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AUSTRALIA: Berean Bible Institute, P.O. Box 402, Rosanna, Victoria 3084

BRITISH ISLES: Associated Bible Students, P.O. Box 136, Chesham, Bucks HP5 3EB

CANADA: P.O. Box 175, Elmwood Postal Outlet, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2L 1M0

FRANCE: Aurore, B. Boulrier, 8 rue du Docteur Laennec, 95520, Osny

GERMANY: Tagesanbruch Bibelstudien-Vereinigung, Alzeyer Str. 8 (Postfach 252), D 67253 Freinsheim

GREECE: He Haravgi (The Dawn), 33-33 149th Street, Flushing, NY 11354 USA

ITALY: Aurora, Via S. Leonardo 21, Ottaviano 80044, Napoli

SOUTH AMERICA: El Alba, Apartado 1390, Trujillo, Peru

SPAIN: El Alba, Via S. Leonardo 21, Ottaviano 80044 Napoli, Italy

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The Glory of the Heavens

“The heavens declare the glory of God.” **IT WAS ANNOUNCED IN**
—Psalm 19:1 the *New York Times* on January 17, 2004, that “NASA Cancels Trip to Supply Hubble, Sealing Early Doom.” The article said:

“Savor those cosmic postcards while you can. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration decreed an early death yesterday to one of its flagship missions and most celebrated successes, the Hubble Space Telescope.

HUBBLE’S DOOM

“In a midday meeting at the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, two days after President Bush ordered NASA to redirect its resources toward human exploration of the Moon and Mars, the agency’s administrator, Sean O’Keefe, told the managers of the space telescope that there would be no more shuttle visits to maintain it.

“A visit by astronauts to install a couple of the telescope’s scientific instruments and replace the gyroscopes and batteries had been planned for next

year. Without any more visits, the telescope, the crown jewel of astronomy for 10 years, will probably die in orbit sometime in 2007, depending on when its batteries or gyroscopes fail for good.

“It could die tomorrow, it could last to 2011,” said Dr. Steven Beckwith, director of the Space Telescope Institute on the Johns Hopkins University campus in Baltimore. Dr. Beckwith said he and his colleagues were devastated.

“At a news conference last night, Dr. John M. Grunsfeld, the agency’s chief scientist and an astronaut who has been to the Hubble two times, called the telescope the ‘best marriage of human spaceflight and science.’

“It is a sad day that we have to announce this,” Dr. Grunsfeld added.

“As the news flashed around the world by e-mail, other astronomers joined the Hubble team in their shock. Dr. David N. Spergel, an astronomer at Princeton and a member of a committee that advises NASA on space science, called it a ‘double whammy’ for astronomy. Not only was a telescope being lost, but \$200 million worth of instruments that had been built to be added in the later shuttle mission will also be left on the ground, Dr. Spergel said.

“Dr. Garth Illingworth, an astronomer at the University of California at Santa Cruz who is also on the advisory committee, said, ‘I think this is a mistake,’ noting that the Hubble was still doing work at the forefront of science.

“Dr. Tod Lauer, of the National Optical Astronomy Observatories in Tucson, said, ‘This is a pretty nasty turn of events, coming immediately on the heels of ‘W’s’ endorsement of space exploration.’

“The demise of the Hubble will leave astronomers with no foreseeable prospect of a telescope in space operating primarily at visible wavelengths. The announcement also precludes hopes that astronomers had of using the Hubble in tandem with the James Webb Space Telescope, scheduled for launching in 2011 and which is being designed for infrared wavelengths, to study galaxies at the far reaches of time.

LIMITATIONS OF GROUND TELESCOPES

“Ground-based telescopes like the 10-meter-diameter Kecks on Mauna Kea are growing more powerful, and the use of adaptive optics to tune out the blurring effects of the atmosphere lets them approach the resolution of the Hubble in limited cases. But they are blinded by the atmosphere to ultraviolet and infrared light.

“Floating above the murky atmosphere of Earth, the Hubble, launched in 1990, has had the ability to see into the depths of space and time with unprecedented clarity, glimpsing galaxies that were under construction when the universe was half its present age and helping cosmologists chart how the mysterious ‘dark energy’ has gradually taken over the expansion of the universe.

“Periodic service calls by shuttle astronauts repaired a series of early problems and have continually refurbished the telescope and kept it at the fore of cosmic research. The mission next year would have left the telescope in good shape to continue working through the end of the decade, when NASA plans to bring it down. But the service missions are expensive, more than \$500 million each.”

There is no doubt that the expensive nature of each service mission is a factor in this decision, although the article did bring out the dangerous aspect of these missions. Ever since the Columbia catastrophe a year ago, there has been an awareness that the shuttle does not carry enough fuel to reach the space station in case of trouble. The article explored various ways of eliminating the hazardous aspects of the mission, but each led to much more expense. The chief scientist at NASA, Dr. Grunsfeld said, "Cost was not an issue," but many astronomers noted that the decision came on the heels of Mr. Bush's directive to NASA to reallocate \$11 billion of its resources over the next five years for returning people to the moon. Presenting the decision as a safety related issue will make it difficult to challenge.

SPACE EXPLORATION BY THE POOR

It was interesting to note that a week later, the *New York Times* reported January 24, 2004, on India's space program. It told of 40 college engineering students visiting a satellite manufacturing plant in Bangalore. The article said,

"All expressed the same hope: to work for India's prestigious national space program. And all dismissed a simple question: why should a country with as many poor as India spend hundreds of millions of dollars on a space program when it could use satellites from Europe or the United States?"

"'We will not depend on others,' declared Raj Sheker, 21, an engineering student. 'It's just an Indian feeling.'"

“Forty years after the launching of a small American-made rocket marked its humble beginnings, India’s national space program bills itself as thrifty space exploration for the common man.

“With a budget of only \$450 million a year—one-thirtieth of NASA’s \$15.5 billion annual budget—India has thirteen satellites in orbit, produces some of the world’s best remote imaging satellites and is planning to send a satellite to the moon by 2007 or 2008.

“But unlike space programs in other developing countries, including Brazil, low costs have not meant catastrophic launching failures. Only 6 of India’s 37 satellite launchings have failed.”

We note the question asked, Why is India spending hundreds of millions of dollars when it has so many poor people? A similar question was asked of the United States when it announced its program to explore for life on Mars. An editor of the newspaper *USA Today* asked, “What about life on Earth?”

EXPLORING THE COSMOS

Coming back to the Hubble telescope, the question that arises is why are astronomers so eager to maintain this method of exploring outer space? It is because they are eager to use every available instrument to learn about outer space. Yet the Hubble is only one of many being used to explore outer space. An article appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* newspaper on August 12, 2003 entitled, “A Whole Other Cosmos,” written by K. C. Cole, as front page news. It began by saying:

“There’s nothing like quietly contemplating the sky on a clear, moonless night to make us feel we

can touch the cosmos in its entirety—the bright canopy of stars, the ever-shifting play of planets, the vast, cold silence of infinite space.

“How little we know.

“All this glory is but the barest glimpse of what’s actually out there. Tales of extreme violence and profound mystery stream at us from every corner of the cosmos, and yet we’re constrained to peering through the tiniest keyhole, seeing only the thin band that beams in visible light. Until very recently, even astronomers, who see nearly the entire electromagnetic spectrum, from radio to gamma rays, have been able to tune in to only the barest trickle from the flood of news.

“In the last few years, however, new instruments have begun painting a far more vibrant image of the universe. The celestial story now unfolding has as much in common with the picture of decades past as a Technicolor, Dolby Digital surround-sound production has with a grainy silent film.

