as the Mormons have, that they can be baptized for a dead person who was not baptized into the Mormon Church, and thereby make him eligible for salvation according to Mormon doctrine? Or is there another understanding of baptism that is related to the resurrection of the dead—the theme of I Corinthians 15?

The Apostle Paul wrote, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (vs. 22) Few will deny the fact that the entire human race is either dead or dying, and Paul explains that this began with the first man, Adam. This was due to Adam’s disobedience of divine law. Essentially, the entire 15th chapter of I Corinthians presents the assurance that the dead will be restored to life by means of a resurrection.

Just as all in Adam die, ‘even so in Christ shall all be made alive’. Paul explains why this is so: “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.” (vs. 21) Here we are reminded that it was the man Christ Jesus who redeemed the world from death; which is in keeping with Jesus’ own words when he said that he would give his flesh “for the life of the world.”—John 6:51

The apostle used the word ransom to describe this feature of the divine plan for the recovery of

man from the condemnation of death. He wrote, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."—I Tim. 2:3-6

The Greek word in the New Testament which is translated "ransom," signifies 'a price to correspond'. The man Christ Jesus being, as the Scriptures declare, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26) corresponded with the perfect Adam, who was created in the divine image. It was this perfect man, Adam, who brought death upon himself and upon his entire progeny by his transgression of divine law; the perfect man, Jesus, gave himself in sacrificial death, and in so doing he was a price to correspond, which provided redemption for the entire Adamic race. This opened the way for all to return to life.

Paul wrote, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23) A similar thought is expressed in John 3:16,17: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

Jesus further explained, "He that believeth on him [Jesus] is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18) These texts reveal that the whole world, by heredity, is under condemnation

to death, and that escape from this condemnation has been provided through Christ; and further, that this escape depends upon the faith and acceptance by the individual of this provision which has been made for him.

During this present age, those who, on learning about this provision of God's grace, accept it upon the conditions of obedience and full dedication to do God's will, are said to be 'justified'. Paul wrote, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1) Those who have not come to Christ in full faith, supported by the complete dedication of their lives to do the will of God by following in the footsteps of Jesus, do not enjoy this 'peace with God'. These are still alienated from him through sin—still under condemnation to death.

There is no other way of salvation from death than through Christ. Speaking of Jesus, Peter said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) The reason there is no salvation from death except through Jesus is that he is the only one who shed his perfect human blood on behalf of the sin-cursed and dying race. Shed blood is, in the Scriptures, a symbol of life poured out, and Jesus poured out his soul unto death, that all of Adam's children might have an opportunity to live.—Isa. 53:12

When we accept by faith the provisions of Christ's shed blood, and devote ourselves to the divine will, we find that there is more to it than merely believing. Paul wrote, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." (Phil. 1:29) There

are many scriptures to indicate that it is the privilege of believers to suffer for, or with, Jesus. In his letter to Timothy, 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

### "FOR THE DEAD"

Appropriately, Paul mentions this aspect of the divine will for all believers in connection with his discussion of the resurrection of the dead. There were apparently some in the church at Corinth who did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus, and he points out that if Christ be not raised from the dead then there is no hope that any of the dead will be restored to life. He shows, on the other hand, not only that Jesus *has* been raised from the dead, but that *all*, through him, *will be* restored to life.

The apostle shows clearly that this will be accomplished by Christ's rulership, and that he will reign until all enemies are put under his feet, and that even death itself will be destroyed. When that glorious kingdom work is complete the kingdom will be turned over to the Father, that he "may be all in all." (I Cor. 15:22-28) To this he adds the words of our theme text, 'What shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?'

To this the apostle adds, "Why stand we in jeopardy every hour" if the dead rise not? "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die."—vss. 30-32

Here we are reminded that true believers in Christ—those who are actually following in his footsteps—suffer and die with him. And this, Paul explains, is on behalf of the dead world of mankind, indicating that in some manner the dead will benefit from the sufferings and death of the followers of Jesus. And this, indeed, is one of the important features of God's grand design for giving life to the world of mankind. It is brought to our attention in a number of ways in the Scriptures, and one of those ways is through the promise which God made to Abraham—the promise that through his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed.—Gen. 12:3

Paul identifies this promised seed of Abraham as being Jesus, and adds, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, . . . and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:16,27-29) Here it is evident that those who are baptized into Christ and who are faithful, will inherit with him the promise of blessing all the families of the earth. Since these 'families of the earth' which are to be blessed are either dead or dying, it is logical to think of those who are baptized into Jesus Christ as being baptized 'for' the dead. It is through this 'death baptism' that they prove worthy of, and are prepared for, that great future work of blessing all the families of the earth.

### **BAPTISM FURTHER EXPLAINED**

The water immersion authorized in the Scriptures for believers is merely a symbol or picture of the true baptism, which is not into water, but into Christ. Paul explains, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3) Again, "For if we

have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”—vs. 5

What was the ‘likeness’ of Jesus’ death? Paul explains, “In that he died, he died unto sin once. . . Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.” (Rom. 6:10,11) Jesus never had been a sinner. His death ‘unto sin’ was, therefore, a sacrificial death on behalf of the world of mankind. Our being planted with him by baptism into death is likewise a sacrificial death, and on behalf of the dead human race. Paul wrote. “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

Jesus experienced this same ‘death baptism’. Referring to it he said, “I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” (Luke 12:50) The Greek word here translated “straitened” has the literal meaning of ‘seized’ or ‘made captive’. The reference is plainly to the closing hours of his ministry when he was arrested and put to death. His baptism, then, was a ‘death baptism’.

When two of his disciples asked to sit, one on his right hand and the other on his left hand in the kingdom, Jesus said to them, “Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”—Mark 10:38

When these two disciples said that they could go through the experiences to which Jesus referred, he said, “Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized.” (Mark 10:39) The

word baptize means 'to bury', and the reference in these various texts is to a burial of our wills into the will of God. It was the will of God that Jesus should die sacrificially for the sins of the world, thus the burial of the Master's will into the will of his Heavenly Father meant his death, so it was a 'death baptism'. It is the will of God for the disciples of Jesus to follow Jesus into death, to be baptized with his baptism, which Paul explains to be also a baptism into death.

Jesus' sacrificial death unto sin provided for the cancellation of the sentence of death resting against the Adamic race; no other sacrifice is needed for this. But the world, made free from condemnation, needs to be enlightened concerning the sacrificial work of Christ; and upon acceptance of this provision it also needs to be lifted up out of degradation, sickness, and death in order to be restored to the perfection lost in Adam. And the followers of Jesus who are planted together in the likeness of his death participate in this work of enlightenment and restoration.

## **RECONCILING THE WORLD**

Paul wrote, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word [ministry] of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—II Cor. 5:18-20

It is indicated from this passage that the sacrificing followers of the Master do participate with him in the reconciliation of the world. This work

originates with God. He is the great Author of the plan of salvation for the lost race, and this plan was put into operation through Jesus: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." And then we, the followers of Christ, are brought into the picture as Christ's representatives in the work of reconciliation for which he made provision. We are given the 'word' of reconciliation.

Verse 21 reads: "He hath made him [Jesus] to be sin [a sin-offering] for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Here we have the explanation of the basis upon which we, who are by inheritance members of the sin-cursed and dying race, can be used by God in the work of reconciliation. It is because Christ, first of all, made provision for our reconciliation, and upon the acceptance of this provision we are 'made the righteousness of God in him'. We add nothing to the merit of the blood by which we are reconciled, but the power of that blood effects our reconciliation, and God reckons us as perfect, and gives us the privilege of participating with Christ in the work of reconciliation for others.

The following verse, which is the first verse of II Corinthians 6, reads, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." How marvelous is 'the grace of God' which Paul urges us not to receive in vain! This privilege of being workers together with God is a work which embraces two ages in the divine plan of salvation—the Gospel Age and the Millennial Age. Christ commissioned his church to go into all the world and preach the Gospel—the word of reconciliation. This work requires sacrifice, the laying down of our lives. It is

this that is involved in our death baptism with Christ, our suffering and dying with him. We “fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ . . . for his body’s sake.”—Col. 1:24

And then, as we have seen, the work of the approaching Millennial Age, when the body members have all been gathered and prepared, will be to reconcile and restore mankind to life. Paul wrote: “I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”—II Cor. 6:2

The expression, ‘now is the accepted time’, does not apply to the lifetime of individuals, but to an age in the plan of God—the Gospel Age—when God accepts the sacrifice of his people and assigns them a role in his plan as workers together with him. In this text, Paul quotes in part from Isaiah 49:8,9: “Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.”

