

# The Dawn

Volume LV, Number 1  
(USPS 149-380), January 1987

Second-class postage paid at  
Rutherford, NJ. Published  
monthly by The Dawn Bible  
Students Association, 199  
Railroad Avenue, East Ruth-  
erford, NJ 07073. \$1.00 per  
year; Great Britain 60p.  
Write to foreign addresses  
for other prices.

**CANADA:** P.O. Box 175,  
Postal Station F, Winnipeg,  
Man. R2L 2A5

**BRITISH ISLES:** 26 Rands  
Meadow, Holwell-Hitchin, Herts.  
SG5 3SH

**AUSTRALIA:** Berean Bible  
Institute, 19 Ermington Place,  
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**FRANCE:** Association des  
Etudiants de la Bible-Publica-  
tions Aurore, B.P. 3066, 68062  
Mulhouse CEDEX

**GERMANY:** Tagesanbruch  
Bibelstudien-Vereinigung,  
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21, Ottaviano 80044, Napoli,  
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# Highlights of Dawn

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*IT HAS been said that the office of the president of the United States is the most powerful position held by any man in the world.*

*Also it has been said that just about any child in America can grow up to be president.*

*However, the intense public humiliations suffered by recent presidents when mistakes were made (and who cannot help but make them in this unpredictable, chaotic world) will no doubt dampen the aspirations of many in the future to seek this office at the risk of jeopardizing their lives and reputations.*

*Our form of government, the best the world has to offer today, intrinsically possesses the same prevailing weakness that has plagued governments of every kind since the world began—the imperfections of those who administrate as well as those who are governed.*

*But, where is the perfect man? Only two are known to have existed in our entire history. One was responsible for plunging the human race into sin, and the other was rejected and put to death on a cross.*

*Is it too much to hope that a perfect government will sometime exist, with the wisdom to bring peace and unity to this earth—a government possessing the noble qualities of leadership which will command the honor, respect, and loyalty of people worldwide?*

*Present imperfect governments threaten the world with extinction. Dare we believe in a better world—a world without end?*

*What does the Bible say?*

# The End of the World and A World Without End

*"All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof."*

*I John 2:15-17*

"THE world passeth away," our text declares. This is one of the fundamental teachings of the Word of God. It is also clearly taught in the Bible that the end of the world is associated with the second coming of Christ. However, after the apostles fell asleep in death, crude notions developed concerning both the second coming of Christ and the prophetic end of the world. These erroneous views failed to take into consideration the great basic truth of the Scriptures that the return of Christ was to usher in what the Apostle Peter described as "times of restitution of all things, which," he declared, "hath been spoken by the mouth of all his [God's] holy prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:19-21

The view developed that when Christ returned, this literal planet upon which we live would be burned up; that faithful Christians living at the time would be taken to heaven, and the remainder of mankind consigned to an eternity of torture. Obviously, the horrors, in terms of human suffering thus brought about, would be a million times worse than mankind could possibly inflict upon themselves through the misuse of nuclear power. And yet, professed Christian people tried to believe it, and accept it as an evidence of God's wisdom and justice.

The teachers of most false theories pertaining to the doctrines of Christianity find something in the Bible by which they

attempt to prove their theories. So it was with the misconception of the prophecies pertaining to the end of the world. The Bible does teach that with the return and second presence of Christ there would be a great upheaval of human society. This is variously described as "a time of trouble," "great tribulation," and a time when there would be "distress of nations, with perplexity." (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21,22; Luke 21:25,26) The Bible clearly teaches that this great time of trouble would result in the overthrow of all selfish human institutions, political, financial, and religious, and that in the process this would involve worldwide chaos, suffering, and loss of life.

The prophecies describe the ultimate and complete result of this trouble as the end of the world, for it will be the end of man's misrule over the earth. In the place of this selfish and imperfect misrule comes the establishment of the long-promised kingdom of the Messiah, which, in its thousand-year rulership over the people, will lead to the doing of God's will on earth, even as it is now done in heaven.—Matt. 6:10

One important fact lost sight of by those who perpetrated the Dark Age misconception of the end of the world was that God had created this earth to be man's eternal home, and that his design was that man would live on it forever. Assurance is given us of this by the LORD, through the Prophet Isaiah. We quote: "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, he formed it to be inhabited."—Isa. 45:18

### **Symbolic Language**

The word 'earth' is often used in the Bible in a symbolic or figurative sense to denote the association of people who inhabit the planet. Just a brief glance at some of the instances in which the word 'earth' is thus used will suffice to prove this point. Take, for example, a statement found in Daniel 7:23. Here a great beast, which most students of the Bible understand as depicting the old Roman Empire, is said to "devour" the whole

earth. Obviously, no beast, symbolic or otherwise, has ever, or ever will, devour the literal earth. The thought simply is that this unholy, beast-like kingdom appropriated to itself all the resources of the people to further its own selfish purposes.

Here again the earth is shown to be devoured, not by a beast, but by the 'fire' of Jehovah's jealousy, or zeal, as it is in the Hebrew text. In Isaiah 9:6,7, this same Hebrew word is translated zeal in the statement, "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." In this prophecy we are told of the birth of Jesus, and that of the increase of his government and peace there would be no end. It is the establishment of this righteous government in the hands of the foretold Messiah that is said to be accomplished by the zeal of the LORD of hosts. In order for this to be done, the kingdoms of this world, symbolized in Zephaniah 3:8 by the earth, must be destroyed; and appropriately, they are said to be devoured, or destroyed, by the fire of God's zeal, for it is in preparation for the establishment of the messianic kingdom.—Rev. 11:15

Zephaniah 3:8 is another prophecy in which we are told that the earth is devoured, but the circumstances are quite different. We quote: "Wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy [**Hebrew**, 'zeal']."

In the verse following this prophecy of the devouring of the symbolic earth, we are informed that then the LORD will turn to the people a "pure language," that they might all call upon him, to serve him with one consent. (vs. 9) This clearly shows that after the symbolic earth is devoured, the people will still be living on the literal earth, and that they will be enlightened by the LORD and have the opportunity of serving him. It is not, then, the literal earth that is devoured; therefore this text shows again that the earth is sometimes used symbolically in the prophecies.

Another interesting instance is found in the forty-sixth Psalm, verses two and three: "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." When Jesus said that at the time of his second presence there would be distress of nations with perplexity, he illustrated the situation by likening it to the roaring of the sea and the waves.—Luke 21:25

In Isaiah 17:12,13 a similar symbolism is used, and an explanation given. We quote: "Woe to the multitude [margin, noise] of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty [margin, many] waters. The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing [margin, thistledown] before the whirlwind."

From this it is evident that the roaring of the sea and the waves is symbolic of the restless, chaotic state of the nations and people of the earth, which increases in intensity until the symbolic earth is removed in the great time of tribulation. This thought is suggested again by the psalmist: "The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted." (Ps. 46:6, **RSV**) Here, instead of 'mountains' being carried into the midst of the symbolic 'sea', as in verse two, it is the 'kingdoms' that are 'removed'. And instead of the 'earth' being 'removed', it is 'melted'.

But the literal earth is neither removed nor melted, for the conclusion of this wonderful prophecy reads, "Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." (vs. 8,

**RSV)** Here the point to notice particularly is that after the symbolic earth is removed, and melted, the literal earth is still the scene of action, and God's name is exalted in it. This exalting of God's name throughout the earth will be the work of the messianic kingdom.

### **In the New Testament**

In the New Testament one of the Greek words which is translated 'world' is **aion**. The word **aion** simply means 'age', or 'period of time'. It is this word which is used by the apostles, as quoted in Matthew 24:3 when they asked Jesus, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?" The sign which Jesus gave, therefore, in answer to this request, is not a sign that the burning up of the literal earth is near, but that we have reached the end of the present age. Outstanding among these signs is the great tribulation, already referred to, and without doubt we are now witnessing the development of the foretold distress of nations, with perplexity. Already, as Jesus foretold, the human race is threatening its own destruction.

What this means is that it is given to us to be living at a time when an age in the divine plan is coming to an end, to be replaced by the authority and rulership of the kingdom of Christ. This is why, as Christians, we should not fear, at this time when the world is filled with fear, because we know that the LORD'S plans are being carried out, and that soon the desire of all nations will come, and there will be peace, joy, and everlasting life for all who will avail themselves of them.—Hag. 2:7

### **Man's Social Order**

The Greek word **kosmos** is also used in the prophecies pertaining to the end of the world. This word simply means 'order' or 'arrangement'. It has nothing to do with the literal earth on which we live. It is this word that is translated 'world' in our text, which assures us that the world is to pass away because of its selfish sinful nature. Jesus said concerning this same humanly

constituted social order, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—John 16:33

In II Peter 3:5,6, we are informed that a world passed away at the time of the Flood. The spiritual and material aspects of that pre-Flood world are symbolized as 'heavens' and 'earth'. Much in God's material creation is used symbolically in the Bible. The sun, for example, is used to symbolize the health and life-giving powers of the Messiah, during the time of his reign for the blessing of the people. We read, "The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings." (Mal. 4:2) We read concerning Christ's true followers, the wheat in the parable of the wheat and the tares, that they shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."—Matt. 13:43

The literal heavens and earth bear a very vital relationship to each other. Life on the earth is largely subject to the influences of the heavens, that is, the sun, the moon, and the stars. The tides and seasons are thus controlled. It is because of this relationship that the LORD uses them to symbolize a social order.

Throughout all human experience, higher or spiritual powers have exerted more or less influence over the human race. Satan and the fallen angels, although invisible to mankind, nevertheless, through deception, have misdirected the people particularly away from God. This unholy influence has been exercised mostly through false religious systems. These together constituted the heavens which ceased to rule at the time of the Flood. The earth of that time constituted the material arrangements of men whereby they lived and worked together. The Flood brought an end to these arrangements, and, so far as that world was concerned, to most of the people—Noah and his family being the only exception.

The literal earth was not destroyed by the Flood, and soon after the Flood, Satan again began to exercise his influence in the affairs of men. The historical records of the Bible, and secular history as well, reveal the many forms of false worship which have lured the people away from the true worship of God,



the great and loving Creator of the Bible. So there has been another symbolic heavens which, in myriads of unholy ways throughout the centuries, has influenced the minds of the people, and has had a bearing on their civil and political arrangements.

Peter, in his symbolic description of the ending of the present social order, describes it as the passing away of the heavens and the earth which are now. We quote: "The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." (II Pet. 3:7) Verse ten reads, "The day of the LORD will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

The 'fire', the 'great noise', and the 'fervent heat' of this prophecy are all symbolic. Some have suggested that since it was literal water that destroyed the first world, it is literal fire which will destroy the heavens and the earth, which are now. But this does not necessarily follow. The more complete prophetic testimony on the point employs a number of other symbols, such as earthquakes, storms, whirlwinds, floods, etc. Besides, the mighty armies of the nations are shown to have a part in the destruction of the present **kosmos**, or social order. In nonsymbolic language, that which brings about the end of the world is described by Daniel as "a time of trouble," and by Jesus as "great tribulation." (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21,22) To consider Peter's prophecy alone, and insist that it refers to literal fire, would be restricting our understanding of all that is involved.

