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March 2010



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199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073

Phone: (201) 438-6421 and 1-(888) 440-DAWN • Fax: (201) 531-8333

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Visit the Dawn web page at: www.dawnbible.com

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The World's Savior: Hated Without a Cause

“This cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.”

—*John 15:25*

THESE WORDS WERE SPO-ken by our Lord Jesus to his disciples during the closing days of his earthly ministry. He knew the distress and heartache they would soon suffer, and endeavored to prepare their hearts and minds for the tragic events that soon lay ahead. He did not want them to be stumbled, but to be ready to receive the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and enter into the wonderful privileges of the heavenly calling during this present Gospel Age.

THE WORLD'S SCORN

During Jesus' ministry, the disciples had been learning that being a follower of the humble and lowly Jesus did not bring upon them the goodwill of the religious world of their day. There were occasions when the multitudes flocked around their

beloved Lord, but often their motive turned out to be whatever material or fleshly benefit they hoped to receive from him. Few were interested to the point of faithfully following him, or being willing to make sacrifices in order to be his disciples.

When the time arrived for Jesus to be crucified, his disciples no doubt believed that he could somehow overcome this obstacle and assume his role as the leader and king of Israel. They were acquainted with the words of the Prophet Isaiah who had written concerning him, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." (Isa. 9:7) Yet, they did not know that it was first necessary for him to suffer and die for the world before the wonderful prophecies in connection with his kingdom glory could be fulfilled. It was their hope to share with the Master in his glory, which they believed was near at hand.

JESUS MUST DIE

Jesus did not withhold from his disciples the necessity of his soon coming death, and explained, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:51) His followers perhaps thought that what he had said must have some other meaning that they didn't know about. From the scriptural account, we learn, "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."—Matt. 16:21

Jesus informed his disciples concerning his approaching death, but they were not able at that time to accept the fact that it might actually happen. He knew they were still viewing their privileges of discipleship from the standpoint of material advantages and of the glory they hoped to attain from being associated with him. He knew that, after Pentecost, they would be imbued with the Holy Spirit of understanding.

Luke recorded the event: “When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.”—Acts 2:1-4, *New American Standard Bible*

JESUS’ FOLLOWERS HATED

The disciples loved their Master and were convinced that he was the divinely appointed leader, but they did not yet comprehend the fact that there was to be suffering and death associated with his ministry, as well as glory and honor. Peter later wrote, “Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”—I Pet. 1:11

In our featured scripture, Jesus acknowledged that he was hated without a cause, and he also explained, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the

world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.”—John 15:18-21

The Master also forewarned, “Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”—John 16:32,33

It is well to note that it was not so much the warning of coming persecution that was designed to give the disciples peace and good cheer, but rather when it did come they would understand its true meaning. They would then realize that they were having the great privilege of suffering with him. He wanted them to know that he overcame the world, and that they too would be given strength to overcome the world if they continued to be his disciples. With this promised assurance of victory they could rejoice, despite the opposition and persecution of the world. Knowledge that they were suffering with their dear Lord would give them courage to continue faithfully on.

OVERCOMERS

In the example set by Jesus during his own life, ministry, and teachings, it is clear that the Christian

life is one of struggle against opposition. A continual warfare is waged in which we are engaged in deadly combat with formidable enemies that would overpower us, unless we were given divine strength to overcome them. Satan, the Devil, is the church's great Adversary, and his allies are the world and our own fallen flesh. Speaking of himself, the Apostle Paul wrote, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."—I Cor. 9:27

The term 'to overcome' is used to describe the Christian's victory over the Devil, over the Devil's world and our own flesh. Evil is the very foundation of the world of which Satan is the prince. Paul thus admonished, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12:21) John also encourages, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—I John 5:4

John is the only apostle who writes specifically about overcoming the world. When considering this matter, it is well to remember that there are two great principles operating in the earth. These are love and selfishness, or good and evil. The Apostle John had a clear vision of divine love, and this helped him to discern the importance of overcoming the world. It meant being victorious over evil and the selfish spirit of the world.

GOD IS LOVE

Our Heavenly Father is the author and principle of love, and has been its sponsor throughout the ages. Satan, however, is the sponsor of selfishness.

These two principles have been at war with each other ever since the fall of man. The people of God—those whom he has called to serve him and who have been faithful to the terms of their calling—have been motivated by love during this Gospel Age. They have been begotten by the Holy Spirit of God, while the majority of mankind pass through life controlled largely by the principle of selfishness. Man was created in the image of God and traces of this image still remain and manifest themselves in deeds of kindness on the part of many.

However, it is not the occasional kind deed that constitutes overcoming the world and its spirit. It must be a conversion from the principle of living for oneself to that of living for God, and by devoting our lives to his service. Self-preservation is part of the law of nature, and may be true with respect to the lower orders of creation. It is only because of sin that it has been adopted by the human family as a dominating motive of life. It has become so much a way of life in the world that it is considered normal. Self-interest is the principle which rules this present evil world, over which Satan is the prince. “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”—II Cor. 4:4

There are some who have made noble attempts to fight against this spirit instead of drifting along with the tide of selfishness that sweeps the masses along to inevitable destruction. They have striven against it, and have given their lives in causes which they intended might eventually turn the tide, or at least alleviate the sufferings of those

who were unable to help themselves. These will have their reward in God's due time.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

The only way in which selfishness can be done away with, and the principle of love established throughout the earth as the motive of life, is through the divine plan of salvation. In Jesus, we have our most comprehensive example of love as a way of life. He not only gave us an example, but enjoined love upon his followers, saying, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you."—John 13:34

This spirit of love was not fully understood nor appreciated by the rich young ruler who was told to sell all he that he had and give to the poor, and he went away sorrowful. (Matt. 19:20-22) In following the law of self-preservation, he had accumulated worldly goods as a protection against a rainy day, and he wasn't prepared to abandon the idea. Even the disciples were perplexed at this advice to the rich young man which seemed to reflect a reckless abandoning of all self-interest.

Commenting on the incident, Jesus explained to his disciples that it would be "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (vss. 23,24) "When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."—vss. 25,26

TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

"Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall

we have therefore?” (vs. 27) Peter was reminding the Master that as his disciples they had complied with the conditions that he sought to impose upon the rich young ruler. Their all was not as much as his all, but the principle was the same. Having made this sacrifice they naturally wanted to know what they could expect to get. Peter’s question reveals that as yet he had not appreciated the real spirit of discipleship. He perhaps hoped that he would receive something in the way of honor and prestige. Instead of being a humble fisherman, he may have wished for a prominent position in Messiah’s kingdom, and to be a ruler, or a great one among men.