“Consider: In the last year alone, a satellite tuned to faint microwaves still glowing from the Big Bang took a picture of the quantum mechanical quivers in the newborn universe that pulled matter into what eventually became galaxies, stars, and ultimately, us. The picture pinned down the age of the universe precisely—13.7 billion years—and confirmed its exact mix of ingredients. The same astonishing image suggested that the fires of the first stars electrified the skies 200 million years after the Big Bang—much earlier than most astronomers predicted.

“Meanwhile, X-ray telescopes have been finding black holes—objects of such concentrated energy

and warped space that they trap even light—virtually everywhere they’ve looked. One satellite alone found 1,500 supersized holes feeding on surrounding gas and stars in just a small patch of sky. Other telescopes found a whole new species of midsized models previously unknown to exist.

“‘Far more black holes are lurking out there than anyone thought,’ said Sonoma State University astrophysicist Lynn Cominsky. ‘If you look at the universe in visible light, it’s pretty calm. But in X-rays and gamma rays, it’s very violent.’”

NEW METHODS OF EXPLORING THE COSMOS

From this introduction it can be seen that the language used in this article is beyond an ordinary man’s imagination. An instrument capable of detecting microwaves released 13.7 billion years ago is beyond our comprehension. These are the sort of things with which the article deals. One usually thinks of an astronomer as a person using a telescope and light, as we know and experience it, to get clearer pictures of heavenly bodies. In this article, seven modern instruments are mentioned as being used by modern day astronomers, of which the Hubble telescope is only one. It was deployed in 1990 and uses three cameras designed for optical and infrared light.

In New Mexico there are twenty-seven radio antennas, each eighty-two feet in diameter in a Y-shaped array. These detect radio waves from outer space.

A SIRTf (Space Infrared Telescope Facility) was to be launched in late August of 2003. Some infrared light reached Earth from outer space, but only

in patches because of interference. Hence much is expected from SIRTF.

Twin telescopes on Mauna Kea in Hawaii (the Keck telescopes) use optical and infrared light.

The Galex, an orbiting telescope launched in April, 2003, uses ultraviolet light to observe galaxies.

The Chandra, launched in 1999, is an orbiting X-ray observatory exploring high energy objects such as collapsed stars.

The SWIFT was scheduled for launch in December 2003 to study gamma ray bursts.

Currently there are now in orbit new instruments such as the Hubble, the Chandra, the Galex, and the Swift. The article referred to these new instruments by saying:

“The adventure has barely begun. On Aug. 23, NASA is set to launch the last of its four ‘great observatories,’ (the SIRFT) grand telescopes in the sky, each tuned to a particular swath of the electromagnetic spectrum. While Hubble, Chandra, and the now defunct Compton telescopes looked at visible light, X-rays and gammarays, respectively, the new infrared telescope will allow astronomers to peer through the fog that shrouds the births of stars and planets.

“Following not far behind them are two more ‘Great Einstein’ observatories. Both involve arrays of telescopes flying in formation like well-practiced flocks of birds, in one case effectively creating an observatory millions of kilometers across.

“Almost every month, new ground-based telescopes open their eyes, and new special-purpose explorers take off for the clearer skies of space. Some, like the Sloan Digital Sky Survey, are mapping

much of the sky in great detail, pinning down the location of galaxies, stars and distant quasars to create a three-dimensional image of its large-scale structure. Others, like Hubble, often go deep and narrow, taking what amounts to a core sample of the universe.”

ORDER VS. DISORDER

The article, which covers a full page, talks about black holes, dark matter, dark energy, and gravitational waves predicted by Einstein’s theory of relativity. What is mentioned is a new kind of observatory to test Einstein’s theories. One is called LIGO (Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory) and the other, LIGO’s successor, is called LISA (Laser Interferometer Space Antenna). All of this is designed to learn more about outer space. Both LISA and another Einstein observatory are scheduled for launch by 2010 and 2011.

Conspicuous by its absence is no mention of a great Supreme Creator being involved in all that has been observed. As scientists study the glory of the heavens, they do not say in the simple words of David, “The heavens declare the glory of God.” (Ps. 19:1) The glory of the heavens should declare the glory of God, who brought all of these elements into being. We do not understand the meaning of black holes or gamma ray emissions. He who created all things is mighty beyond our imagination.

The Prophet Isaiah knew this, and wrote: “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure,

and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?”—Isa. 40:12-14

VISIBLE SIGNS OF GOD’S CREATION

Isaiah explains in simple language how all things we see on Earth—the oceans, the fields, the mountains, and hills—were all designed and measured by God. From where did this intelligence come? Who instructed God in doing all these things? The answer is that God is self-existing and is the fountain of all knowledge and wisdom. Then Isaiah says, “Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.” (vss. 15-17) Isaiah calls attention to the puny nature of man when he says ‘the nations are as a drop of a bucket’ and ‘as the small dust of the balance.’

He attacks the folly of men who make graven images to worship, and says, “Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent

to dwell in: That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth [is missing].”—vss. 21-26

GLORY AND ORDER IN THE HEAVENS

All the stars in the heavens that we can see with the ordinary telescope move in orderly and precise procession. God has named each one. Some of the names of these have appeared in the Scriptures. When Job talked with God, he was asked many questions. Some involved the stars of heaven. Job was asked, “Can you bind the beautiful Pleiades? Can you loose the cords of Orion? Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the Bear with its cubs? Do you know the laws of the heavens?”—Job 38:31-33, *New International Version*

As astronomers started to study the glory of the heavens several hundred years ago, they found the ‘laws of the heavens,’ and that all the movements of the stars were precise and dependable. Now astronomers and astrophysicists are using exotic instruments to peer beyond the known heavens and report seeing black holes, stars disappearing, black energy, dark matter, and general disorder.

Is their vision being distorted? Are they seeing God's creativity in action? Does God want them to see beyond the known heavens? The terms being used indicate ignorance on the subject. We prefer to wait upon the LORD, and to heed the words of Isaiah as he said, "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isa. 40:28-31) David truly said, "The heavens declare the glory of God." ■

How Great Thou Art

*O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds thy hands have made.
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee;
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee;
How great thou art! How great thou art!*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

Reflecting the Glory

Key Verse: *“We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”*

—II Thessalonians 2:13

Selected Scripture:
II Thessalonians 1:3,4,11,12; 2:13-3:4

PAUL OPENS HIS SECOND

epistle to the Thessalonians by thanking God for the brethren whom he was addressing. (II Thess. 1:3) Specifically, he thanked God for their growing faith and their love which seemed to abound toward one another. What a beautiful testimony of their faithfulness is given from Paul’s simple statement of thanksgiving for them. He takes the matter a step further in verse 4, by saying that, as he traveled and visited the various churches he had helped establish, he

spread the word of their faithfulness, so that all who heard gloried in it. He states, “we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure.”—vs. 4

Although Paul realized that the church at Thessalonica had been faithful, he also knew that they would continue to be tested and tried, and that maintaining their faithful course would not be accomplished in their own strength, but in God’s. He prayed that God would continue to work in them to the completion of that which had been begun. In verse 11 we read, “We pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this

calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.” Paul indicates that it was really God’s work which was being fulfilled in the Thessalonian church—‘his goodness,’ and his ‘work of faith with power.’ He wanted them to realize that all the glory and honor in the development of each member of the Church belonged exclusively to God and his faithful Son, Jesus Christ, and that it was only through grace that we could even be products of such a work. “That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”—vs. 12

In our lesson Paul recounts how they had been specially chosen by God to receive salvation, on their faith in being sanctified and because of their understanding of the Truth of God’s Word. This points out that to realize the hope of a heavenly salvation requires more than mere belief. It also requires an understanding of God’s plan, his Truth, and the resulting sanctifying effect that knowledge should have on our character. Without these two additional things, God’s Truth and its sanctifying effect, we could not be found fit for a place in Christ’s heavenly kingdom. Realizing this, Paul admonished the brethren to “stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught.” (chap. 2:15) He also prayed that God would “comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.”—vs. 17

In concluding our lesson, Paul expresses to the brethren that the Lord is faithful, and has confidence that they would be also. He says, “The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.” (chap. 3:3,4) Let us also be confident, not in our own strength, but in the Lord’s, and remember the words, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised).”—Heb. 10:23 ■

Who is Worthy?