### **God's New World**

After describing the passing away of the heavens and the earth, which are now, Peter continues, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (II Pet. 3:13) The reason the present world is passing away is because selfishness and evil largely influ-

fluence its activities. But God has promised to establish a new world, new heavens and a new earth, wherein righteousness will dwell.

Peter says it is according to God's promise, or because God has promised it, that we look for the new heavens and new earth. This promise is recorded by the Prophet Isaiah. We quote: "Behold, I [the LORD] create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man who hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."—Isa. 65:17-22

It is important to notice in this prophecy that the creating of new heavens and a new earth is associated with the creating of a new Jerusalem. The LORD said, "Be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." (vs. 18) Many centuries later the Apostle John was given a vision of the fulfillment of this prophecy, and he also saw the new heavens and new earth associated with the new Jerusalem. John wrote, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: . . . and I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."—Rev. 21:1,2

One of the angels used by the LORD to show John the wonderful symbolisms of Revelation, said to him, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." (vs. 9) And then we read, "He carried me away in the spirit to a great and high moun-

tain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." (Rev. 21:9,10) From this it is clear that the new Jerusalem is the bride, the Lamb's wife. The bride of Christ is the church of Christ, made up of his faithful, sacrificing followers. We are informed also that the LORD God and the Lamb are the temple in this city, and that the glory of the LORD and the Lamb are the light thereof.—vss. 22,23

Here, then, we have the new spiritual rulership of the messianic kingdom. It is the Lamb and his bride, functioning by the authority of the true God of heaven and earth. This is the new heaven of promise. We are told that "the nations . . . shall walk in the light of it," and that the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it; that is, they will yield up whatever supposed glory and authority they possessed, and become subject to this new authority.

The new earth will, to begin with, consist of the resurrected Ancient Worthies, as "princes in all the earth." (Ps. 45:16) As the work of the new kingdom continues, eventually all mankind, except those who prove to be incorrigible, will become part of that new social order here on earth, functioning in accord with the divine will as it will emanate from the new heaven, and be interpreted and administered by the princes in all the earth. This new arrangement will mean that God is again favoring his human creatures; that he is, symbolically speaking, dwelling with them. Verse three of Revelation twenty-one mentions this: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them, and be their God."

When, through the Prophet Isaiah, the LORD promised to create new heavens and a new earth, assurance was given that there would come as a result a greatly increased life span for the people. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days," the LORD said, and one that dies at a hundred years of age will be but as an infant. The LORD likened the days of his people at that time to the days of a tree, the reference being to the durability of

the ancient cedars of Lebanon and other sturdy and long-living trees.

But when John, in vision, saw the fulfillment of this wonderful promise of the new heaven and new earth, human longevity was seen to take on a new dimension. Revelation 21:4 reads, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be **no more death**, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."—vss. 4,5

This wonderful new social order of tomorrow will in reality be the kingdom of Christ. It will have both rulers and subjects. Its great objective will be to establish divine righteousness throughout the earth, and to destroy sin and death. It is for this objective that we pray in those wonderful words of the Master, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) Before this prayer can be answered, the present world must come fully to an end. It is even now disintegrating; and because of this we look up, and lift up our heads, knowing our deliverance draws near!—Luke 21:28 □



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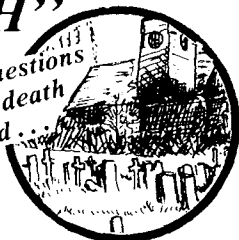
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# International Bible Study Lessons

## LESSON FOR JANUARY 4

### Teacher of Righteousness

**KEY VERSE:** *"I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Matthew 5:20*

**SELECTED SCRIPTURE:** *Matthew 5:17-20; 6:1-6, 16-18*

IT IS well to emphasize that Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, a part of which is assigned as a basis of this lesson, was intended primarily to instruct and guide the disciples of Christ in preparation to be joint-heirs with him in his kingdom. Loyalty to these instructions is a prerequisite to obtaining a place of rulership with Jesus. Each one of the rules is important in itself, and the spirit reflected by all of them points out the difference between God's viewpoint and ways, and those of Satan, reflected in the spirit of the scribes and Pharisees. It is the difference between love and selfishness; between sacrifice and grasping; between trusting in God and trusting in ourselves.

To seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness is a challenge to our faith in God, and to our love for the righteous requirements of his law. Food, clothing, homes, and other material necessities are to be considered but secondary by the Christian. The Heavenly Father knows we have need of these, and has promised to supply them; hence, if we fully trust him and love the things of the Spirit more than those of the flesh we will delight to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

If we hope to reign with Christ we must learn to go beyond justice in dealing with our fellow men and with our brethren. This simply means that we must learn to be like God and delight in his spirit of unselfishness. Had God not gone beyond

justice in planning for the blessing of mankind, there would be no hope of life for any of us.

The same is true of Jesus. Justice did not demand that he die in order to redeem the fallen race, but love caused him to rejoice in the privilege. We are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, rejoicing also in the opportunity that is ours of laying down our lives for the brethren and for the world.

"By their fruits ye shall know them," is a well known Scriptural expression, but one which is often misapplied. Works which are ostensibly good are not always fruits by which we can properly appraise the position of others in the sight of God, for Jesus explains that he would condemn some who had done "wonderful works." (Matt. 7:21,22) Many, even, who call upon him in prayer, saying, "Lord, Lord," will not pass the test of having borne good fruit. "He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," said Jesus, is the one who bears good fruit and is entitled to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

As God "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," so should we seek to be all-comprehensive in the bestowing of our blessings. (Matt. 5:45) Thus we can be "perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect." (vs. 48) If we limit our love to those who love us; if we do not bless them who curse us; if we do not do good to those who spitefully use us; we are coming short of all that it means to be like God—we are imperfect, not perfect like unto him.

The standard is high, but the blessings for those who attain it are rich. The kingdom of heaven is theirs. They will rejoice as they witness and share in the work of destroying sin and death, and in drying the tears of all mankind. And, oh, the indescribable joy that will be ours when we "see him face to face!" (I Cor. 13:12) Let us then press for the promised prize with all diligence, permitting no seed thoughts of selfishness to spring up in our heart to mar our present vision of God, or to turn aside from faithfully doing his will. □

## Man of Compassion

**KEY VERSE:** *"When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not." —Luke 7:13*

**SELECTED SCRIPTURE:** *Luke 7:11-17, 14:1-6*

"WEEP not." These were the comforting words of Jesus to a sorrowing mother who was burying her only son. His tender heart went out to her, as he observed and felt the terrible sting of death as the funeral bier passed by. But these were more than just comforting words. Jesus realized he had the power to turn her tears of sorrow into tears of joy. Knowing that through him the power of God could raise the dead, he touched the coffin, and as the procession stood still, Jesus said in a commanding voice, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up."—vss. 14,15

Jesus used his time and strength unstintingly in relief of human suffering, but his main achievement was to furnish a vivid object lesson of what would be accomplished later for all mankind under the righteous and healing administration of his kingdom. Wherever Jesus went he found those who were sick and afflicted. And in every place he visited he preached the Gospel of the kingdom and healed "every sickness and every disease among the people." (Matt. 9:35) This daily association with human depravity and suffering touched the Master's loving heart. The record is that when "he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."—Matt. 9:36

He saw in these circumstances the need for more service than he could personally render, and he said to his disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the LORD of the harvest, that he will send forth labor-



ers into his harvest." (Matt. 9:37,38) This reflects the true spirit of the Master with respect to preaching the Gospel. It is difficult to see how anyone could be truly Christ-like who did not have this same loving sympathy for the people, and the same longing desire to comfort them with the kingdom message.

Jesus knew full well, even as all truth-enlightened Christians know today, that this is not the age for the world's conversion. He knew that even the one small nation of Israel would not accept his message in a genuine and permanent manner. He knew that for the most part the multitudes who heard him gladly were of the "stony ground" (Matt. 4:5) class, whose interest would wither under the heat of unpopularity and persecution. But this did not deter him from bearing witness to them, healing them, and rendering what comfort he could for their sorrows. He continued to preach the kingdom message until the end, his last witness being to one of the thieves who was crucified beside him.

Can we, who are endeavoring to be transformed into his character likeness do less?

Every time Jesus performed an act of healing, and most certainly when he raised the dead, he no doubt thought of the future time of his kingdom, when he could say to all men, "Arise," and all that are in the grave will hear his voice and come forth—a time when all will be healed from sin and sickness and the terrible blight of death. How often he must have recalled that beautiful, symbolic picture of his kingdom foretold by the Prophet Isaiah: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing."—Isa. 35:5,6

The program for accomplishing mankind's recovery is a great act of compassion on the part of our Heavenly Father and his faithful Son. We have been offered the unspeakable privilege of having a part in it, but it must be an act of compassion on our part too. □

## Lord of Life

**KEY VERSE:** *"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."—John 11:25*

**SELECTED SCRIPTURE:** *John 11:17-27, 38-44*

THE doctrine of the resurrection is the only hope held out in the Scriptures for a future life after death. And yet, both by Christian and non-Christian alike, it is perhaps the least understood and least believed statement of God's method of achieving salvation for mankind.

All the various 'no-death' theories rule out the Bible's teachings concerning the resurrection of the dead. If no one really dies, then there are no dead to be resurrected. But when we accept the Bible's teachings that death is the penalty for sin, and that there is no hope of life beyond the grave at all except through a resurrection of the dead, then it is natural to inquire concerning the details of the resurrection. Thinkers in Paul's day did the same, and he expresses their question thus: "Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what bodies do they come?"—I Cor. 15:35

Paul answers this question, saying, "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, . . . but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." (I Cor. 15:36-38) Two great truths are set forth in this passage. One is the fact, as we have previously stated, that there must be death in order for there to be a resurrection of the dead—"That which thou sowest [in death] is not quickened [made alive], except it die." It would seem that even in Paul's day there were those who denied the reality of death.

The other truth here set forth is that the body we sow in death is not the body which will be restored in the resurrection. By this statement Paul robs many theologians of the only apparent way of harmonizing their no-death theories with the Bible's teachings of the resurrection; for, say they, while the 'immortal soul' does not die, it is the dead body which is to be resurrected. Certain creeds state it this way: "I believe in the resurrection of the body."