## **TWO SALVATIONS**

During the Gospel Age, those who through faith partake of the provision of life made for them by God through Christ, will, if faithful unto death, be exalted to glory, honor, and immortality. (Rom. 2:7) They are spoken of in Hebrews 3:1 as being “partakers of the heavenly calling.” In II Peter 1:4 they are described as being given promises by which they might become partakers of the “divine

nature," which is the nature of God. In Romans 5:2 these are depicted as rejoicing in the "hope of the glory of God."

The divine nature is not only immortality, but also the source of life. That is why, as in Isaiah 49:8,9, quoted above, those who are referred to as being preserved by God through all their trials, as they suffer together with Christ in his death baptism, are represented as saying to the prisoners, 'Go forth', and to them that are in darkness, 'Show yourselves'. These are the prisoners of death who, through Christ and his faithful followers during the Gospel Age, will be awakened from death. But these will not be exalted to the divine nature, as will be the church; but will be caused 'to inherit the desolate heritages'.

This is the heritage of life on earth, and the dominion of earth that was given to Adam, but which he lost through sin. This heritage of earthly life was purchased by the blood of Christ, and the church will join with him in restoring this purchased heritage to all who will obey the laws of that thousand-year kingdom of blessing—that kingdom during which the dead for whom we are now being baptized will be enlightened, and given an opportunity to return to perfection of human life.

How thankful we are that our loving and eternal God has been an ever-present help for his sacrificing people throughout this entire 'day of salvation', which we believe is now nearing an end! We are glad that, through the merit of Christ's blood, our Heavenly Father accepts the sacrifices of his people, and makes possible the test of their faithfulness to him, looking to their ultimate exaltation to the divine nature.

As we have seen, even during the time when their death baptism has been going on, the LORD has been using them as co-workers in the great plan of salvation. And as we have seen, these will continue to be used as ministers of reconciliation during the Millennial Age, for it will be these who will convey the message of reconciliation to all mankind, until eventually this knowledge of the LORD will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

It will be through the church, as ambassadors for Christ, and using the word of reconciliation, that the knowledge of the 'ransom for all' provided by Jesus will, in due time, be 'testified'—or made known to all.—I Tim. 2:3-6

## THE BRIDE

In symbolic language, the Bible speaks of the church as a whole—all those, that is, who, during the Gospel Age are planted together in the likeness of Jesus' death, as the 'bride' of Christ. In Revelation 19:7, Jesus is mentioned as the 'Lamb', because of the sacrificial nature of redemption, and we read, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

This 'making ready' of those who will be united with Jesus in glory, and share with him in the restitution work of the Millennial Age, has entailed much sacrifice and suffering. Jesus' own ministry was predominantly one of sacrifice; a sacrifice that ended in death. The Scriptures urge us to be like him, symbolically to be buried with him by baptism into death.

The adornment of the bride-to-be, in addition to being unselfish love leading to sacrifice for others, is also an adornment of humility and obedience in

doing God's will. It is, in fact, a rich combination of all the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. And it is only when each prospective member of Christ's future bride is thus adorned, and the whole brought forth in the first resurrection, that the marriage of the Lamb will take place.

Then Revelation 22:17 will be fulfilled, for not until then will there be a 'bride'. The text reads, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." We are informed that the 'Spirit' and the 'bride' will constitute the vanguard of those who invite mankind to partake of the 'water of life', again revealing the unique position in the plan of salvation occupied by those who are planted together in the likeness of Jesus' death.

No wonder Paul points out how futile would be Christian suffering and death, how empty of meaning our baptism for the dead, if there is to be no resurrection of the dead! But we know that there is to be a resurrection of the dead, because Christ 'the firstfruits' has already been raised from the dead and exalted to heavenly glory. The first resurrection will embrace all who have suffered and died with him that they might live and reign with him, but this glorious hope can be realized only through faithfulness in death baptism.

We rejoice in the assurance of divine help for those laying down their lives in sacrifice. One of the greatest incentives to faithfulness is the truth of the Scriptures that our death baptism is to accrue to the benefit of the world. If faithful, we will share in the great future work of restoring the dead world to life, enlightening them, and giving them the opportunity to live forever. ■

# INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

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## LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 4

# RUNNING FROM GOD

**KEY VERSE:** “*Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.*”—*Jonah 1:3, New International Version*

**SELECTED SCRIPTURE:** *Jonah 1:1-4,10-15,17; 2:1,10*

**J**ONAH WAS AN active prophet at the time that Jeroboam, son of Joash, was king of the northern or ten-tribe kingdom, about 800 to 750 B.C. See II Kings 14:27. The prophetic book which bears his name describes the circumstances of an assignment given by God to Jonah; namely, to preach against the great city of Nineveh because their wickedness had come up before God. Jonah's response was most unusual. He went in the opposite direction to run away from God.

Nineveh was the principal city of the Assyrians. Their armies were feared

by all of the neighboring countries, and these nations would enjoy seeing retribution against Assyria because of her tyranny and cruelty.

If Jonah preached to Nineveh, would they reform? Jonah did not want to risk finding this out, so he proposed to distance himself as far as possible from that city. He boarded a ship in Joppa going to Tarshish and paid the fare. Later he went down into the hold to sleep.

A storm arose as it is written: “The LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to

break up.” (Jon. 1:4, *NIV*) The captain and the sailors were distressed. They awakened Jonah, cast lots to determine who was responsible, and Jonah was indicated. It was determined that he had run away from a service God wanted him to perform. Jonah offered to be cast into the sea to calm it, but the sailors were reluctant to do this, and rowed hard to get back to land to no avail. As a result they were forced to cast Jonah overboard, and the sea became calm.

Jonah did not drown. The LORD prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah, and he was in the ‘belly’ of the fish three days and three nights. (Jon. 1:17) This happened so that the Ninevites and the world would have an important sign.—Luke 11:30

During the ministry of Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees sought a sign from him to verify that he was the Son of God. The answer Jesus gave them is recorded in Matthew 12:39-41. The only sign they would receive would be the sign of Jonah. It is evident

that the experiences of Jonah were to provide this sign concerning the death of Jesus, and that he would be in *sheol* [*hades*] for the same period of time.

The resurrection of Jesus from the condition of death was miraculous, as was also the expelling of Jonah from the great fish onto dry land. It is noteworthy that Jonah prayed to God and said, “Out of the belly of hell [*sheol*] cried I, and thou [Jehovah] heardest my voice.” (Jon. 2:2) *Sheol*, translated “hell,” has also been translated “grave.” Symbolically, Jonah was in the state of death—he would have died if the LORD had not delivered him.

As we know, there is no human reasoning that can interfere with the fulfillment of God’s plan, so also Jonah had another opportunity to carry out his mission. There is no place that anyone can go to hide from God—not even in “*sheol*,” the grave. God’s purpose is clearly that “all that are in the graves shall hear his [Jesus’] voice. And shall come forth.”—John 5:28, 29 ■

## EXTENDING MERCY

**KEY VERSE:** *"He prayed to the LORD, 'O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity'."*—Jonah 4:2, *New International Version*

**SELECTED SCRIPTURE:** *Jonah 3:1-5,10; 4:1-5,11*

WHEN JONAH WAS ejected from the great fish, God sent word to him again, "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." (Jon. 3:1,2, *NIV*) This time Jonah obeyed and faithfully took the long journey to Nineveh, and delivered God's message to the people. Not much detail is given about that message, but it is summarized as: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." (Jon. 3:4) God had indicated that a great evil was to befall these people.—Jon. 3:10

The Hebrew word translated "evil" in the *King James Version* can be translated a variety of

ways, and other translations use words such as "calamity," or "destruction." The residents of Nineveh knew that Jonah's message indicated clearly that a great calamity would befall them which would destroy them. Led by their king, they all repented of their evil ways in sackcloth and ashes. When God saw that this reformation was sincere, he did not carry out the threat of annihilation.—Jon. 3:10

Jonah's reaction was one of great displeasure and anger. These people clearly deserved the punishment God had proclaimed he would inflict upon them, and he prayed,

using the words of our Key Verse. In this prayer it becomes clear that the motivation for Jonah's original flight to Tarshish was to avoid having this mercy manifested by God. He was so mortified by the change of events that he wanted to die. God asked Jonah, "Have you any right to be angry?"—Jon. 4:4, *NIV*

We read that Jonah then went out of the city and prepared a shelter for himself, and waited to see what would happen to the city. Perhaps he expected that they might revert to their evil ways, and God would destroy them. By God's providence, a vine grew up quickly, spreading over Jonah's shelter, giving him shade and relief from the hot sun. This made Jonah happy. However, the next day God permitted a worm to destroy the vine so that it withered away. Along with this loss of shade came a hot east wind and blazing sun that made Jonah faint, and again he asked God that he might die.