Key Verse: “*Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*”
—**Revelation 5:12**

Selected Scripture:
Revelation 5:1-10

the seals thereof?” (Rev. 5:2) No one in heaven or on earth was found who was able to open the book, or even look upon it, causing much weeping and disappointment. (vss. 3,4) The book, in this instance, seems to be symbolic of God’s Divine purpose and plan—that purpose being to have a perfect race of God’s creation here upon earth, enjoying in peace and perfection all the beauties and blessings of God’s handiwork. Sin had separated man from God’s favor, however, and instead of living and enjoying the beauties of earth forever, man was subject to the results of sin: disease, sickness, suffering, and eventually death. God’s original purpose for man was sealed, unable to be opened and fulfilled, until someone could be found worthy to redeem man from his fallen condition and bring him back into favor with God.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION is highly symbolic, and in chapter five we have pictured before our minds God upon his throne with a book. This book, or scroll—as books were in olden times—was written on the inside as well as on the outside. However, no one could read it, or even open it, as it was sealed with seven seals. The question is then asked, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose

To fulfill the requirement of a redeemer would not be an easy task. First it required a corresponding price, a perfect human life to be given up in payment of the perfect human life Adam lost when he sinned in the Garden of Eden. Although many angelic beings were qualified as perfect, yet they were not a corresponding price because they were not human beings, born of flesh and blood. Likewise, mankind, although a corresponding price from the standpoint of their human lineage, failed in the other vital requirement, that of being perfect. After all, they were all of Adam's descent, and therefore it was impossible for any of them to give a perfect life as a ransom, for none were perfect, "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10) The psalmist says, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." (Ps. 49:7) Surely it seemed that no one was worthy to open the book, and loose its seals.

Just when it seemed that no one would be found worthy to be the one to carry out God's plan of salvation to its ultimate conclusion, the cry is heard, "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." (Rev. 5:5) Who was this 'Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David?' If there was any doubt, it is removed in the next verse, when it identifies this worthy one as a "Lamb as it had been slain." (vs. 6) This could only be Jesus, of whom John the Baptist had said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—John 1:29

Because of Jesus' faithfulness, even unto death, and his subsequent resurrection to the right hand of God, it could now be said with much rejoicing, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood [men] from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."—Rev. 5:9, *New American Standard Translation* ■

The Faithful are Rewarded

Key Verse: *“The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”*
—Revelation 7:17

Selected Scripture:
Revelation 7:1-3,9,10, 14-17

IN TODAY'S LESSON WE have presented to us the reward of the faithful overcomers of this present Gospel Age. These are those who will receive a heavenly inheritance, prior to the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth for the rest of mankind, all of whom have been purchased by Jesus' blood. In Revelation 7 we have mentioned two distinct, yet related, classes of those who receive such a heavenly reward.

First, John says that the symbolic “four winds” (vs. 1) of trouble, that will bring about the end of this present evil order of things and usher in a new age of blessing for mankind (II Pet. 3:7,13), cannot be let loose until the servants of God are sealed “in their foreheads” (Rev. 7:3)—that is, until they have proven themselves faithful, even “unto death.” (chap. 2:10) Revelation 7, verse 4, states that this group of faithful servants will be a relatively small number of one hundred and forty-four thousand. Jesus also described this class of his faithful followers as a “little flock.” (Luke 12:32) These are those who have the indelible mark, or seal, of the

character of Christ, and have proven loyal through trials and testings to be deemed worthy of “glory and honour and immortality.” (Rom. 2:7) Later, John refers to this small number of faithful ones, and the reason they are rewarded so highly, saying, “I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. . . . These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.”—Rev. 14:1,4

In the scripture, John speaks of this small group as ‘firstfruits.’ This indicates that there are to be afterfruits, although on a lesser plane of life than the 144,000. One of these groups is the second class spoken of in our lesson. Revelation 7, verse 9, identifies this group as a “great multitude,” in contrast with the first group comprising only a ‘little flock.’ Also in contrast is the statement that this second class stood “before the Lamb,” whereas the first group is spoken of as being ‘with’ the Lamb. (chap. 14:1) Further, John says that this great multitude had “washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (chap. 7:14) Thus is indicated that this group, while deemed worthy of heavenly life, were not as faithful as the class cited earlier. This group had, through a measure of willful sin, soiled their symbolic robes and through difficult experience were required to wash them in order to be found acceptable to God. Because of this, they fail to achieve the reward of immortality given to the little flock. However, they are promised a heavenly inheritance, to serve God before his throne, with their life sustenance graciously provided by the Lamb. “The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”—vs. 17 ■

A Call for Endurance

***Key Verse: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”
—Revelation 14:12***

***Selected Scripture:
Revelation 14:6-13***

ONE OF THE PRIVILEGES that the prospective members of the Church have at the present time is to preach the good tidings to others. Revelation 14, verse 6, speaks of an “angel,” or messenger, as “having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” All who are striving to follow Christ have part in proclaiming the Gospel message. That this would be the case was prophesied by Jesus himself, when he said, “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.” (Matt. 24:14) In Revelation 14, verse 7, John tells us what our message to others should be, “Fear [reverence] God, and give glory to him; . . . worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” God is to be the center of all our preaching, not ourselves, our ideas, our thoughts, our ways, but his only. Secondly, we should preach Jesus, the one who exercised the power of God his Father to create heaven, earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters. “All things were made by him [Jesus, God’s Son]; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”—John 1:3

John further reminds us that it is not only important

that we preach the Gospel message, but we also must live it each day of our lives. Our Key Verse indicates that to do so requires endurance, constancy, and patient continuance, because the way is sometimes difficult, the trials and tests severe. It says that to be successful in this lifelong work, two things must take place. First, we must keep the commandments of God. That is, we must be obedient to the precepts and guidelines which, through the Scriptures, he has set before us. Obedience is the ultimate test of loyalty, and our character must be found in such a state if we are to be deemed faithful and worthy of the crown of life. Second, we must also keep the faith of Jesus. What is meant by this? It means that we must have the same kind of faith that Jesus had. His faith was such that, even under the most difficult circumstances, he could say, “not my will, but thine, be done.” (Luke 22:42) His was also a faith that was based on a correct understanding of God’s plans and purposes. Our faith, too, is to be built upon the simple Truth of God’s Word, not upon human reasoning, creeds or theories.