But Paul does not agree with this, for he says, "Thou sowest not [in death] that body which shall be." In our English versions of the Bible, the pronoun 'it' is used to describe that which is to be restored to life in the resurrection. Thus 'it' is not a so-called immortal soul, for if it were, it could not die, and Paul insists that there has to be death in order to have a resurrection of the dead. Neither is the 'it' the body, for as we have seen, the body sown in death is not the body to be restored in the resurrection.

The matter is not a complex one. The 'it' simply refers to one's personality, a personality which has developed from infancy through all the years of life. In the resurrection it is this identity or mind of the individual which will be given life in a new body. It will indeed be a miracle because the body which now houses the mind dies, and this 'life recording' is later given a new body in which to function. It is this that will be done by divine power in the resurrection.

Certainly the great Creator, who, as the Bible says, knows the number of the stars, and has given them all names, will have no difficulty with the resources available to him, in preserving the identity of all the millions who have died, and restoring them to life in the resurrection. It is just this that the Creator of all life has promised to do!

All mankind are included in the statement in Isaiah: "The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: and they shall obtain joy and gladness."—Isa. 35:10 □

## Good News for All People

**KEY VERSE:** *"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."*—Acts 11:9

**SELECTED SCRIPTURE:** Acts 11:1-18

WHEN the time came in the divine plan for the Gospel to go to the Gentiles, miracles were required to prepare the mind of Peter to accept this broadened ministry and to cooperate in it.

Through the Prophet Amos, God had said to the nation of Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2) It was in keeping with this that when Jesus first sent his disciples into the ministry he said to them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."—Matt. 10:5,6

After his resurrection, Jesus broadened the scope of his commission, saying to his disciples, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) But the uttermost part of the earth at that time was not a large territory. Gathered at Jerusalem at Pentecost were devout Jews "out of every nation under heaven." (Acts 2:5) So the apostles could have misunderstood Jesus' commission, supposing that they were to witness merely to Jews who lived in the uttermost parts of the earth.

The Gentiles were looked upon by the Jews as being unclean; hence the appropriateness, in the vision, of the unclean animals let down from heaven. So when, as a result of the instructions of an angel to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, to send for Peter, and he met and conversed with those who had come for him, he began to see the meaning of the vision. When Peter arrived at the home of Cornelius and preached the Gospel to

him and to his household, another miracle occurred—a miracle identical with the one all the disciples had witnessed at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the Jewish believers there. Peter knew beyond doubt that this was a token God had accepted these Gentile converts.

Now Peter recognized that in truth God was "no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:34,35) God had never been a respecter of persons. It was merely that he had made special promises to the natural descendants of Abraham, and he was faithful to those promises until the time limit he had placed upon them had expired. God had always loved the people of all nations, and so did Jesus. Indeed, Jesus laid down his life for the sins of the whole world.

But God had entered into a special covenant with the natural descendants of Abraham. God promised Abraham that through his seed he would bless all the families of the earth, and he had said to the Israelites, Abraham's natural seed, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: . . . ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."—Exod. 19:5,6

This implied that the seed of blessing promised to Abraham would be made up exclusively from his natural descendants, if, by their faithfulness, they qualified for this high honor. But the nation as a whole did not qualify. As the plan of God unfolds, it is revealed that, primarily, Jesus is the promised seed of Abraham. (Ga. 3:8,16) But Jesus will have joint-heirs. (Rom. 8:17) These will be those who follow him, suffering and dying with him. This faith seed is made up of both Jews and Gentiles, although these distinctions vanish as they all merge into the oneness of Christ.—Gal. 3:27-29

And so it is incumbent upon us today to witness the Gospel worldwide as opportunity permits since it is God's purpose that those called should come "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation."—Rev. 5:9 □

# Christian Life and Doctrine

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TIMES AND SIGNS—PART 7

## The Rise and Fall of the Antichrist—Part I

*“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”*

*II Thessalonians 2:3*

NO STUDY of the prophecies pertaining to the end of the age and the establishment of Christ's kingdom could be considered complete without an examination of their testimony concerning the rise and fall of the foretold Antichrist. The Apostle John wrote that in his day there were already “many antichrists.” (I John 2:18) In this same text John wrote, “Ye have heard that Antichrist shall come.” Here the reference is to the many prophecies which foretell the rise of an iniquitous system which would be a counterfeit of Christ and his glorious kingdom of righteousness.

While, as John observes, any individual who opposes Christ and his teachings can properly be called an antichrist, our present study will be concerned with the prophecies which relate to **the** Antichrist which, as we shall see, is not an individual, but a great system which was to take the place of Christ—a clever counterfeit which

deceitfully would be established and rule in the name of Christ.

In the prophecies various names are applied to this wicked Antichrist system. In our text we have the names 'Man of sin', and 'son of perdition'. In verse seven of the same chapter we are given the description 'mystery of iniquity', and in verse eight, 'that Wicked', or 'wicked one'. Just as the Christ is composed of Jesus, the Head, and the church, his body, who will constitute the ruling house of the LORD in the long-promised kingdom, so the Antichrist is made up, not of one individual, but a whole company of individuals who together claim to be the kingdom of Christ. Thus in the minds and hearts of the unwary it takes the place of Christ's kingdom.

The importance of properly identifying the Antichrist, the Man of Sin, and of discerning its rise to power, is emphasized in Paul's two letters to the brethren in Thessalonica. In his first letter, fifth chapter, he explained that the "Day of the LORD [beginning with Christ's second presence on the earth] so cometh as a thief in the night." He pointed out that the world would not know about the coming of this day until, as a result, "sudden," or unexpected, destruction would come upon them. But to the disciples in Thessalonica Paul said, "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."—I Thess. 5:1-4

Some of the brethren to whom this epistle was written, earnestly desiring the return of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom, interpreted Paul's words to mean that Christ had already returned. If he were to be present as a thief in the night, and the brethren would know about it while the world would be in ignorance, what could Paul mean except that their Lord and Master had already returned? After all, these brethren knew that before Jesus returned to heaven he was invisible to human eyes except

as he miraculously manifested himself to them. And why could he not thus be present again? they reasoned.

When writing to these brethren the second time, Paul endeavored to correct this misunderstanding of what he meant in his first letter concerning the return of Christ and the Day of the LORD. He wrote that he wanted them not to be "shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." To this Paul added, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the son of perdition." — II Thess. 2:1-3

It is well to note, in passing, that Paul did not write to the brethren at Thessalonica and say that they were wrong in their understanding of the manner of Christ's return and second presence. He did not say that it was preposterous for them to believe the Day of the LORD had arrived, for if that be true, the earth would have been destroyed and they, as disciples of Christ, would have been taken up in a rapture to be with the Lord in the literal air. No, Paul knew the brethren had the proper understanding of the manner of Christ's second presence, that he would be here as a 'thief in the night'. He knew, just as Jesus explained, that in the beginning of the Day of the LORD, people would continue on about their usual affairs of life—eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage—not knowing the significance of the time in which they were living.

Knowing, therefore, that the brethren at Thessalonica were correct in their understanding of the manner of Christ's presence, Paul's argument against their erroneous conclusion that he had already returned was simply the fact that there were certain prophecies descriptive of events which were to occur between Christ's first and second advents which had not yet been fulfilled. "That day shall



not come," Paul explained, "except [until] there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the son of perdition."—II Thess 2:3

Nineteen centuries have passed since Paul wrote these words explaining that there would come a great falling away from the Christian faith—an apostasy—and that there would develop and be revealed a Man of Sin, a son of perdition, and that this would occur before the Lord returned. Is it now possible, looking back down the corridor of these centuries, to see the development of this foretold Antichrist? Has Paul's prophecy been fulfilled to an extent that makes it unnecessary longer to wait for this development before we can be assured we have reached the end of the age, and that the Day of the LORD is now, indeed, at hand?

We believe so!

There is a mistaken idea, held and proclaimed by some, that the Man of Sin, the Antichrist, is an individual who is yet to appear in the world, and who will be so clever as to deceive practically all mankind into believing that he is God, and, furthermore, that this master deceiver will seat himself in a rebuilt, literal temple in Jerusalem. This theory is at once seen to be in error in view of the fact as explained by Paul, that the spirit, or influence, of the Antichrist or Man of Sin was already working in his day, and its full manifestation awaited only the removal of certain hindrances which then prevented its development.

"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" Paul wrote to the Thessalonian brethren. "and now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed."—II Thess. 2:5-8

In this second chapter of Thessalonians, Paul refers to the Antichrist as the 'mystery of iniquity', and 'that Wicked' or 'Wicked One'. These names clearly show that the apostle is not writing about an individual, but a system, for this is in contrast with the true mystery of God, referred to in the New Testament.

Concerning the true mystery 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: whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to the saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." — Col. 1:24-27

Here the Apostle Paul emphasizes one of the great truths of the true Gospel, which is that the disciples of Christ are called to suffer and die with him, so they might live and reign with him. When James and John asked Jesus if they might sit, one on his right hand and the other on his left hand in his kingdom, the Master explained to them that the only condition upon which they could be with him at all in his kingdom was to drink of his cup of suffering, and be baptized with his death baptism. In other words, in order to reign with Christ, they must first of all suffer and die with him.

Those who are thus suffering and dying with Jesus are represented as being baptized into his mystical body. In this way they become a part of the Christ, for, as Paul explains, "The body is not one member, but many," and again, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (I Cor. 12:14,27) It is this association with Christ in suffering and death of those who are energized to

faithfulness by the hope of reigning with him, that Paul describes as the mystery—a mystery hidden through ages and generations, made known only with the coming of Jesus and the establishment of the Early Church. Here, then, is the true mystery. It pertains to the association of Jesus and his followers in suffering and death now, and together reigning in glory in the future. The mystery of iniquity must, therefore, also involve more than one individual. Besides, if it is the counterfeit of the true, it must involve the idea of reigning in a kingdom.

In a further description of the mystery of iniquity, Paul wrote that his coming would be “after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” (II Thess. 2:9) From this, we should expect to find evidence of the handiwork of Satan. And this is not difficult. Near the beginning of Jesus’ ministry Satan appeared to him presenting certain temptations. One of them was that if Jesus would fall down and worship Satan, he would be given all the kingdoms of the world. Jesus knew if he proved faithful he would eventually be the ruler of the world; but here Satan was offering him this kingly position without the necessity of suffering and dying. By acknowledging Satan as overlord, Jesus could enter into his rulership right away.

Clearly, then, this is one of the workings of Satan. It is a way by which he attempts to lead astray those who profess to be guided by the instruction of the LORD’S Word. Jesus did not yield to this temptation, but later, after his faithful apostles fell asleep in death, the vast majority of his followers became confused and were easy prey to the delusion of reigning now. Paul rebuked those having this disposition. (I Cor. 4:8) They overlooked the invitation to suffer and die with Jesus, and, as a group, joined hands with civil governments, and called this unholy union Christ’s kingdom.