“Jesus said unto them, 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. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.”—vss. 28-30

GOD’S WILL

When Jesus announced to his disciples that he was going to Jerusalem, and that he expected to be arrested there and put to death, Peter would not hear of it. “Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.” (Matt. 16:22) Jesus’ reply to this well-meant advice was, “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be

of men.” (vs. 23) Peter was attempting to persuade the Master that he should permit self-interest to influence him, and not go to Jerusalem where he knew his enemies had set a trap for his arrest.

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

In doing this, Peter was promoting the cause of Satan who always encourages men to consider themselves first. Men of the world, over which Satan is the prince, naturally think of self first. It is openly their way of life, and has been since the days of Eden, but it is not God’s way. “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”—vss. 24-26

It is doubtful if the disciples understood the depth of the Master’s remark at that time, but it was the method he used to explain the difference between the way of selfishness and the way of love. Love is manifested by a self-sacrificing interest on behalf of others.

Jesus was even then losing his life sacrificially for the whole world of mankind. Men of the world considered it foolish that he should think of anyone but himself. Jesus, however, was appealing to Peter’s mind and heart by directing his attention to the fact that his life would be saved. It would be saved in God’s way, and not by following the worldly principle of self first.

To overcome the world means that in living up to the terms of our consecration we stand against

the principle of selfishness with which we are surrounded on every hand. We lay down our lives unselfishly in the service of God, of the Truth, and of the brethren. We are called out of the world, so we are to remain separate from it, and not permit ourselves to be influenced by its selfish spirit. We cannot reform the world, nor change any of its institutions, from the love of self to that of the sacrifice and denying of self. The test upon us is to continue separate from the world while endeavoring to lose our lives in the cause of divine love.

This is Satan's world and we cannot take part in any of its arrangements, nor should we be influenced at any time by its viewpoint. The world has its pleasures that are often selfishly inspired, and should be shunned by those who are endeavoring to overcome the worldly spirit. As followers of the Master we are being prepared to share with him in the rulership of God's new world, and are being trained in the principles of love. In so doing, we are losing our lives in sacrifice.

THE UPPER ROOM

As we approach another Memorial season many of the Lord's people will joyfully accept the occasion to partake of the emblems which he commanded we observe. It was in the upper room where he inaugurated the Memorial Supper. This year the consecrated people of God will partake of the emblems after sundown Sunday evening, March 28, 2010.

"As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying,

Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."—Matt. 26:26-29

INVITATION TO THE DISCIPLES

Jesus invited his disciples to partake of these emblems, thus signifying that they not only were to benefit from that which they represented, but also that they would share in the deeper significance and meaning of the memorial of his death. This was later emphasized by the Apostle Paul when he wrote to the brethren at Corinth. He explained to them the common union of the body and blood of Christ as pictured by the bread and the wine. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."—I Cor. 10:16,17

BAPTISM UNTO DEATH

A rich blessing awaits the Lord's people each year as they commemorate the memorial of the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus. Partaking of the bread and cup represents our participation in his sacrifice. Let us rejoice in the divine grace toward us, and remember that they picture our privilege of dying with Jesus, denying ourselves, and laying down our lives in doing God's will. It is a baptism unto Jesus' death.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into

death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”—Rom. 6:3-5

It is a special invitation to share in our Lord’s death, and to ‘follow him’ means that our experiences in the world will be similar to his. Jesus explained, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.” (John 13:16) “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”—Rev. 3:21

HATED WITHOUT A CAUSE

The world of Jesus’ day hated him, and finally put him to death. They hated him because his way of life was contrary to theirs. By his example of sacrifice, he condemned their way of selfishness and, by his teachings, he exposed their popular errors while teaching unpopular truths. ‘This cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.’ ■

2010 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 P.M. on Sunday, March 28, 2010.

Mission to the Community

*Key Verse: "So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them."
—Jonah 3:5*

*Selected Scripture:
Jonah 1:1-3; 3:1-9*

from our studies that the preparation and deliverance of Jonah from the great fish was a sign, or type, of our Lord's own entombment and subsequent resurrection from death.

If we recall from historical accounts, Nineveh was a great city that was situated outside of the influence of the city of Jerusalem and, therefore, outside of divine favor. From the giving of the Law Covenant until three and a half years after our Lord's death on the cross, God's favors were exclusively confined to the Jews. God knew of the sin that was in this city, and he instructed Jonah to go there. "Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah, . . . saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me."—Jon. 1:1,2

SKEPTICS HAVE BEEN IN-clined to dismiss the story of Jonah's experiences in the belly of the great fish as being merely fiction. However, we know that the great Teacher of men refers to Jonah and his experiences in the belly of this great fish, and those who believe in him have no better ground to accept the account as being true. (Matt.

12:39-41) We further know

from our studies that the preparation and deliverance of Jonah from the great fish was a sign, or type, of our Lord's own entombment and subsequent resurrection from death.

If we recall from historical accounts, Nineveh was a great city that was situated outside of the influence of the city of Jerusalem and, therefore, outside of divine favor. From the giving of the Law Covenant until three and a half years after our Lord's death on the cross, God's favors were exclusively confined to the Jews. God knew of the sin that was in this city, and he instructed Jonah to go there. "Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah, . . . saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me."—Jon. 1:1,2

Jonah was a bigoted Jew who was unwilling to testify to a Gentile city, and angry that God had spared it. So instead of quickly obeying the word of God, he fled from his mission. He fled from God, and boarded a ship to take him to Tarshish. The LORD “sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea.” (vs. 4) The seamen were so fearful during this storm that they confronted Jonah concerning the peril that they were in. After questioning him, they determined that he was the cause of their problems. They asked him what they should do, and he told them, “Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you.” (vs. 12) The men eventually did as Jonah had asked them to do. After three days, God delivered him out of the belly of the great fish. He had humbled himself and had prayed to God for deliverance. “I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.”—chap. 2:9

He was again commissioned by God to go to Nineveh, and this time he obeyed the word of the LORD. After entering the city, he told them that their destruction was soon to come. “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” (chap. 3:4) The king and all of the people repented from their evil ways, and did what God required them to do to be right in his sight.—vss. 5-9

Jonah typically foreshadows the nation of Israel, cast out of its own land, and a resulting burden to the Gentiles. Witnessing to them, Israel was cast out by them, but then miraculously preserved. In their distress, they will call upon the Heavenly Father, and find deliverance from all of their problems.

