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A Better “Day of Atonement”

“On the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement, . . . to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God.”
—Leviticus 23:27,28

ON OCTOBER 3-4, 2014, from sundown to sundown, Jews throughout the world will celebrate Yom Kippur, or Day of Atonement, their holiest day of the year. The central themes of Yom Kippur are atonement and repentance. This holy day is traditionally observed by Jewish people with fasting and intense prayer, often spending most of the day in synagogue services. As noted in our opening text, Israel’s Day of Atonement—Yom Kippur—is celebrated each year on the tenth day of the seventh month, called Tishrei. Although Tishrei is the seventh month of the Jews’ religious calendar, it is considered the first month of their civil year, and Rosh Hashanah—the first day of Tishrei—is the Jewish New Year. Yom Kippur completes the annual ten-day period known in Judaism as the “High Holy Days” that commence with Rosh Hashanah.

Israel's Day of Atonement was established by God as part of the Law given to them through his servant Moses at Mount Sinai. On this day, certain offerings and sacrifices were to be made which, if done according to God's instructions, he counted as providing atonement for their sins. By so doing, God reckoned Israel acceptable before him, and he could continue to deal with them as a chosen, covenant people, for the ensuing year.

In reality, the benefits of this special day to Israel were limited. It had to be repeated every year because the nation continued to sin and fall short of keeping its covenant. It failed to provide life to the people because, despite their most valiant efforts, each individual still sinned; and the Scriptures tell us that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4) Israel's Day of Atonement, however, was used by God to illustrate and point forward to a "better" arrangement, one by which not only Jews, but also all mankind, would receive atonement for sin which would be eternally efficacious. It is this better "Atonement" which is the subject of the following pages.

BLOOD AND ATONEMENT

Blood is used in the Bible as a symbol of life, particularly life poured out as an atonement for sin. The Scriptures say, "The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."—Lev. 17:11

God's arrangement with typical Israel, through the priesthood and Tabernacle services, called for

much shedding of blood. While a degree of blessing accrued to the Israelites from these sacrifices, their main purpose was to point forward to Jesus' sacrifice. He shed his blood—poured out his human life—to make an atonement for all mankind. By so doing, he “reconciled all things unto himself, . . . whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven”—that is, for mankind as well as for those who are partakers of the “heavenly calling.”—Col. 1:20; Heb. 3:1

A similar thought to atonement is expressed by the word “propitiation,” both meaning to expiate, or make satisfaction. Paul, speaking of Jesus, says, “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” (Rom. 3:25) In I John 2:2, we read, “He [Jesus] is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

God's great love made provision for atonement through the blood of Christ. The need for this arose when Adam transgressed the divine law and brought the penalty of death upon himself and his progeny. Not until satisfaction, or propitiation, had been made for his sin could he, or any of his condemned race, be released from the penalty of death. Atonement for sin provided through the blood of Christ, therefore, leads to life for those who accept this gift of God's grace.

TYPICAL ATONEMENT

In the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, where the typical work of sacrifice is described, the word atonement appears seventy-three times. In the

sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, the yearly Atonement Day and its sacrifices are recounted. The nation of Israel received a measure of blessing from these annual services, but they did not provide satisfaction for the sin and its penalty, death, which they inherited from father Adam, so they remained under Adamic condemnation and continued to die.

Paul explains this matter, “The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.” (Heb. 10:1) Only by being made perfect, free from Adamic condemnation, can one escape the penalty of death. The yearly Atonement Day sacrifices offered by Israel’s typical priesthood did not result in perfection to those who sought benefit from them.

“The law made nothing perfect,” Paul writes, “but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.” (chap. 7:19) This “better hope” is based upon the atoning value of the blood of Christ. His blood is efficacious to assure perfection, and therefore life. This is because his life, which he poured out, and as symbolized by his shed blood, was an exact equivalent of the perfect life of Adam—the life that he forfeited when he sinned against his Creator. Paul emphasizes this basic aspect of the atoning work of Christ by the use of the word “ransom,” saying that the man Christ Jesus gave himself “a ransom for all.”—I Tim. 2:3-6

RECEIVED BY FAITH

God’s love provided atonement for sin through Christ, which in turn, opens the way to life. However,

the mere fact that Jesus died as the Redeemer and Savior of the world does not in itself give life to Adam and his race, for whom the sacrifice was made. Each one of the condemned race who receives life through this provision must believe therein, and individually accept the gift. John 3:16 makes this clear, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Jesus again said, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [Greek: judgment]; but is passed from death unto life." (chap. 5:24) This is a most comprehensive statement, and can be properly understood only in the light of Jesus' further explanation. In verse 25, he reminds us of the hope of the resurrection, saying, "The hour is coming . . . when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."

After explaining that he had been given authority to execute judgment, and that it had been given him to have life in himself (vss. 26,27), Jesus again speaks of the resurrection. He states that those who have "done good"—those faithful to God in all ages—shall come forth unto "the resurrection of life." Those who have "done evil"—all others, still more or less entangled in sin—shall come forth unto a resurrection of judgment. (vss. 28,29, *Revised Standard Version*) As explained in verse 24, the faithful believers do not enter into this judgment.

When Jesus said, "He that heareth my word, . . . hath everlasting life," it is clear he meant that they have it upon the basis of faith. This means that God no longer looks upon them as sinners under

condemnation to death, but as perfect in the righteousness of Christ, and having a right to live. However, from the human standpoint, these seem to die like everyone else or, as the thought is expressed in Psalm 82:7, they “die like men.” Actually, as is further explained in this prophecy of the church’s part in the plan of God, they “fall [in death] like one of the princes.”

The Hebrew word here translated “princes” literally means head, and is used in the Old Testament to describe captains and generals in armies, or chief persons in any association. Its literal meaning lends itself to the fact that, in this particular text, the princes referred to are the heads of the human race—Adam, who fell, and Jesus, who will be the head of the regenerated race.

The first prince died as a condemned sinner. The second prince died sacrificially on behalf of the first and his race. He died to provide a way for mankind to come out from under the penalty for sin, which was death. The prophecy states that the “children of the most High” (vs. 6), to whom these words are addressed, seem from the human standpoint to “die like men,” yet actually they “fall like one of the princes.”

They do not fall like prince Adam, because he was under the sentence of death. Through their faith acceptance of the atoning merit of Christ’s blood, these “children” have passed from death unto life, and are no longer under condemnation. They die, therefore, as prince Jesus died—that is, sacrificially. Their life is not taken away from them because of sin. Rather, they lay it down by denying themselves, taking up their cross, and following

Jesus into death. They “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth” and thereby are led into death, even as he was “brought as a lamb to the slaughter.”—Rev. 14:4; Isa. 53:7

A LIVING SACRIFICE

There is much said in the New Testament to indicate that the footstep followers of Jesus are co-sacrificers with him. Paul wrote, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” (Rom. 12:1) It is a “holy” sacrifice, and therefore “acceptable” to God. It is holy because faith in the atoning blood of Christ results in perfection—not actual, but reckoned.

In Romans 6:3-11, Paul reasons the matter out for us in detail, and shows why we are given the privilege of laying down our lives in acceptable sacrifice to God. First, he speaks of it as a baptism, or burial, into Christ’s death—a sacrificial death. He says we are “buried with him by baptism into death.” Paul also states that we have been “planted together in the likeness of his death”—that is, dying like one of the princes.

Paul further explains in verses 6 and 7 that our “old man is crucified with him [Christ], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.” The *Marginal Translation* more correctly says, “justified from sin.” These bodies that are “justified from sin” are not, therefore, the “body of sin” that is destroyed, but our own justified bodies that are willingly presented to God as a “living sacrifice.”

What then, is the “body of sin” that is destroyed? *Strong’s Bible Concordance* defines the Greek word translated body as follows: “the body (as a sound whole), used in a very wide application, literally or figuratively.” The body of sin mentioned by Paul is a figurative body—those sinful aspects of character which have been blighting humanity ever since Eden. The atoning work of Jesus opens the way for the destruction of this symbolic body of sin. The death of our justified bodies as a “living sacrifice” is a further aspect of the divine arrangement whereby the evil reign of sin will be overthrown and destroyed.

Paul substantiates this in verse 10. Speaking of the death of Jesus, he says, “He died unto sin once.” In verse 11, he continues, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.” There are two key words in this statement—“likewise” and “reckon.” We are planted together in the likeness of Jesus’ death, Paul said earlier, and he now tells us that Jesus’ death was “unto sin.” Jesus was not himself a sinner, and did not die unto sin in his own body. He died unto sin as a “sin offering.”

Likewise, or in the likeness of his death, we die unto sin. With our imperfect bodies we could offer nothing to God in the way of an acceptable sacrifice. In order to be partners with Jesus in the divine plan of reconciling the world to God, we are authorized to reckon, or deem, ourselves to be so doing. We can do this because God reckons us as having passed from death unto life. If we be dead with Christ, our bodies, Paul says, are freed, or justified, from sin’s condemnation. Thus, on the authority of God’s Word, we are privileged to reckon ourselves

as participating in the “better sacrifices” of this age, and in the great sin-offering work.—Heb. 9:23

RANSOM AND SIN OFFERING

When considering God’s plan for man’s atonement, there is a distinct difference of meaning between the words ransom and sin offering. The word ransom as used in the Bible means a “corresponding price.” Thus Paul explains that the “man Christ Jesus . . . gave himself a ransom for all.” (I Tim. 2:5,6) None but a perfect man could do this, for it was the perfect man Adam who sinned and brought death condemnation upon himself and his offspring. Since the undefiled Jesus gave himself a ransom, nothing needs to be, nor can be, added thereto.