By means of this vine Jonah was taught a lesson in mercy. He felt sorry that

the vine had withered and died.

On the other hand, God had much more reason to feel sorry for the people of Nineveh. When Jonah said that he had a right to be angry about the vine dying, God told him that he had been concerned about a vine which was not his responsibility. Should not God be concerned about the 120,000 people who did not know the difference between right and wrong, and had to be taught?

The narrative ends on this note, but the answer to God's question is clear. All of us have to acquire the virtue of mercy. As Jesus said, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." (Luke 6:36) There are many Christian people in the world who believe that they are the only ones who will be saved, and that the great majority of mankind will perish. These lack mercy and believe they deserve to perish. But God is merciful and has a plan of salvation that is merciful. The Gospel message is truly a message of good news! ■

## REMAINING LOYAL

**KEY VERSE:** *“Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”—Ruth 1:16*

**SELECTED SCRIPTURE:** *Ruth 1-8,16-18*

THE EVENTS DESCRIBED in the Book of Ruth took place during the era of the Judges. This was a period spanning the time that Israel entered the land of Canaan—after their bondage in Egypt—to the anointing of the first king of Israel, Saul. It was during this time that a famine in the land caused Elimelech, an Ephratite, to leave Bethlehem in Judah to escape the hardships. He went to Moab, taking his wife, Naomi, and two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Shortly after arriving in Moab, Elimelech died, leaving Naomi and her two sons in that foreign land. Meanwhile, her two sons married Moabite women—one named Orpah, and the other Ruth. The sons, too,

did not live long, but died after ten years in the land of Moab.

Naomi received news after these events that the days of famine had ended in Judah, and decided to return. Her two widowed daughters-in-law decided to go with her, which speaks well for Naomi's character. Both were very considerate and kind to Naomi because she was a good mother-in-law to her sons' wives. But Naomi knew that the future for these two young widows might not be as attractive in Judah as it could be if they stayed in Moab with their own families.

So, she encouraged them to return to their land and families, and sought the LORD's blessing

on them for their many kindnesses to her sons, to herself, and to her husband, for, indeed, they had been good daughters-in-law. In these days of instability and incompatibility in marriages, how good it is to read of such beautiful relationships between husbands and wives, mother-in-law and daughters-in-law. Naomi knew that they would make good wives for some men of Moab. Naomi kissed both in parting, and the feelings were so deep that they wept. Then both Orpah and Ruth could not do as she advised, and insisted on returning with her to Judah.

Again Naomi reasoned with them, saying, "It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD's hand has gone out against me." (Ruth 1:13, *NIV*) Perhaps she felt that the LORD was displeased with her family because they had left Judah to go to Moab. She gave vent to such feelings when she returned to Bethlehem and was greeted by her former friends.

Orpah yielded to Naomi's reasoning and again wept as she kissed Naomi

farewell and returned to her family in Moab. On the other hand, Ruth begged Naomi not to entreat her to leave, and said that she would stay with Naomi until she died.

The loyalty manifested by Ruth to Naomi involved the worship of the true God. When Elimelech left Judah to go to Moab, he took the worship of Jehovah with him. There is no doubt that religious practices of Israel were maintained by this family, and had a deep impression upon Ruth. This is why she said to Naomi, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Ruth 1:16 Heretofore, she had known only the gods of Moab, and a return to Moab and her family would mean a return to these gods as well.

An important lesson for us is that the privilege of being the LORD's people brings responsibility. We should so live that others can clearly see and know of our deep conviction, love, devotion and worship of God. Such was the reason for Ruth's love for Naomi, and the God whom she worshiped. ■

## SHOWING KINDNESS

**KEY VERSE:** *“Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed be he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, the man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.”—Ruth 2:20*

**SELECTED SCRIPTURE:** *Ruth 2:1,8-12; 4:13-17*

WHEN RUTH CONVINCED Naomi to let her return with her to Judah, they travelled together to Bethlehem and arrived at the time of the barley harvest. The people of Bethlehem welcomed her back. But these were two widows in a new land for them, and the specific parcel of property owned by Naomi had not been farmed. However, Israel's laws were generous. In the times of harvest, the corners of the fields were left untouched so that gleaners could come and harvest some of the grain. This was a provision for the poor.

Ruth unknowingly selected a field to glean that belonged to Boaz, a kinsman of Naomi. Boaz came to the field to supervise the

work, saw Ruth, and asked about her. When told that she had come from Moab with Naomi, he gave her special privileges in gleaning. Ruth was grateful for his kindness, and asked, “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me, a foreigner?”—Ruth 2:10, *New International Version*

Then Boaz told Ruth how he had been told all about her kindnesses to Naomi, and how she came to Judah with Naomi after her husband died. When Ruth returned home that evening, she told Naomi her experience. Naomi saw the blessing of the LORD in these circumstances, and Boaz, being a kinsman, was in a position to redeem the land that she owned in

Judah. Ruth went every day to the field of Boaz until the harvest was ended.

The laws of Israel required that the brother or near kinsman of a dead man take his widow as a wife if they had no child, to raise up seed to his name. (Deut. 25:5-10) Also, the law stated that property owned could be redeemed by the nearest of kin. Naomi sought to have Boaz redeem the property left to her by her husband, Elimelech, since Boaz was a near kinsman. She also explained to Ruth what she must do to approach Boaz as nearest of kin, to take her as his wife.

Ruth followed all of Naomi's instructions faithfully. But there was another kinsman that was closer to Elimelech than Boaz, so he was given the opportunity to redeem Naomi's property first. However, when he found that the requirement included taking Ruth as a wife to raise seed to Naomi's son, he was reluctant to proceed with the transaction, and forfeited his right to do so. "And Boaz said unto the

elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's of the hand of Naomi. Moreover Ruth the Moabites, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren."—Ruth 4: 9, 10

"So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son." And the women blessed the name of the LORD, as recorded in Ruth 4:13-16.

The child, named Obed, became the father of Jesse, who was the father of David. Ruth became a link in the genealogy of David, and of our Lord Jesus. The fact that she was a Gentile seemed to point to the fact that all of the Christ class would not be found in Israel. God would also "visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name." —Acts 15:14 ■

# THE MEANING OF LENT

**T**HIS MONTH MANY sincere believers in the Christian world will observe Ash Wednesday on February 21, and the beginning of Lent. Lent is a period of forty days of penitential preparation for Easter which is observed by Roman Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox Church, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and many Protestant churches. Strange as it may seem, the Bible says nothing about Lent, or any such penitential preparation. To learn about this ritual it is necessary to search writings that came later, starting in the fourth century.

The earliest record of an establishment of this penitential preparation is found in the transactions which took place in the Nicaean Council of A.D. 325. The Council called this period by the Latin name, "quadragesima," meaning 'forty days of fasting'. As differences arose in the church and it split into a western and eastern church, the exact time period assigned to this period of repentance varied because of their rules on fasting.

The features of 'forty days' and 'fasting' appear to be associated with our Lord's forty days in the wilderness. Jesus went into the wilderness to meditate, immediately following his baptism in

the Jordan River. There he fasted forty days and forty nights—he ate no food—and there the Devil came and tempted him. (Matt. 4:1-11) However, our Lord's meditative period in the wilderness was not intended to be a pattern for a ritual concerning his death, but rather an illustration of temptations that beset all consecrated followers of Christ.

When Lent was first established, fasting consisted of eating one meal a day with no meat, fish, eggs or butter. Also, there was public penance for notorious sinners. They were clothed in sackcloth and ashes and kept apart from everyone until the Thursday before Easter, at which time they were reinstated into Christian fellowship. This treatment of these sinners was discontinued about the eighth or tenth century, when a form of public penance was imposed upon all the congregation, including the clergy. This was done by burning the palms saved from the previous Palm Sunday and using the ashes to form a cross on the foreheads of all penitents on Ash Wednesday. This ritual has remained to this day.