Jonah also represents Christ as the one sent from God, raised from the dead, bringing salvation to the Gentiles and in turn to the whole world of mankind. “They repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas [Christ] is here.”—Matt. 12:41 ■

A Community to Redeem

Key Verse: *“He prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country?*

Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.”
—Jonah 4:2

Selected Scripture:
Jonah 3:10; 4:11

The events that were taking place regarding God’s dealings with the people of Nineveh caused a great deal of displeasure to Jonah. “It displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.” (Jon. 4:1) He was so distraught because God spared the people that he even prayed to God to take his life. He

AS WE ENDED OUR PREVIOUS lesson, we saw the repented people of Nineveh turning away from evil, and doing as God had asked them to do through the words delivered by Jonah. God then changed the way that he would deal with them, not in the sense that he would ‘repent,’ for God never repents of his ways, but he decided to change his conduct. This is in harmony with what we know of the character of the Heavenly Father, for he has no need to repent, since he knows the end from the beginning. “As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.”—Ps. 18:30

was apparently more interested in himself and his own reputation than in the people of Nineveh and their welfare. We should be ever thankful that we have such a loving Father who is full of compassion when compared to that of his imperfect human servants.

“So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city.” (vs. 5) Since the sun was hot that day, the LORD caused a gourd to grow up to provide a shadow for Jonah “over his head, to deliver him from his grief.” (vs. 6) This made Jonah glad, however his joy was short-lived because the LORD soon caused the plant to wither and die. His reaction to these events caused him to say, “It is better for me to die than to live.” (vs. 8) He had compassion for this gourd, but failed to be concerned at all with the people to whom he had come to proclaim destruction. The Lord taught Jonah a valuable lesson respecting his sympathy for a gourd—an inanimate thing—and his lack of sympathy for others. Many people align themselves to so-called good causes; they have compassion for the flowers, for the birds, for the lower animals, or for the environment. It would appear that this lack of true love, sympathy, and concern for fellow man is an attitude that has existed since man’s fall.

God does not intend to punish the world of mankind for all eternity. According to his gracious plan, he purposes to help the world in general to have an opportunity to attain to human perfection of body, mind, and heart. It is pictured in the sending of his only begotten Son to die, to take away the sins of the world. “For 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.”—John 3:17 ■

Family as Community

Key Verse: *“Ruth said, Intreat 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 1:1-16

THE STORY OF RUTH IS A very interesting one, not only as an account from Jewish history since it covers a period of about ten years, but also it has a further lesson concerning the beautiful aspects of God’s grace. Ruth was born in Moab so, being a Moabite and therefore a Gentile, she desired to become a Jewish convert, and would come to be recognized by God as one of his chosen people. She would come to be honored with a place in the line of our Lord Jesus’ human ancestry in that she would be the great-grandmother of David. (Matt. 1:1-5) Her character and her demonstration of love and devotion to God is something that we should desire to emulate in our own lives.

As we consider the events that took place in the life of Ruth, we must also realize the influence that Naomi had on her. Recalling from the account, we see that Elimelech—the husband of Naomi—left his home in Bethlehem-Judah and traveled to the land of Moab. A severe famine had gripped the land and Elimelech was forced to take his wife and sons into this new land. (Ruth 1:1,2) Following their father’s death, Naomi’s two sons took wives from the Moabites. “They took them wives of

the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth.” (vs. 4) Naomi’s sons also died, and the women were left alone. It was now the desire of Naomi to return to Judah, the land of her birth, but she thought that it would be best for her daughters-in-law to remain in Moab. Orpah decided to remain in Moab, but Ruth was not of the same mind. “They lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.” (vs. 14) Ruth was actually affirming by her affection the good example that Naomi had provided for her resulting in her beautiful character. This led her to speak the words that are found in our theme text. It also caused her to express that she would stay with her until her very life would come to an end. “Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.” (vs. 17) The fact that now Ruth’s life was centered around the words, ‘your God shall be my God,’ is a testimony to the faithful living of Naomi, and a gesture of appreciation for the leadings of God. “When she [Naomi] saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.”—vs. 18

We, who were by nature Gentiles as Ruth was, by the grace of God have become spiritual Israelites. “Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. . . . Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” (Eph. 2:13,19) We should determine that from now on the former conditions, interests, pleasures, and relationships are gone forever. We desire to live close to the LORD and his people—our brethren, the footstep followers of Jesus. These words apply to the true believer, “The former things are passed away.” (Rev. 21:4) They have also willingly, as Ruth did, followed the scriptural advice from Psalm 45:10, “Forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house.” ■

Acceptance in Community

Key Verse: “Now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.”
—Ruth 3:11

Selected Scripture:
Ruth 2:1-3:13

a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.”—Ruth 2:1

Now, after she met Boaz and offered to work for him, he had compassion on her and gave her food and water. Later, he allowed her to go to a field and, under his protection, she gleaned barley, so much so that she gathered in a large quantity. This was made possible due to the generosity of Boaz. Instead of dealing selfishly with Ruth, he gave directions to his servants that they purposely let a few handfuls of grain fall so that her gleanings would be greater. (vss. 14-16) “So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up,

OUR LESSONS INVOLVING

the life of Ruth can be divided into several parts. We have seen her deciding to go to a land and make those people her people; we have her serving others, resting during a period of time and, finally, being rewarded for her faithfulness. Ruth’s service began when she offered to work as a gleaner in the fields for a relative of Naomi. “Naomi had a kinsman of her husband’s,

and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.” (Ruth 2:17,18) Ruth took the grain with her to show Naomi, and upon arriving she related the events that had taken place with regard to Boaz.

The account gives us insight into the customs of the time, and also shows us how the Lord rewarded the noble character of Ruth. She did not come to Bethlehem with great expectations and selfish motives, but out of her love for Naomi, and with a devotion to those whom she now viewed as her people. This is shown by the fact that she set out to earn a living for herself and her mother-in-law. Under Jewish law, she was permitted to gather the grain left behind as a way to help the poor and needy people. God in his kindness had mercy on her and, their hearts being free from evil, permitted all to work out for their good. Their kind reception by the people of the community, and the sympathy and kindness shown to them were great blessings. Ruth was most certainly guided by divine providence to the field of a man who was a kinsman to Naomi, and to whom she would subsequently marry. “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.”—chap. 4:13

It would do us well to note that the Lord’s people should find something in this story of Ruth and Boaz that would be helpful to them. We should commit our life to the Lord, and sincerely and unselfishly determine to follow the path of righteousness. Then, as with Ruth, the LORD shall be our God, and his people our people. Testing will come to us but, if we trust in the true and living God, we will see how he desires to guide us, order our steps, overrule in our affairs of life, and bring us rich blessings. “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”—Rom. 8:28 ■

Tried in the Fire

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.”