A sin offering is simply an offering, or sacrifice, for sin. A sin offering can be anything which God indicates his willingness to accept, and for any purpose which he may design. In connection with the typical Tabernacle services, bullocks and goats were offered for sins, and the Lord accepted them. By God’s design certain blessings accrued to Israel from these offerings. They did not make the offerer perfect, nor give him life. Only the perfect sin offering, combined with a corresponding price, as given by the man Christ Jesus, could do this.

The ransom, a corresponding price, was provided by Jesus, and was the first step taken to give life to Adam and his race. The world must be given a knowledge of this provision, and have an opportunity to accept it. Even after they accept it, however, they will need sympathetic help and understanding in order to bring their lives into harmony with the

righteous principles required of all those who will have the privilege of attaining everlasting life. This second step describes the work and purpose of the sin offering.

It is specifically in this connection that Jesus' footstep followers are invited to share in the work of reconciling the world to God—of bringing mankind into at-one-ment with the Creator that they might live. Paul writes, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." Prior to this statement, he said, "God, who hath reconciled us [Christ's followers] to himself by Jesus Christ," has given unto us the "ministry of reconciliation." Thus we represent Christ as his ambassadors, to give to the world the "word of reconciliation."—II Cor. 5:18-21

This cooperative plan in which the word of reconciliation is entrusted to the footstep followers of Jesus begins during the Gospel Age, while we are still in the flesh. The condition is that we must share the death baptism of Jesus. We must be planted together in the likeness of his death, and suffer with him. This suffering and sacrifice must be on behalf of Christ's body members now, but also for the benefit of the world of mankind during the next age.

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) This is a very practical matter. All those who eventually become members in the body of Christ were at one time in the world. The Truth which enlightens and draws them to the Lord is not flashed across the sky, but

ministered to them by those previously enlightened. Because darkness hateth the light, this ministry of the Gospel—the ministry of reconciliation—results in suffering.

Bitter, death-dealing persecution does not always result from bearing witness to the Truth, though it often did in the beginning of the age. Now the hatred of the light is more refined, often taking the form of ostracism and cold indifference. However, faithfulness in the ministry of the Truth will lead to weariness of the flesh. These responsibilities, if faithfully discharged, will mean a measure of mental concern for the interests of the Lord's cause. No true saint of God can ever be content to take life easy when there are brethren to be served, or when the Gospel can be proclaimed to reach those whom the Lord may be calling to become his brethren.

We have a wonderful example of this in the ministry of Paul. What a great deal of suffering was involved in his faithful ministry—stripes, imprisonments, stonings, perils in the sea and in the city, and even perils among false brethren. (II Cor. 11:23-28) All of this, he said, was for Christ's "body's sake, which is the church."

Paul's suffering was not just for the church. In his masterful argument on the necessity of the resurrection, he again speaks of his suffering, and the suffering of all the body members. Why, he asks, are we thus "baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" (I Cor. 15:29) Here again Paul is referring to our death baptism, and he says that it is on behalf of the dead—that is, for the eventual benefit of the dead world of mankind.

A SYMPATHETIC PRIESTHOOD

Jesus is the great antitypical high priest, and his footstep followers are clearly shown in the New Testament to be associated with him in the priesthood. (Heb. 3:1; I Pet. 2:5,9) One of the principal functions of Israel's priesthood was the offering of sacrifices. So the priesthood of this age, beginning with Jesus the head, and continuing with his faithful body members, also offer sacrifices—not animal sacrifices, but themselves. Jesus set the example of faithful sacrifice, even unto death, and we are baptized into death with him.

Based upon the sacrifices offered, the priests of Israel extended blessings to the people. For example, at the close of the typical sacrificial service outlined in Leviticus, chapter 9, "Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them." (vs. 22) The antitypical priesthood, composed of Jesus and his church, will, in Messiah's kingdom, be the channel of blessing to all mankind. The blessing they will offer the people will be the opportunity to gain everlasting life made available through the ransoming blood of the Redeemer.

What wisdom and love are revealed in this arrangement! The antitypical priesthood members are the Gospel Age sons of God, and we read that "it became him, for whom are all things, . . . in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. 2:10) Jesus had never been imperfect. The thought of the text is that through suffering he was trained or perfected as the "captain" of our salvation.

This training through suffering made Jesus a sympathetic High Priest. Paul wrote, "In that he

himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” “We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”—Heb. 2:18; 4:15,16

These references describe Jesus’ relationship as High Priest to his consecrated followers. The same principle will hold true in the next age in the relationship of the world of mankind to the divine priesthood, made up of Jesus and his glorified church. The entire priesthood is perfected for that high office through suffering, so that when the due time comes, the world will be dealt with sympathetically and understandingly.

ONLY JESUS’ BLOOD

It is Jesus’ blood alone, representing his life poured out, that constitutes the ransom, the corresponding price. However, as we have seen, those who suffer and die with him during the present age are reckoned as having a share in the great sin offering work based upon the ransom. The sacrifice and suffering of Christ’s followers contribute to the future blessing of the world. Because this sacrifice is a part of God’s arrangement for destroying the body of sin and releasing sin-cursed humanity from death, it is properly styled a sin offering. As Paul explains, we, like Jesus, are dying “unto [or, for] sin.”—Rom. 6:10,11

All the sin canceling merit is in the ransom. The church’s share in the sin offering lies in the sacrificial

work of this age which, as we have seen, is designed to prepare us to be the kind of priesthood that will offer the life provided by the ransom under the most favorable circumstances. Thus every painful circumstance we faithfully endure will result beneficially to the world when the life-giving blessings of the ransom are offered to them.

The entire Gospel Age is being utilized in training an understanding, sympathetic, and merciful priesthood, which will carry the healing powers of the ransom to the world. These offer themselves to die with Jesus, that they might share in ridding the world of sin and its blighting effects upon humanity. Their sacrifices and sufferings add nothing to the ransom. They are simply God's way of making the value of the ransom an eternal benefit to the dying race.

God could have perhaps miraculously revealed the truth of the ransom to all mankind, and said, "Accept this provision, or else continue to die." In his great love, however, he has provided this better way. It is a way in which members of the fallen race, touched with the feeling of the world's infirmities and needs, may sympathetically bring the provisions of the ransom to the attention of mankind, and lovingly instruct the people in the ways of life.

Truly we can say with Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!—Rom. 11:33 ■

*"Man of sorrows," what a name, for the Son of
God who came, ruined sinners to reclaim!
Hallelujah! what a Savior!*

Rejoice Anyway

Key Verse: “Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”
—Habakkuk 3:18

Selected Scripture:
Habakkuk 2:1-5;
3:17-19

HABAKKUK’S PRAYER IS recorded for us in the third chapter of his prophecy. In verses 17-19, he concludes his prayer in a most admirable way. He states that the conditions surrounding God’s people at that time were most difficult, yet he continued to rejoice in the Lord and his salvation, and

claimed God as the source of his strength.

God’s people of all ages, including the present time, do well to take note of the prophet’s attitude. At all times, in any place, and under all circumstances, we should rejoice in the Lord and give him glory and honor. Paul said, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice,” and, “Do all to the glory of God.”—Phil. 4:4; I Cor. 10:31

Habakkuk’s prayer contains much in the way of symbolic and figurative language, from which we may glean blessings by their interpretation. Yet the primary lesson he imparts to us is the very simple and plain statement of our Key Verse, “Yet I will rejoice in the LORD.” By going back to the previous chapter, we gain an insight as to why the prophet, and we likewise, can rejoice in the midst of trouble and distress.

In Habakkuk 2:1-3 we read, in part, “I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, . . . And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables. . . . For the vision is yet for an

appointed time: . . . the just shall live by his faith.” It is the “vision” of truth—God’s plan of salvation—and our understanding of it, which allows us to rejoice at all times. These verses tell us that in order to understand this vision, we must be a faithful watcher, as Habakkuk evidently was. They further illustrate to us the importance of studying God’s Word, clearly and logically, for in the Bible is laid out God’s wonderful plan of the ages. This plan, indeed, is the central theme and testimony of the Scriptures.

The symbolic testimony of the Bible, such as given by Habakkuk and other writers, is meant to be understood only by those who “hath an ear” to hear and understand. (Rev. 3:22) Jesus said, during his earthly ministry, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” (Luke 10:21) Here we are told that God reveals his plans only to those who give evidence of purity and honesty of heart—traits found in babes. Only such can truly come to appreciate the words, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.” (Matt. 13:16) The eyes of our understanding must be opened before we can appreciate the “vision” the prophet spoke of, and have the rejoicing attitude he expressed. This understanding is made possible through the begetting and indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit.