Paul wrote, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work," and so it did. In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul said, ironically, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." (I Cor. 4:8) Paul did not mean that the church at Corinth had actually united with the civil government and was participating in it as rulers. What he did mean was that the desire to escape sacrifice and become kings, or rulers, was evident in their midst. Perhaps they even surmised that in some manner they were reigning with Christ.

It is contrary to human desires to sacrifice and suffer. Man was created to be the king of earth, and in his fallen state often overlooks the fact that he was not created to lord it over his fellow-man. So the desire to escape suffering, and the disposition to rule, have made many followers of Jesus throughout the age easy victims to Satan's temptation to reign as kings. While Paul reveals that this attitude was prevalent in the church at Corinth, we are not to suppose that it was, even that early in the age, limited to this one congregation of the disciples.

Satan, of course, was the mastermind which used every opportunity to foster this erroneous viewpoint. We know this from the fact that he attempted to maneuver Jesus into the same false position. However, not much progress could be made along this line in the Early Church, for, as Paul explained, "He who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." (II Thess. 2:7) The Greek word in this text, translated letteth, literally means 'to hold down'. Paul's explanation is that in his day there was a powerful influence holding down the ambitions of those in the church who would like to become rulers, hindering their attaining to this position, except in their desires.

Nor is it difficult to discover what that hindering

influence was. At that time the Roman Empire controlled the so-called civilized world. The Emperor of Rome was not only the civil head of the empire, but the religious ruler as well. One of his titles was Pontifex Maximus, meaning 'chief religious ruler'. While under this arrangement a great deal of religious freedom was granted to minority religious groups, such as the Jews in Israel, none was permitted to share in the religious rulership of the empire. The Jews, for instance, were not permitted to imprison one of their own people who, according to their law, was a criminal. Only the Roman civil authorities could do this. That is why Jesus was brought before Pilate to be sentenced to death.

It is manifest, then, that professing Christians of that time, no matter how ambitious for power they might have been, could not make any headway in attaining positions of religious authority. They were indeed held down by the fact that the position which they coveted was, for the time, firmly held by another. We are not to suppose, of course, that any one individual, or even group, in the Early Church held any such exalted ambition as to become religious ruler of the Roman Empire. But the disposition to rule was there. This is what Paul tells us.

The fact that the spirit to be manifested in the mystery of iniquity was even then working, proves that this iniquitous thing which Paul describes is not something that would suddenly appear on the scene down here at this end of the age. Rather, it is a system, a counterfeit ruling system, the development of which would begin soon after the death of the apostles, and come to full fruition as soon as that which hindered was removed. Let us, then, take a brief glance through the pages of church history and see what we find.

### **A "Falling Away"**

The Book of Acts, and the epistles of Paul, Peter,

James, Jude, and John constitute the most reliable historical records there are concerning conditions in the Apostolic Church, also of the hopes and aims of the believers. Within the fellowship of the saints at that time there were not many wise or noble according to the standards of this world. There were some who, had they continued in the world and followed worldly pursuits, would doubtless have made names for themselves. There was, for example, Luke the physician, and Paul the lawyer and logician.

Generally speaking, however, the members of the Early Church were just ordinary folk whose circumstances in life had prepared their hearts to appreciate the message of hope contained in the Gospel of Christ, the good news of redemption from sin and of resurrection from death. They rejoiced in the assurance that this hope of life in the resurrection would be translated into reality when Christ returned to establish his kingdom, his government. Both the Jewish and Gentile Christians were happy in the belief that there was to be a better government ruling the world than the Roman Empire.

The Early Church did not seek influence in the world, but was taught to be subject to the existing authority and power. While the Jewish religious leaders were often violent in their persecution of Christians, particularly the apostles, the Gentile rulers were not disposed to hinder the simple activities of the church; except on occasions when they thought it would help to pacify those who were so bitterly opposed.

With the exception of the individuals here and there who were ambitious to 'reign', such as we have noted, the believers in the Early Church understood that their privilege then was to serve, suffer, and die as ambassadors for Christ in an unfriendly world. They understood clearly that Satan, the Devil, was the spiritual ruler of the present

(Continued on page 37)

# The Bible Answers

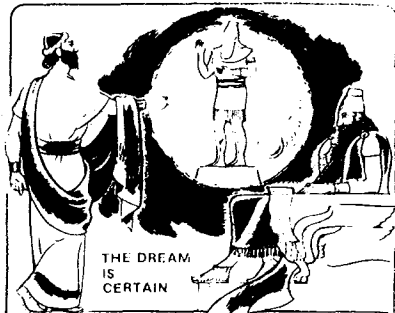
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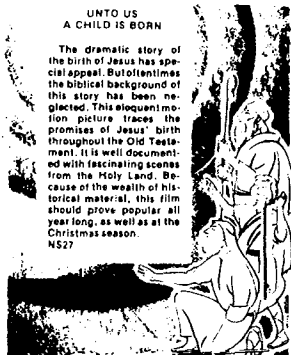
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<b>INDIANA</b> Hammond LaPorte	WJOB 1230 WCOE-FM 96.7	8:30 a.m. 10:00 a.m.	<b>TENNESSEE</b> Memphis	WMSO 640	10:00 a.m.
<b>KANSAS</b> Goodland	KLOE 730	8:15 a.m.	<b>TEXAS</b> Fort Worth Pearsall	KFJZ 870 KWVG 1280	6:15 a.m. 9:15 a.m.
<b>KENTUCKY</b> Bowling Green Winchester	WLBJ 1410 WHRS	8:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	<b>VIRGINIA</b> Richmond	WGGM 1410	7:45 a.m.
<b>MARYLAND</b> Baltimore	WCBM 68	6:45 a.m.	<b>WASHINGTON</b> Clarkston Everett Spokane Tacoma Yakima	KCLK 1430 KWYZ 1230 KUDY 1280 KANT 1360 KUTI 980	10:00 a.m. 9:30 a.m. 9:45 a.m. 7:30 a.m. 6:45 a.m.
<b>MAINE</b> Portland	WDOS-FM 106.3	9:45 a.m.			

**WISCONSIN**  
Milwaukee WNOV 85.6 7:00 a.m.

**WYOMING**  
Cheyenne KSHY 1370 10:15 a.m.  
Sheridan KWYO 1410 12:00 noon

**PUERTO RICO**  
Aguadilla WABA (Fri.) 8:00 p.m.

### U.S. BROADCASTS-Spanish

**ARIZONA**  
Nogales KFBR 1340 9:00 a.m.

**FLORIDA**  
Miami WRHC 8:30 a.m.

### CANADIAN BROADCASTS

**ALBERTA**  
Wetaskin CJOI-1440 7:45 a.m.  
Lethbridge CJOC-1220 7:15 a.m.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA**  
Abbotsford CFVR-810 8:30 p.m.  
Castlegar CKQR-760 8:45 a.m.  
Duncan CKAY-1500 9:00 a.m.  
Duncan CKAY-1500 7:30 p.m.  
Grand Forks CKGF-1340 9:00 a.m.

**LABRADOR**  
Churchill Falls CFCL-FM 97.9 7:15 a.m.

**MANITOBA**  
Winnipeg CKJS-810 9:00 a.m.

**NEWFOUNDLAND**  
Corner Brook CFCB 570 7:15 a.m.  
Deer Lake CFDL-FM 97.9 7:15 a.m.  
Goose Bay CFLN 1230 7:15 a.m.  
Port au Choix CFNW 790 7:15 a.m.  
Pt. aux Basques CFCN 1230 7:15 a.m.  
St. Andrews CFCV-FM 97.7 7:15 a.m.  
St. Anthony CFNN-FM 97.9 7:15 a.m.  
Stephenville CFSX-910 7:15 a.m.  
Wabush CFLW-1340 7:15 a.m.

**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**  
Yellowknife CJCD-1240 9:00 a.m.

**ONTARIO**  
Hamilton CKOC-1150 7:00 a.m.  
Leamington CHYR-710 5:00 p.m.  
St. Thomas CHLO-1570 10:45 a.m.

**QUEBEC**  
Montreal CFMB-1410 5:15 p.m.

**SASKATCHEWAN**  
Prince Albert CKBI-900 7:30 a.m.  
Weyburn CFSL-1190 7:15 a.m.

**YUKON**  
Whitehorse CKRW-610 9:30 a.m.

### OVERSEAS BROADCASTS

**BRITISH ISLES**  
Radio Caroline-Tues. KHZ 962 8:45 p.m.

**BRITISH WEST INDIES**  
Grand Cayman Radio Cayman 9:30 a.m.

**CEYLON**  
Columbo-Sat. Radio Sri Lanka 7:15 p.m.

**HONG KONG**  
Radio Villa Verde-Fri. 6:00 p.m.

**ITALY (Italian)**  
Europa Radio Milano 83.3-FM 11:30 a.m.  
Euro Tele Radio Calabria-Fri. MHZ 102 5:30 p.m.  
Radio Corleone Centrale FM-88-500 FM-92 11:00 a.m.

**MEXICO (Spanish)**  
Mazatlan XECQ 8:30 a.m.

**NEW ZEALAND**  
Dunedin 4XD 11:15 a.m.  
Whakatane IXX 6:45 a.m.

**NIGERIA**  
Radio Africa-Wed. 8:00 p.m.

**PANAMA**  
Panama City HOQ 1250 10:30 a.m.

**PHILIPPINES**  
Manila-Sat. DWXX 1026KH2 7:15 p.m.

**SOUTH AFRICA**  
Joubert Park-Thurs. SWAZI Music  
Radio 1400 & short-wave 49 & 60 9:00 p.m.

**SPAIN (Spanish)**  
Radio Gerona-Mon. 9:45 p.m.

**TONGA**  
Nuku' Alofa-Mon.. 10:15 a.m.

**URUGUAY (Spanish)**  
Montevideo-Sun.. Radio El Espectador 810 9:15 a.m.

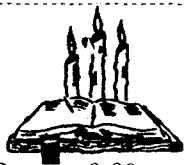
**VIRGIN ISLANDS**  
St. Croix WSTX 970 9:00 a.m.

# The BIBLE ANSWERS

## REGULAR TELEVISION BROADCASTS

We regret we are unable to furnish the day and time of many of the broadcasts for the following stations:

<b>CALIFORNIA</b> Chico (Sun.)	KMPN-5	8:30 p.m.	<b>MICHIGAN</b> Ann Arbor (Sun.)	WIHT-31	12:00 noon
<b>FLORIDA</b> Miami Jacksonville	WKID Channel 17		<b>MISSISSIPPI</b> Jackson	WAPT	
<b>GEORGIA</b> Albany (Sun.)	WTSG-31	9:30 a.m.	<b>MISSOURI</b> Springfield	KOLR	
Atlanta	WATL		<b>NEW MEXICO</b> Roswell	KSWS	
<b>ILLINOIS</b> Champaign- Springfield	WEHW		<b>NORTH CAROLINA</b> Hickory	WHKY	
<b>IOWA</b> Cedar Rapids	KTS-13		<b>OHIO</b> Dayton	WHIO	
Mt. Vernon-	WMVL Cable	7:00 a.m.	<b>TEXAS</b> Lubbock	KCBD	
Lisbon (Every weekday)			<b>WEST VIRGINIA</b> Logan (Mon.)	Channel 12	
	<b>GUAM</b> (Sun.)		<b>KUAM</b>		9:00 a.m.