—I Peter 4:12

THESE WORDS WERE WRIT-ten by the Apostle Peter more than thirty years after Jesus had finished his earthly ministry, and reflect the level of discipline that he had experienced in his faithful walk with our Lord. He had learned to recognize that trials were necessary in his own ministry, and as further evidence of his relationship as a son of our loving Heavenly Father. He rejoiced that he had been invited to partake of the heavenly calling in Christ Jesus.

TRIALS OF FAITH

The apostle’s admonition is addressed to all followers of our Lord Jesus who have accepted the invitation during this present Gospel Age. These have gladly left their former earthly hopes, ambitions, and pursuits, and have given their lives to God in full consecration to him. The apostle spoke of this special relationship of the heavenly calling, and put it in perspective, when he added, “Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall

be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”—I Pet. 4:13

Earlier in his first epistle, Peter also wrote about the trial of faith that would come upon the Lord’s special people. He thus addressed them, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”—chap. 1:2-5

MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

The apostle encouraged the people of God and said, “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”—vss. 6,7

The trials of which Peter wrote may come into our lives, but we must always keep in mind his words ‘think it not strange,’ because these experiences are permitted by God to prove us, to strengthen our character, and to cause the principles of Truth and righteousness to take deeper root in our consecrated hearts.

From Job, we read, “He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” (Job 23:10) The Prophet Malachi wrote, “He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.”—Mal. 3:3

The revelator recorded our Lord’s words concerning the church at Laodicea. “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”—Rev. 3:15-19

THE ARMOR OF GOD

Fiery trials will come upon us as fiery darts from our great adversary, Satan, whose wrath against the children of light is permitted to manifest itself in various ways. But these darts cannot injure us if we have securely buckled on the divinely provided armor of Truth and righteousness of which the Apostle Paul spoke. He admonishes us, “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities,

against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”—Eph. 6:11-13

The Apostle Paul enumerates the various items that the child of God would need to fight the good fight of faith. He thus encourages, “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”—vss. 14-18

Each of these distinct items of the armor has a deeper meaning and spiritual significance. The breastplate of righteousness covers the heart of the consecrated follower of Jesus, and suggests the need to keep it pure. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” (Matt. 5:8) During this present Gospel Age the Lord’s people are walking in the narrow and difficult way of sacrifice, and their feet will need to be properly shod. “Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.” (Heb. 12:13) The shield of faith will be required to ward off the fiery darts that will be aimed at them. “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”—I John 5:4

The helmet of salvation represents that part of the soldier's armor that protects the head. This represents the individual's knowledge, reasoning, and understanding concerning spiritual things. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." (Eph. 1:18) The sword is used as a weapon, and represents the Christian warrior's only weapon—the Word of God that he uses to defend the precious Truth. "Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."—Rev. 19:15

TESTINGS NECESSARY

The Apostle Paul, when writing to Timothy concerning the faithful members of the church during the present Gospel Age, reminded them, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."—II Tim. 3:10-12

God allows his people to have difficult experiences and to suffer for right doing. During the present time, he is calling out a fully consecrated company who will be the royal priesthood of our Lord's kingdom, and will have the power and authority to bless the sin-sick world of mankind during Christ's future reign of truth and righteousness. We are assured

that trial and testing is needed to prove and prepare the hearts and characters of each one of the Lord's faithful followers.

Our loving Father watches to see how loyal we are to the principles of righteousness. Some who have been called may endure a certain amount of trial and testing and then withdraw, while others will endure more. The Lord is seeking those who are willing to give up everything in their desire to prove faithful to their covenant of consecration with him. This higher level of faithfulness means a new life of entire loyalty to God and to his laws, which are the laws of righteousness.

FIERY TRIALS

Trials test the various members of the church and are designed to do a purifying work in their characters. It is an experience that must be endured by each one individually. Not only will the church as a whole have opposition against them, but each individual will be personally exposed to the fiery trials of which both the Apostles Peter and Paul wrote.

The trial and testing of the members of the Christ is different from that which comes to any other people. The explanation of this difference can be briefly quoted in the words of Peter in our opening passage of scripture, when he pointed to this and explained, "Inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." (I Pet. 4:13) We know that each member of the body of Christ must be tried, and we can rejoice when some of these experiences touch us also. In our own heart we can say, I am glad to have a share in the sufferings of Christ and in God's wonderful

providence. Without this divine arrangement we could never share as a body member of the Christ.

PATIENT CONTINUANCE

In his letter to the brethren at Rome, the Apostle Paul wrote, "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." (Rom. 2:7) He was pointing them to the wonderful blessings in connection with the High Calling in Christ Jesus.

We are all looking forward to the time when the body of Christ will be completed, and when we may share in the glory of abundant life with our glorified Lord Jesus. We rejoice in knowing that during the present time fiery trials are needed to perfect us as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, and have put ourselves into the Lord's powerful hands. He has promised to supervise all that concerns us during our walk in newness of life, and whatever comes to us we may be sure that it is of his purpose or permission for our spiritual welfare. We know, too, that he has provided a wonderful provision whereby we may go frequently to the throne of grace for help in every time of need.

A LITTLE FIRE KINDLETH

A devilish disposition was manifested toward our Lord that resulted in great sufferings. Satan was permitted to instigate much of this, and also toward our Lord's faithful followers throughout the present Gospel Age. The Apostle James explains the nature of the human tongue in carrying out much of this persecution. He wrote, "Thus also the tongue is a small member, and boasts greatly. Behold! How large a mass of fuel a little fire kindles! (And the

tongue is a fire,—the world of wickedness;) thus is that tongue rendered among our members, which defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by Gehenna.” (James 3:5,6, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*) The tongue and pen are often used as weapons of evil.

OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION

The source of our trials may come not only from the Adversary, but also from the weaknesses and imperfections of others. Those that come from Christian people are often the most difficult to bear. However, we trust that nothing can happen to us unless the Heavenly Father permits it. If they do not come from one source they will be permitted to come from another. This testing is designed to strengthen the elements of our character which need development, and we are to take all these experiences patiently, knowing that they are working out for our spiritual welfare. “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”—II Cor. 4:17,18

We recognize the need for these trials and appreciate the grand purpose of God in our spiritual growth. We thus reflect the chiseling and polishing to make us ready for the grand temple of glory. We can look with fortitude and patience on these fiery trials, fully recognizing that we shall receive rich blessings from them if they are received with humble and contrite hearts.

GLORY IN TRIBULATION

In respect to our High Calling we learn to rejoice in all things which our loving Father has done for us. We can have joy in putting our lives in the hands of the one who called us out of the darkness of this sin-sick world. Not that we enjoy the tribulations and persecutions, but we realize that these are working out for us in the development of a character that is pleasing to God. It is proper for us to recognize that in all of our present trials he makes them work together for our spiritual benefit. We can rejoice in any persecution, especially if we are in no way blameworthy. Peter said, "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."—I Pet. 4:16

FAITHFUL AMBASSADORS

The word of reconciliation has been committed to the Christ, and we are to "shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life." (Phil. 2:15,16) The world is a very dark place, and sin and error abound. As we continually strive to be faithful ambassadors for Christ and are following closely in his footsteps, we have the privilege and honor of suffering with him.

Paul has explained, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."—Rom. 8:16,17

Whoever will faithfully exercise their ambassadorship and not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, will come to realize something concerning

the sufferings of Christ. They can truly say, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.”—Ps. 69:9

ENDURING CHASTENING

Satan introduces bitter aggression and painful injustice against the faithful followers of Jesus that is designed to discourage them. Peter wrote, “This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”—I Pet. 2:19-25

If not resisted, adverse influences and the powers of darkness would lead to lukewarmness. “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who (Continued on page 35)

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(Continued from page 31) for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"—Heb. 12:1-7

THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT

In his letter to the brethren at Rome, Paul proclaimed, "We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we

know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”—Rom. 8:22-28

PATIENTLY WAITING

The Psalmist David wrote, “Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.”—Ps. 37:5-7

The present mission of the church is to develop in herself every grace, to be God’s witness to the world, and to prepare themselves to be the kings and priests in Christ’s future kingdom. Then, associated with the beloved sympathetic High Priest, the church shall establish God’s glorious kingdom in the earth. The fiery trials experienced this side of the veil will help fit us for a place in that heavenly kingdom.

TRUSTING IN HIM

The wonderful promises of our loving and wise Heavenly Father have never failed, and those who have put their trust in him will never fail. We feel unworthy that our efforts to be faithful to our covenant of sacrifice fall short. However, when we are weak and realize our own helplessness and incompetency, we may turn to our loving Heavenly Father. “He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”—II Cor. 12:9

It is when continued trust in the Lord and his responsive providence in our lives have ripened into precious personal acquaintance and intimacy that we learn to delight in him. It is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of peace, when the divine love and care have been clearly seen in the guidance of our way, that we can recognize the abiding presence with us of the Father and his Son.

However dark may be our way and severe the storm that rages about us, the thought of divine protection is ever with us, so that, as the children of the Lord, we are never in despair. Paul says, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."—II Cor. 4:7-10

We must not allow our faith to falter when the test of patient endurance is applied, and while the outward peace and quietness which we crave may tarry long. Outward peace and calm are not always the conditions best suited to our needs as a New Creature in Christ Jesus. We would not desire conditions in which the precious fruits of the Holy Spirit would not grow and develop in us. Therefore, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice."—I Pet. 4:12,13 ■

The Last Supper

*“As often as ye eat
this bread, and
drink this cup, ye
do shew the Lord’s
death till he come.”*
— *I Corinthians*
11:26

ACCORDING TO THE JEW-ish calendar, the fourteenth day of Nisan this year falls on Sunday, March 28. The day begins at sundown and corresponds with the night before Jesus died. He ate the

Passover with his disciples for the last time and invited them to partake of the ‘bread’ and the ‘cup’ with him, explaining that they represented his broken body and shed blood. This annual anniversary is the only proper time to partake of these Memorial emblems, which follows the scriptural custom. The Lord’s true people continue to renew their vows of consecration to suffer and die with him inspired by his most wonderful promises.

A SOLEMN CEREMONY

The celebration of the Memorial is a short and simple ceremony, but with profound and far reaching significance. “He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is

given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”—Luke 22:17-20

WITH HIS DISCIPLES

When Jesus gathered together with his disciples in the upper room, it would be the last meal that he would share with them before he was to give his life for the sin-sick human family. It was the closing hours of his earthly mission, and would end three and a half years of intense ministry whereby he preached the message of Truth to those who came to hear him. As illustrations and a foretaste of his future kingdom, he also healed many of the sick and afflicted, and raised some from the grave. This last supper with his disciples would thus end the commission he had been given by his Heavenly Father to rescue the human family from sin and death. “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 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

As an added and more personal note to his closest followers, the Master taught them, saying, “Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at

my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”—Luke 22:27-30

A CORRESPONDING PRICE

The perfect man Adam had sinned and brought upon himself and his offspring the divine penalty of death. As a corresponding price, the perfect man Christ Jesus gave himself in death as a substitute for Adam, thus providing a way of escape from the death sentence for all mankind—“As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (I Cor. 15:22) John also explained, “He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”—I John 2:2

FAITH IN JESUS' BLOOD

This provision of God's grace is made operative toward the Lord's people during this present Gospel Age, and it rests upon the basis of their faith in Jesus' sacrifice for sin. His sacrifice provided an opportunity for Adam and all his children to be restored to perfection of life as human beings. During the kingdom age this opportunity will be offered to the whole world of mankind. It will also guarantee a resurrection and an awakening from the sleep of death for all those who have died throughout the long centuries of the past.

The imputation of life through faith in Christ's blood makes it possible for his consecrated followers to offer themselves in acceptable sacrifice to God. In his letter to the brethren at Rome, the Apostle Paul said, “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. And 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.”—Rom. 12:1,2

BURIED WITH JESUS

The apostle addressed the true significance of being baptized into Jesus’ death. He said, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—Rom. 6:3-11

OUR PARTICIPATION

When we partake of the emblems which represent the broken body and shed blood of Jesus, we testify that we not only gratefully accept the provision of life thus made through him, but also that we have entered into a covenant with the Lord.