Another use of figurative language in the Scriptures which we understand as part of our “vision” of truth is found in these statements of our Lord: “I am the vine, ye are the branches,” and “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep.” (John 15:5; 10:14) Jesus speaks here of his footstep followers as “branches” and “sheep,” and himself as the “vine” and “good shepherd.” Those branches and sheep who continually abide in the vine, and under the care of the good shepherd, will inherit the kingdom of heaven. Then, according to God’s “vision,” the whole world of mankind will have the opportunity of walking in “The way of holiness” in Messiah’s kingdom.—Isa. 35:5-10 ■

Even So, My Redeemer Lives

Key Verse: *"I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."*
—Job 19:25

Selected Scripture:
Job 19:1-7,23-29

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, the words "redeem," "redeemed," "redeemer," and "redemption," are often translated from the Hebrew word *gaal*. This is also true of the word "redeemer" in our Key Verse. According to *Young's Concordance*, *gaal* means to set free by avenging or repaying. In addition to our Key Verse, other references that use this Hebrew word read as follows: "They remembered . . . the high God their redeemer." "The Redeemer shall come to Zion." (Ps. 78:35; Isa. 59:20) Man's need for a redeemer is cited when, speaking of God and his plan for man's salvation, the psalmist says, "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction."—Ps. 103:4

Redemption along the lines of temporal matters was also possible in certain circumstances under Israel's Law Covenant arrangement. For example, concerning one who became impoverished, the Scriptures state, "One of his brethren may redeem him: Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, . . . or if he be able, he may redeem himself." (Lev. 25:48,49) Although such redemption under the Law was accomplished by means of monetary payment of one kind or another, this is not the case with man's ultimate redemption from sin and death.

This important truth about God's plan for man's

redemption is noted in these words: “Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.” (Isa. 52:3) Peter confirms this thought in the New Testament, saying, “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (I Pet. 1:18,19) To this Paul adds, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”—Rom. 3:23,24

One reason for citing these scriptural references, from both the Old and New Testaments, is to guard against the false teachings of some. Many today, as in times past, misunderstand the subject of redemption and its basis, the ransom—that the world was purchased by our Lord’s death. Some cite various passages in the New Testament where the word “redemption” is translated from the Greek word which actually means “deliverance.” The inference is then made that the only meaning attached to redemption is that of deliverance. As students of the Bible, in cases such as this, where so much depends on the correct meaning of certain terms, it is necessary to understand the original Greek words and their meaning.

It is also important to look at the use of certain words by the context in which they appear. In certain instances, New Testament writers expressed the thought of redemption by specifically identifying it with the purchase of the human race, and of the corresponding price provided for that purchase. (I Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:18) In other cases, the context has to do with man’s deliverance—the end result of the purchase, or redemption. (Eph. 1:14) When properly understood, however, there is really no conflict in the usage of these words. Indeed, man’s ultimate deliverance is secured by means of the ransom, or redemptive price, already provided. Both aspects are important and necessary to the accomplishment of God’s plan. ■

Hope Complains

Key Verse: “As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me.”
—*Psalm 55:16*

Selected Scripture:
Job 24:1,9-12,19-25

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND

what is meant by the words spoken to us by David in our Key Verse, we go back to verse 15, which says, “Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell.” At this juncture, we must examine closely the use of the word “hell.” Hell, as it appears in this verse and in the entirety of the Old Testament, is a translation of the Hebrew word *sheol*, and simply means the condition of death, or the grave.

Both good and bad people go to *sheol*—the condition of death. Jesus went there. David said prophetically of him, “Thou wilt not leave my soul [being] in hell.” (Ps. 16:10) To this Isaiah adds, also speaking prophetically of Jesus, “He hath poured out his soul unto death.” (Isa. 53:12) In the New Testament, Peter, when speaking of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, quoted Psalm 16:10, saying, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” (Acts 2:27) The Greek word here translated “hell” is *hades*. Since this passage is a direct quote from the Psalms, we understand that the word *hades* in the New Testament is the exact equivalent of the Hebrew word *sheol* in the Old Testament. Indeed, Jesus died and spent parts of three days in the grave—the Bible hell—and was then resurrected by the mighty power of God.—see Jon. 1:17; 2:1,2; Matt. 12:40

Returning to our lesson in Psalm 55:15,16, we see David observing the doings of the wicked. He prays that they

may soon die, and thus cease to do evil. As we have seen, the word *sheol* contains no thought of fire or torment in death, but simply signifies oblivion, or the cessation of life. With this view, we can understand that David's prayer toward his enemies, the opponents of righteousness, was a proper one and in accordance with God's law.

Had David prayed that his enemies go to a place of eternal torture, it would have shown an improper heart condition on his part. Indeed, it is completely foreign to the character of our loving Heavenly Father to even conceive of such a place. The Apostle Paul seemed to have the same mind set on this subject as David. He said, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." (Gal. 5:12) In other words, let them go down quickly into death, that their evil thoughts and ways might cease. God himself said concerning those who did great abominations, "I took them away as I saw good."—Ezek. 16:50

The key to understanding all these statements, in which the desire is expressed that the enemies of God die, is found in the fact that mankind's trial and judgment is not in this present life with all of its unfavorable conditions. The time for the world's judgment is the coming Messianic age, when all shall be made to know God's mercy and his truth under favorable conditions. (Jer. 31:34; Ps. 136:1-12) Paul said that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man [Jesus] whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance [trust, reliance] unto all men."—Acts 17:31

All mankind have sinned and are subject to death. Hence, all go to oblivion, the grave, *sheol*, *hades*—the Bible hell. Job expressed similar thoughts in these words, "Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave [*sheol*] those which have sinned." (Job 24:19) Praise be to God, though, that Christ Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (I Tim. 2:6) May we be ever thankful to God who, "in the morning," will bring mankind out of oblivion, according to his own precious promise.—Ps. 30:5 ■

Hope Satisfies

Key Verse: “*I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.*”
—Job 42:2

Selected Scripture:
Job 42:1-10

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

Version translates our Key Verse as follows: “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.” This rendition of the verse seems to capture the proper thought. Our Heavenly Father has created a glorious plan which is being carried out according to his holy and perfect

will. It cannot be thwarted by any person, power, or influence, whether in heaven, or on earth. God’s wonderful plan incorporates all of the aspects of his attributes—his wisdom, justice, love, and power. These can be seen in all aspects of his plan by those who have come to appreciate his perfect and harmonious character.

Concerning wisdom, James tells us that “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated [obeyed], full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” (James 3:17) God’s wisdom is pure—that is, it is holy. Being first holy, it is also peaceable, gentle, easy to obey, and merciful toward all. Because these attributes of God’s wisdom are all in harmony one with another, it is truly “without hypocrisy.”

In the Book of Proverbs, we are also told of the importance of wisdom. “The fear [reverence] of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.” “Wisdom is the principal thing.” (Prov. 9:10; 4:7) These words point out to us just what Job realized, as recorded in the verses of our lesson.

Through his experiences Job came to appreciate that only after developing a complete reverence for the Almighty Creator, and a realization of his infinite wisdom, justice, love, and power, could he expect to receive the fullness of God's blessings and mercy.

For the followers of Christ—he who perfectly displayed the qualities of his Father—keeping God's character attributes in our minds and hearts will compel us to delight in doing those things that are in harmony with those attributes. The condition of our heart is all-important in this endeavor, and we are reminded of this by this sobering statement of Paul: "The word of God is quick [living, powerful], . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."—Heb. 4:12

To develop complete heart loyalty to God means that we must put forth a continual effort to bring all the intents, motives, thoughts, words, and actions of our lives into subjection to the divine will to the greatest extent possible. Job testified that his words came from an "upright heart," and thus could be found pleasing to God. "I am about to open my mouth; my words are on the tip of my tongue. My words come from an upright heart; my lips sincerely speak what I know. The Spirit of God hath made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life."—Job 33:2-4, *New International Version*

We close this lesson with faith-strengthening words from the Prophet Isaiah: "Thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain. . . . Tell ye, . . . who hath declared this from ancient time? . . . have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me." "I am God, . . . Declaring the end from the beginning, . . . the things that are not yet done." (Isa. 45:18,21; 46:9,10) We can have wonderful peace in knowing that what God has promised, he has always been able to perform. His righteous and merciful plan will not fail. ■

Our “Iron Gates”

*“They came unto
the iron gate that
leadeth unto the
city; which opened
to them of his own
accord.”*

—Acts 12:10

WHEN JESUS, IN GETHSE-mane, faced the mob that had come out from Jerusalem to arrest him, Peter drew his sword and, in an effort to rescue the Master from his enemies, cut off the ear of a servant of the high priest.