## SATELLITE CABLE BROADCASTS

EVERY Sunday morning, over four hundred cable stations air **The Bible Answers** TV program in forty-three states and Puerto Rico, at 9:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, 8:00 a.m. Central Standard Time, 7:00 a.m. Rocky Mountain Standard Time, and 6:00 a.m. Pacific Standard Time.

If you subscribe to cable TV, consult the listing in your local newspaper or guide, for the station in your area which shows these fine educational programs. In some cases, stations tape the programs and show them at a different time than that mentioned above. You may have to check the complete listings to locate **The Bible Answers** programs in your city. We are sure you and your family will find these programs inspiring and faith strengthening, well worth watching. **If you own a satellite dish**, the Bible programs can be seen on SATCOM F3, TRANSPONDER-6, at the same times listed above. ☐

(Continued from page 30)

world, and that they could not expect to have any share in the affairs of the world unless they compromised with the Devil, and this they would not do.

With the death of the apostles, however, this situation began to change. Many years had passed since the angels had said to the apostles at the time of Jesus' ascension, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11) As the increasing number of years separated them farther from this promise, the hope of Christ's return began to lose its vitality in the hearts of many.

Besides, the original generation of believers all passed away in death, and each succeeding generation was farther removed from those who had direct contact with Jesus, and whose outlook was centered so completely on his return and the establishment of his kingdom. As the hope of the king's return to set up a kingdom became dim, it was but natural that the vast majority of believers should allow themselves to become more and more associated with the world and worldly governments.

The complete falling away from the faith once delivered unto the saints did not occur overnight. It was a gradual deterioration of faith, hope, and practice. As believers increased in numbers and influence, civil rulers took more notice, and bitter persecutions arose. But this did not stop the growth of the church.

While, as it is stated in **Lord's "Old Roman World,"** the third century saw the church more powerful as an institution: "It was not until the fourth century—when imperial persecution had stopped; when Constantine (the Roman Emperor) was converted; . . . [that] the church was allied with the state; . . . the early faith itself was corrupted; . . . [and] superstition and vain philosophy had entered the

ranks of the faithful.”

Quoting further, the same historian says, “When Christianity became the religion of the court and of the fashionable classes, it was used to support the very evils against which it originally protested. The church was not only impregnated with the errors of pagan philosophy, but it adopted many of the ceremonies of oriental worship. . . . The churches became, in the fourth century, as imposing as the old temples of idolatry.”

Obviously, the historian uses the term ‘Christianity’ in an accommodated sense when he speaks of the time when Christianity became the religion of the court, for by this time the falling away from true Christianity was so complete that the institution which bore the name was, in reality, no longer Christian at all.

Briefly stated, the doctrines of Christianity are these:

Man was created in the image of God, and to enjoy everlasting life on earth, conditional upon obedience to divine law. He disobeyed, and was sentenced to death. God, in his love, provided redemption from death through his Son, Christ Jesus, who returns to earth to establish a kingdom, through the agencies of which redeemed man will be restored to his lost home on earth. The followers of Jesus during the intervening age have the opportunity of suffering and dying with him and thereby proving worthy to live and reign with him in the spiritual phase of his kingdom.

By the fourth century, when the church united with the state, not a vestige of this truth of Christianity was still held by its responsible leaders. In their corrupted theology, man was not created to live on the earth forever, but to remain here only temporarily, and then, through the ‘gateway’ of death to enter heaven, hell, or purgatory. Man, they believed, was not sentenced to death. To them he

was immortal and could not die. Jesus did not die as man's Redeemer, but God, incarnate in a human body, made a pretense of suffering and dying. Christ does not return to establish a kingdom, but the kingdom had already been established by the church's illicit union with the state. The hope of believers is not to live and reign with Christ, but, by living as best they can now, to escape as many years of torment in purgatory as possible, and eventually be transferred to heaven. Such was the extent to which erroneous beliefs had grown.

This does not imply that there was no one who still held to one or more of the original teachings of Jesus and the apostles. Doubtless there were some, although helpless to do anything except to endure what they could not change. They were as isolated grains of "wheat" in the field which, by the fourth century, had been almost completely overgrown with "tares." — Matt. 13:24-30; 36-43

### **The "Man of Sin"**

We do not call attention to this falling away from the original faith of the Gospel as being in itself proof that the apostate church had become the Antichrist, although this apostasy was one of the essential elements of the mystery of iniquity. Certainly that which was Christian could not be anti-Christian, or anti-Christ. This seems obvious. Nevertheless, it was not the apostate church alone which constituted the Antichrist, or Man of Sin, but the union of that church with the state, the civil governments, to constitute a ruling organization, or institution.

The false church, apart from its alliance with civil governments, is represented in the Book of Revelation as a harlot woman. The true church is, throughout the Scriptures, by contrast, symbolized by a chaste woman, a virgin, waiting for the coming of her bridegroom, Christ, to be united with him in marriage and to share his kingdom

glory. — II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 12:1; 19:7; 21:2, 10; 17:1-6, 15, 18; 18:2, 3, 9, 10; 19:2

In the Book of Revelation, John pictures the false church, the "harlot," as making the nations drunk with the "wine of her fornication"; the doctrine pertaining to the union of church and state. This illicit union is properly designated fornication, for the church, by profession, was supposed to be betrothed to Christ, and to wait for his return to be united with him in marriage. Instead, the fallen away or apostate church decided not to wait for Christ to return, but to unite with the civil powers of the earth, and reign together with them.

### **The Roman Hierarchy**

The union of church and state became a reality under Constantine, and from that time on there developed a rapid concentration of power in the hands of the bishop of Rome, who in due course became the head bishop, or pope. Soon the pope was in a position to crown and uncrown the rulers of Europe. Not only did the church accept and use the power of the state to further its own ambitious schemes, but it also dictated the policies of the civil rulers. Thus, in the pope there came to be a combination of civil and religious authority more arbitrary and totalitarian than anything the world had ever known. And it was all done in the name of Christ.

How true is the description which Paul gave of this iniquitous system. He wrote, "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." — II Thess. 2:4

As we have noted, the emperors of the pagan Roman Empire assumed the title, Pontifex Maximus, meaning 'chief religious ruler'. As such, they were looked up to as gods by their deluded subjects. When papal Rome



supplanted pagan Rome, the popes took this title. Thus they exalted themselves above the former pagan gods, even taking the place of the chief representative of these, the Roman emperor.

More than that, this position supplanted that of the true God in the hearts of most believers, and substituted the church-state alliance for the true kingdom and the true temple, the meeting place between God and man. In other words, all gods, the true and living God, and the false gods of the heathen, were set aside, and their places taken by this system which was styled Christ's kingdom. One quotation from a Roman Catholic writer will suffice to emphasize the accuracy of Paul's forecast of the Man of Sin. It is from "**Ecclesiastical Dictionary**," a standard Roman Catholic authority, and reads:

"The pope is of such dignity and highness that he is not simply a man but, as it were, God, and the vicar of God. . . . Hence the pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven, of earth and of hell. Nay, the pope's excellence and power is not only above heavenly, terrestrial and infernal things, but he is also above angels, and is their superior; so that if it were possible that angels could err from the faith, or entertain sentiments contrary thereto, they could be judged and excommunicated by the pope. . . . He is of such great dignity and power that he occupies one and the same tribunal with Christ; so that whatsoever the pope does seems to proceed from the mouth of God. . . . The pope is, as it were, God on earth, the only prince of the faithful of Christ, the greatest king of all kings, possessing the plentitude of power; to whom the government of the earthly and heavenly kingdom is entrusted." This Catholic writer further adds that "the pope can sometimes counteract divine law by limiting and explaining it."

But let us recognize that these claims are made for

the head of a system—not a particular pope. And while the fact that this system has as its head this one man is doubtless the reason it is called the **Man** of Sin, it is the system itself that is called the Antichrist, which Paul said must develop before the return of Christ, and be destroyed by the brightness of his coming, or presence.

We have seen, then, by way of summation, that there did come a great falling away from the faith once delivered unto the saints; yea, virtually a complete falling away so far as the governing leaders in the nominal church were concerned. We have seen how that desire for power, which began to manifest itself even in the Apostolic Church, ultimately did find expression through the union of church and state. We have traced, though briefly, the persecution against the true saints of God, perpetrated by the false church which illicitly united with the kings of the earth. We have also noted the accuracy with which Paul foretold the claims of this false system—the Man of Sin—to be the supreme religious and civil authority in the earth, capable even, according to its claims, of modifying the laws of God.

With these facts before us, there can be no doubt in the mind of any reasonable person that the foretold Antichrist has already appeared, and that its unholy and counterfeit reign as the kingdom of Christ is now a historical reality. We have presented only briefly the historical evidence of the fulfillment of the Antichrist prophecies, but all reliable church historians verify the facts as we have presented them, even though it is doubtful if many of them recognized the prophetic meaning of these facts.

This recognition of the fulfillment of prophecy would be of no special interest to us, except to satisfy the curiosity, but for the fact that the reign of Antichrist was to take place before the return of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom. Since, therefore, the Antichrist has already

appeared, it becomes just one more reason to believe that the true kingdom of Christ, with all its blessings of peace and joy and life, is near. ☐

*"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to the promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—II Pet. 3:11-13*

For your newspaper:

To the right is a suggestion for a small advertisement in your local newspaper. This outline is designed for three and one-half inches in one column.