Somewhere between the fourth and eighth century, the word Lent became associated with this period of penance. The word Lent in Old English means 'spring'. It is evident that the church leaders sought to combine this period of forty days of fasting with the spring season. Likewise, Easter was adopted from the Saxons and refers to their goddess, Estera, whose festival was celebrated in the spring of the year. The adoption of the two names, Lent and Easter, and their application to the period celebrating our Lord's death and resurrection were designed to assist the supplanting of heathen beliefs by Christian events.

## **MARDI GRAS**

There is yet another strange outgrowth of this imposition of the church upon its congregations, and that is the Mardi Gras (the French name for Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent). Since it was the last day before the fasting season, it became the occasion for great merrymaking in the Middle Ages. In the cities or regions of some of the Roman Catholic countries, the custom of holding carnivals for Mardi Gras has not only been continued but has become more elaborate. The carnivals, with spectacular parades, masked balls, mock ceremonials, and street dancing, usually last for a week or even two weeks before Mardi Gras. Some of the most celebrated carnivals are held to this day in New Orleans, Rio de Janeiro, Nice, and Cologne. After the merrymaking comes fasting, and the call to refrain from certain carnal pleasures.

The development of carnivals and merrymaking before Lent came as a natural consequence of forcing fasts and abstinence upon a people not consecrated to God. Church leaders have not been too concerned about this development. They are satisfied that after the gaiety their congregations still come to church, fast, and obediently support the church.

The question could be asked, "Is Lent and abstinence a way of Christian sacrifice?" The answer is, No! God has never forced anyone to sacrifice. The Christian must be a willing sacrificer, or not sacrifice at all.

## **DRAWN BY GOD**

The first step toward becoming a willing sacrificer, according to the Scriptures, is for God to draw that person to himself. Jesus explained this

in John 6:44 when he said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Once the Father has drawn one to Jesus, then must come the willingness to follow Jesus and be a sacrificer.

In Matthew 19:16-30, a rich young man went to Jesus and asked him, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."

It is noteworthy that Jesus had a very simple requirement of those whom the Father drew to him. They were to follow him. In order to get treasures in heaven, they had to be willing to give up treasure on earth. This was not a sacrifice for a period of time each year during Lent, but for the rest of their lives.

This young man was rich, and unwilling to give up his possessions. So Jesus continued on this occasion to make the point of how necessary it is to give up all we have: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?"

### THE NEEDLE'S EYE

The point Jesus made was that riches were a burden to a rich man, and that they would more likely hinder than help him enter the kingdom of heaven. The illustration of the camel going through the eye of the needle makes this point. In the walled cities of Biblical times, the gates to the cities would be closed at night. One small door, called the 'eye of the needle', provided guarded access to the city. A traveler coming to the city late in the day after sundown might find the gates closed. To get his camel through the needle's eye it was necessary to take all of the camel's burden off his back, have the camel kneel, and then, by pushing and tugging, get the camel through the needle's eye.

The illustration was not intended to convey that it was impossible for a rich man to enter the city, but rather that it was possible to enter through humility, illustrated by the camel kneeling. Sacrifice of earthly goods was pictured by unburdening the camel; and that it would be difficult, was shown by the need for pushing and tugging. The disciples, upon hearing this illustration, were amazed and asked, 'Who then can be saved?' The attitude of sacrifice sought by God of those whom he was calling seemed so difficult to attain.

Jesus, sensing their discouragement, said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Then Peter was encouraged

enough to say, "Behold, we have forsaken [left] all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Jesus answered: "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:1 says, "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."

### **ALL TO BE SACRIFICED**

Those whom God calls are to give up their all. Their very lives are devoted to him. The Apostle Paul calls it a 'reasonable service'. It is not a ritual that is imposed upon us for a period of time. It is a lifetime of reasonable service to God. Also associated with this willing sacrifice is a desire to be transformed so that we do all things as God desires us to do them. Hence the Apostle Paul says, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (vs. 2) To the true Christian it would be a delight to do God's will rather than partake of worldly pursuits.

Jesus mentioned, in answer to Peter's point, that these sacrifices would have a manifold compensation to those who are faithful. In his kingdom these brethren would be with him ruling over Israel and the world as a reward for their sacrifice.

Another objective that the church leaders had in setting up the observance of Lent was to make people aware of their sins, and to do penance. The awareness of sin should always be with us. The Apostle John writes, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."—I John 2:1,2

We are to so chart our course of life that we 'sin not'. But we won't succeed. For John makes this plain: "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (I John 1:7-10) We have the assurance that Jesus died for our sins and has become the satisfaction, not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world. This appreciation of our Lord, particularly that he died for our sins, should be a matter of reflection every day, and not only for a period of forty days within a year.

### **TRUE FASTING**

When Lent was conceived, it was to be particularly associated with fasting. Fasting can be a way whereby people show devotion to God. In the sermon on the mount (Matt. 6), Jesus presents three ways of showing devotion to God and comments on these. One of these is fasting. (vss. 16-18) The other two are prayer (vss. 5-15), and the giving of

alms. (vss. 1-4) Each of these can be misused, and so Jesus says: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. . . . Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

In each of these acts of devotion, Jesus recommends that others not be aware that we are performing them, or it will all go for naught. Above all, these acts of devotion must all be done willingly, at any time, and never by decree. Setting up

(Cont'd on p. 36)

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Guntersville  
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### **ARKANSAS**

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

### **CALIFORNIA**

Claremont KTSJ 1220 9:45 a.m.  
Lancaster KVOY 1340 8:15 a.m.  
Monterey KNRY 1240 8:30 a.m.  
Morro Bay KBAI 1150 7:30 p.m.  
San Francisco  
KEST 1450 3:30 p.m.  
Tehachapi  
KTPI 103.1 fm 8:15 a.m.

### **FLORIDA**

Jacksonville  
WXTL 1010 7:45 p.m.  
St. Petersburg  
WTIS 1110 5:00 p.m.

### **GEORGIA**

Augusta WGAC 580 8:00 a.m.

### **ILLINOIS**

LaSalle WLFO 1220 9:45 a.m.  
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### **INDIANA**

Hammond WJOB 1230 8:30 a.m.  
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WCOE 96.7 fm 10:00 a.m.  
North Vernon  
WKRP 1460 8:00 a.m.

### **KANSAS**

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WBGH 107.1 fm 8:15 a.m.  
Winchester WINH 1380 10:30 a.m.

### **MICHIGAN**

Detroit WLQV 1500 9:30 a.m.  
Fremont WSHN 1500 9:00 a.m.  
WSHN 100.1 fm 9:00 a.m.

### **MISSOURI**

Osage Beach  
KRMS 1150 8:30 a.m.

### **NEW JERSEY**

Camden (Tues.)  
WTMR 800 2:30 p.m.  
Salem WJIC 1510 9:45 a.m.  
WNNN 101.7 fm 9:45 a.m.

### **NEW YORK**

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

### **NORTH CAROLINA**

Greensboro (Tues.)  
WQMG 1510 3:00 p.m.  
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Cleveland WRKG 1380 7:45 a.m.

### **PENNSYLVANIA**

Pottstown  
WPAA 1370 12:45 p.m.

### **SOUTH CAROLINA**

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WOKE 1340 7:45 a.m.

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Richmond WGGM 820 7:45 a.m.

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Spokane KAQQ 590 7:00 a.m.

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Estevan CJSL 1280 8:45 a.m.

#### BRITISH WEST INDIES

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10:30 p.m.

#### CHILE (Spanish)

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#### COSTA RICA (Spanish)

San Jose Radio Sonorara  
105.9fm and 700am 6:15 a.m.

#### MEXICO (Spanish)

Culiacán Ranchera  
XECQ 8:30 a.m.  
Guadalajara  
XEWK 1130 8:30 a.m.

#### NIGERIA

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

#### PANAMA (Spanish)

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

#### PERU (Spanish)

Trujillo 105.7fm  
9:30 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.

#### PHILIPPINES

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

#### SOUTH AFRICA

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Commercial Radio 1400 am  
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#### URUGUAY (Spanish)

Radio CX32 1170kHz 9:00 a.m.

## ..... THE BIBLE ANSWERS TV LISTINGS

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Channel America 9:30 a.m.  
Norfolk, VA WJCB 7:00 a.m.

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a period of time in which all must fast violates these principles. The imposition of Lent rituals upon church congregations would seem to oppose the principles laid down by Jesus.