Jesus commanded Peter to put up his sword. He healed the injured man’s ear, and then indicated that he had merely to ask the Father and twelve legions of angels would be sent to protect and deliver him.—Matt. 26:51-53; Luke 22:50,51; John 18:10,11

Later, when Jesus was before Pilate, charged with claiming to be a king, this Roman governor was somewhat irritated because the Master was so uncommunicative. He asked Jesus if he did not realize the authority of his position and what it would mean to get a favorable decision from him. However, Jesus answered, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.”—John 19:11

These two statements, by which Jesus affirmed his complete conviction of his Heavenly Father’s overruling providence in his life, should be a great source of confidence to us who are following in his

steps and striving to develop the “mind of Christ.” While Jesus did not expect that his Heavenly Father would deliver him from all trouble, he had no doubt of divine ability to do this. He knew that he was to die for the sins of the world. If he should be spared from suffering and death, “How then,” he asked, would “the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?”—Matt. 26:54

Shortly after Jesus commenced his ministry, the religious rulers of Israel began to show their opposition. They would have liked to do away with him long before they did. Jesus knew this and avoided situations that would give them their coveted opportunity. His Heavenly Father cooperated with him in this. We may be sure that all the powers of the Roman Empire enlisted on the side of the Master’s jealous enemies could not have touched so much as a hair of his head until the “due time” came.

There was in God’s plan, however, a due time for the Redeemer to give his life for the sins of the world. Jesus knew when that time was to come. He told his disciples, even before he went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover with them for the last time, that he would afterward be arrested and put to death. He knew that this was God’s will for him.

Twelve legions of angels were ready to protect him from harm. These were more powerful than all the armies of Rome. Pilate would have been helpless to do anything against the Master had it not been permitted by God. However, Jesus knew that it was the Father’s will that he should die, so he did not ask for the host of angels to protect him from his enemies. His only way of escape from trial, now that his hour had come, was through death.

WE WALK IN HIS STEPS

As Jesus was, so are we in this world. We have covenanted to walk in his steps, develop his mind, and be “crucified” with him. (Gal. 2:20) This is a difficult thought to fathom. We know what it meant for Jesus to be crucified, and the Scriptures use this word to describe our own experiences as we endeavor to walk in his steps. Yet, at the same time we may wonder why we have such severe trials—why God does not deliver us from “fiery furnace” experiences and allow us to enjoy the apparent joy and peace that seemingly fill the lives of other Christians.

There are many promises in the Bible which assure us of God’s ability and of his willingness to protect us from harm. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High,” says David, “shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” (Ps. 91:1) Indeed, the Almighty is just as capable today of sending those twelve legions of angels to protect us as he was when Jesus was delivered into the hands of his enemies.

With us, however, as with Jesus, there is a due time as well as a proper way of deliverance. The lesson we need to learn is that of simple trust in our God and humble submission to his will. Jesus prayed, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” (Matt. 26:39) Jesus desired that his Heavenly Father’s will be done more than he desired release from suffering. This should be our attitude in every trial, hardship, perplexity, disappointment, and faith-trying experience with which we are confronted.

GOD'S WILL FOR PETER

Our opening text brings before us a marvelous providence of God in the life of the Apostle Peter. The miraculous power of God was employed through an angel to deliver the apostle from prison and certain death at the hands of Herod. This deliverance was accomplished, not because it was the general plan of God to protect all his consecrated people from bodily harm, but because he had further service for Peter to perform and further lessons for him to learn.

In the beginning of the chapter, we are informed that Herod “stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.” (Acts 12:1,2) No angel was sent to prevent this killing. We cannot believe that this was because James was not faithful to the Lord. It was simply that God had another way for him to “escape”—in the sleep of death. Thus, we understand that God’s providential care for his people is not always manifested in the same way.

As Herod “stretched forth his hands” further, Peter was caught and imprisoned. In doing this, Herod was seeking to please the Jews, over whom he ruled as the representative of Caesar. It was the Passover season, and he was sufficiently acquainted with Jewish customs to realize that until these special days were ended, the interests of the Jews would be well taken up. Therefore, he decided to hold Peter in prison until afterward and then bring him forth to make a public demonstration of his killing.—vss. 3-5

Meanwhile, however, the brethren prayed. We cannot imagine that these consecrated followers of Christ “demanded” of God that he use his power to

protect Peter. They no doubt had earlier prayed on behalf of James, who was “killed . . . with the sword,” in a similar manner as Jesus had prayed while in Gethsemane: “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” In Jesus’ case it was not possible—it was not God’s will for him—nor was it his will that James be spared from death at the hands of Herod.

The disciples did not lose their faith. They prayed for Peter also. It was the Father’s will that Peter should also die as his Master did. Jesus had prophesied this. (John 21:18,19) However, as with Jesus, so with Peter, and so with every one of us, there is a due time for all our experiences, and this was not the due time for Peter to finish his course in death.

Peter was “kept in prison,” we read, “but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.” (Acts 12:5,12) What a beautiful picture this portrays in our minds—Peter in prison, the brethren gathered in the home of Mary, the mother of Mark, praying. These devoted disciples had no assurance that the hands of Herod would not soon reach them also, but they prayed for Peter.

Meanwhile Peter, chained between two soldiers, was “sleeping.” (vs. 6) What an example of faith we see in this. Chained between two guards and held in prison with a threat of execution hanging over him—yet Peter slept. He had such confidence in the Lord that he was able to leave everything completely in his hands, knowing that whatever his will might be for him, it would be the best.

Peter, who was so greatly disturbed when Jesus was arrested and attempted to use his sword to deliver the Master from his enemies, had learned his lesson. He had learned it so completely that now,

when similarly held in custody and threatened with death, he could lie down and sleep, leaving the outcome of his experience wholly with the Heavenly Father. This circumstance reminds us of David's attitude. When his enemies were pressing hard against him, he wrote: "LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me."—Ps. 3:1-5

Thus it was also with Peter. He knew that the Lord was his shield and his salvation, so he "slept." Peter also "awaked" because God sustained him. An "angel of the Lord" appeared before him and "smote Peter on the side, and raised him up." The angel then said to him, "Arise up quickly."—Acts 12:7

What a startling, and at the same time, happy awakening this must have been. When, in faith, Peter fell asleep chained between the two guards, there may have been a fleeting thought passing through his mind that possibly he would be smitten by them, awakened, and hurried to his execution. Little did he perhaps realize that he would be awakened by an angel. Not only was he awakened, but his chains also fell off, and he was bidden to arise. He was told to gird himself, put on his sandals, and follow the angel. Peter obeyed, and followed him. (vss. 8,9) This indicated that he was to leave the prison—but how? True, he was no longer bound to his guards by chains, but he was still locked up within the prison. He would surely be soon apprehended by other

guards, and appeared to have no realistic hope of getting through the doors of the prison to freedom on the outside.

These thoughts may have occurred to Peter, but the account does not record them. We know only that Peter followed the angel, being unaware of exactly what was happening. He was, in fact, not sure that he was actually awake, thinking that perhaps he was having a dream or seeing a vision. The important thing, however, is that he followed, doing exactly as he was instructed. There is a lesson in this for all the Lord's people when passing through severe trials. The Heavenly Father always sends an angel to conduct us through them. As "ministering spirits," they are always near to help and direct us, if we obediently "follow."—Heb. 1:14

These angels do not now speak to us audibly, nor do they appear in visible form, but they are able to overrule our experiences in such a manner as to be a positive and directing influence in our lives. We often speak of the providences of God, but we should also realize that our ministering spirits are helping to shape those providences. They may not always lead in the direction of lighter burdens or less fiery trials. However, if we follow them, they are sure to lead us finally to victory and glory.

IRON GATE "OPENED BY ITSELF"

Peter followed the angel "past the first and the second ward." (Acts 12:10) Thus far there was no interference. Who or what could interfere with the angel of the Lord? Then they came to the iron gate that led to the city. This apparently was the last barrier, but it was a formidable one. Whether Peter

was thoroughly awake by now and fully understood what was taking place is uncertain. Although we are not told, perhaps he wondered how, or by whom, that iron gate would be opened.

The account simply tells us that the gate “opened by itself.” (*Contemporary English Version*) In this day of modern technology, gates and doors are opened automatically by various man-made devices. In many cases, the person or vehicle approaching is electronically identified and sets a mechanism into motion which opens the gate for their passage, and then closes it afterward. No such apparatus opened the iron gate of the Roman prison in which Peter was incarcerated. It was the Lord’s angel who went into action, as Peter approached, and swung the gate wide open. Indeed, it was a miracle, but only by a miracle could God deliver his servant and make him available to render further service to his people.

Peter passed through the iron gate to freedom, and then “the angel departed” (vs. 10), leaving Peter to find his way to the home of Mary and to his friends and brethren who were praying for him. The direct services of the angel were no longer needed, reminding us that the Lord gives us help only to the extent actually necessary. He furnishes us with our “daily bread” one day at a time, not for a year in advance.

Past the iron gate and out of prison, now fully awake, Peter meditated on the meaning of what had happened. He came to the definite conclusion that there was no other explanation than that God had sent an angel to deliver him. Fortified by this knowledge, he sought out the house of Mary, the mother of Mark. It was here that the brethren were praying for him.—vss. 11,12

Peter knocked at the door, attracting the attention at first of only a “damsel”—a young maidservant. She recognized Peter and quickly reported to the others that he was at “the door of the gate,” but was evidently too excited and did not think of opening the gate to permit him to enter. When she told the brethren that Peter was outside, they said to her, “Thou art mad.” (Acts 12:13-15) This does not necessarily indicate that these brethren lacked faith in the efficacy of their prayers. James had already been killed by Herod. Perhaps they had concluded from this that Peter would also be killed.