\* \* \*

### January Special

On Sunday, January 18th, "Frank and Ernest" will discuss a topic of interest to many. Attractive circulars will be made available to you for announcing this program, and you are invited to send for as many as you can use. They are free. Address your request to: **The Dawn, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.**

### "Frank & Ernest"

Listen to these interesting topics to be discussed on

Sundays on  
**WHL D—1270**  
**12:00 noon**

Jan. 4-God Has a Plan  
Jan. 11-The Lord's Witness  
Jan. 18-The Judgment Day  
Jan. 25-Christian Baptism

SEND FOR the free booklet  
offered after each broadcast:

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

# Talking Things Over

## Statistical Report

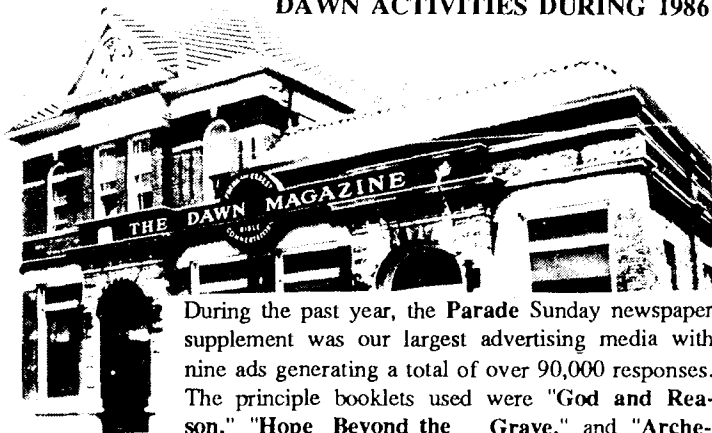
for the year ended September 30, 1986

	Receipts	Expenditures
General Fund.....	\$221,318.45	
Radio (Domestic Only).....	16,030.00	\$113,249.36
Television.....	8,016.99	91,774.42
Traveling Speakers (USA & Overseas).....	1,854.32	20,759.63
Overseas (Incl. Radio).....	20.00	64,406.98
Recorded Lecture Service..	909.55	1,064.23
Free Literature.....	3,349.71	3,349.71
Free Subscriptions.....	202.00	202.00
Sales of Dawn Publications.....	33,379.48	297,346.78
Advertising (Mag. & Newsp.)	50,360.00	53,181.53
Film Service.....	45.00	33,456.68
Video Tape Service.....	1,529.50	
Other (Interest, Securities, etc.)..	<u>92,933.45</u>	
<b>Total before bequests.....</b>	<b>\$429,948.45</b>	<b>\$678,791.32</b>
<b>Bequests received.....</b>	<b><u>619,502.71</u></b>	
	<b><u>\$1,049,451.16</u></b>	<b><u>\$678,791.32</u></b>

FOR the fiscal year reported, the Dawn had an operating loss, before bequests, of \$248,842.87. Bequests in the amount of \$619, 502.71 made up this loss and posted a total net gain of \$370,659.84.

Income from contributions was down 7% from the prior year, while expenses showed an increase of 4%. It is apparent that the LORD is still making it possible for the Word of truth to go forth, and our desire is to make the media for its promulgation—radio and TV, books, booklets, films, tapes, and video tapes—available to all at the lowest possible price. Much of it is free.

The brethren of the Dawn rejoice in sharing with you the privileges of doing this work, especially in these closing days of the Gospel Age when our message of hope is so much needed by a troubled world. May the LORD continue to bless and direct us all!



During the past year, the **Parade** Sunday newspaper supplement was our largest advertising media with nine ads generating a total of over 90,000 responses. The principle booklets used were "God and Reason," "Hope Beyond the Grave," and "Archaeology Proves the Bible." Sample Dawn magazines, as well as publication catalogs accompanied each mailing. The secondary response to this was very good, with over 1,000 new subscriptions to **The Dawn** magazine, and many other books and booklets requested.

**Nationwide Shopper**, through their advertising program, produced about 6,000 requests per month for the booklet "Armageddon, then World Peace." Because of the wide geographic range of their advertising, we received many responses from areas outside the continental limits of the United States.

We have recently initiated an advertising program of a similar kind using card packages through a New York City company. The first returns, numbering 2,500, have just been received at this writing, and we are in hopes that this will also prove to be a valuable source for witnessing.

In addition to the above, ads have been placed in other publications. The "**Readers' Digest**," both in a German issue, and one in the French language, have produced close to 1,000 responses each. **Farmer's Almanac** and **Greer's Almanac** in the United States continue to bring a supply of letters. In prospect a nationwide ad in the **Readers' Digest** is planned for the early spring of next year.

**The Dawn** magazine is still published on a monthly basis, with a total circulation of about 17,000. In addition to this, **The Dawn** is also printed in French, German, Spanish, Greek, Italian, and Polish.

Weekly broadcasting of the "**Frank and Ernest**" radio program continues over 101 radio stations. Recently a contract was signed with radio station WOR in New York, with a power output of 50,000 watts. It blankets the entire Metropolitan New York area, covering about 60,000,000 in population. Thus far the responses have been good. During 1986, a station started airing our programs in Hong Kong, which also covers a very large populace, extending into mainland China. So far, returns have been very small. Radio Caroline in Europe is still going strong, with very good responses coming in every week. Two powerful stations in Africa are still on the air, reaching much of the continent. Also, a station in Ceylon, as well as one in the Philippines, bring the truth to the other side of the world. A new station in Lima, Peru is producing a weekly supply of responses in the Spanish language. Canada now has twenty-five radio stations broadcasting the truth.

The listings on pages 34 and 35 of this issue of **The Dawn** indicate that the truth is being carried to many places in the world over radio waves.

Our contact with Tempo Television has been renewed. Through them **The Bible Answers** program is picked up and rebroadcast by over 600 cable stations weekly.

The Dawn Film Department continues to serve the needs of schools, churches, nursing homes, and other institutions with Bible films. The Recorded Lecture Departments both here and in England have taped lectures and convention talks available for brethren who write in requesting this service. The Video Tape Service maintains a very similar operation with taped lectures and convention talks, as well as making available all of **The Bible Answers** programs on half-inch video tape.

The Pilgrim Service is still maintained, serving classes, when possible, in the United States and Canada, as well as sending two or three brethren overseas each year, and inviting speakers from other countries to the United States. ☐

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***"Ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the  
uttermost parts of the earth."**—Acts 1:8*

# Encouraging Letters

## READS CAREFULLY

*Gentlemen: I get The Dawn magazine, which I read very carefully and have introduced to my family and friends. It is good for Sunday School purposes, and for home reading. I am a Senior Citizen and I find my joy in reading and studying The Dawn. I have ordered several pamphlets and also, "People of the Bible." I am interested, and hope to continue. Respectfully yours. —GA*

## THANKFUL PEOPLE

*Gentlemen: Please send me twenty-five copies of your wonderful "Hope" booklet. I have exhausted what I last ordered, and the people I give them to just can't thank me and you people enough. —CT*

## WONDERFUL HOPE

*Dear Sirs: Please renew my subscription to The Dawn for five years. I have been receiving The Dawn for two years now, and feel it is a wonderful hope, and that someday all people will have the same feeling. Lovingly. —Canada*

## ANXIOUS FOR THE DAWN

*Dear Bible Students: I am always so anxious to read The Dawn magazine. It helps me keep in close touch with our God and his Son, Jesus Christ, and to understand the Bible much better. God bless each of you for this wonderful work you are doing. And I thank you for the understanding I have received from your magazine for more than twenty years. A Friend in Christ. —NY*

## SEARCHING

*To Whom It May Concern: Please send me the booklet, "God's Plan." I watched your program on television. I am a church-goer, but would like to read your booklet as I am still searching. Thank you. —NJ*

## FAITH STRENGTHENED

*Dawn Publications: I have enjoyed studying your magazine, The Dawn. It has strengthened my faith in the LORD, and I enjoy telling my friends about it. I pray the good LORD will continue to bless you. —MS*

## ENCOURAGING MESSAGE

*Dear "Frank and Ernest":  
Greetings in Jesus' name! I  
would like to receive that lit-  
tle booklet, "God and Rea-  
son," that you speak of on  
Sunday mornings on your  
radio programs here. Thank  
you for offering it on the air.  
Your messages are very en-  
couraging in these bad times.  
God bless you!—IL*

## MOST INSPIRING BELIEFS

*To Whom It May Concern:  
A few months ago I was intro-  
duced by a friend to a copy of  
your book, "The Divine Plan  
of the Ages," and also to  
some of your Dawn publica-  
tions. After careful studying  
and prayer, I found your be-  
liefs most inspiring. I would  
like to continue these studies,  
and am therefore requesting  
several of your booklets,  
books, and the magazine, all  
of which were listed in one of  
your booklets entitled, "God  
Has a Plan." Along with this  
letter and list I am enclosing a  
money order to cover the  
price of the thirty pieces of  
literature I have ordered.  
Thank you for your time and  
patience in filling this order.  
—IL*

## "FOOD IN DUE SEASON"

*Dear Friends of the Dawn:  
Many thanks for your litera-  
ture sent to me last year. It is  
now time I renew my subscrip-  
tion for yet another year's en-  
joyment of your wonderful lit-  
tle magazine, The Dawn. My  
wife and I often say, "I don't  
know what we would do with-  
out it." It has been such a  
wonderful help to us, telling  
us God's truth in a manner we  
can understand, and so up-to-  
date with the times. We treat  
it as "food in due season" so  
aptly put in "The Divine Plan  
of the Ages." I feel sure this  
is how the great plan was in-  
tended to come to us for our  
daily use and guidance, and  
we are especially in need of it  
in these times we are going  
through. —CA*

## FOUND DAWN AT WORK

*Dear Sir: Enclosed is my  
check for renewal of my sub-  
scription. I read the book and  
when I am through I place it  
in the lounge of the local hos-  
pital where I do volunteer  
work. That is where I found  
the first one and liked it so  
much I became a subscriber.  
God bless you!—MA*



### TRIES TO TELL OTHERS

*Dear Friends of the Dawn: Just a note to let you know my brother and I still enjoy The Dawn as we have for many years. We believe the Bible the way you explain it and do not think anyone could ever change our minds. We try to tell others about God's great plan when we get an opportunity. May the LORD continue to bless you in your wonderful work, and we request a continued interest in your prayers. Yours in Christ. —VA*

### EASES LONELINESS

*Sirs: It was like a message from heaven when I received a copy of "Hope," as it helped to fill an irreplaceable void when my wife of fifty years passed on. When my spirits are low, it really helps to ease the pain of her absence, and the loneliness. I really get a great deal of consolation and satisfaction from reading The Dawn and your other publications. They have brought me a lot closer to God and to mankind. Thanking you for all your good work and words. Thanks again! —MT*

### TO USE IN BIBLE STUDY

*Gentlemen: Last November I sent you an order for five copies of "The People of the Bible." I gave them as gifts. My friends have decided to use them in our prayer group as we study the Bible. Could you please rush me seven more copies? We started reading it yesterday, and everyone enjoyed the book. Thank you. —OH*

### HAS MISSED THE DAWN

*Dear Friends: Since the passing of my beloved mother in 1969, I have not received The Dawn magazine. She always made sure I received them, and now, with many years having passed, I find I have truly missed its many fine articles. Therefore, please enter a new subscription for myself. Very truly yours. —CA*

### VERY INSPIRED

*Dawn Publications: I picked up your monthly booklet in the dentist's office and was very inspired. I would like to receive future issues to help in leading a daily devotional meeting. Thank you. —IN*

### **"MAKES SENSE"**

*Dear Frank and Ernest: I heard you on a California radio station years ago, and a friend of mine used to listen to you twenty years ago! I wish I had too! What you say makes sense. Please send me the booklet, "Hope Beyond the Grave." Thank you!—CA*