The psalmist wrote, "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Ps. 50:5) "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16:24) The Apostle Paul speaks of the special partnership that is thus established by sharing in the cup of sacrifice. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."—I Cor. 10:16,17

A SACRIFICIAL DEATH

Jesus knew from the beginning of his ministry that he was to die sacrificially. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."—John 6:51-56

Even when it became apparent to our Lord's disciples that he would be killed by his enemies, they had great difficulty in accepting this fact and did

not understand the reason why he had to die. This added to the burden he bore during the last trying hours of his life because he had very little benefit of human understanding and comfort. From the scriptural account, we read some of the details that took place during Jesus' final hours.

A LONELY WAY

“Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples. Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?”—Matt. 26:35-40

WATCH AND PRAY

It would have meant much to Jesus to know that at least one of his followers was ready and willing to share in his feelings with some degree of understanding. Yet he was kind to them, and said, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he

came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”—Matt. 26:41-45

It was no doubt difficult for Jesus to realize that he must stand alone during the final hours of his earthly ministry. He knew that his Father was always near to comfort and strengthen him, but he now had to experience the loneliness of having no human companionship to give him comfort, sympathy, or understanding. He had to face his accusers, be condemned to death and then hung upon a cross to die, all without any human comfort.

HUMBLE SUBMISSION

Through all of this terrible agony, Jesus was calm, patient, and humbly submitting to his Heavenly Father’s will. When asked by the high priest if he was the Son of God, he was forthright in his acknowledgment of this truth, which he knew would seal his final condemnation as far as the religious leaders of Israel were concerned. He simply answered, “Thou hast said.” (vs. 64) Later, when Pilate asked if he were a king, Jesus explained, “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world.” (John 18:37) He fully understood the implications of this confession of the Truth and that Pilate could do nothing further to save his life. His accusers would surely press the false charge that he had committed treason against the Roman masters.

JESUS CONDEMNED

From the scriptural account, we read in part some of the events that unfolded in Jesus' final hours. "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified."—Matt. 27:24-26

As the Master hung upon the cross, the crowds were watching him. "They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God."—vss. 39-43

THE FINAL SCENE

When the end finally came, Jesus was strengthened with the knowledge of his Father's countenance. In complete faith and confidence, he put his life in the Father's hands. "It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father,

into Your hands I commit My spirit.” And “having said this, He breathed His last.”—Luke 23:44-46, *New American Standard Bible*

Truly our Lord Jesus had been led as a lamb to the slaughter. Now his sacrifice for the sin-cursed human creation was finished and the antitypical Passover lamb had been slain. As we partake of the emblems again this year let us remember his broken body and shed blood, and do so with a grateful appreciation of the great love which provided redemption and life for us at so great a cost.

HIS FOLLOWERS

While we can rejoice that Jesus' personal suffering was completed on Calvary nearly two thousand years ago, the Memorial emblems of which we again partake will remind us that we have not yet completed our sacrifice. This is yet the privilege of his consecrated followers of which the Apostle Paul wrote. “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church.”—Col. 1:24

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”—Heb. 12:1-3

OUR GREAT SALVATION

The Memorial season is an appropriate time to reexamine our own position. Are we facing up to our privileges of sacrifice as faithfully as we intended to do when we first entered the narrow way, or are we perhaps taking an easier way? As we think upon Jesus at this Memorial season, we will all want to make sure that we are among those who continue voluntarily to keep our sacrifice on the altar. It is only those who strive against the enemies of the flesh who will be faithful. "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."—Mark 13:13

Paul asks, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." (Heb. 2:3) He then reminded them, "Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used." (chap. 10:32,33) James encourages, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."—James 1:12

END OF THE AGE

Those consecrated brethren who have been enlightened by present Truth know that we are now living in the closing years of the present Gospel Age. We do not know how many more years we will have the privilege of partaking of the Memorial

emblems, but we do know that the fruition of all our hopes is near. This should give added meaning to this year's Memorial Supper and cause us to increase our efforts in the weeks and months ahead to make our calling and election sure.

The blessed hope of again being in the actual presence of his Heavenly Father was one of the joys set before Jesus, and enabled him to endure the cross and despise the shame. When instituting the Memorial Supper, Jesus told his disciples that he would not drink of the cup with them again until they were all together once again in the kingdom. Jesus' faithful followers are promised a place in that glorious future kingdom. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."—Rev. 3:21

PARTAKING OF THE EMBLEMS

Many of the Lord's consecrated people will be gathering together again this year to commemorate our dear Lord's death on Sunday evening, March 28, 2010. However, those who may be isolated from this privilege need not feel deprived from complying with our Lord's request to do this in remembrance of him. Wherever this may be the case it is possible to bring Christ into each individual and consecrated heart with renewed meaning and strengthened determination to be his faithful follower even unto death.

Let each one remember the great and tragic events that were about to take place nearly two thousand years ago when Jesus gathered with his disciples in the upper room a few hours before his

terrible death. Let us also recall our loving Heavenly Father's ultimate plan and purpose for the reconciliation of the poor groaning and sin-sick human family, and that this wonderful purpose will soon be accomplished.

It is recorded, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For 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. He that believeth on him 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 3:14-18

Jesus loved the human creation and willingly gave his life that the world might live. May the Memorial Supper this year help to fill our hearts more fully with the desire to comfort all who mourn, and increase our longing for the time when we will soon have the glorious opportunity of association with our Lord in the administration of his righteous kingdom. The time is near for the long-promised work of restoration for all the willing and obedient to health and life, and of establishing peace and righteousness in a very dark world. ■

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matthew 6:10

Let Not Your Heart be Troubled

*“Let not your heart
be troubled,
neither let it be
afraid.”*
—*John 14:27*

THESE COMFORTING words were spoken by our dear Lord Jesus to his disciples only a few hours before his death as a ransom price

for the sin-sick human family. His tender words reflect the very high level of love, devotion, and compassion that he had for his faithful followers. They also indicate the wonderful peace of God which he possessed.

THE CONFUSED DISCIPLES

Jesus knew that his disciples were confused and unable to comprehend the tragic events that were taking place. The climax of his earthly ministry was unfolding, and in a few hours he would face a terrible death, as well as having been betrayed by one of his own followers.