Most likely, their prayers for Peter had been in the nature of the one offered by Jesus, “If it be possible, let this cup pass” The main burden of their prayers was probably that Peter be given grace and strength to meet this severe test. These prayers were wonderfully answered, not only by his deliverance, but also by the fact that while in prison Peter was able to lie down and sleep while chained to the two guards.

God’s providences are not always the same for all his people. James was killed, but Peter was saved from death at that time—saved for further service, to continue feeding the Lord’s sheep, as he had been commissioned by Jesus. He was saved in order that through his continued faithful ministry he might further “strengthen” the “brethren,” as Jesus had also told him he would have the special privilege of doing.—John 21:15-17; Luke 22:32

OUR “IRON GATES”

We look back upon the experiences of Jesus and the apostles, and note the miraculous manner in

which God dealt with and blessed them. In doing so, we perhaps wish we could have been there and shared in some of those thrilling episodes. Sometimes our walk with the Lord may seem void of outstanding evidences that he is actually by our side, that his angels are encamped round about us, that every detail of our lives is being supervised by his wisdom, and that we are protected by his power and enriched by the abundance of his grace and love.

It should occur to us, however, that it requires greater faith to trust in the Lord when the outward manifestations of his keeping power are difficult to discover. Peter could always look back upon his experience of being delivered from Herod's prison as a proof of God's overruling providences in his life. It was so definite, so outstanding, that there could be no mistaking its blessed and reassuring implications. The opening of his iron gate was a lasting memorial of God's power to deliver him from evil.

We all have our iron gates to pass. If we are following the Lord's leadings, putting our trust fully in him, these may also open as we approach them. When they do, they will seemingly open of their own accord. We do not need to force the opening of these gates in an attempt to escape from trials which God in his wisdom sees that we need.

"IN PLEASANT PLACES"

Of Jesus it was prophetically written, "Lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." (Ps. 16:6) The word "lines" as used here means a "measured portion" of action or experience. Jesus had a measured course in which to walk, and to be pleasing to his Heavenly

Father, it was necessary for him to keep within those boundaries.

So it was with Peter, and so it is with us. This is well illustrated by the manner in which Peter was led out of the prison. He followed the angel, who led him past the first and second wards, and then to the iron gate, which opened of its own accord. Had Peter decided that he knew a better way out of that prison, and had he not followed the angel, he would not have been delivered. Let us suppose that Peter knew the location of the iron gate and, realizing that the angel was leading directly to it, decided to take another route, hoping to find an exit not so firmly closed. We know what the result would have been.

The short journey from the prison dungeon, past the wards, and through the iron gate to freedom, might well illustrate our entire walk in the narrow way. Our "lines" of direction are God's "measured portion" for us. They are the lines contained in our covenant by sacrifice. With Jesus, these lines had "fallen . . . in pleasant places," because he delighted to do his Father's will. God's will was not in itself always pleasant, but the "cup" of experiences Jesus passed through became pleasant in the certain knowledge that it was what the Heavenly Father had outlined for him.

It should be the same with us. We begin our consecrated life with the determination that we want only the Lord's will to be done. The lines which mark out his will are clearly traceable in his Word. We claim his promises to lead us and to give strength for every time of need. We are conscious of the fact that his angel is by our side, so we have no need to fear.

We may often wonder about the trials that loom up before us. Frequently, when we awaken in the morning we perhaps are unsure, or even fear, how we will get through certain experiences which we know we will have to face that day. They are sometimes only little things, yet nevertheless, they are our iron gates. If, however, we follow the “angel” and do not attempt to go in some other direction, which for the time may seem better to us, those gates will frequently open of their “own accord” as we approach them.

If we are noting well all the little experiences of our lives, we will find that many iron gates open for us every day. As followers of Christ we should be able each night to look back and praise the way God has led us that day. We should be able to discern the opening of the iron gates and give thanks for the abundance of the Lord’s strength, wisdom, mercy, and love.

In the case of Peter, the iron gate stood between him and freedom. Even more importantly, it stood between him and continued service to the Lord and the brethren. We, also, have this type of iron gate. No consecrated follower of the Master should be contented when not doing everything possible in the service of the Lord. Yet, with all of us there are hindrances—iron gates—that may at times hold us back from doing as much as we would like.

With some it may be job or family responsibilities, limitations due to age or health, or other hindrances which the Lord in his wisdom does not deem best to change. We may try, as it were, to peer beyond this iron gate and think how wonderful it would be if it would only open and permit us to go out into

the service of the Lord as Peter did. However, evidently the Lord's "lines" have not thus fallen for us—not yet, at least.

On the other hand, there may be a service we can render within the confines kept closed by our present iron gate. Let us remember the case of Paul. From the time he was taken into protective custody in Jerusalem by the Romans, throughout his long and tedious experiences en route to Rome, and then for years as a prisoner in Rome, he was inside his iron gate. The angel of the Lord did not lead him immediately to freedom as was the case with Peter.

Nevertheless, Paul found service. He witnessed to princes, rulers, prison guards, and many who called on him. From behind the iron gate in Rome, he sent letters to the brethren to comfort and strengthen them. We may be able to do likewise. Whatever the iron gate may be that is preventing us from serving as freely as we would like, we should look for opportunities that may exist within the confines of our present situation. Where none may immediately present themselves, we should always leave the matter in the Lord's hands.

This is what Peter did. Chained between two guards, he fell asleep. We can "sleep" also—that is, rest in the Lord, even though we may feel that we are chained and restrained. It would have done Peter no good that night to lie awake and worry about the chains that were binding him or about the iron gate that stood between him and freedom.

Similarly, when Paul and Silas were in prison at Philippi, they sang hymns. In his own way, the Lord delivered them, and in connection with their

incarceration, the jailer received the Truth. (Acts 16:23-33) Thus, let us endeavor to rest in faith and to rejoice in the Lord, no matter on which side of the iron gate our lines may have fallen.

We may be striving for victory over some imperfection of the flesh, a weakness that may be keeping us bound or hindering our progress in the narrow way. The Lord can open this iron gate for us also, if and when it is his will. The lesson he wants us to learn in all these experiences is that he knows what is best for us as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. We will rejoice in the Lord as we learn this and never try to force open our iron gates by our own strength.

As Peter looked back upon his deliverance from prison, one of the blessed assurances that it was only by the Lord's overruling providence was the fact that the iron gate opened of its own accord. May we look for similar providences of the Lord in our lives. Whether the Lord opens our iron gates or keeps them closed, let us so delight in his will that we will never be tempted to tamper with the gates ourselves, or redirect our path in "lines" not marked out by God.

We might, perhaps, force open an iron gate that is standing between us and what we would like to do. If we did, however, how could we know that it was of the Lord? This does not mean that we should go through life in a spiritually listless manner, taking little or no interest in God's providences. If we are fully consecrated to him, watching and praying for his guidance and blessing, we will want to be serving him. If an iron gate is standing between us and his service, we will sincerely desire to be on the other side of it, but only if it is his will. If it opens

of its own accord, we will rejoice and with diligence enter into a wider field of service thus made possible. However, if the gate remains closed, we will gladly do what we can on the “inside.”

There is an iron gate that stands between all the Lord’s people and that glorious liberty of the sons of God beyond the veil. While we are on this side of that gate, we are all bound and hindered by the flesh and other circumstances from doing the things that we would. In the Lord’s due time, and if we are “faithful unto death,” this last iron gate also will open of its own accord. Then we will be truly free and in the presence of our God, where there are “pleasures for evermore.”—Ps. 16:11

*“They that trust in the Lord shall be as
mount Zion, which cannot be removed,
but abideth for ever.*

*“As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,
so the Lord is round about his people
from henceforth even forever.”
—Psalm 125:1,2*

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.

Brother Albert Blakely, Gulfport, MS—August 20.
Age, 74

Sister Joanne Haig, Chicago, IL—September 1.
Age, 80

Sister Mary Olchow, Winnipeg, MB, Canada—
September 20. Age, 85

Ghanaian Trip Report

IN THE SPRING of 2014, Bro. Homer and Sr. Beverly Montague had the privilege of traveling to Ghana and visiting many brethren there. We are pleased to have them provide the following report to readers of *The Dawn*.

This year we had the blessing of meeting with brethren gathered in Accra, Ghana, for the twenty-fifth time since 1999. This interest grew out of a report given after three American brethren attended the 1998 Nigerian General Convention. At that time we were intrigued to learn of an aged Ghanaian who had corresponded with various brethren from the United States for some years and indicated he could not generate any interest in the Truth among those with whom he came in contact. This senior individual traveled to Nigeria in 1998 to meet one of these American brethren and also symbolized his consecration during that same gathering. It was the hearing of that narrative, and the desire to meet this newly consecrated brother—who was nearly 90 years of age—that prompted the start of our ongoing labors in Ghana. Our efforts commenced the



Bro. Homer and Sr. Beverly with Brethren at Seminar

following year when we, along with Bros. Joe Dolan, Lee Hicks, plus Srs. Ila Hicks and Cathy Sandridge, made our initial sojourn there.