Finally, on this matter of observing Lent, we note that the church leaders had in mind the forty days that Jesus was in the wilderness after being immersed by John the Baptist in the river Jordan. It would be difficult for anyone in the world to comprehend these particular experiences of Jesus unless they were called of God to be joint-heirs with his Son and to partake of his sufferings: "joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him."—Rom. 8:17

### **THE CALLED ONES**

These are those whom the Apostle Paul describes as the "called according to his [God's] purpose." (Rom. 8:28) In this part of Paul's epistle to the church at Rome, the apostle tells how Jesus was in God's mind, first, and that he should be the eldest in a family of brethren. Having provided this earth as a place where he could test our Lord as to his worthiness to receive the divine nature—a nature like unto his Father's—immortal—God planned to use it as well for the trying and testing of those 'called to be joint-heirs' with his Son. In II Timothy 1:9 the apostle describes it thus: "Who [God] hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

Hence we should not expect everyone in the world to understand the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness, for these are lessons applicable to those called to be with him. Nor should we expect

those who are followers of Christ to duplicate what he did when he spent forty days and nights without food. This was true fasting. It would be inadvisable to try this and, for most, impossible. The lesson concerns the temptations presented by the Adversary—to which temptations all of Jesus' followers are exposed—and how to deal with them.

## **JESUS' TEMPTATIONS**

The Scriptural account of these temptations is found in Matthew 4:1-11: "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

"Then the Devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the Temple. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God.

"Again, the Devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God,

and him only shalt thou serve. Then the Devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”

In these temptations, the Devil used the approach, ‘*If thou be the Son of God*’, attempting to goad our Lord into proving his identity by sensational means. The first temptation to Jesus was to gratify his desires as a man. Being hungry, he could use his power to provide food, as he was later to prove when he fed 5,000 people. The second temptation was the suggestion that Jesus bring himself before the eyes of the people by jumping from a pinnacle in the Temple. This is believed to be the top of the royal portico, in itself 150 feet high, and the valley below it about 600 feet deep.

When these approaches failed, the Devil appealed to Jesus to consider avoiding the course of sacrifice, suffering, and humiliation as a path to glory, and take a shortcut, suggesting that his gain would be as great by joining forces with him. In each case the answer Jesus gave came from God’s Word: “It is written,” and the Devil failed in his temptation of Jesus.

### **FOLLOWERS ALSO TEMPTED**

All three temptations are typical of those which the followers of Jesus must endure. Although the Devil was involved in all three, the first two are typical of how our flesh and the world are particularly involved, under Satan’s direction, whereas the third is typical of the Adversary, himself.

The first test is typical of those temptations besetting the followers of Jesus that involve the gratifying of their senses—their fleshly desires. The second test is typical of those temptations besetting the followers of Jesus that involve entan-

gument with the world and its ambitions, desires, and appetites. The third test is clearly that of the Adversary enticing us to worship him. If we are to succeed, as Jesus did, in resisting these temptations of the Devil, we need to be thoroughly acquainted with the Word of God and his plan. We could never hope to succeed by setting aside forty days in which to fast. The temptations will come every day and must be met every day.

The way of Christian sacrifice is not open for all. This is made clear by Jesus when he explained to his disciples why he spoke to the people in parables and dark sayings: "He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: . . . lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."—Matt. 13:11-17

The opportunity for the rest of the world of mankind to understand God's words will come in God's millennial kingdom when "the earth shall

be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." See Isaiah 11:9, Jeremiah 31:34; and also Hebrews 2:14.

The observance of Lent implies that whosoever will join a Christian church can sacrifice and fast as Jesus did. This is not so. God has reserved the privilege of following Jesus for a few. But those who have been invited should appreciate this privilege and seek to carry out their consecration vows faithfully every day. "If we suffer [with him], we shall also reign with him."—II Tim. 2:12 ■

## ***TWO PHASES OF SALVATION—ONE SAVIOR***

**A**LTHOUGH THE HUMAN race was one, and although all shared the same sentence of death, nevertheless it has pleased God to provide two different phases of salvation from this curse of death. Both phases are based upon the great sacrifice which Jesus accomplished at Calvary. The first of these is for the church class, called out of the world during this Gospel Age—called to a change of nature, from human to spiritual nature. Even this first phase is not yet complete, and will not be until the whole company of the church shall have been selected from the world, and by the first resurrection shall have been glorified with Christ. These will be joint-heirs with Christ in his kingdom; and that kingdom will soon begin its work on behalf of the world.

The second phase of salvation begins in the Millennial Age when Messiah's kingdom will control the affairs of earth, and Satan will be bound. The knowledge of the LORD shall fill the whole earth! All the blind eyes shall be opened and deaf ears be unstopped! The second phase will then be effective to all mankind. That will not be a spiritual salvation, like the angels. But it will be restoration to human perfection and uplift of man out of sin and death to the image of God, as experienced by father Adam. Both phases of salvation will be grand and glorious—though that of the church will be the more glorious!

## OBITUARIES

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

Brother Walter Olesiak, Melrose Park, IL—November 22,  
Age, 77.

Brother Arthur Phillips, Kelowna, B.C.—November 26.  
Age, 88.

Brother Kenneth Benton, Johnstown, NY.—December.  
Age, 64.

Sister Helen Gleason, Highland, CA—December 3. Age, 76.

Sister Vida Ott, San Gabriel, CA—December 9. Age, 72.

### 1996 Memorial Supper Date

THE PROPER TIME for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 p.m., on Tuesday, April 2nd, 1996.

We have a complete Memorial Service available for isolated brethren, or for any who care to have it, on both audio and video cassettes. The audio cassette can be purchased for \$3.00 per copy, or is available free of charge on loan from:

#### **Dawn Recorded Lecture Service**

199 Railroad Avenue  
East Rutherford, NJ 07073

The video cassette can be purchased for \$6.00, and is also available free on loan. Send your request to:

#### **Dawn Video Cassette Service**

P.O. Box 4355  
North Hollywood, CA 91617

## THE FIRST ARMAGEDDON BATTLE

*“The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.”*

—*Psalm 34:17*

**I**T IS GENERALLY believed that the great battle of Armageddon is near. This study relates to the first of the great battles in the valley of Megiddo, noted for its many slaughters. It is therefore the basis of the divine prediction respecting the “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation” (Dan. 12:1), which will precede and prepare the way for Messiah’s glorious rule of a thousand years.—Rev. 20:6

The Israelites, guilty of idolatry, had, according to God’s covenant with them, been chastened by his permitting their enemies to vanquish them. They had come to great straits. Their enemies had become strong and high-handed. General Sisera, of the northern Canaanites, having humbled the Israelites of northern Palestine for years, moved with a large army, intent upon victories in the south. The strength of his army is indicated in a statement that it contained nine hundred iron chariots.—Judg. 4:13

By the time he had gone as far south as the Valley of Megiddo, the messengers reached him, informing him that Barak, a leader among the Israelites, had seized the opportunity of Sisera's absence and was also leading southward an army of ten thousand Israelites. Under divine guidance, Barak made Mt. Tabor his army base—the same place which in Jesus' day became known to his followers as the Mount of Transfiguration, and where the coming kingdom of Messiah was represented in a vision. Here we have another remarkable feature in this picture of the future—the association of the vision of the kingdom, and its proximity to the Armageddon field of disaster, symbolic of the overthrow of present institutions.

### **A DISCOMFITED ARMY**

General Sisera, looking with scorn upon the Israelites, advanced with his army on both sides of the River Kishon toward Mt. Tabor. Then it was that the word of the LORD came afresh to General Barak, directing him to advance against the army of the Canaanites. The slaughter was a great one. Sisera's army was defeated in battle, so that it scattered. A great storm and cloudburst swelled the river, making quagmires of the lower valleys, rendering useless the chariots of Sisera. His soldiers, fleeing for their lives, were cut down by the Israelites, while other thousands were swept down the river to the sea.

This interference by God on behalf of his people, Israel, is styled in figurative language as the fighting of the "stars of heaven" against Sisera's army. (Judg. 5:20-22) Similarly, in the great Armageddon soon to come it will not be human might that will prevail, but the disconcerted hosts will effect the complete disruption of the present order

of things, for "every man's hand shall be against his brother and against his neighbor." (Ezek. 38:21; Zech. 8:10; 14:13)) It is the 'cloudburst' of truth, and the 'rising waters' of knowledge which are bringing to pass this great human catastrophe—which the LORD will overrule for the blessing of the world.