His followers had just witnessed the institution of the memorial of his death wherein he substituted his own life as the lamb of sacrifice. They were invited to share with him in partaking of the sacred emblems that were symbolic of his sacrificed

life—the bread which he broke representing his flesh, and the cup which showed his life blood given on their behalf, and also for the sins of the world.

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Although he would soon finish his earthly ministry as a ransom for the sins of mankind, he would not fulfill the prophetic titles of his future office as king for another two thousand years. Jesus knew that his faithful followers would experience many severe trials during that long period of time. One of the titles of his future office, “The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6), points to one of the fundamental aspects of his loving character. Throughout his ministry he exemplified the fact that he was a man of peace, and as a peacemaker he assured his people of his continuing interest in their spiritual welfare.

During those few remaining hours of his life, Jesus turned to his disciples and promised them, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.”—John 14:27-31

THE END DREW NEAR

The peace that Jesus had was centered in the omnipotent power, wisdom, justice, and love possessed by his Heavenly Father. Likewise, if we desire to have the peace of God and of Christ it must also be centered in God by faith. The peace of Christ is a blessed legacy, especially when the storm clouds of trouble descend upon the lives of his faithful people.

Even as Jesus was speaking these words, his betrayer Judas had left to carry out his murderous errand. This was to be followed by the agony he would suffer in the Garden of Gethsemane. Later, his disciples would become dismayed and fearful as they began to realize the fate of their beloved Lord. Under darkness of night, their suspense would deepen into more fearful forebodings as he stood alone before his merciless accusers and persecutors in the hall of Pilate and the court of Herod. In fulfillment of the Father's purpose came the tragic end and the horrors of the crucifixion, and they were powerless to help him.

Under the unfolding circumstances there was no peace of which Jesus had earlier spoken. Becoming overcome with fear and dread our Lord's disciples all forsook him. Even Peter, who was anxious to defend him, was so filled with fear that three times he denied his Lord, and with cursing declared that he never knew him. (Matt. 26:69-75) When Jesus had completed the task for which he had been born as a perfect man, he cried, "It is finished." (John 19:30) Then the heavens were darkened, the earth quaked, the rocks were rent, and the Temple veil was torn in two.

DEATH REQUIRED

Years later while commenting on the divine purpose, the Apostle Paul explained that peace could not yet be realized until Jesus' sacrificial death. In his letter to the Hebrew brethren, he wrote, "Where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood."—Heb. 9:16-18, *New American Standard Bible*

As fear fell upon the people of Israel, and the clamor and excitement of that awful day died away, they smote upon their breasts and returned to their homes with fear. "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."—Matt. 27:54

HOPE REALIZED

To the disciples of the Lord, the peace their Master possessed had also been theirs. Although they were in despair, three days later hope was revived by the news of the Lord's resurrection. It was confirmed to them by his appearance in their midst. Again, forty days later, they were strengthened by his ascension after his parting counsel, promised return, and instructions to tarry in Jerusalem until they received at Pentecost the promise of the Father—the Holy Spirit of adoption.

The peace of Christ and the Lord's rich legacy began to be more fully realized. The tarrying days of prayer and expectancy were days of abiding peace

which flowed as a river. On the Day of Pentecost the promised Comforter was received, and the disciples' peace and joy knew no bounds.

THE CHURCH'S LEGACY

The legacy of peace was given not only to the Early Church, but is the blessed promise to the entire church throughout this present Gospel Age. In his prayer during those last hours of his life, Jesus declared, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."—John 17:20,21

The promised peace of which Jesus spoke was not to be the peace that the world may offer. That may be enjoyed for a short time, but may soon vanish when health fails and death steals away the treasures of the heart. Paul pointed to this when he said, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4:7

Christ enjoyed this peace of God when he endured loss, persecution, and contempt even amidst the agonies of the cross. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:25,26) His ministry was a difficult way, and so it must be with all his faithful followers until the purposes of God are accomplished in us. We are assured that

through all of life's storms this peace shall abide in us also. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) This is the peace which no trial can destroy and no enemy can wrest from us.

FAITH'S FOUNDATION

The foundation and security of this abiding peace is able to survive even the most difficult storms of life. When we consider the Lord and his apostles, we are impressed with the fact that their faith in the love, power, and wisdom of God was firm and unmovable. They believed that what God had promised them, he was able also to perform and that his righteous and benevolent plan could know no failure.

When speaking of the Heavenly Father, Isaiah declared, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isa. 46:9,10) To emphasize this, we read again from the words of the prophet, "The LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"—chap. 14:27

Those who have responded to the heavenly calling during this present Gospel Age have rested on the wonderful promises of God, and in him has their faith been firmly anchored. While they were being tossed about by the tempests of life, their anchor still held fast to the throne of God. Jesus had been with the Father from the beginning, and had realized his

love and goodness. He had seen his power and had marked his righteousness and fatherly providence over all his works. The knowledge which he had of the Heavenly Father gave him a firm foundation for faith in all God's purposes concerning the future. The Master could walk by faith which enabled him to overcome all obstacles, and to secure the victory even over death.

As it is written, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."—Isa. 53:11,12

THE VICTORY

John has written for our instruction, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born [begotten] of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born [begotten] of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—I John 5:1-4

It is only through steady, unwavering faith that the peace of Christ will abide with his faithful and consecrated people. While Jesus was with his disciples and they witnessed in him the manifestation

of the Heavenly Father, their faith remained strong and they had peace in him. As he said, “While I was with them in the world, I kept them.” (John 17:12) However, it was not until after he had left them that their faith was truly anchored in God. After Pentecost they experienced the same peace that Christ had enjoyed. This blessed peace came from a knowledge that God had acknowledged them as sons and heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ, and if they would continue faithfully to follow in the steps of the Redeemer they could be victorious.