Our lesson concludes with the statement concerning those who faithfully complete the work previously described. “I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” (Rev. 14:13) Although they will experience death, yet it will be a blessing, for they will then be resurrected and have the privilege of being associated with Jesus in the heavenly phase of the kingdom to bless all the families of the earth. (Gen. 28:14) They will rest, or cease, from their present earthly labors as the verse indicates, but their works will ‘follow them’ after their resurrection, as they will then have part in the great work of blessing mankind. These faithful, patient, enduring ones are spoken of as those “who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality.”—Rom. 2:7 ■

A New Homecoming

Key Verse: *“I heard
a great voice out
of heaven saying,
Behold, the
tabernacle of God
is with men, and
he will dwell with
them, and they shall
be his people, and
God himself shall be
with them, and be
their God.”
—Revelation 21:3*

Selected Scripture:
Revelation 21:1-7, 22-27

of peace here on earth. Revelation 21, verses 1, 2, speak of this arrangement as “a new heaven and a new earth.” This is not to be thought of literally, but in the sense that there will be established a new order of things, and that this new order will have as the source of its governing authority the ‘new heaven,’ that is, Christ and his church. They will not reign literally here on earth, as they will be in heaven. However, their governing authority will be made manifest through various faithful earthly representatives who will administer the righteous, and perfect, laws of that kingdom.

The Key Verse states plainly that it has been God’s intent from the very beginning that his tabernacle

IN THE LESSON FOR MAY

16 we considered the reward of those footstep followers of Jesus who would be counted worthy to share a heavenly inheritance with him as immortal spirit beings—his church—as well as those who, although less faithful, will also receive a heavenly reward—a great multitude. Today’s lesson, however, presents the hope of an earthly inheritance for the remainder of mankind, to be made possible by the establishment of a kingdom

(dwelling) would be with man. Since he created man to dwell on the earth, God intended, in due time, for mankind to live on a perfect earth, in perfection, forever, enjoying its beauty and bounty, and also enjoying communion with God as Adam had in the Garden of Eden. We believe this time is close at hand, and once the lessons of sin have fully been learned by mankind, this present evil order will give way to the righteous and peaceful kingdom that Jesus taught his disciples to pray for, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”—Matt. 6:10

John continues to describe some of the wonderful conditions that will exist in the earth during this time of blessing, saying that when this time comes tears would be wiped away, there would be no more death, sorrow, or crying, not even any more pain! All these former things will have passed away. (Rev. 21:4) Summarizing all these changes, he says, “Behold, I make all things new . . . Write: for these words are true and faithful.” (vs. 5) We can have the utmost confidence that these words will come to pass. They will not fail, for God has so stated.

John points out that authority, both religious and civil, during Christ’s coming kingdom will center in God and his Son, the Lamb. (vs. 22) The light of Truth will also emanate from them. (vs. 23) No more will this light be hidden, covered up, or deceitfully distorted by Satan and his devices, for he will be bound, no longer able to influence mankind. (chap. 20:1,2) The results of this will be that entire nations and their leaders will flock to be a part of this wonderful arrangement. “The nations . . . shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory . . . into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory . . . of the nations into it.” (chap. 21:24-26) All of mankind who obey God’s commandments will be “they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”—Rev. 21:27 ■

Temptation and Fall

“The LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”
—Genesis 2:16,17

THE CREATOR HAD EN-
dowed man with the ability to know right from wrong. Having created our first parents perfect, they possessed the necessary moral strength to resist temptation to do wrong. But they did not, intuitively, know what was right and what was wrong. This knowledge had to be communicated to them by their

Creator who, in so doing, became their lawgiver. The laws, which God communicated to them, were simple and understandable, quite within range of full comprehension, even by the inexperienced Adam and Eve.

GOD’S LAW

Certain things were expected of them. They were to multiply and fill the earth. They were to

subdue the earth. God's law provided that they could freely eat of all the trees in Eden with one exception, which was 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.' The Scriptures do not indicate what sort of tree this was. Perhaps it was not greatly unlike many of the other trees in the garden. Nor are we to suppose that the fruit of this tree contained a mysterious element which, if eaten, would give one understanding that he did not previously possess. It was the act of disobedience in partaking of this tree, and the sequence of circumstances to follow, that would lead to a full knowledge of good and evil.

God's love had made wonderfully full and rich provision for our first parents. They were perfect, and had been given dominion over earth's animal kingdom. A marvelous home had been furnished for them, and they were bountifully provided with life-sustaining food. Their loving Creator had a just right to ask that they obey him. From every standpoint, it might be reasoned, they were under obligation to render the obedience he demanded.

The restrictive commandment, or law, which God gave to our first parents, was simple and understandable. Man-made laws are usually complicated and obscure in meaning. In most cases, one feels a measure of insecurity as to the intent of certain laws unless a lawyer is consulted, and these professional interpreters sometimes disagree. Even in the Supreme Court of the United States there are frequently split decisions over the meaning of laws, and this despite the fact that the Supreme Court judges are the most highly trained men in the country in the interpretation of the law.

But Adam and Eve did not need a lawyer to interpret the plainly stated law concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were not to eat of this tree. There were no obscurely stated circumstances under which they were to have the privilege of deciding whether or not they could properly eat of the forbidden fruit. There were no exceptions of any kind. 'Thou shalt not eat of it' was the law, 'for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.'

This law was given to Adam before Eve was created, but he fully informed her concerning it. This is revealed in the first three verses of the next chapter. We quote, "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."—Gen. 3:1-3

TEMPTATION

The average human reactions today indicate that when something is forbidden there is an increased desire to indulge. This may well have been so even from the beginning, when our first parents were perfect. Of Mother Eve it is written, "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."—vs. 6

Even the forbidden tree was 'pleasant to the eyes,' as well as good for food. This was true of the garden as a whole. Normally, all nature is pleasant to the eye, and it is evident that God planned it so for the legitimate joy of his human creation.

Delectable and nourishing food has also been provided by the LORD for man's enjoyment and sustenance. There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that God wants his people to eat poorly prepared and unpalatable food, and thus deprive their natural senses of enjoyment in order to live closer to him. These are among the distorted notions pertaining to the worship of God that have been handed down to us from the Dark Ages. The forbidden fruit in Eden was not forbidden because it was pleasant to the eye and good for food.

It was wrong to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil simply because God had forbidden it. This was the supreme test of obedience that the LORD placed upon our first parents. It was a test of their faith and confidence in him. It was a legitimate test, because God's thoughts and ways are so much higher than man's that of necessity they are nearly always beyond human understanding. So, if man were to obey God's laws only when he decided they were proper, chaos would have always been on earth.

There is a modern saying that we should trust God even where we cannot trace him. This is true. God does ask us to reason with him (Isa. 1:18), and to the extent that it is possible to understand the whys and wherefores of his laws, this information is revealed to us. God does not arbitrarily withhold from his people an understanding of his will, but

he does expect them to obey even though in his wisdom he does not always give the reason. The One in whom we live and move and have our being, and whose thoughts are as high above ours as the heavens are higher than the earth, has the right to expect our obedience, even though many times it must of necessity be a blind obedience. We should love to obey him under these conditions. The poet has well said:

I would rather walk in the dark with God,
Than go alone in the light,
I would rather walk by faith with him,
Than go alone by sight.—*Hymns of Dawn*

This was the opportunity that confronted Eve, and later Adam. There was nothing wrong with the forbidden tree—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But the reason God had forbidden it was withheld. Consequently, the question of whether they would obey or disobey was a test of faith, a test of their confidence in their Creator. How appropriate that such a test should be placed upon them! All the inanimate creations of God obey him, not by chance, but by force. The sun rises and sets in obedience to a split-second timetable arranged by the Creator. Should not his intelligent creations also obey him?

But, coupled with an intelligence that reflected many of the principles by which the Creator himself is governed, man was given a free will. A part of the image of God in man was his freedom of choice. God desired his obedience, but only if man, because of his trust in his Creator, desired to obey. If such an objective could not be attained, the man would have to be destroyed—‘In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.’

