

The DAWN

VOLUME NO. LXXXV, Number 7
(USPS 149-380), July 2017

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First-class postage paid at Rutherford, NJ. Published monthly by The Dawn Bible Students Association, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. \$12.00 a year.

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World Conversion— When and How

*“I have heard thee
in a time accepted,
and in the day of
salvation have I
succoured thee:
behold, now is the
accepted time;
behold, now is the
day of salvation.”*

—II Corinthians 6:2

FORTY-THREE YEARS AGO, in 1974, a group of leaders of the World Council of Churches issued a statement as to the purpose of that organization’s evangelism and mission work. This purpose, said the Council’s leaders, is to assist “the Christian community in the proclamation

of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by word and deed, to the whole world to the end that all may believe in him and be saved.” Though not part of the official statement, this stated purpose of converting the entire world, it was believed, should be completed by the end of the twentieth century.

The above-stated goal has hardly come to pass. Trends over the past one hundred years paint a much different picture, as shown by the chart of

the world's top three religious groups below:

**Religious Adherence as a Percentage of the
World's Population**

	1910	1970	2016
Christianity	35%	33%	33%
Islam	13%	16%	21%
Hinduism	13%	13%	13%

Two trends are especially noteworthy in the above chart. First, Islam has grown significantly and consistently over the last ten decades. Second, Christianity has struggled to keep pace, and even declined slightly as a percentage of world population over the past century. Not included in the above chart is another rather remarkable statistic. In 1910, less than one percent of the world's population claimed to be non-religious—that is, atheists or agnostics. In 2016, however, this segment had grown to 14%, surpassing Hinduism, and now is third in adherence, behind only Christianity and Islam. Indeed, it seems that the goal of converting the world to Christianity is further away from accomplishment now than ever before.

If we are correct in our understanding that the hope and aim of many professed Christians is to present to as many as possible a single opportunity of believing in and accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior, so that they may be saved from the horrors of hell or even eternal destruction, the completion of that task cannot come any too soon. Such a charitable but misplaced concern by the churches on behalf of their fellow man is rooted in an erroneous understanding of the purpose of giving witness to

the Gospel, which most suppose requires conversion to Christianity during this present life. However, this is not what the Bible sets forth as the purpose of Christian preaching at the present time, nor is it what Jesus or the apostles expected.

A WORLDWIDE WITNESS

Jesus did indeed instruct his disciples that “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.” (Matt. 24:14) Jesus himself during his earthly ministry “went about all Galilee, . . . preaching the gospel of the kingdom.” (Matt. 4:23; Luke 4:43; 8:1) The apostles likewise spent their consecrated lives preaching the Gospel, and they encouraged other followers of the Master to do the same. (Acts 5:42; II Tim. 4:5) It is still the privilege of the church today to preach the glad tidings of salvation, and to do so with energy and zeal.

What has been the result of all this preaching, from the time of Jesus and the apostles to the present? If its purpose was the conversion of the world, and thus their being saved from an eternity of suffering, then it must be conceded that the results have been dismal. By any criterion, only a fraction of earth’s billions have come into the fold of Christianity, the rest having gone into death either totally ignorant of the Gospel, or without having accepted Jesus as their Redeemer.

ANNOUNCING THE GOOD NEWS

The Greek word *euaggelizo* is generally translated in the New Testament by the phrase, “to preach the Gospel.” (Luke 4:18; Acts 16:10; Rom. 15:20) This is a good translation, for the Greek word means “to

announce good news.” However, the purpose of announcing and witnessing the good news has not been the conversion of the world during this present Gospel Age. Rather, the purpose has been to call out of the world a “little flock” of faithful, footstep followers of Jesus, to be associated with him in the upcoming Messianic kingdom for the blessing of the remainder of mankind.—Luke 12:32

This high privilege first went to the Jews of Jesus’ day. In his sermon just after Pentecost, addressing the Jews, the Apostle Peter points this out, saying, “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”—Acts 3:25,26

Although the message went first to the Jews—“unto you first”—only a small number responded, and the invitation was then extended to the Gentiles. The Apostle James later explained this expansion of the Gospel message to those gathered at a council held in Jerusalem. He pointed out how Simon Peter had been used to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles, so that God might “take out of them a people for his name.”—Acts 15:13,14