The major purpose of this year's trip was to participate in the Pan African seminar for Bible Students, held on April 19-21, 2014. This spiritual gathering was an outgrowth of sustained involvement by various brethren, primarily from America, who have visited numerous locations in Africa throughout the years spreading the Gospel.

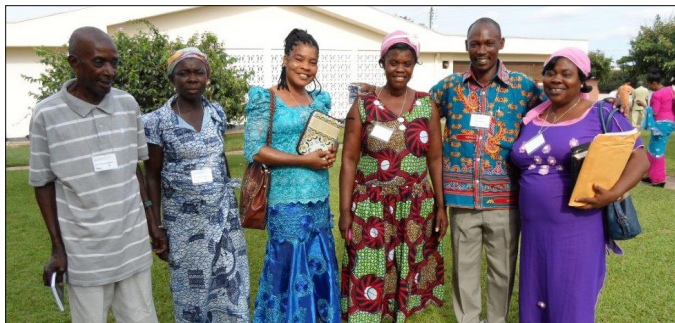
As a result of such efforts, there are now several countries in Africa where the harvest message has been flourishing. The many brethren who have lent support to these dear ones overseas have been greatly encouraged by the Lord's overruling in this endeavor. A variety of Truth activities exists throughout the continent, and although travel is more difficult there than in many parts of the world, these friends rejoice when they can come together in conventions,

seminars, and during other occasions of mutual feasting upon God's Word.

During the past decade, there has been a steady movement towards bringing brethren from different African countries to meet together, and the loving generosity of many supporters in this endeavor has enabled it to continue. As a result, since 2004, on a biennial basis, attendees from America and elsewhere have traveled to Ghana to participate in an international gathering. One of the reasons Ghana was chosen for this purpose is because the political climate there has been favorable to the assembly of brethren from various nations.

Many brethren who travel to Africa also have had the privilege of attending international conventions in Europe or engaging in Truth related activities in Israel. Such mobility by the friends in Africa is severely limited and, therefore, the presence there of brethren from other countries is greatly appreciated.

The venue for the 2014 Pan African seminar was the Presbyterian Women's Centre, which proved to be very conducive to meditation, devotion, fellowship, and an in-depth study of God's plan. Unlike many places in the world where Bible Students have had difficulties in securing appropriate facilities for worship because of doctrinal issues, there is cause for much gratitude to God that this lovely site in Accra, Ghana, was available for our use. The friends were extremely well received by both the staff and administration. We are pleased to share the report of this international gathering in Ghana during April 2014 involving more than 100 brethren from Ghana, Nigeria, the United States,



Brothers and Sisters During Intermission

Cameroon, Kenya, Romania, Uganda, Congo, India, Pakistan and South Africa.

In addition to Bro. Homer and Sr. Beverly, other Pan African seminar attendees from the United States included Bros. Richard Doctor, Joe Dolan, Bob Goodman, Lee Hicks, Ray Luke, Brian Montague, Jerry Wesol, Austin Williams, as well as Srs. Johanna Gawronski, Ila Hicks, Leah Ruggirello, Cathy Sandridge, and Claudia Tosa. Six of the American brethren were delayed in reaching Ghana because of visa issues.

Among the American friends who arrived early were Srs. Johanna and Claudia who flew to Accra on Saturday, April 12th, and were met at the airport by Bros. Edward Nkansah and Felix Daddah. Bro. Felix stored their excess luggage in Accra, after which Bro. Edward caught a domestic flight and escorted the two sisters to Kumasi where they were guests for a few days in the home of Bro. Samuel Amoo and his family. They had studies and fellowship with the local ecclesia and celebrated the Lord's Memorial with them by candlelight on Sunday, April 13, because of a power outage. The next day they

distributed tracts and discussed the kingdom hope with some of the people in the town. On Tuesday, April 15, accompanied by Bro. Edward Nkansah and Sr. Sarah Asare, they took a return flight to Accra and remained at the Presbyterian Women's Centre for the balance of their stay in Ghana. A few sightseeing excursions, meeting brethren at the airport, and evening Bible studies enhanced the overall experience for Srs. Johanna and Claudia prior to the start of the Pan African seminar.

Although Bro. Homer and Srs. Beverly and Cathy traveled to Kennedy Airport with Bro. Brian on Tuesday, April 15, of the four of them, only Bro. Brian boarded the airplane as scheduled. The others had to return to their homes and secure new visas in order to travel to Ghana two days later than anticipated. Bro. Brian had the additional task of overseeing the nine pieces of family luggage that were transported to Ghana. He, along with the other friends who took the same flight, arrived in Accra on Wednesday, April 16, had dinner that evening at the Presbyterian Women's Centre with about fifteen brethren, and then participated in a Bible study led by one of the American brethren.

On Thursday, April 17, many of the brethren from Ghana arrived at the Centre while some of the friends who were there earlier departed for an all-day excursion that morning to visit Cape Coast Castle. Over time, this facility is said to have housed 12 million slaves who were shipped out of Africa to supply labor to the New World. Several million died while journeying across the ocean.

On Thursday afternoon, a Ghanaian leaders' mini-seminar commenced at the Centre. Each speaker



Speakers at Ghanaian Leaders' Mini-Seminar

was given twelve minutes to provide his thoughts on an assigned verse of Scripture from Exodus, chapter 20, followed by eight minutes to answer questions from the floor. Nine African brethren served on this occasion. This format continued on Friday, April 18, with six additional presentations on selected texts from I Thessalonians, chapter 5. Some of the observers from other countries remarked that the format of using seminars such as they witnessed, appeared to be an effective model for the development of well-grounded study leaders.

On Friday, April 18, Bro. Brian, along with Bro. Noah Amoo, traveled to the airport in Accra to meet Bro. Nadir Niazi from Pakistan and, thereafter, Bro. Homer and Srs. Beverly and Cathy who arrived at the Centre to settle in and prepare for the proceedings scheduled to begin the following day.

The Pan African seminar began the morning of Saturday, April 19, with a devotional service. This procedure was also used for the next two days. Following a welcome address by Bro. Homer, discourses

were given by two brethren from Nigeria and Kenya. Their respective topics were “The Kingdom of God and You” and “Our Sacrificial Offerings to God.” The morning session concluded with a panel discussion entitled “Pre-Kingdom Prophecies Awaiting Fulfillment.” The moderator and panelists included brethren from the United States, India, and Nigeria.

Six discourses were given after lunch by Nigerian, Romanian, and American brethren. Their subjects were “Be an Example of the Believers,” “Who Is Melchisedec?” “Love One Another Fervently,” “The Law of Christ,” “Sin Is a Disease,” and “The Music of My Heart.” A testimony meeting concluded the afternoon session and, following supper, a special visual presentation was given, captioned “Ten Years of African Seminars.” This was followed by the distribution of several computer tablets loaded with Truth study materials and an opportunity for extended fellowship for the balance of the evening.

On Sunday, April 20, the morning discourses were given by four brethren from the United States and



Bros. Eke, Nadir, Doctor, and Menu



Brethren in Meeting Hall

Nigeria. The titles of these presentations were “Take Up Your Cross Daily,” “Prayer,” “The Apostles and Their Works,” and “There Is a Sin unto Death.” The afternoon session featured discourses by four brethren from Nigeria, America, and Uganda. These lessons were captioned “The Lost Keys of Knowledge,” “Turning from Evil,” “Christianity and Ecclesiasticism,” and “Our Wilderness.”

During a lengthy intermission, a group photograph was taken followed by a discourse titled “About the Space of Half an Hour.” Activities for the evening included a song service as well as a panel moderated and participated in by Nigerian and American brethren on the topic, “How Do You Know You Have the Truth?” A testimony meeting was the final service for the day.

The proceedings on Monday, April 21, commenced with a baptismal discourse by Bro. Joe Dolan on “Not My Will but Thine Be Done.” This was followed by an immersion service for ten brethren. After an intermission, a discussion was held entitled

“Bible Student Activities in Various Lands.” Those who participated on this panel included brethren from Kenya, Nigeria, Romania, South Africa, and Uganda.

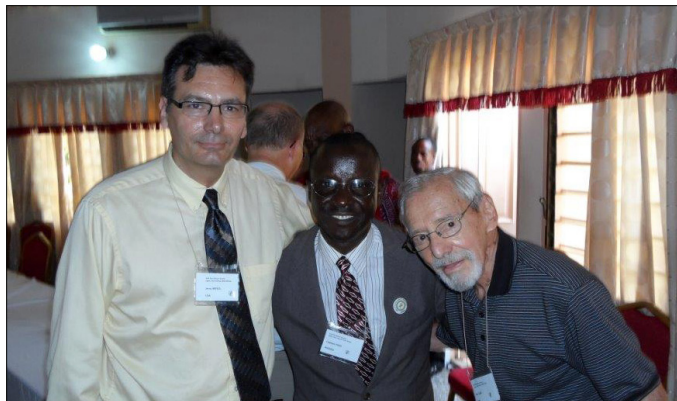
The afternoon session began with a symposium captioned “Exhortations from the Daily Heavenly Manna.” Seven brethren, all from Ghana, spoke on various texts from these devotions of April 22-28. Prior to the evening meal, a visual presentation entitled “Global Harvest” was provided, followed by the final testimony meeting of the seminar.