EVE WAS DECEIVED

Eve yielded to the temptation. She offered the fruit of the forbidden tree to Adam, and he also partook. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." (I Tim. 2:14) Eve's deception was apparently in believing the serpent's assurance that death would not result from her disobedience—"Ye shall not surely die." (Gen. 3:4) Adam was not deceived by this falsehood, nevertheless he joined his wife in the transgression.

One of the motives, which induced Eve to disobey her Creator, is stated in verse six. It was a tree to be desired because it would make one wise. There is nothing wrong with this motive, not if the wisdom one craves is along right lines, and there is nothing in the record to indicate that Eve desired a knowledge of sinful things. Had she exercised proper trust in her Maker, she would have reasoned that in his own due time, and under circumstances which would be best for her, she would be given wisdom. But she lacked such faith.

Being deceived into believing that the threatened penalty of death would not be exacted, Eve no doubt felt that she had nothing to lose, and probably much to gain, by disobedience. In this another important viewpoint is revealed, that true obedience to God must spring from the heart, motivated by a sincere desire to please him. But Eve was willing to disobey since, as she was deceived into believing, she would not be punished.

Nothing is said to reveal Adam's motive for joining his wife in disobedience. The record states merely that Eve "gave also unto her husband with

her; and he did eat.” (vs. 6) It has been conjectured—and we believe reasonably so—that Adam, realizing he would lose his wife in death because of her disobedience, decided that he did not want to live without her, so deliberately and willfully partook of the forbidden fruit, knowing full well what the consequences would be.

Adam also revealed a lack of faith and confidence in God. He should have known that if he obeyed, especially under such trying circumstances, the LORD would surely compensate him, and that he would not be left permanently alone. But he did not take this viewpoint. The tragic fact that his wife must die took possession of his reasoning and, in reckless abandon, he joined her in transgressing the Divine law. ■

My One Talent

In a napkin smooth and white, hidden from all mortal sight, my one talent lies tonight.

Mine to hoard, or mine to use, mine to keep, or mine to lose; may I not do what I choose?

Ah! the gift was only lent, with the Giver's known intent, that it should be wisely spent.

And I know He will demand every farthing at my hand, when I in His presence stand.

What will be my grief and shame when I hear my humble name, and cannot repay His claim!

Lord, O teach me what to do! I would faithful be and true; still the sacred trust renew.

Help me, ere too late it be, something now to do for thee; thou who hast done all for me!

—Poems of Dawn

The Resurrection of the Dead

***“The ransomed
of the LORD shall
return, and come to
Zion with songs and
everlasting joy upon
their heads: they
shall obtain joy and
gladness, and sorrow
and sighing shall
flee away.”
—Isaiah 35:10***

THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY

book in the world which holds out a hope that those who have died will be raised to life again, or that there will be a resurrection of the dead. Many religions do not acknowledge that anyone is dead. There is no death, they insist; so naturally from their standpoint there

could be no resurrection of the dead. But the Apostle Paul does not agree with this viewpoint. He wrote, “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”—I Cor. 15:17-19

God’s plan to restore the dead to life is emphasized throughout the Old Testament as well as the New. In his defense before Felix, Paul referred to his “hope toward God,” (Continued on page 38)

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(Continued from page 31) which the Jewish religious leaders of his day “also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”—Acts. 24:15

The Apostle Peter referred to this hope of a resurrection, using the word “restitution,” saying there would be “times of restitution of all things,” and then added, “which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:19-21) As one of his proof texts, Peter cites the promise God made to Abraham to bless all the families of the earth. (vs. 25) Then, in the beginning of the next chapter, we are told that the “captain [ruler, *Marginal Translation*] of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.”—chap. 4:1,2

This was exactly what Peter meant by ‘times of restitution of all things.’ So from his testimony we know that the doctrine of the resurrection is clearly set forth by the prophets of the Old Testament. True, the word resurrection is not used in the Old Testament, but the hope of a restoration to life which it describes is set forth in many and various ways. Jesus told the Sadducees that the fact of a resurrection is set forth in the LORD’s word to Moses at the burning bush, saying that he was “the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but the living: for all live unto him.”—Luke 20:37,38

This text is often mistakenly used to prove that the dead are not actually dead. But this is not the argument that Jesus presents. Abraham, Isaac,

and Jacob were dead, but because God intended to raise them from the dead they were not forever out of existence. All live unto God, Jesus said, and the reason is that God has promised to raise all from the dead. Because of this, he looks upon them as being merely asleep, from which there will be an awakening.

A “RETURNING”

One of the ways by which the idea of resurrection is set forth in the Old Testament is by the use of the word returning. Thus for example, in our text, the promise is that ‘the ransomed of the LORD shall return.’ In the New Testament the Apostle Paul informs us that it is God’s will that all men shall be “saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” The great Truth referred to is that Jesus gave himself a “ransom for all.” It is this that is to be made known to all “in due time.”—I Tim. 2:3-6

Since Jesus gave himself a ‘ransom for all,’ it means that the ransomed of the LORD who are to return are all mankind, all who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Their returning is described by Paul in the text just quoted as being ‘saved’ in order that they may have the truth of the ransom “testified” to them. They cannot acquire a knowledge of the Truth while in the sleep of death.

CHILDREN TO RETURN

Jeremiah assures us that children are to return from death, described in this passage as a returning from “the land of the enemy.” We quote, “Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah,

lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border.”—Jer. 31:15-17

It is interesting to note in this passage how Jeremiah emphasizes the fact that it is the LORD who is promising that children ‘shall come again from the land of the enemy.’ No human being could make such a promise and be able to fulfill it. Only by Divine power can the dead be restored to life, and in this wonderful promise God assures us of his intention to use his power for this purpose. In the New Testament this promise is referred to and applied to the children who were killed by King Herod in his attempt to destroy the newborn king, Christ Jesus; but we may well apply it to all children who have been struck down by the grim reaper, Death.

ALL TO “RETURN”

In Psalm 90, verse 3, the prayer of Moses also expresses the hope of resurrection. Addressing the LORD he says, “Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.” It was in the Garden of Eden, and because of original sin, that the LORD turned man to destruction. To Adam he said, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Gen. 3:19) Because Adam’s children were born after he sinned, they were imperfect and

partook of the death penalty. Paul wrote, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”—Rom. 5:12

Paul expresses a similar thought in I Corinthians 15, verse 22, which reads, “As in Adam all die.” In this text the apostle adds, “even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Thus he explains the manner in which the LORD will say, ‘Return, ye children of men.’ Moses simply states that the LORD turned man to destruction, and will later restore him to life, while Paul explains that death came through Adam, and that life will come through Christ.

JOB’S HOPE OF RESURRECTION

The Prophet Job is one of the outstanding characters of the Old Testament. He was permitted to pass through much suffering, mentally and physically. It reached the point where he could endure no more, so he asked the LORD to let him die. “O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, . . . until thy wrath be past,” he prayed. Having asked God to let him die, he then asked, “If a man die, shall he live again?”—Job 14:13,14

Job was simply inquiring as to what his status would be in the event the LORD answered his prayer and allowed him to die. Speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Job replied to his own question, saying, “All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. [Then] thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.” (vss. 14,15) The hope expressed by Job that the LORD would ‘call’ him forth from death is in keeping

with the assurance given us by Jesus that “all” in death will hear his “voice” and “shall come forth.”—John 5:28,29

Earlier in his experience Job expressed the opinion that it would have been better for him had he died in infancy. He explains that in this event he would have “lain still and been quiet.” “I should have slept,” he continued, and “been at rest.” He also indicates that all classes of the human race—kings, counselors, great, small, the wicked and the weary—all rest together in death. “There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.”—Job 3:11-19

Job refers to the dead as being ‘prisoners’—held captive in death. In a reference to the “kings of the earth upon the earth” who lose their lives in the great Armageddon struggle at this end of the age, the Prophet Isaiah said, “They shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison [of death], and after many days shall they be visited.” (Isa. 24:21,22) The ‘visiting’ of these suggests their awakening from the sleep of death.