### **THE POWER OF A FAITHFUL WOMAN**

Although the LORD has been pleased generally to use men in connection with his work, not only as typical characters but also as ministers of the Gospel, nevertheless the Scriptures give us pictures of noble women who, because of the failure of men, have also been used. Notable among these is the case of Deborah. She perceived how neglect of the divine law had borne fruit in the subjugation of her people. Before this incident of General Sisera's attack, she perceived that heathenism was spreading throughout the land of Canaan, and that what was needed was a guide to point the people to the right way—back to God. The Canaanites, whom they had not conquered, had conquered them.

The conquest of Israel had been permitted by God. It had its incipient state when the Israelites neglected the divine direction that they should live separately from all other people. Instead, women had enticed their husbands and their children to the heathen gods of worship. Apparently many of Israel who had not gone over to idolatry had nearly lost their knowledge and appreciation of the true God.

The same difficulty is present today in the Christian world. Christian people have been alienated from the Bible by creeds that teach error. What the people need is correct information re-

specting the true God of love and his real plan, as outlined in the Bible.

In the dark hour of Israel's oppression, the princes of the tribes seemed to lack patriotism, as well as faith in God. Each tribe was a separate state, and there was no cohesion between them—the divinely intended bond of union, the true religion, having relaxed. It was about this time that the LORD, seeking a way through which to be gracious to his people, found that fulfillment through a woman named Deborah. She realized the situation more keenly than others, probably because more deeply consecrated to God and his service. She moved from her home in the north to a central place in the highlands of Ephraim. From there she sent encouraging, stimulating messages to the chief men of the various tribes. She was respected. Her counsel was appreciated and her advice was sought. In this sense she judged, admonished, guided, and assisted Israel.

### **FULL DEVOTION OF HEART ESSENTIAL**

Deborah is styled a prophetess. This could mean public teacher, or one through whom the LORD sent special messages. Some things connected with this story indicate the latter. Surely the LORD used her because she was a willing and consecrated servant of his principles and his people. What a lesson is here for all of God's people, that in order to be used in the LORD's service and to accomplish things for him and his, full devotion of heart is essential.

At an opportune time, when Sisera's army with nine hundred chariots had proceeded southward to Megiddo, Deborah sent word to Barak, a leader in her tribe—Naphtali. She admonished that now was the time to do something for the deliverance

of God's people, and that he should immediately march to battle with ten thousand Israelites. Barak refused unless she would cooperate by going with him. (Judg. 4:8) She agreed to do so, forewarning him, however, that the honor of the matter would thus be divided with herself, and that he would lose a part of his blessing by reason of his lack of courage. Thus it was that when Barak's army moved to Mt. Tabor, it was under General Barak's command, but a woman was the real mouthpiece or agent of God directing the affairs of the battle which brought such a signal victory to Israel.

When General Sisera's chariots stuck in the mire and his army was defeated, he fled afoot with others, only to be overtaken by the victors. Entering a supposedly hospitable tent, he hid himself and fell asleep. His hostess took advantage of the situation and drove a tent-pin through his temple.

The death of Sisera and his army did not precipitate them into a hell of eternal torture, but merely was the passageway by which they 'slept with their fathers'. (Deut. 31:16) They have known nothing since, and will know nothing in the future until the time of their awakening. That awakening God has graciously timed so that it will be after Messiah shall have taken possession of the world, and by the establishment of his kingdom shall have overthrown the kingdom of Satan and the reign of sin and death.

Sisera and his army will come forth, like the remainder of mankind, as a result of the redemptive work of Jesus, made possible at Calvary. They will come forth in order that the grace of God may be testified to them, and that they may have an opportunity, by obedience to the laws of the king-

dom, to prepare themselves for entering into everlasting life on the plane of human perfection in an earthly paradise.

With these thoughts before us, it makes little matter whether death comes upon us through war, pestilence, or disease. Praise be to God for his wonderful plan!

A thousand years! Earth's coming glory!

'Tis the glad day so long foretold!

'Tis the bright morn of Zion's glory

Prophets foresaw in times of old!

—*Hymns of Dawn*, #152 ■

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## **1995 General Convention Audio-tapes Are Available**

FOR A COMPLETE set of all the discourses and special vespers' music, the cost is \$40.00, postpaid. Please mail your request to:

The Dawn Recorded Lecture Department  
199 Railroad Avenue  
East Rutherford, NJ 07073,

... and we will be happy to mail your set to you. If you would prefer to borrow these tapes, you may do so at no cost other than the return postage. Indicate whether you will pay for the tapes, or whether you wish to borrow them.

If you would like to request particular subjects, a list of the new titles will be mailed to you as soon as it has been published. The individual price for tapes is \$2.00 each.

# A CANADIAN PILGRIM TRIP

**O**UR PILGRIM TRIP began in the USA with the Pittsburgh Area Convention on October 14th and 15th. The convention was attended by about one hundred Bible Student brethren from all parts of the country. It was a lovely gathering with the LORD's spirit prevailing.

The morning after the convention we headed north for the Province of Ontario in Canada. We were welcomed in London, Ontario by the brethren, the LORD's dear people, and had many interesting discussions on various topics of the Bible. The following day we went on to Tillsonburg, where we were again warmly received by the group there. Although English is not their first language, we were able to devote considerable attention to the Scriptures, which we all enjoyed.

Our destination the next day was Owen Sound, about 150 miles distant, where an older brother lives, with whom we have been corresponding. With some difficulty we found him, living alone in an old farmhouse with few facilities. We had a blessed and enjoyable visit with this dear brother who told us that we are the first ones who have ever come to see him. We promised him that we

will include him in our annual pilgrimage, and, of course, continue to correspond with him on a regular basis.

After leaving Owen Sound, we headed for Blythe, Ontario, which was about 125 miles away. Again, it took a bit of effort to locate an isolated sister, but we were rewarded with another session of rich fellowship and discussion concerning the Truth. She is an invalid and unable to get out, but is a very happy person who lives with her faith and devotion to the LORD, and misses going to London meetings, especially. We assured her, too, that we would keep in touch, and would be looking forward to seeing her again next time through. We then left for Chatham, another 125 mile drive.

The next morning we made our way to the home of an elderly sister in Chatham. We arrived about 11:00 a.m., and were warmly greeted by her, and by another sister whom we had not met before, and who had for a while lost contact with the Chatham class. We were joined later by still another brother and sister, and we had a Bible discourse, followed by a Truth discussion.

Our next stop was Dresden, where we also had an opportunity to fellowship and discuss the truth with those of 'like precious faith', which, once again, we enjoyed and appreciated very much.

Upon leaving Dresden, we returned to London to enjoy another round of fellowship with our brethren there. We picked up where we had left off a few days before, and continued our Bible study and discussions on many topics. We left London to travel on the United States side of the border on our way north, and before crossing into Canada again, stopped to see brethren in Fargo, North Dakota.

The brethren at Fargo were especially glad for our visit as they seldom see any of the LORD's people except those who stop there on their trip into western Canada. They are very dear brethren who remain loyal to God and his message, although being isolated. We had lovely fellowship, as always, as we discussed the truth with them. We were richly blessed by our visit there, and we agreed to stay in touch as closely as possible.

We returned to our home in Manitoba, Canada, having traveled about 4,500 miles, in a total of nine states, as well as in two Canadian provinces, during a period of two-and-one-half weeks.

The LORD's people, we believe, are standing firm in the Truth, and we consider it a privilege to have had an opportunity to meet with a few of them. May God's name be honoured.

(This trip was made by Brother and Sister Sidney Jones, of Winnipeg, Manitoba.) ■

*Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.—II Corinthians 4:17*

ARE WE WILLING to bear the hatred, the scorn, the contumely, which loyalty to the truth brings? Is our Father's loving favor more, far more, to us than the favor and smiles of the whole world—even more, far more, than life itself? If so, we can go forth in his name, rejoicing as we go, praising him with our lips, singing the new song which he hath put into our mouths, even the lovingkindness of our God.—*Songs in the Night*



# GENERAL CONVENTION BULLETIN

*July 13-18, 1996—St. Joseph, Missouri*

**I**T IS TIME to begin making plans to attend the General Convention in St. Joseph, Missouri. We will be at the same college and will use the same facilities as in 1994. These are the prices:

	Age 6 to 12	13 to 17	18 to 99
Breakfast/lunch/dinner	\$8.75	\$13.25	\$13.25
Lodging: double/night	\$9.00	\$15.00	\$21.00
single/night	❖❖❖❖❖	\$19.00	\$30.00
PACKAGE: double	\$100	\$150	\$186
single	❖❖❖❖❖	\$200	\$272

Under age 6 is free. **Two** bedrooms share **one** bathroom. PACKAGE is for 7 nights and 18 meals. No room charge for a child who does not occupy a bed (i.e., sleeps in a crib or sleeping bag on the floor) if all beds are occupied.