### **BLESSED BY LIGHT**

*Gentlemen: I want to tell you the LORD has richly blessed me through the literature you have published over the years. I cannot tell you how many times I have read through my copies of "Studies in the Scriptures." Each time I see something I had not seen before. I thank God you have continued to publish them so those of us who came along later could be blessed by the light which has shone on God's people who lived during the harvest period. I want to ask you if you have recorded anything on VCR tapes? More and more people are buying the machines, and it would be a wonderful way for the Word to reach people who don't have access to your television*

*or radio witness. Being a VCR owner I would very much like to have truth tapes to play to my family and friends. Keep up the good work. Your efforts are very much appreciated.—IN*

### **SEEKING FOR TRUTH**

*Dear Editor: Your magazine, The Dawn provokes deep consideration. Each reading is equally, if not more enjoyable. I labor under a compulsion to study the Bible and to search out the truth therein. I seek to know the truth. Where can I find a church that presents a teaching of the Bible in all its purity? I must compliment you on your staff of writers. The articles project a very comprehensive understanding of the Word of God. Please send me the booklets I have designated. These may answer many of the questions which fill my mind. It is my sincere hope that this letter will be the first of many. I have no desire to remain blind, or to be led by those who are. Too much is at stake—please help me! Praying that God's love will ever enfold you, I await your reply.—GA*

# **Christian Life and Doctrine**

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## **Habakkuk**

*"The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see."*

*Habakkuk 1:1*

THE word 'burden' at the beginning of this book is somewhat unexpected. The translators of the *Revised Standard Version* thought 'oracle' to be a better rendering of this Hebrew word, *massau*. *Strong's Concordance* gives the meaning as 'an utterance, chiefly a doom'. In Proverbs 30:1, and 31:1, the word also has been rendered 'prophecy'. But the thought conveyed by the word **burden** nicely expresses the prophet's emotions concerning the vision. God granted him a preview of judgment to come upon Israel, followed by punishment upon the heathen who were to be used by God to execute that judgment. Certainly the collected utterances of Habakkuk can well be categorized as 'doom'.

We know almost nothing about Habakkuk—where he lived, or for how long; who his parents were; nor can we be sure when he received his prophetic vision of the future. Because of the nature of the prophecy, most experts place the time of its pronouncement before Nebuchadnezzar marched with his armies to overthrow Jerusalem and take the Jews captive to Babylon. Conditions in Israel at that time had deteriorated to the point where the people were no better than the heathen nations surrounding them. They had forgotten about the special relationship they had with God, and their covenant with him.

### **CHAPTER ONE-Habakkuk's Complaint**

It is easy to understand Habakkuk's distress as he uttered this prayer: "O LORD, how long shall I cry and thou wilt not hear, even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! . . . For spoiling and violence are before me and there are that

raise up strife and contention. Therefore the Law is slacked and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth."—Hab. 1:2-4

Habakkuk saw violence, iniquity, and injustice go unpunished, the wicked oppress the righteous, and the law of God, which forbids such things, go unheeded. The opening verses of Habakkuk show that he complained repeatedly about these conditions: "Why don't you do something?" is his bewildered query to God. God was about to take steps to correct the situation, and he told Habakkuk, "Lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful [and from them shall proceed the judgment of these, **Margin**]."—Hab. 1:6,7

Thus, from this prophecy, Habakkuk knew what the future would hold for his people, for the LORD had prophesied that the Chaldeans, or Babylonians, would destroy everything. He acknowledged that they were ordained for the very purpose of the judgment and the correction of Israel, but he was confused as to why the LORD would use a nation so evil. (vs. 12) He asked: "Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?" Although Israel was a wicked nation, at least in Habakkuk's eyes they were better than the heathen, the Babylonians. How could God give a victory to Israel's enemy when that enemy was still worse than Israel? God's solution seemed to create more problems than it solved.

Wanting to understand this perplexing situation, Habakkuk stood upon his watch to "see what he [God] will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd." (2:1) Habakkuk dared to argue with God about the solution to his original complaint. He knew he deserved to be reprov'd for this, but he wanted to hear God's reasons for using the wicked heathen to punish Israel; it seemed such an improbable and unreasonable method. And God did explain the plan of action, and his reasons for it.

## CHAPTER TWO: Evil Will Not Really Triumph

"The LORD answered me and said, Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it because it will surely come, it will not tarry." (Hab. 2:2,3) What vision was the LORD talking about? What was it that Habakkuk was to write? The answer is the book itself: the burden that he saw. This includes what God had told him, as recorded in chapters one and two. Furthermore, he was told to write them on tables, or clay tablets, and not on perishable parchments.

There is a verse in chapter one that the Apostle Paul quoted in Acts 13:41, to emphasize what was happening in his time. That verse, containing a wonderful principle, states: "I will work a work in your days which ye will not believe though it be told you." (Hab. 1:5) It is easy to disbelieve any prophecy if its fulfillment takes longer than you think it should, and the doom pronounced upon Israel by God through Habakkuk was quite certainly in that category.

Habakkuk never doubted that God's judgments would come upon Israel, although many in Israel found it very convenient to doubt, and very difficult to conceive that God would ever punish his chosen people by showing favor to a people who were far more wicked and unbelieving than Israel. The question raised then, still remains: Why does God permit evil? The answer, of course, is that although it appears that evil prevails unheeded, there indeed will eventually come a day of reckoning.

The remainder of chapter two predicted five woes against the invader, whose soul was "lifted up": "Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own." (vs. 6) "Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house." (vs. 9) "Woe to him who builds a town with blood and . . . iniquity." (vs. 12) "Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink of the cup of his wrath." (vs. 15) "Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, Awake, to a dumb stone, Arise!" (vs. 19) These are all quoted from the **Revised Standard Version**.

Here was the answer to Habakkuk's puzzle: the Chaldeans, the most powerful empire the world had ever seen—pictured by the head of gold on Nebuchadnezzar's image—would be thoroughly humbled and punished in God's due time. Mighty Babylon, as Isaiah prophesied, would be completely destroyed. "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation." (Isa. 13:19,20) This prophecy was fulfilled so completely that even to this day only wild beasts live in the ruins of Babylon.

We see many similarities between what we call 'typical Babylon' of Habakkuk's prophecy, and 'anti-typical Babylon' of today—"Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." (Rev. 17:5,6) This Babylon prophesied of by John in Revelation is not the literal Babylon of Habakkuk's day. That world empire had already passed from the world scene before Revelation was written. This Babylon represents another great power which has oppressed God's people. And once again the faithful may wonder, why does God permit such evil to prevail? The Revelator tells us, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning, and famine: and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the LORD God who judgeth her. Babylon shall be thrown down and shall be found no more at all."—Rev. 18:2,8,21

If sometimes you begin to think that the forces of evil are winning, or that the unjust live equally as well, or better, than the just, or that the establishment of the kingdom is tarrying—remember the prophecy of Habakkuk. The destruction foretold by God did indeed come upon Jerusalem, despite the fact that the people did not believe this would ever happen. The destruction God had foretold would come upon literal Babylon did come to pass. Therefore we are certain that the destruction upon anti-

typical Babylon will also occur, whether or not the prophecy seems to tarry.

We have no pleasure in destruction, but we know present evil conditions must be destroyed before the blessings of the kingdom can flow to the people, and this is where our interest lies. Habakkuk, too, was concerned about the blessings. He said, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."—Hab. 2:14

The proud Chaldeans put their trust in their might, "They sacrifice unto their net [their own strength]." Since they make sacrifice to their net, it becomes a 'god'—a god which has no breath at all! What a contrast to the only true and living God—a God who dwells in a holy temple and has the power to silence all the earth before him, including the false gods of man's making.—Hab. 2:20

### **The Just Shall Live by Faith**

The fourth verse of chapter two is extremely important. It is one of only two verses in this book which are quoted in the New Testament. This particular verse provided proof to the Apostle Paul for a key doctrine: justification by faith. The Book of Romans has much to say about faith. The word appears thirty-nine times in that book alone. After a few introductory words, Paul quoted from Old Testament Scripture, saying, "Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith."—Rom. 1:17

Is this true? Do not the unjust live as long as the just? In this life, of course, they do; but as far as God's eternal purpose is concerned, they do not. Paul raised Habakkuk's words to a higher plane when he showed that the life enjoyed by a just man can only come through belief in and acceptance of Christ. In the preceding verse he had stated, "The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." This salvation is what constitutes 'living', and it is only available to those who have faith. In the next few verses Paul explains how the wrath of

God is upon those who have no faith, and that without God's favor no one can receive the blessing of everlasting life.

The Jews of Paul's day believed it was necessary to earn God's favor by keeping the Law—justification by works. In his letter to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul used this Habakkuk text to prove this premise wrong: "That no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God is evident for, The just shall live by faith. And the Law is not of faith." (Gal. 3:11,12) Again Paul used this Habakkuk text to prove his assertion concerning the importance of faith as compared with works.

### **Chapter Three: A Psalm of Salvation**

We have seen that chapters one and two of this book contain the burden, or oracle, which God gave to Habakkuk. Chapter three is in a different style. It is a psalm—beginning with a subscription, and concluding with a superscription, in the manner of David's psalms.

Some Biblical scholars have thought this psalm was a later addition to the book, but that seems unlikely. When you consider Habakkuk's state of mind and his knowledge that the Chaldeans were destined to come into Israel, wreaking destruction upon the nation, how would we expect him to act? As a man of faith, he naturally turned his thoughts to God, and he composed a hymn of praise to the great Creator, remembering the many times past when he had intervened with special salvation for Israel. Since it is written in a poetic style, it is more difficult to understand the specific references, but these can be identified with thoughtful consideration.

In verse six, he speaks of the time when God "drove assunder the nations," referring to Israel's entrance into the land of Canaan. Again, salvation came about when "the deep uttered his voice and lifted up his hands on high," referring to the walls of water Israel passed through in crossing the Red Sea. (vs. 10) A reference is made to the battle of Joshua at Gibeon, when "the sun and moon stood still in their habitation."—vs. 11



The thrust of this psalm is summarized in verse thirteen: "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people." By recalling these marvelous examples of God's intervention on behalf of his people, Habakkuk's hopes were raised that God would once again remember Israel in their time of trouble. Although he believed God's word that the Chaldeans would be punished, this did not prevent him from continuing to hope that God would save his people. And, although this did not happen in Habakkuk's day, we know, in harmony with his prophecy, that this is exactly what God has done at this end of the age.

Habakkuk prayed that he might rest in the day of coming trouble upon Israel. (vs. 16) Whether he meant he wanted to be at rest spiritually, or whether he prayed for rest in death, is not clear. No matter which is the case, the principle is what is important. In times of trouble, our prayers should be that we might rest in the LORD, knowing he has full control over every experience which comes to us.