RELEASED FROM CAPTIVITY

There are many Old Testament references to the dead being prisoners, or in captivity, as for example Isaiah 42, verse 7. But we are assured that these captives shall be released. Probably such promises prompted Paul to affirm that there would be a resurrection of the dead, including the “unjust.” (Acts 24:15) “I [will] bring again the captivity of Moab in

the latter days,” the LORD assures us through the Prophet Jeremiah. (Jer. 48:47) The Moabites were a wicked people, yet they will be released from their captivity in death.

The LORD said that this would occur in the ‘latter days.’ When Jesus said to Martha, “Thy brother shall rise again,” she replied, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” (John 11:23,24) From this we learn that the ‘last day,’ or latter days, is the time of the general resurrection. This reaffirms the fact that bringing ‘again the captivity of Moab in the latter days’ will, in reality, be their resurrection from death.

The ancient Ammonites were also a wicked people, yet the LORD’s promise is, “I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon.”—Jer. 49:6

The wicked Elamites are also promised an awakening from death. God’s promise concerning them is, “It shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam.”—Jer. 49:39

In Ezekiel 16, verse 53, we are assured that the Sodomites, the Samaritans, and the Israelites are to be resurrected. God’s promise is, “When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them.”

ORDER OF THE RESURRECTION

The hope of the resurrection is clearly set forth in both the Old and New Testaments, but it is only in the New Testament that we are furnished with some of the details concerning its order and the nature of the released prisoners of death. We

are indebted to Paul for much of this information, as he outlines it in the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians. After declaring that as 'in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,' he explains, "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."—vss. 22,23

In verse twenty of this chapter, Paul speaks of Christ as being the "firstfruits of them that slept." However, his footstep followers are counted in with him as part of the 'firstfruits.' In James 1:18 and Revelation 14:4 the true church is referred to as "a kind of firstfruits [unto God] of his creatures." When Paul, in describing the order of the resurrection, says, 'Christ the firstfruits,' the body members of Christ are included.

From two standpoints these, together with Jesus, are the firstfruits of the resurrection. In Revelation they are described as participating in the "first resurrection" (chap. 20:5), and from this standpoint are properly called the firstfruits. But there is another and perhaps more significant thought attached to the term firstfruits than merely being first. The word stems from the LORD's arrangement with the people of typical Israel to present the firstfruits of their harvests to him as an offering, or sacrifice.

Exodus 34, verse 26, speaks of the "first of the firstfruits." This might well point forward to the offering of Jesus, who thus would be the 'first of the firstfruits' to be raised from the dead, having given his life for the sins of the world. Jesus' followers also offer themselves in sacrifice. They follow in his footsteps, and are "planted together in

the likeness of his death,” and will therefore be “in the likeness of his resurrection” as the remaining members of the firstfruits class.—Rom. 6:5

In Revelation, where these are shown to be raised in the ‘first resurrection,’ they are also pictured as a sacrificing class—“beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.” (chap. 20:4) Not many of these have been literally ‘beheaded.’ All who participate in the first resurrection to live and reign with Christ, are symbolically beheaded. The thought is of renouncing one’s own will and way, and accepting the headship of Christ, thus becoming a part of his mystical body.—I Cor. 12:12-14

Thus the term Christ in the larger sense embraces both Jesus and his church, and Paul explains that in the resurrection Jesus is the first to be raised from the dead; then his body members, the remainder of the firstfruits class. But this is only the beginning of the resurrection! Paul explains that ‘afterward’ there will be those who become Christ’s during his presence—his presence, that is in the kingdom, which is to last for a thousand years.

It is this afterward resurrection that so many have failed to see in the Word of God, and the *King James Translation* somewhat obscures the thought. It reads, ‘Afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.’ It is the Greek word *parousia* which is here translated ‘coming.’ This word means ‘presence,’ and the reference is to the entire thousand years of Christ’s presence as the reigning king of earth. This is shown by the next three verses, which read, “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have

put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”—I Cor. 15:24-26

Those who are, or become, Christ’s during his presence will be those of the world of mankind who, during his reign, will be awakened from the sleep of death and accept the opportunity then given of believing on him and obeying the laws of his kingdom. This also is shown in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, where we are informed that during the thousand years of Christ’s reign, when his church, brought forth in the first resurrection will be reigning with him, “the dead, small and great” will stand before God, being enlightened concerning the Divine will and purpose for them by the “books” which then will be opened. It will be then that “death and hell” will deliver up the dead that are in them.—vss. 11-13

WHAT KIND OF BODIES

The question naturally arises as to what people will be like in the resurrection. This has been an age-old question, and Paul brings it into his treatise on the subject—“Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?” Paul’s answer to this question reads, “Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened [made alive], except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.”—I Cor. 15:35-38

Even in Paul's day the erroneous theory that there is no death was prevalent, to the extent that he thought it necessary to emphasize that there could be no resurrection of the dead if no one is dead—'That which thou sowest [in death], is not quickened, except it die.' Then he explains that the body which is sown in death will not be quickened in the resurrection. That which is resurrected he describes as 'bare grain.' He explains that each bare grain will be given a body in the resurrection as it pleases the LORD—to every seed his own [appropriate] body.'

In verse forty Paul explains that "there are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial"—or spiritual and earthly bodies. Thus, when he says that each bare grain will be given its own appropriate body, he simply means that in the resurrection some will have spiritual bodies and some will have earthly bodies, the determining factor being what sort of bare grain is sown in death.

What, then, is the bare grain that is sown? Obviously Paul's reference is to the mind, the personality, which now finds expression through the body organism, particularly the brain. When the body dies this mind, or personality, is left unclothed, bare. It ceases to exist except as the LORD is able to, and will, restore it in the resurrection by giving it an appropriate body through which to find expression.

As Paul explains later in this wonderful chapter on the resurrection that Adam the father of the human race, was of the "earth, earthy." (vs. 47) The earth was his home, and it was natural that his mind and his affections should be centered in the good earthly blessings with which he

was surrounded. His entire progeny has likewise been of the 'earth, earthy.' The natural desires of all mankind are for the good things of this earth. Their affections are centered upon them, and they would be out of place in any other environment.

With the followers of Jesus, however, a change takes place. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, they are begotten to a new and spiritual hope. Jesus promised his disciples that he would prepare a "place" for them, and that they would be with him in that place. (John 14:2) While our finite minds cannot understand the details of a spiritual existence, the Scriptures encourage us to set our "affection on things above," "where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."—Col. 3:1,2

The Apostle John wrote, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:2) Paul wrote, "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." (Heb. 3:1) He also wrote of his own determination to attain this great prize of the heavenly calling, saying, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:14) Those who have laid hold upon this heavenly hope are described by Paul as New Creatures.—II Cor. 5:17

So it is that from the time we accept Jesus and devote ourselves to following in his steps of sacrifice, a transformation of mind begins. Paul expresses it, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Rom. 12:2) Although still in the flesh, and surrounded by earthly things, we have been given a hope of a heavenly reward in the resurrection; so we continue to set our affections on

things above. This new mind continues to develop, becoming more and more the dominant influence in our lives.