After supper, Bro. Ray Luke gave a Godspeed discourse on the subject “Parting Admonitions.” This was followed by closing remarks and a vesper service involving several brethren. Immediately thereafter, the heartfelt singing of “God Be with You” by all those in attendance brought the seminar to a close.

On Tuesday, April 22, thirty-one brethren from Nigeria and two from Cameroon departed by vans early in the morning en route to their respective homes. A few hours later the remainder of the brethren also left the Centre, making a visit to



Group of Brethren from Africa



Bros. Jerry Wesol, Cajetan Egbu, and Ray Luke

Christ Ordained Evangelical Ministry. Bro. Bob Goodman gave a public talk on the topic “Where Are the Dead?” There was good audience participation and at the conclusion of the presentation, the brethren were recipients of warm hospitality from the members of that congregation, who provided refreshments, including cold bottles of water and fresh tropical fruit. Later in the afternoon, and before most of the brethren traveled to the airport to catch an evening flight from Ghana, we enjoyed a final meal together—a delicious international buffet at the Golden Tulip Hotel.

The overall experience of being with brethren from so many countries was a tremendous blessing to everyone. Many new connections with the friends overseas were made, as well as a rekindling of relationships previously established. Of even greater importance is the fact that the brethren in Africa are being further established in the Truth. With increasing skill and understanding they are able to

conduct their spiritual arrangements in a manner that is consistent with those practices of Bible Students in locations where the Truth has been flourishing since the early days of the harvest. We are glad that so many brethren from distant locales came to participate in this seminar. We can indeed attest from our own personal observations that the body of Christ will be composed of individuals from “every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” (Rev. 5:9) We continue to look to the Lord’s leading in anticipation of another similar occasion of international fellowship in 2016, if it be his will.

“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go
into the house of the LORD.”
—Psalm 122:1■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

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

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

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

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

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

Trip to Germany and England

IT WAS A wonderful blessing and privilege for Bro. Mark and Sr. Henriette Nemesh to travel to Germany and England in June, 2014, to meet with the brethren and to attend the German General Convention. We are pleased to present a report of their trip to readers of *The Dawn*.

Leaving Detroit on Thursday June 5th, we arrived Friday morning in Germany at the Cologne airport where we were warmly greeted by Bro. Lutz and Sr. Eleni Ruthmann. Bro. Lutz has been working closely with the Dawn in the conversion of the original German “Franck and Ernst” audio programs to an electronic format, allowing them to be posted on the Dawn website’s German page. As we traveled back to the Ruthmann’s home, we learned that two convention speakers—Bro. Gonos from Greece and Bro. Petelinschek from Austria—would not be able to attend due to health reasons. Bro. Lutz and Sr. Eleni were able to speak to both of them by phone to encourage them. The discourses they had prepared would be read at the convention by other brethren.



Monica and Arnd Bärwolf, Eleni Ruthmann,
Daniel Bärwolf, and Lutz Ruthmann

That afternoon the Ruthmann's daughter, Sr. Monica Bärwolf, and her husband, Bro. Arnd, along with their son Daniel, joined us and we had a wonderful time discussing the Truth together. Sr. Monica had done the final proofreading of the German booklets which are offered in each audio program, prior to their being posted on the Dawn website.

During our visit, Bro. Lutz shared with us some of the experiences the brethren in Germany had during World War II. At that time, some of the brethren had their Truth literature confiscated by the Nazis and they were sent to prison, where many of them were beaten. In one experience, some of the friends came to the home of one of the brethren and warned them that the Gestapo was searching for religious books, and asked if their Volumes could be hidden somewhere. They placed the Volumes

inside a wooden box and buried it underneath a pile of coal in the cellar of the home. A short time later the Gestapo arrived, kicked in the front door, and began to search the house. Upon entering the cellar, the Gestapo ordered the pile of coal to be shoveled away in order to see if anything had been hidden. As the coal pile was shoveled away, the Gestapo stood by shouting "Shovel! Shovel!" Eventually the wooden box was uncovered. The brother doing the shoveling calmly picked up the box and placed it to the side. The Gestapo continued shouting "Shovel! Shovel!" until the coal pile was reduced to nothing. Finding no other items in the coal pile, the Gestapo left. Their eyes were "blind" to noticing this wooden box and the German Volumes were saved. Had the Gestapo opened the box, all the books inside would have been destroyed and the brethren would have been sent directly to prison.

Saturday morning we traveled with Bro. Arnd and Sr. Monica Bärwolf to the German General Convention at Korbach, Germany. We had a wonderful time in the car discussing various Bible subjects. One question we were asked was, "Do you think the time is short, or will it be a long time before the Gospel Age ends?" We were also asked about how the brethren are doing in America and the size of the ecclesias there. Upon arriving at the town of Korbach, we learned that it is located only twelve miles from Willingen, where the International Convention was held in 1986 and 1990.

The German General Convention began early Saturday afternoon with the singing of the hymn "Blest Be the Tie that Binds." The opening discourse was entitled "Your Will Be Done." Two questions

answered in the discourse were: “What is God’s will for us who have chosen the narrow way?” and “How can we do the will of God when trials come?” Next on the program was a convention study on “God’s Plan for Man.” Many questions were asked by both the study leader as well as the brethren. One by one brethren raised their hands, and scriptural comments to the questions were given. Another discourse followed, entitled “Stay in What You Have Learned,” a lesson from II Timothy 3:14,15.

Bro. Stefan Thieme gave a discourse entitled “The History of the Gibeonites.” Bro. Stefan receives the German Dawn magazines produced by the Dawn and does the distribution to the subscribers. He is also very active in developing the German Bible Student websites. Recently, the brethren there advertised the German First Volume on the Internet for a period of ten months. As a result of this effort, forty-six First Volumes were requested and two new German Dawn magazine subscribers have been added. A list of new names from the German Internet advertising during the past year was given to the German Dawn Committee, who is planning on sending a follow-up to each name.

During the convention, there were three translation tables set up—for English, Polish, and Romanian.



German General Convention at Korbach



Moses Felix, Hubert and Ruth Lipka, Dorchen Kotoulas,
Garbia Diana, Henriette Nemesh

The German brethren had provided, ahead of time, to each of the translators a written copy of each discourse in order to make the live translation easier. We appreciated very much this labor of love, and the time and effort it took to do the translation. It allowed us to understand all the discourses, announcements, and even the prayers given. The book table and area set aside for writing notes of encouragement to brethren unable to attend reminded us of the conventions held in North America.

During the convention, we learned that the existing “*Studies in the Scriptures*” in the German language are printed in an old-German font style—one which is no longer taught in the school systems. The result is that people younger than 25 years of age are unable to read the Volumes. The brethren were very happy to receive from the Dawn, just before the convention, a supply of newly printed Volume Six in the modern German font type. The brethren in Germany are

finishing the updated font style for Volume Two and plan to update the other Volumes also. The Dawn will continue to support this effort by printing each updated German Volume as it becomes available.

The closing service of the convention was a Love Feast. Two convention speakers were stationed at the front of the meeting room holding a plate with small pieces of bread, and the brethren lined up to say their goodbyes. Once all the brethren went through the line, the brethren were then asked to sit back down and “Blest Be the Tie that Binds” was sung again, as it had been at the beginning of the convention. As it was sung, one by one all the brethren stood up and began waving goodbye, using both hands, to the rest of the brethren in the room.

After the convention we traveled by car with Bro. Samuel and Sr. Annick Stalder to their home. While traveling we discussed various Bible topics and the witness activities of the brethren. The time seemed to fly by. The Stalders’ home is located near the city of Bonn, in a small town which has existed for more than 1,000 years. An added blessing was that Bro. Timo and Sr. Sirpa Nordmann from Finland, along with their two daughters, were also staying at the Stalders’ home after the convention. It had been many years since we had last seen the Nordmanns. Bro. Timo shared an experience they had in Finland in the late 1980s, when a study leader of the brethren in Finland began to teach that the “door” to the High Calling was closed, and that it was no longer possible to consecrate with a heavenly hope. However, there was another brother in the class who did not believe the door was closed. He had been a subscriber to the English Dawn



The Nordmann Family

magazine for thirty years, despite the fact he could not read English, and had kept all the issues. Thanks to his efforts, the Nordmanns were able to obtain scriptural clarification as to why the High Calling is still open, and using the mailing address listed in the magazine they were able to get in contact with the brethren at the Dawn. As a result, several Dawn booklets were translated into the Finnish language and printed in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Currently, each of these booklets is being typed up electronically and a Finnish language page is being added to the Dawn website, so that others may receive a blessing.

On Wednesday a meeting was arranged at the Stalders' home. One sister had arranged to take a vacation day from work in order to attend the meeting. However, none of the local trains were

running, due to damage from strong thunderstorms and tornadoes the previous day. She went to the station and tried for an hour and a half to find another way to get to the meeting by train. Unsuccessful in these efforts, she went to her work place. Upon learning about the situation, one of the brethren at the Stalders' home suggested that she could perhaps attend the meeting via a computer link-up using SKYPE. The sister was contacted and the meeting start time delayed, allowing her to finish her work and return home. The brethren gathered at the Stalders' sat around the kitchen table, and a computer tablet was placed there, allowing this sister to attend the meeting via SKYPE.