### **Lessons for Our Own Time**

If this book were only concerned with the destruction upon Israel in Habakkuk's day, and the destruction that came later upon the Chaldeans, God would not have directed Habakkuk to write it on permanent clay tablets so that it would be preserved for our use. All the books of our Bible contain lessons on many different levels. Let us consider a few thoughts from which we can profit today:

"I will work a work which ye will not believe, though it be told you." (Hab. 1:5) Israel should have believed the message given especially to them by God's prophet; but few did. Those born under the Jewish Law in Paul's day could not believe God was widening his perspective to include Gentiles. Today? We preach the coming kingdom, and the ending of this long night of sin and death. And most people simply say it is too good to believe. Faith is, and always has been, a scarce commodity!

God has his own methods of solving problems, and God's

way of dealing with a problem is probably not our way, since he has particular lessons in mind which the experience is designed to teach. How many times do we go to God with a solution to a problem, instead of with the problem? We tell him we need better health to serve others, or money to attend a convention, or a more reliable car to take people to a Bible study meeting. These are all solutions.

From the beginning of time, God has moved in what appears to be a mysterious way to accomplish his plans, and therefore we must seek to be in tune with him to understand how we can work with him. God was not angry with Habakkuk for being concerned about Israel. He will not be angry with us when we bring our problems to him; but let us remember that his ways are higher than our ways, and are always best.

The wicked prosper, and it does not mean a thing. We all know that it is not wise to judge a book by its cover, yet we are still prone to do so anyway. Worldly agencies, religious groups, social and political organizations, all appear to achieve great advantages for their members. But appearances do not mean anything. Our affections must be set on things above. Earthly prosperity is not part of our covenant of sacrifice. Since the wicked are not in covenant relationship with God, what happens to them in this present evil world should not be our concern.

Why does God permit evil? This is perhaps one of the hardest questions Christians face. Habakkuk made it clear that God had no intention of permitting evil indefinitely, but only as long as it suited his purposes, and accomplished his designs. There came a time when he brought Israel's favor to an end because of their evil practices. The time came when the Chaldean empire was totally destroyed from off the face of the earth. And he will indeed put an end to evil in a great time of trouble which has begun to engulf the world. Let us use this penetrating question as an aid to giving a witness in our contact with others, and share the answers which the truth has given us, which answers are found nowhere else.

"Oh that I might rest in the day of trouble," Habakkuk prayed. We have also been given a great vision of a coming time of terrible trouble. But the troubles in the world cannot affect our faith. Like Habakkuk, we too should rest in the providences of God, waiting for his promised deliverance.

The prophecy of Habakkuk, when viewed in this light, has contemporary importance. May the LORD grant each of us the strength to be faithful to the vision we have received, and run with patience the race set before us. □



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"GREAT and marvelous are thy works, LORD God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O LORD, and glorify thy name? For only thou art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."—Revelation 15:3,4

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For years The Dawn has been recorded monthly on tape for the blind. Recently we have been able to upgrade the quality of these recordings with a very fine reading voice. We are so pleased with the result that we wish to offer copies of these readings to all who might find a use for them.

Requests should be sent to the **Dawn Recorded Lecture Service**. Cassettes may be purchased for \$2.00 each. If you would like to subscribe to this service on an annual basis, the cost is \$20 for twelve months.

# Voices from the Past

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Discourse by Brother C.A. Sundbom  
Chautauqua, 1941

## Baptism

BROTHER Chester A. Sundbom gave the baptismal talk, and as usual he pointed out the significance of water immersion—that it is not the real baptism, but a symbol of that which has already taken place in the hearts and lives of the consecrated.

Opening his remarks, Brother Sundbom said: "This service is arranged for the express purpose that you dear ones may publicly acknowledge, not only that you have believed on the Lord Jesus, but, in addition, have responded to his call, 'My son, give me thine heart'. Because you have done this, you will be a member of the body of Christ and a son of God. You are not joining the Bible Students, or any other group. We welcome you as fellow members of the body of Christ.

"You all know something of God's great plan—that it is his purpose to undo the work of Satan and restore all that was lost by Adam's disobedience. In II Corinthians 5:12, we are told that God, through Christ, is reconciling the world to himself. This reconciliation of the world will be accomplished by Christ's kingdom, which will be a real government upon this earth. It will fulfill the prayer, 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'.

"Christ is to be the head of this government, and he has associates with him in this great work. These are the church, whose names are written in heaven. Each one who eventually will be a member of the true church must first be faithful unto death. You dear ones of Christ, if you follow in the footsteps of Jesus, will not only be provisional members, but, if faithful unto death, will be actual members in glory, and co-workers with Jesus in the kingdom work."

In explaining the manner in which Christians suffer and die with Jesus, Brother Sundbom reminded us that as consecrated followers of the Master we do not go into death because of disobedience, but because of obedience. He said, furthermore, that true consecration of our hearts means an agreement to do anything and everything that our Heavenly Father may desire.

He reminded us that it was not safe for us to give ourselves over in such a complete manner to any individual upon earth, but it is safe for us to thus surrender our wills to God. We know that he will cause all things to work together for our good. We can safely leave ourselves entirely in his hands, knowing that if we are doing his will, he will safeguard our highest and eternal interests to his glory and to our greatest blessing. □

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## Beginning a New Year

*"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply  
our hearts unto wisdom."—Psalm 90:12*

THE beginning of each new year serves to remind us afresh that time is fleeting; and, realizing that our days and years are limited, it is well that we seek divine guidance in using them wisely. In this psalm, Moses contrasts our brief span of life with the eternal existence of the Creator: "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God," he declares. A thousand years are to him but as yesterday, and as a watch in the night when it is past. However, our present three-score-and-ten year limit of human life is not all that we have to consider. Moses reminds us: God has turned man to destruction—"in Adam all die"—but not everlastingly, for he will later say, "Return, ye children of men," and, "In Christ shall all be made alive." Every thought, word, and deed of the present will have some bearing on the life beyond the grave. If we are seeking for "glory, honor, and immortality," to live and reign with Christ, let us be diligent in the wise use of each moment of the new year. □

# Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts

**JANUARY 1**—"O Bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of His praise to be heard; which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved."—Psalm 66:8,9 —(Z'03-3 Hymn 175)

**JANUARY 8**—"See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."—I Thessalonians 5:15 —(Z '01-297 Hymn 252)

**JANUARY 15**—"What doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—Micah 6:8 (Z'02-172 Hymn 229)

**JANUARY 22**—"Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."—Psalm 31:24 (Z '01-79 Hymn 137)

**JANUARY 29**—"The fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."—Psalm 111:10— (Z '96-155 Hymn 74)

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God grant you grace, this coming year, for every time of need;  
And strength to follow day by day where'er your path may lead.  
God shower upon you blessings rich, to cheer you hour by hour;  
And fill your heart and keep you through his Holy Spirit's power.

## 1986 Memorial Supper Date

THE proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 12th.

We have a complete Memorial service available for isolated brethren or for any who care to have it, on both audio and video cassette. The audio cassette service can be purchased for \$3.00, or is available on loan. Write to: Recorded Lecture, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. The video cassette Memorial service can be purchased for \$6.00, or is also available on loan upon request to: Dawn Video Cassette Service, P.O. Box 4355, North Hollywood, CA 91607.

# Speakers' Appointments

## MINISTERING THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF CHRIST

*These speakers are routed through the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn or by classes associated with the pilgrim services. Their visits are furnished free upon request whenever possible. Write to: Dawn Bible Students Association, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.*

<b>S. MENGOS</b>		<b>E.K. PENROSE</b>	
San Luis Obispo, CA	January 11	Memphis, TN	January 30
<b>M. NEKORA</b>		<b>J.H. SNYDER</b>	
Riverside, CA	January 25	Phoenix AZ	January 2-4
		St. Petersburg, FL.	11
		Louisville, AL.	12
<b>G. PASSIOS</b>		Athens, AL.	13
Middletown, NY	January 18	Oak Ridge, TN	14
		Cincinnati, OH	15
<b>T. PASSIOS</b>		West Newton, PA	16
Phoenix, AZ	January 2-4	Allentown, PA	18

## Obituaries

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

Brother R. B. Weeks, Eastman, GA—February 23.

Sister Irena Goppald, Los Angeles, CA—October. Age, 77.

Sister Pamela Allison, Bakersfield, CA—November 16. Age, 43.

Brother Paul Krukowski/Jaros, Windsor, Ont.—November 23. Age, 86.

Sister Elizabeth Shoup, San Francisco, CA—November 26. Age, 65.

**"The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever."**

**—Isaiah 32:17**



# Conventions

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*These conventions are listed at the request of the individual classes who are sponsoring the gatherings.*

**PHOENIX, AZ, January 2-4—**  
Quality Inn, 2420 West Thomas  
Road. Contact : Mrs. Mildred  
Enteman, 542 West Southern,  
85041  
Phone: (602) 276-3267

**ST, PETERSBURG, FL, January 11—**  
Majestic Park Homes, Inc.,  
8300 Seminole Blvd. (Alt. 19).  
Contact: Mrs. Lloyd Hagensick,  
Secy., 8003 Seminole Blvd., Lot 8,  
Seminole 355422  
Phone: (813) 391-1772

**LOS ANGELES, CA, January 18—**  
Golden State Masonic Lodge,  
933 So. Hoover St., Los Angeles.  
Contact: Wade Austin, 21207  
Wilder Avenue, Lakewood 90715

**DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL  
CONVENTION, April 4, 5—Ma-**  
comb Community College, 14500  
12 Mile Road, Warren, MI

**DELAWARE VALLEY, PA,  
February 22—**Royce Hotel, Lang-  
horne. Contact: Barbara Marshall,  
291 Oaktree Drive, Levittown, PA  
Phone: (215) 949-3876

**ROCKLAND, NY, March 8—**  
Bear Mountain State Park, Overlook  
Lodge, Bear Mountain, NY.  
Contact: Dawn Shallieu, 1041  
Johnston Dr., Watchung, NJ 07060

**FRESNO PRE-MEMORIAL  
CONVENTION, March 27-29—**  
Details later. Contact: A.W. Abra-  
hamsen, 4689 Shields Ave. 93726

**NEW ORLEANS, LA, March 14,15—**  
Airport Howard Johnson's  
Motel, 6901 Veterans Memorial  
Blvd. Contact: Mrs. Samuel Heron,  
4513 St. Anthony 70122  
Phone: (504) 288-1553

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## *1986 Convention Audio Tapes Now Available*

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Audio tapes of the 1986 General Convention at Albion, are now available. If you wish to order the entire set, the price is \$40.; or you can order individual tapes at \$2.00 each. Write to: The Dawn Recorded Lecture Service, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A list of titles will be sent to you upon request. □

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