This new, spiritual mind is pre-acclimated to heavenly things under the lifelong influences of the exceeding great and precious promises of God, and is the bare grain that is sown in death. While here below, this new mind can but imperfectly express itself, being fettered by natural desires of the flesh, and a corrupt, sin-cursed and dying flesh. But being sown in this corrupt body, it, the bare grain, the new spiritual mind, is raised in a glorious spiritual body suitable to its every need. Thus will be the resurrection of the firstfruits class. Paul explains:

“So also is THE resurrection of THE dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”—I Cor. 15:42-44

This is the resurrection hope of the firstfruits class. It is a glorious, heavenly hope. But, as Paul emphasizes, in the resurrection ‘there is a natural body’ as well as ‘a spiritual body.’ Only those, however, who undergo a transformation of mind and character through the influence of the heavenly promises of the Bible, will participate in the spiritual resurrection. Only these would be at home amidst spiritual surroundings.

Every seed, or bare grain, will be given its own appropriate body; so those who have not been setting their affections on things above, but on the

things of earth, will be restored to life as human beings, just as they were before. These will be awakened from death during the millennium, and if they obey the laws of Christ's kingdom, will be restored to full perfection of human nature as Adam enjoyed it before he transgressed the Divine command.

WHEN—THEN

In verse fifty-four Paul again sets forth the Divine order of the resurrection. Having told us in verse twenty-three of the firstfruits of the resurrection, and then of the afterward awakening of those who will become Christ's during his presence, he now confirms this, saying, "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."—I Cor. 15:54

The terms 'when,' 'shall have,' and 'then' are most significant in this text—"When this mortal shall have put on immortality." This indicates the first resurrection to be complete, the firstfruits class all raised from death and united with their Lord and Head in the heavenly realm. 'Then,' that is, afterward, after 'this mortal shall have put on immortality,' 'shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.'

This saying is contained in one of the outstanding Old Testament promises of the kingdom, and the blessings it will make available for all mankind. It is one of the restitution promises which God caused his prophets to record. The promise describes the kingdom of Christ as a "mountain" in which the LORD of hosts will make unto all

people a “feast of fat things.” It is in this kingdom, the prophet affirms, that the LORD will “swallow up death in victory,” and will “wipe away tears from off all faces.”—Isa. 25:6-9

It is a glorious promise of restitution for the sin-cursed and dying race. For death to be swallowed up in victory means that those who are dead must be restored to life. So, during the thousand years of the kingdom the dead will continue to come forth from death, until even Adam himself will be awakened, as well as the remainder of the unjust—the Sodomites, the Moabites, the Elamites, and the Ammonites. Yes, all the ransomed of the LORD shall return.

They will not return to be consigned to the “second death,” unless they then prove themselves incorrigible sinners. (Rev. 20:14) They will not be awakened from death to be sent to eternal torture. As our text declares, they shall ‘return, . . . with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.’ ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

MAY 6—“As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”—Romans 8:14 (Z. '03-173 Hymn 91)

MAY 13—“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”—I Samuel 15:22 (Z. '03-218,219 Hymn 275A)

MAY 20—“A peculiar people, zealous of good works.”—Titus 2:14 (Z. '97-95 Hymn 322)

MAY 27—“In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”—Philippians 2:3 (Z. '97-296 Hymn 229)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

QUESTION: Dear Dawn: What did Jesus mean when he said to his disciples, “There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom?”—Matthew 16:28

ANSWER: Dear Friend: These words of the Master are found in the last verse of Matthew, chapter 16. The first verse of the next chapter reads, “After six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.” The account goes on to explain further details of the transfiguration vision, which was a vision of the kingdom.

Writing about this vision later, Peter explained, “We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”—II Pet. 1:16-18

Jesus’ return to earth is for the purpose of establishing his kingdom. This is why Peter speaks of the ‘power and coming [Greek, presence] of our Lord Jesus Christ,’ and his ‘majesty.’ It seems clear that Peter understood what he saw to be a foreshadowing of the kingdom, and realized that it fulfilled Jesus’ statement concerning some of them who would not taste death until they saw the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. ■

General Convention Bulletin

July 17-22, 2004—Orange, California

THE 2004 GENERAL CONVENTION will be upon us in less than three months. If you haven't yet made plans to attend, now is the time to do so. We encourage as many as are able to join in the blessings of this annual gathering of the Lord's people. The convention will be held on the campus of Chapman University in Orange, California. Rooms sharing a bathroom with one other room are available. Additionally, rooms with private bathrooms are available at a somewhat higher price.

The convention program appears in this issue of *The Dawn*, on the pages following the General Convention Registration form. In addition to the discourses, panel discussions, and testimony meetings, there will be two assigned topics, one titled "The History of Baptism," and the other, "Determining the Lord's Will." There will also be a two-person symposium on the important subject of "Prayer: in the Old Testament—in the New Testament." These should all prove to be very informative and helpful presentations. A public meeting will be held presenting a very timely subject for this election year, "Who is God's Candidate?"

The cost of room and meals for those five years old or younger will be paid by the convention. Once again 50% of the cost of those from six through seventeen will be refunded if the young person

attends at least 75% of the studies for his or her age group. This subsidy does not cover meals paid for at the door.

The Orange County Airport (code SNA-Santa Ana) is the closest to Chapman University. Local brethren will provide frequent shuttle service between that airport and the college as needed. Those who fly into other airports might have a longer wait before a commercial service, paid for by the convention treasury, takes them to Chapman.

Ages	18 & up	13-17**	6-12**
Breakfast	\$7.00	\$6.00	\$5.00
Lunch	8.00	7.00	6.00
Dinner	10.00	9.00	8.00
Total, three meals	\$25.00	\$22.00	\$19.00
Lodging (per night)			
dbl occ (private bath)	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00
dbl occ (shared bath)	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$35.00
single occ (private bath)	\$70.00	n/a	n/a
single occ (shared bath)	\$60.00	n/a	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals			
dbl occ (private bath)	\$345*	\$325*	\$310*
dbl occ (shared bath)	\$259*	\$275*	\$260*
single occ (private bath)	\$495*	n/a	n/a
single occ (shared bath)	\$395*	n/a	n/a
*Deduct \$25 if no breakfasts.			
**50% 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, 2004				
Saturday, 17th				
Sunday, 18th				
Monday, 19th				
Tuesday, 20th				
Wednesday, 21st				
Thursday, 22nd				
Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals <input type="checkbox"/> or 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts) <input type="checkbox"/> (Dinner Friday, July 16 is at additional cost)				
Check: <input type="checkbox"/> private bath or <input type="checkbox"/> shared bath <input type="checkbox"/> double occupancy <input type="checkbox"/> single occupancy				
Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)				
Address:				

Saturday, July 17

Chairman: Michael Nekora, *Los Angeles CA*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Welcome Address

Wade Austin
Los Angeles CA

10:45 Intermission

11:15 Discourse

Ernie Kuenzli
Orlando FL

12:00 Close of Morning Session

2:00 Discourse

Robert Gorecki
New York NY

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Discourse

Michael Brann
Seattle WA

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse

Adam Kopczyk
Australia

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:15 Special Music

7:30 **Public Meeting:**
“Who is God’s Candidate?”