A discourse was given, followed by a short break, and then a question meeting on the discourse subject was conducted by another brother. At the close of the meeting, all those gathered voted to send their Christian love and greetings to all the brethren in North America, and also to the brethren we would later meet in England.

On Thursday we flew from Germany to England. After picking up our rental car, we drove to the town of Chesham and the home of Bro. Fred and Sr. Ivy Binns, where we were warmly welcomed. Many hours were spent in their home discussing various Bible subjects. During our visit, Bro. Fred pointed out some of the homes in the town which are more than 500 years old. In the mid-1950s, Bro. Fred and Sr. Ivy first heard about the Truth by listening to the "Frank & Ernest" radio program, which at that time was being broadcast from the country of Luxembourg. They ordered the various booklets offered at the end of each radio program and were

especially happy to learn about the heavenly call. Enthused with having heard the Truth and unaware of there being any brethren in the local area, they placed ads in the newspaper advertising "Listen to 'Frank & Ernest' on Radio Luxembourg!" Brethren in their local area saw the ad in the newspaper and wondered who was advertising "Frank & Ernest." As a result of the ad the brethren were able to get in contact with Bro. and Sr. Binns.

On Saturday afternoon a meeting was arranged in a nearby town at the home of Sr. Dina Hynde and her husband Paul, where about fifteen brethren were gathered. A study was held on the topic "Scriptural Proofs that the High Calling Is Still Open." A live translation into Romanian was done by Sr. Dina, as a few of the brethren in attendance were visiting from Romania. A study outline had been sent a few weeks earlier, so brethren could prepare ahead of time for the study. After an hour and a half, only a portion of the scriptures on the study outline had been discussed. Nevertheless, the brethren appreciated considering this important topic. Following the meeting, refreshments with tea were served.

Bro. Martin Powell from Shropshire, a three and a half hour drive from Chesham, arrived and stayed the rest of the weekend at the Binns' home. Bro. Martin's parents subscribed to *The Dawn* magazine for many years. When both of his parents took ill, Bro. Martin cared for them at home and would read to them each month's issue of *The Dawn*.

On Sunday, Bro. Martin drove the four of us in his car, and after a one-and-a-half hour ride, we arrived at the home of Sr. Maureen Keable for a Tabernacle study, during which the "hidden manna"

was discussed. (Rev. 2:17) Sr. Maureen is the natural sister of Bro. John Mercer, who has come to the United States several times in the past from Australia to work at the Dawn. Following the study, Sr. Maureen served us lunch, and afterward we went to the home of Bro. Donald and Sr. Edna Holliday. Sr. Edna is homebound due to her health and is looked after by Bro. Donald. It was a joy to see them both after so many years.

We then traveled a short distance to the meeting at West Wickham, which began at 3:30 p.m. with a discourse on “God’s Providence.” Following the discourse, there was a one hour break. The break began with the brethren seated around tables and singing from memory one of the hymns from the English Bible Students hymnbook. Refreshments with tea were then served. About halfway through the break, the *Manna* for the day was read, and the brethren were asked to give their comments. The second meeting was a study on Ephesians 2:8-10.



Meeting at West Wickham

Two weeks earlier, the West Wickham class had prepared an invitation to their meeting on June 15, advertising the discourse subject and meeting location. The invitation was sent via email to names located in the U.K. which had requested booklets from the Dawn Internet advertising effort. The brethren in England plan additional follow-ups to these names in the future. As the Apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 3:6, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.”

At the end of the meeting, the brethren voted to send the Christian love of the West Wickham class to all the brethren back in North America, along with the scripture Hebrews 13:20,21: “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”



Brethren at West Wickham

After the West Wickham meetings, we returned to the home of Bro. Fred and Sr. Ivy, and Bro. Martin returned home the next morning. On the second and fourth weekends of each month, he drives to the Binns' home. On Sunday morning, the three of them travel to Sr. Maureen's home for a study meeting and then, later in the day, they go to the West Wickham meeting. On the first and third weekends of the month, the West Wickham class meets on Sunday at the home of Bro. Donald and Sr. Edna Holliday.

We inquired as to how the brethren who only are able to get to a meeting every other week keep up with the studies they are unable to attend. The brethren explained that an audio recording of each meeting is made, and whoever is not in attendance is mailed a copy, allowing everyone to keep up and be ready for the next study.

We thank our Heavenly Father for the privilege we had to meet with the brethren in Germany and England. We returned home having many precious memories of the brethren we saw, and we are very thankful for their example, as well as all their labors of love on our behalf. We conclude this report with the scripture Bro. Fred and Sr. Ivy asked to have conveyed to the brethren:

“Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.

“Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.

“They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.”—Ps. 84:4-7 ■

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.

J. Freer

Delaware Valley, PA	Jacksonville, FL	19
October 10,11	Clearwater, FL	20
Washington DC/Baltimore, MD	St. Petersburg, FL	21
12	New Orleans, LA	27
Richmond, VA	Starkville, MS	28
Charlotte, NC	Huntsville, AL	29
14		

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

M. Balko

Jacksonville, FL October 19

E. Blicharz

Atlanta, GA October 12

C. Chandler

San Luis Obispo, CA
October 18,19

D. Christiansen

Grand Rapids, MI October 19

O. B. Elbert

Orlando, FL October 25,26

J. Freer

Orlando, FL October 25,26

K. Humphreys

San Luis Obispo, CA
October 18,19

E. Kalinski

San Luis Obispo, CA
October 18,19

B. Keith

Pittsburgh, PA October 4,5

P. Mora

Pittsburgh, PA October 4,5

D. Rawson

Detroit, MI October 26

R. Shahan

Pittsburgh, PA October 4,5

A. Williams

Pittsburgh, PA October 4,5

“Dawn Devotional Radio” Internet Radio Station

www.live365.com/stations/dawn_radio

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.

NAMBOUR CONVENTION, October 3-5—Alexandra Headlands, QLD, Australia. Contact D. Greenhalgh. Phone: +61-75483-1946 or Email: darryngreenhalgh@hotmail.com

LAGOS CONVENTION, October 4—Contact C. Oledibe, #4 Morning Star Church Road, Ejigbo, Lagos, Nigeria. Phone: 234-703-369-3841 or Email: oledibe@yahoo.com

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 4,5—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact G. Balko. Phone: (724) 771-0139

BRAZIL CONVENTION, October 18—Cult Hotel, Recife, Brazil. Contact L. Bezerra. Email: estudantesd-abiblia_aurorabrasil@hotmail.com

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 18,19—Masonic Hall, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. Contact M. Allard. Phone: (805) 773-2963 or Email: medlallard@juno.com

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 19—GRBS Church Building, 830 North Park Street NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525. Contact J. Houlmont. Phone: (231) 972-4259 or Email: ljhoulmont@gmail.com

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 25,26—South Seminole Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry, FL 32707. Contact J. Kuenzli. Phone: (407) 831-2098 or Email: jkuenzli@cfl.rr.com

DETROIT JOINT CONVENTION, October 26—Pleasant Ridge Community Center, 4 Ridge Road, Pleasant Ridge, MI. Contact G. Zendler. Phone: (248) 399-8843 or Email: ngzendler@wowway.com

NEW HAVEN CONVENTION, November 2—Westwoods Italian-American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven, CT. Contact A. Suraci, 171 Johnson Road, Hamden, CT 06518. Phone: (203) 248-3793 or Email: annasuraci@comcast.net

PHOENIX CONVENTION, November 16—Boys and Girls Club of Scottsdale, 8250 E. Rose Lawn, Scottsdale, AZ. Contact C. Humphreys. Phone: (480) 226-9076 or Email: christyscastles@gmail.com

SAN DIEGO CONVENTION, November 28-30—Alpine Community Center, 1830 Alpine Boulevard, Alpine, CA 91901. For accommodations information, contact D. Desmarais, 4333 Serena Avenue, Oceanside, CA 92056. Phone: (760) 945-2233 or Email: desmarais3@cox.net. Other information, contact R. Rice, 13084 Treecrest Street, Poway, CA 92064. Phone: (858) 486-0381 or Email: robinrice@sbcglobal.net

IBADAN CONVENTION, December 6—Contact C. Egbu, #24 Fayemi Street opp. Coca Cola, Mokola, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Phone: 234-803-333-9949 or 234-808-214-6621 or Email: egbucaje@gmail.com

CHICAGO CONVENTION, December 27,28—Prisco Community Center, 150 W. Illinois Avenue, Aurora, IL 60506. Contact A. Schneider. Phone: (847) 533-1874 or Email: secretary@chicagobible.org

*Come ye that know and love the Lord,
and raise your thoughts above;
Let every heart and voice accord
to sing that "God is love."
This precious truth his Word declares,
and all his mercies prove;
Jesus, the gift of gifts, appears,
to show that "God is love."
—Hymns of Dawn*