THE SEED OF BLESSING

In his letter to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul explains how God had long ago made a promise to Abraham that in his seed all nations would be blessed. (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:8) He identifies the seed of blessing as being Christ. (Gal. 3:16) Paul then

concludes with the wonderful statement that all who have been baptized into Christ, both Jew and Gentile, are “one in Christ Jesus,” and with him constitute the seed of Abraham which will bring the promised blessings to the whole world of mankind.—Gal. 3:27-29

It is these who have heard the Master’s invitation to deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow him. Those who present themselves to God in full consecration, trusting in the merit of Christ’s sacrifice, are justified by their faith. They become members of his symbolic body, and, if faithful, part of the seed of blessing.—Matt. 16:24; Rom. 5:1; 12:1; I Cor. 12:12

The appeal of the Gospel message during the present age is only to a few, for it is a call to sacrifice. (Rom. 12:1) Jesus made this clear when he said, “Strait [narrow] is the gate, . . . which leadeth unto life” during this age, adding, “few there be that find it.” (Matt. 7:14) It is to reach these with the invitation to offer themselves in sacrifice now, in order that they may share with Jesus in blessing the world in the next age, that the Gospel is to be preached in all the world for a witness. For those who aspire to this High Calling, this present Gospel Age is their day of salvation.

A SECOND DAY OF SALVATION

The Bible informs us that God, in his boundless love, has so arranged it that there is to be another day of salvation, this time for the rest of the world of mankind. Several other translations of our opening text more properly use the indefinite article “a” rather than “the,” thus rendering the phrase

“a day of salvation.” (*Rotherham Emphasized Bible, Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott, Young’s Literal Translation*) The Gospel Age is an acceptable time, a day of salvation, for the sacrificing followers of Jesus. The next age, when Christ and the church are rulers of the earthly phase of God’s kingdom, will be a day of salvation for the remainder of mankind.

Jesus made clear that the unbelieving of the present time are not forever lost. He said, “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: . . . the same shall judge him in the last day.” (John 12:46-48) The “last day” during which the unbelieving of the present age are to be judged is the coming thousand-year judgment day, when Christ and the church will reign over mankind.—Luke 22:30; Rev. 3:21; 20:4

On another occasion, Jesus said that the time would come when all who are in their graves—the death condition, not a place of torment—would hear his voice, and come forth. Those who have done good, his faithful followers of this present age, will come “unto a resurrection, of life.” All others, Jesus continues, will come forth “unto a resurrection, of judgment.” (John 5:28,29, *Rotherham*) Thus, we understand that those of the world who do not in this present life hear and accept Jesus as their Redeemer will have a future opportunity to hear, and either accept or reject him. In this present life, it is only a small number who hear the message

aright, and fewer still who accept it. However, in that future day the matter and the choice will be made clear, and all who were dead that “hearken unto the voice of the Son of God, . . . shall live.”—John 5:25, *Rotherham*

A RANSOM FOR ALL

In spite of centuries-long preaching, very few have had a real knowledge and understanding of the Gospel. However, in the kingdom the “knowledge of the LORD” will fill the earth, “as the waters cover the sea.” (Isa. 11:9) Paul confirms Jesus’ statement that all mankind, not just a few, will be given an opportunity to gain life. He states that it is God’s desire to “have all men . . . saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth,” and this will be made possible through Christ Jesus, “Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” (I Tim. 2:3-6) The Apostle John additionally assures us that Jesus “is the propitiation [atonement] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”—I John 2:1,2

Speaking to the men of Athens on Mars’ hill, Paul said that God “hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” This future day of judgment for the world of mankind was made possible by the ransom sacrifice of our Lord Jesus on behalf of Adam and his human progeny. It will be a time of righteous judgment, for all will be brought to a knowledge of God and his loving character.—Acts. 17:31; Jer. 31:34

This coming day of judgment is not a twenty-four hour day. It will be a thousand years long, so that all will have ample opportunity to hear, understand and obey the righteous laws of the kingdom. (II Pet. 3:8) The rulers in that righteous kingdom will be the Lord Jesus and his faithful followers, the overcoming, called-out class, the little flock. These, the Apostle John says, will have “judgment . . . given unto them,” and they will live and reign “with Christ a thousand years.”—Rev. 20:4

TIMES OF RESTITUTION

The thousand-year period of judgment, which will begin when the church is complete and Christ’s kingdom is established, is one of the chief works to be accomplished as part of the general period referred to by the Apostle Peter as, “the times of restitution of all things.” (Acts 3:20,21) This designation is especially appropriate, for it will be during the reign of Christ and his church that the obedient of mankind will be restored to the image of their Maker which was enjoyed by Adam, but which was lost when he transgressed and was condemned to death, bringing a like penalty upon all his progeny.