There is a substantial savings for those who take the package of seven nights lodging and 18 meals because the General Convention treasury is subsidizing the price paid by those who stay the

entire week. Half the cost of those under the age of 18 will be refunded if the person attends at least 75% of the Bible classes while at the convention.

A registration form appears on page 51 in this issue of *The Dawn*. Registration can also be done by phone, (310) 454-5248, or by e-mail (nekora@aol.com) without a form.

The convention theme is from the Rotherham translation of Jude 20: "Building yourselves up in your most holy faith." We pray that the General Convention will contribute to the 'building up' of all those who have the opportunity to attend. ■



## **WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS**

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**FEBRUARY 1**—"Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."—Isaiah 30:21 (Z. '95-6 Hymn 145)

**FEBRUARY 8**—"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"—Matthew 14:31 (Z. '00-170 Hymn 106)

**FEBRUARY 15**—"Whoso keepeth his Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected."—I John 2:5 (Z. '97-312 Hymn 177)

**FEBRUARY 22**—"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have."—Hebrews 13:5 (Z. '02-250 Hymn 50)

**FEBRUARY 29**—"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."—I John 4:16 (Z. '02-266 Hymn 165)

## TALKING THINGS OVER

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# STATISTICAL REPORT

for the year ended September 30, 1995

**F**OR THE FISCAL year 1995 reported below, the Dawn had an operating loss before bequests of \$133,312. Bequests in the amount of \$158,383 adjusted this balance to a net gain of \$25,071.

Income from contributions and earnings other than bequests were up 64% from 1994, while expenses were down 52%.

	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
General Fund plus all other earnings	\$426,889	
Radio and Television		\$217,253
Pilgrim Service		18,933
Domestic and Foreign Operations		
Plant and House		160,138
Print Shop Operations		32,858
Shipping and Mailing		76,933
Domestic and Foreign Outside Printing		54,086
Totals before bequests	\$426,889	\$560,201
Loss before bequests (\$133,312)		
Bequests	<u>\$158,383</u>	<u>\$560,201</u>
Totals after bequests	\$585,272	\$560,201
Gain after bequests	\$ 25,071	

For the fiscal year 1995 a budget was set up in which estimated receipts and expenditures were targeted so that our witness effort would not draw more than 20% of our reserves. Because of low contributions in 1994, the reserves were being depleted rapidly (40% rate) and it was necessary to reduce witness expenditures by 63%. The additional bequests received in 1995 enabled us to offset the withdrawal from our reserves. Operating expenses for the plant and house were reduced 50%. This is enabling us to replace some witness activity in 1996, which had been reduced in 1995.

We will continue to use all available media for sending forth the LORD's Word into all the world. Literature explaining God's wonderful plan continues to be printed and distributed. The Word of truth continues to be proclaimed on radio, television, and through distribution of films, audio and video tapes. Responses continue to be received, and it is evident that the LORD is still seeking and finding 'a people for his name'. What a privilege we have of being engaged in this wonderful proclamation of God's plan!

The brethren at the Dawn rejoice in sharing this privilege of proclaiming God's Word with all their co-laborers everywhere. Areas in which we are privileged to cooperate, in addition to the United States are: Canada, Mexico, the Philippines, England, France, Germany, Poland, Italy, Greece, Finland, Romania, Hungary, Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Denmark, Estonia, India, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Brazil, Scandanavia, Chile, Peru, Guyanna, Argentina, Nigeria, and South Africa. As Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." (Matt. 9:37) Let us pray, there-

fore, for each other and for this work, as Jesus admonished us to do.

Soon, earth's weary night of sin and despair will end, and the blessed kingdom of Christ will be ushered in. May we all be found worthy to be a part of that blessed and glorious kingdom. ■

**'FRANK  
&  
ERNEST'**

**Listen each Sunday  
to these interesting  
Bible topics on:**

**WXTL—1010  
7:45 P.M.**

**FEBRUARY:**

- 4-The Beginning of God's  
Creation
- 11-The Opening of the Books
- 18-Thy Will Be Done
- 25-Times of the Gentiles

**SEND** for free booklet  
offered after each broadcast:

**'Frank & Ernest'  
Box 60, Dept. N  
New York, NY 10116**

**FOR YOUR  
NEWSPAPER:**

To the left is a suggestion for an advertisement in your local newspaper. This outline is designed for about 3-1/2 inches in one column.

**FEBRUARY SPECIAL:**

On Sunday, February 18th, "*Frank & Ernest*" will discuss the topic, "Thy Will Be Done." Free circulars are available which announce this program, and you are invited to send for as many as you can use. Address your request to:

**The Dawn**  
199 Railroad Avenue  
East Rutherford, NJ 07073

## What Is Cross-Bearing?

### QUESTION:

Dear Editors of *The Dawn*: In reading the instructions that Jesus gave the apostles when he sent them forth, as recorded in Matthew 10, I noted the 38th verse that says to his disciples, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

What does this 'cross-bearing' mean? How is a Christian supposed to take up his cross and follow Jesus?—CA

### ANSWER:

THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES, cross-bearing has come to mean almost any sort of trial or difficult circumstance a follower of the Master might experience, especially if it is more or less continuous. Based upon the shape of the cross, it has also been explained to mean the crossing of our wills by the will of God. With some it suggests some special and enduring weight of sadness, or pain, which must be borne, different in each individual case, the exact nature of which is known only to the Christian involved.

All these viewpoints have doubtless been a help to the LORD's people in enduring the trials of the narrow way of sacrifice. The one definition that seems proper is that cross-bearing has to do especially with activities in the LORD's service which we find contrary to our natural inclinations. It seems reasonable to us, however, that when Jesus used this illustration he probably had in mind the

custom of the time, under the Roman rulership, for a criminal condemned to death by crucifixion to carry his own cross from the judgment hall to the place of crucifixion. Jesus, it will be recalled, was unable to bear his cross, and one named Simon was called upon to carry it for him.

This well-known custom would readily suggest to the disciples that when Jesus asked them to take up their cross and follow him, he meant that his course of devotion to God would lead to death, and that the only condition upon which they could be his disciples would be their willingness to follow him into sacrificial death. This, primarily, seems to be what is symbolized by carrying the cross. ■

***Thy saints shall bless Thee. They shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom.***

—*Psalm 145:10-12*

THE PROPHET INTIMATES that all the saints shall have the privilege of declaring his kingdom, and of honoring the name of our God. This is literally fulfilled today, for the LORD seems to be bringing to the attention of all his consecrated people everywhere the present truth that they may have its light shining upon their pathway, making manifest to them the glorious character of our God, through a knowledge of his great plan of the ages. Moreover, the LORD seems to be putting it within the power of every one of his saints to glorify his name and to speak forth the truth to others. . . . And we may rest assured that . . . all who are of the LORD's saints have a desire to tell the good tidings of great joy to all who have an ear to hear.

—*Songs in the Night*

## KNOWING JESUS

**S**O FAR AS we know, Jesus did not write a single line concerning his life, nor of any part of the divine plan in which he was so important a figure. Of the writers of the New Testament, two were eyewitnesses, being almost constantly with the Master throughout nearly all of his earthly ministry. These were Matthew, the publican, and John, the apostle. Matthew wrote the first Gospel; and John, the writer of the fourth, also wrote three epistles and the Book of Revelation.

In Mark 2:13,14, we have an account of the conversion of Matthew, called "Levi"—the one destined to write what was later selected to be the first book of the New Testament. While some of the apostles are referred to in the Scriptures as "unlearned and ignorant men," this was not true of Matthew. He evidently had considerable education, especially in the realm of business, else he could not have been a tax collector at Capernaum. Tax gatherers were called publicans, and were looked down upon by their fellow Jews, and to a large extent ostracized.

As Matthew accompanied Jesus, heard him preach, and witnessed his miracles, he doubtless made many notes, which he used later in writing the first Gospel. The most detailed account of Jesus' sermon on the mount is presented in his Gospel, and also the most complete report of his great prophecy pertaining to the end of the age, and the time of his second presence. It is he, also, who

emphases our Lord's presence (*parousia*) in connection with his Second Advent.