Len Griebs
Delaware Valley PA

Sunday, July 18

Chairman: Robert Carnegie, *Los Angeles CA*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Discourse Regis Liberda
France

10:30 Intermission

11:15 **Theme Discourse—Luke 21:28**

“When these things are beginning to
occur . . . your deliverance is drawing
near.” Leo Post, *New York NY*

12:00 Close of Morning Session

2:00 Praise and Testimony David Bruce
Portland OR

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Discourse Robert Goodman
Orlando FL

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse Carlton Chandler
Portland OR

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:00 **Panel Discussion:**

Jesus in the Four Gospels

Moderator: Carl Hagensick, *Chicago IL*

Panelists: Bill Dutka, *Detroit MI*

Dariusz Grudzien, *Portland OR*

8:00 Vesper Service

8:30 Songs in the Night

Monday, July 19

Chairman: Homer Montague, *Highland Park NY*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Discourse
Tim Thomassen
Albuquerque NM

10:30 Intermission

11:15 **“The History of Baptism”**
Richard Suraci
New Haven CT

12:00 Close of Morning Session

2:00 Discourse
George Tabac
Chicago IL

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Praise and Testimony
Douglas Rawson
San Francisco CA

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse
Ray Luke
Jersey City NJ

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:00 **“Israel’s Role in the Kingdom”**
Major: Jim Parkinson
San Gabriel Valley CA
Minor: George Passios
New York NY

(Short presentations followed by discussion)

8:00 Songs in the Night

8:15 Elders’ Meeting

Tuesday, July 20

Chairman: Byron Keith, *Seattle WA*

(Morning session at an off-site facility)

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 **Baptismal Discourse**

Michael J. Balko

Orlando FL

Immerser:

Norm Zendler

Detroit MI

12:00 Close of Morning Session

2:00 Praise and Testimony

Randy Shahan

New York NY

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Discourse

Mark Davis

Los Angeles CA

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse

Sid Jones

Dawn Pilgrim

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

Wednesday, July 21

Chairman: Arbur Fernets, *Vernon BC*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Convention Business Meeting

Walter Blicharz
Detroit MI

10:30 Short Recess

10:45 Convention Business Continues

12:00 Close of Morning Session

2:00 Discourse

Paul Mali
Groton CT

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Praise and Testimony

Robert Wilson
Fresno CA

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse

Robert Johnson
Spokane WA

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:00 **“Determining the Lord’s Will”**

Stephen Jeuck
Orlando FL

7:45 Vesper Service

8:15 Songs in the Night

Thursday, July 22

Chairman: Allan Allers, *Boise ID*

- 9:30 Morning Devotions
- 9:45 Praise and Testimony Frank Nemesh
Detroit MI
- 10:30 Intermission
- 11:00 **Prayer in the . . .**
Old Testament Mike Balko
Dawn Pilgrim
New Testament Edmund Blicharz
Orlando FL
- 12:00 Close of Morning Session
- 2:00 Discourse Ken Fernets
The Dawn
- 2:45 Intermission
- 3:15 Discourse Jonathon Freer
Sacramento CA
- 4:00 Intermission
- 4:30 Discourse Erwin Kalinski
Chicago IL
- 5:15 Close of Afternoon Session
- 7:00 Closing Discourse David Rice
San Diego CA
- 7:45 Melodies of Praise
- 8:30 Love Feast

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The speakers listed below are routed through the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: The Dawn Pilgrim Department, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.

S. Jones

England	May 10-16
France	17-25
Germany	26-31

The speakers listed below, in cooperation with the Dawn, are invited by individual classes, or their services have been arranged by their home classes:

A. Allers

Buffalo, NY	May 15,16
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L. Post

Agawam, MA	May 15,16
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M. J. Balko

Louisville, AL	May 30
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R. Shahan

West Newton, PA	May 2
Buffalo, NY	15,16

S. Jeuck

St. Petersburg, FL	May 9
Los Angeles, CA	May 28-31

Tom Trzeciak

West Newton	May 2
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G. Passios

Buffalo, NY	May 15,16
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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 Wanda Hrechuk, Winnipeg, Canada—December 24.

Brother Joe Wazny, Winnipeg, Canada—January 4. Age, 94

Sister Alma Obenland, Cleveland, OH—March 5. Age, 93

Brother Edward Bielecki, Detroit, MI—March 13. Age, 89

Brother Arthur Cook, Chicago, IL—March 15. Age, 88

Sister Jackie Lamel, Los Angeles, CA—March 19. Age, 75

Brother Nick Melnyk, Wakaw, SK, Canada—March 21.

Age, 78

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.

HARTFORD CONVENTION, May 1,2—Tastebud Banquet Facility, 1450 Main Street, East Hartford, CT. Contact Mrs. Daniel Slivinsky. Phone: (860) 289-0116

WEST NEWTON CONVENTION, May 2—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136. Contact John Krasonic, Sr., 1106 State Route 136, Belle Vernon, PA 15012. Phone: (724) 872-6215

CHENNAI, SOUTH INDIA 83rd ANNUAL GENERAL CONVENTION, May 7,8,9—Balaji Sree Mahal, Anna Nagar. Contact J. Udhaya Kumar, Jehovah Shalom, 4/2 Rangappa Street, Ayanavaram, Chennai, South India. Phone: (044) 26449753

AGAWAM CONVENTION, May 15,16—Radisson Hotel, 1 Bright Meadow Blvd., Enfield CT, (860) 741-2210. Contact Sophie Zielinski, 21 Silver Street, Agawam, MA 01001. Phone: (413) 786-1216

BUFFALO CONVENTION, May 15,16—Holiday Inn, Hamburg, NY. Contact Ruth Morin, 3858 Hobday Road, Bliss, NY 14024. Phone: (585) 322-7459

LOS ANGELES MEMORIAL DAY CONVENTION, May 28,29,30,31—Chapman University, Orange CA. Contact Peter Knapp, Secretary. Phone: (562) 425-2407

CHICAGO CONVENTION, May 29,30,31—Elk Grove High School, 500 W. Elk Grove Blvd., Elk Grove Village, IL 60007. Contact Roberta Tabac, 4N233 Noris Avenue, West Chicago, IL 60185. Phone: (630) 231-1874

WATERBURY CONVENTION, June 5,6—Saturday held in Morris, CT. Sunday at the Litchfield Firehouse in Litchfield, CT. For information, contact Mrs. Anthony Tsimonis, Waterbury Bible Students, P. O. Box 1494, Waterbury, CT 06721.

PORTLAND CONVENTION, June 18,19,20—Ramada Inn, 6221 NE 82nd Avenue. Contact Jerry Black, 13012 SE Oatfield Road, Milwaukee, OR 97222. Phone: (503) 659-6930

ALLENTOWN CONVENTION, June 19,20—East Stroudsburg University, Beers Lecture Hall, East Stroudsburg, PA. Contact Sylvia Yanolko, 820 St. Paul Street, Whitehall, PA 18052.

PRINCE ALBERT/SASKATOON CONVENTION, July 2,3,4—Siwak Farm. Contact Benjamin Siwak, RR#1, Prince Albert, SK. Phone: (306) 763-3170

OKANAGAN CONVENTION, July 9,10,11—Sandman Inn, 4201 32nd Street, Vernon, BC. Phone: (250) 542-4325. Contact Bernice Blencowe. Phone: (250) 545-0780

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 17-22—Chapman University, One University Drive, Orange, CA. Contact Michael Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Phone: (310) 454-5248 (See Pages 53-61 for further information)

WETASKIWIN CONVENTION, August 6,7,8—Way-side Inn. Phone: (877) 358-6177. Mention Bible Students for special rate. Contact Janice Neumeier, Box 428, Fox Creek, AB, Canada T0H 1P0. Phone: (780) 622-3809

BIBLE STUDENTS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 8-13—Polanica Zdroj, Poland. Contact Tom Machacek, 7222 E. 106th Avenue, Crown Point, IN 46307. Phone: (219) 662-8107