UNWAVERING FAITH

This is the basis of our peace. No matter how fiercely the storms of life may assail us, we must never let go our anchor and allow ourselves to drift. The Apostle Paul wrote, “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”—II Tim. 2:19

The psalmist assures us, “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.”—Ps. 91:1-4

“Being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” (Rom. 4:21) Notwithstanding our human imperfections and frailties which are covered through the imputed

righteousness of Christ, we should have no fear that our loving Heavenly Father is fully capable of assisting his people to faithfulness. We are to have full assurance of faith, “For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.” (John 16:27) God knows our weaknesses, “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.”—Ps. 103:13,14

THE ANCHOR OF FAITH

We are thus encouraged to maintain a firm grip upon the anchor of our faith. In his letter to the Hebrew brethren, the Apostle Paul provided an important definition of faith, when he wrote, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb. 11:1) He emphasized its true value, when he explained, “Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”—vs.6

THE PEACE OF GOD

If we desire to have the peace of God reign in our hearts, we must never let go our anchor, nor suffer Satan’s deadliest strife to beat our courage down. The language of our hearts must always be as was Job’s. He wrote, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.” (Job 13:15) The Prophet Isaiah wrote, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”—Isa. 26:3

Thus armed with faith, the peace of God that was given to us by our Master ever abides. “Let the

peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.” (Col. 3:15) As we walk in newness of life and in faith, let our hearts be cheered and our minds be stayed with the assurance that all of the divine purposes shall be accomplished in us. Jesus assured us of his Heavenly Father’s ultimate purpose. “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”—Luke 12:32

In loving tenderness he said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”—John 14:27 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

MARCH 4—“Whatsoever things are pure, lovely, and of good report,...think on these things.”—Philippians 4:8 (Z. ’03-9 Hymn 198)

MARCH 11—“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”—Hebrews 12:1 (Z. ’03-54 Hymn 184)

MARCH 18—Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”—I Peter 1:13 (Z ’03-54 Hymn 146)

MARCH 25—Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—II Peter 3:17,18 (Z. ’03-70 Hymn 136)

TALKING THINGS OVER

General Convention Bulletin

July 17-22, 2010

THE 2010 GENERAL CONVENTION is only a few months away. We encourage you to make your plans now to attend and participate in the blessings of this gathering of the Lord's people at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, PA. A complete pricing table and registration form follows.

	Ages	18 & up	***13-17
Breakfast		\$7.00	\$6.00
Lunch		8.00	7.00
Dinner		11.00	10.00
Total, three meals		\$26.00	\$23.00
Lodging (per night)			
**dbl occ (LLC or APTS)		\$30.00	\$25.00
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)		\$25.00	\$23.00
**single occ (LLC)		\$55.00	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)		\$30.00	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals			
**dbl occ (LLC or APTS)		\$325*	\$290*
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)		\$195*	\$160*
**single occ (LLC)		\$460*	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)		\$235*	n/a
If no breakfasts, deduct—*\$35 **Air-conditioned ***100% of these costs will be refunded if the young person attends 75% of the studies for his/her age group			

General Convention Registration

1425 Lachman Lane — Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

E-mail: Nekora@aol.com (310) 454-5248

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 16, 2010				
Saturday, 17th				
Sunday, 18th				
Monday, 19th				
Tuesday, 20th				
Wednesday, 21st				
Thursday, 22nd				

Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals
or 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts)

Check: private bath **or** shared bath
 double occupancy single occupancy
 interested in APTS

Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)

Address:

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

T. Alexander Orlando, FL March 6-8	E. Kuenzli Fresno, CA March 19-21
R. Carnegie Detroit, MI March 20,21	H. Montague Orlando, FL March 6-8
O. B. Elbert Columbus, OH March 13,14	J. Parkinson Columbus, OH March 13,14 Fresno, CA 19-21
R. Gorecki Orlando, FL March 6-8 Detroit, MI 20,21	D. Rice Detroit, MI March 20,21
L. Griehs Orlando, FL March 6-8 Fresno, CA 19-21	T. Ruggirello Orlando, FL March 6-8 Columbus, OH 13,14

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Elfreda Mandel Carpenter, Weatherford, TX—January 6. Age, 83
Sister Mary Turczyn, Detroit, MI—January 17. Age, 94

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CONVENTIONS

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

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 6,7,8—Clarion Hotel, 230 West State Road 436, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. Phone: (407) 862-4455. Specify “Florida Bible Students.” Deadline for special rates is February 24. For other information, contact E. Blicharz, 320 Raven Rock Lane, Longwood, FL 32750. Phone: (407) 260-8083

COLUMBUS PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 13,14—Der Dutchman Restaurant, 445 S. Jefferson Avenue, Plain City, OH 43064. Contact T. Alexander, 3278 Foxcroft Drive, Lewis Center, OH 43035. Phone: (614) 519-8282

GREATER NEW LONDON PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 14—Bayview Lodge, East Lyme, CT. Contact V. Grillo. Phone: (860) 887-0706

FRESNO PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 19-21—Fresno Quality Inn, 4278 W. Ashlan Avenue, Fresno, CA 93722. Contact B. Wilson. Phone: (559) 255-2241

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 20,21—Holiday Inn-Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48083. Phone: (248) 689-7500. Specify “Detroit Bible Students Ecclesia.” Deadline for special rate is March 13. For other information, contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, April 2-4—Albuquerque Grand Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Blvd. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Contact S. Thomassen, 402 Bryn Mawr SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Phone: (505) 268-8170

NEW YORK SPRING CONVENTION, April 11—

Doubletree Hotel, 1880 Route 17 S, Mahwah, NJ 07430. Phone: (201) 529-5880. Contact G. Passios. Phone: (201) 939-3196

PITTSBURGH SPRING CONVENTION, April 18—Greentree Parkway Center Best Western Inn. Contact C. Byrd. Phone: (412) 734-4702

BOISE CONVENTION, April 23-25—Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main Street, Boise, ID. Contact D. Allers, 7558 W. Hathaway Lane, Boise, ID 83714, by April 2. Phone: (208) 375-6873

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, April 25—Sheraton Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA 19047. Phone: (215) 547-4100. Contact R. Eldridge, 37 Falcon Road, Levittown, PA 19056. Phone: (215) 949-0652

JACKSONVILLE CONVENTION, May 2—Holiday Inn, 620 Wells Road, Orange Park, FL 32073. Contact C. Hires, 2405 Hugh Edwards Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32210. Phone: (904) 781-0506

AGAWAM CONVENTION, May 15,16—Agawam Senior Citizen Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA 01001. Contact L. Bovat. Phone: (413) 883-6421

BUFFALO CONVENTION, May 15,16—New Location—Holiday Inn Buffalo International Airport, 4600 Genesee Street, Buffalo, NY 14225. Contact R. Morin for reservations by April 30. Phone: (585) 322-7459

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, May 29-31—Radisson Hotel, 4545 MacArthur Blvd., Newport Beach, CA 92660. For programs and room reservations at the special convention rate of \$59/night (no tax), contact M. Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Phone: (310) 454-5248

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 17-22—See General Convention Bulletin, pages 60,61 of this issue.

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

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

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

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

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

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

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