Luke wrote the Gospel bearing his name, and also the Book of The Acts. (Luke 1:1-4) He was not a Jew, but a Gentile. There is no indication in any of the other Gospels that he was with Jesus during his ministry, but compiled his Gospel from information gleaned by listening to the sermons of those who were with Jesus, and joining in their fellowship, especially during the two years he stayed in Judea and Jerusalem, when Paul was under house arrest in Caesarea. There would also be a limited amount of written data available for his use.

Luke was an educated man, being referred to by Paul as "the beloved physician." (Col. 4:14) The accuracy of his Gospel may be judged from the statement in Luke 1:3, where he says that he had gained "perfect understanding of all things" from the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Because of this, he tells Theophilus, and us, that the things he writes can be known as certainties. He obtained his information, he explains, from "eye-witnesses," the Greek word for which is *autoptes*, literally 'self-seen', from which we get our word autopsy.

The Apostle Paul should not be overlooked as an authentic source of information concerning Jesus. (I Corinthians 15:3-8) He probably never saw Jesus in the flesh, nor communed with him, yet he has given to us that which he received from the Lord by visions and revelations primarily, but also through his contacts with those who walked with the Master. Among these would be the apostles, whom he visited in Jerusalem.—Gal. 1:18,19

John has been used greatly as a source of true information concerning Jesus. In John 20:30,31 he explains that many "signs" had been given by Jesus to his disciples which were not written, but that those which John recorded were for the purpose of inducing belief "that Jesus is the Christ"—that is, the foretold Messiah—and "the Son of God." The purpose of the belief, he explains, is that "ye might have life through his name."

The opening chapter of John's Gospel is designed to prove that Jesus, in his prehuman existence was the *Logos*, the Son of God. He wrote with the purpose of stimulating belief that would lead to life; for the words believe, believed, etc., appear 98 times, and the words life and living 49 times.

I John 1:1-4 is a remarkable summary of John's wonderful experience with the Master, written about 60 years after the ascension. Those wonderful words of life were still inspiring him. His personal contacts with Jesus were a vivid recollection, and he had spent all the intervening years declaring the great hope of life through Jesus, to all whose hearts were ready to receive the message. He wanted others to enjoy this fellowship with him, and by faith, with the Father and the Son. ■



"O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end."

—*Psalm 119:97,103,105,111,112*

## ENCOURAGING LETTERS (NIGERIA)

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### THE LORD PROVIDES SPIRITUAL FOOD

Dear Brethren: I have to thank the LORD and those brothers and sisters at the Dawn for the spiritual food they have been feeding us over six years. *The Dawn* magazine has helped me in the work of evangelism, our group Bible studies, and teaching. The only way you can keep me happy and strong, and remaining on the firing line of the LORD is to continue sending me *The Dawn* magazine, and materials that will help me in the work of God. We will be grateful if you can help us with these materials, for we want to study the Bible deeper and deeper through you. By sending us text books, work books, tape cassettes, we can study and be a blessing to the majority of our people, who have not known the truth. God

bless you for your cooperation in his work.—  
*Imo State*

### CONGREGATION NEEDS NINE COPIES

Beloved brethren in Christ: Thank you for sending the timely magazine, *The Dawn*. I appreciate the good you are doing. I am a pastor and my congregation also wants to have copies of your magazine. Please send nine copies so that I can share them. They found the magazine so interesting.—*Akwa Ibom State*

### BLESS THE LORD

Dear Brethren in the LORD: Greetings in Jesus' name! I bless the name of our LORD for the grace he has given you for *The Dawn* magazine. When I read it I find it very interesting and helpful. I wish to be placed on your mailing list.—*Kwara State* ■

## SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

*The speakers listed below are routed through the Pilgrim Department of the Dawn. Visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: The Dawn Pilgrim Dept., East Rutherford, NJ 07073. Visits are arranged whenever possible.*

### M. Balko

Seattle, WA            February 11  
 Sacramento, CA            16-18  
 Vancouver, B.C.            25

Vernon, B.C.            27

### T. Krupa

Romania            Feb. 25-Mar. 10

*The listings in this schedule have been arranged by local ecclesias cooperating with the Dawn:*

### A. Allers

Sacramento, CA            Feb. 16-18

### R. Gorecki

Sacramento, CA            Feb. 16-18  
 Claymont, DE            25

### W. Austin

India            Feb. 10-24  
 Bangalor, Mysore, Coonoor,  
 Wellington, Coimbatore

### S.R. Jeuck

S.W. Florida, FL            Feb. 10,11  
 Sacramento, CA            16-18

### E. Kuenzli

Sacramento, CA            Feb. 16-18

### T. Krupa

S.W. Florida, FL            Feb. 10,11  
 Louisville, AL            18

India:            Feb. 10-24  
 Bangalor, Mysore, Coonoor,  
 Wellington, Coimbatore

### W. Blicharz

Southwest Florida            Feb. 10,11  
 Sacramento, CA            16-18

### L.B. Post

Middletown, NY            February 25

## 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 Ave., East Rutherford, NJ 07073.*

### **SOUTHWEST FLORIDA CONVENTION, February 10,11—**

Cape Coral Masonic Temple, 244 Santa Barbara Blvd, Cape Coral, FL 33910. For information, contact: Brother Ed Futchkar, 3460 North Key Drive,

#306E, North Fort Myers, FL 33903

Phone: (941) 997-3008

**SACRAMENTO, CA, February 16-18—**The Beverly Garland Hotel, 1780 Tribute Road, Sacra-

mento. *Cut-off date for reservations, January 31, 1996.* Please send your reservations directly to Betty Lankford, 6000 19th Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95820  
Phone: (916) 457-0569

**ROCKLAND BIBLE STUDENTS CONVENTION, February 25**—Green Meadow Waldorf School, Spring Valley, NY. For programs write: Mrs. Russell Shallieu, 1041 Johnston Drive, Watchung, NJ 07060

**DETROIT, MI, February 25**—Redford YWCA, 25940 Grand River, Redford Township. Contact: Frank Nemesh, 2183 Babcock Dr., Troy, MI 48084  
Phone: (810) 649-6588

**FLORIDA BIBLE STUDENTS CONVENTION, March 2,3,4**—Holiday Inn, 304 West Colonial Drive, Orlando, FL 32801 (Route 50 & I-4, Exit 41). For reservations, request our special convention rate *before February 1st.* Phone toll-free (800) 523-3405. For other information, contact: Stephen Jeuck, 471 Kentia Rd., Casselberry, FL 32707  
Phone: (407) 834-7592

**NEW ORLEANS/PASS CHRISTIAN BIBLE STUDENTS, March 9,10**—Beach Front Holiday Inn, 1600 East Beach Blvd., Gulfport, MS 39511  
Phone: (800) 465-5329

**DETROIT, MI, PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 22,23, 24**—Macomb Community College, 14500 12 Mile Rd., Warren, MI. Contact Convention Secretary before March 12 for reservations: Frank Nemesh, 2183 Babcock Dr., Troy, MI 48084  
Phone: (810) 649-6588

**GROTON/NEW LONGON PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 24**—Bay View Masonic Temple Assoc., Society Rd., East Lyme, CT. Contact John Ruggierello, Secty., for information, 74 Hawkins St., Danielson, CT 06239  
Phone: (860) 774-0117

**FRESNO PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 22,23,24**—Holiday Inn Fresno Airport, 5090 East Clinton Ave., Please register by March 15th. Write to Mrs. Robert E. Wilson, 2103 N. Price, #112, Fresno, CA 93703  
Phone: (209) 255-2241

**ALBUQUERQUE, NM, CONVENTION, April 6,7 (Easter Sunday)**—Contact Mrs. Roberta Buss, P.O. Box 9172, Albuquerque, NM 87119.  
Phone: (506) 877-2866

**BOISE, ID, April 5,6,7**—Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main St., Boise, ID. Send your reservations to: Donna Allers, 2438 Bruins Circle, Boise, ID 83704. *Cut-off date for reservations is April 5th.*  
Phone: (208) 375-6873

**BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 13-18**—Western Missouri State College, St. Joseph, MO. Additional information is available on page 51 in this issue of *The Dawn* magazine.

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 4-9**—Miskolc, Hungary. Write: Inter. Conv., 1425 Lachman Ln., Pac. Palisades, CA 90272 (or e-mail: nekora@aol.com)  
Phone: (310) 454-5248