The Apostle Paul explains that death has come upon all mankind from the very beginning because of inherited imperfection. “There is none righteous, no not one.” “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” “By one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (Rom. 3:10,23; 5:12) This woeful state of affairs, however, is to be changed, Paul says, by the righteousness of the man

Christ Jesus. “Through the disobedience of one man, the many were constituted sinners, so even through the obedience of the one, the many will be constituted righteous.”—Rom. 5:19, *Diaglott*

CONVERSION FINALLY ACCOMPLISHED

After commissioning his followers to preach the Gospel of the kingdom “in all the world for a witness unto all nations,” Jesus added a significant statement. “And then shall the end come.” (Matt. 24:14) He was speaking of the end of the present Gospel Age. We believe that this worldwide witness continues to go forth. By word of mouth, the printed page, radio and television, electronic media, and in many languages, the Gospel has gone to the far corners of the earth.

This witness has not converted the world to Christianity, but it was not intended to do so during the present age. Rather, it has drawn dedicated disciples, one here and one there, to lay down their lives following in the steps of the Master. We believe the full number to constitute the church in glory is approaching completion, and with that, the Gospel Age will come to an end. Thus, the glorious Messianic kingdom, the day of salvation for the world of mankind, is near.

We have been graciously given a revealing glimpse of the lengths, breadths, heights and depths of God’s great love. His love is so all-embracing that he sent his only begotten Son to die for all mankind “while we were yet sinners.” (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8) We have seen, too, that in God’s plan there is one day of salvation for his faithful people of this Gospel Age, and there is to be yet another day of salvation

for all the remainder of mankind in the Messianic kingdom to be set up “in earth.”—Matt. 6:10

The faithful overcomers of this present age will live and reign with Christ for a thousand years, for the teaching and blessing of all the families of the earth. Then, the world’s conversion to the Heavenly Father and his dear Son will be accomplished. What a magnificent, wise and loving plan God has designed on behalf of all his human creation. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! . . . To whom be glory for ever. Amen.”—Rom. 11:33,36 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JULY 6—“What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.”—Psalm 25:12 (Z. ’99-13 Hymn 275A)

JULY 13—“Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.”—II Corinthians 11:14,15 (Z. ’99-62 Hymn 91)

JULY 20—“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman . . . every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”—John 15:1,2 (Z. ’99-109 Hymn 95)

JULY 27—“We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.”—Daniel 6:5 (Z. ’99-167 Hymn 177)

Moses at the Burning Bush

Key Verses: *“Behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.”*
—Exodus 3:9,10

Selected Scripture:
Exodus 3:1-12

OUR LESSON OPENS WITH

Moses at eighty years of age shepherding his father-in-law Jethro’s flock near Mount Horeb. Forty years earlier, Moses was the second most powerful man in Egypt, behind only Pharaoh. At that time, he forsook his position in Egypt, supposing that his Hebrew brethren would rejoice in having him as their leader and lawgiver. However, Moses was greatly disappointed when he discovered that his kinsmen had no such loyal feeling toward him. They declared, “Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?” (Exod. 2:14) At forty years old, and now under threat from Pharaoh due to his forsaking of Egypt, Moses was

forced to flee into the land of Midian to save his life.

The next forty years of Moses’ life was a period of isolation. During this time, his former lifestyle of refinement and honor among men changed dramatically. Now he lived in seclusion, serving as a shepherd of Jethro’s flocks. After many years of working in this humble occupation, Moses

had a most unusual experience. While tending flocks pastured near Mount Horeb, he caught sight of something most unusual on the mount. A bush was on fire, yet it was not consumed. The longer he gazed the more curious he became. Finally, Moses resolved to investigate, and made his way to the burning bush. (chap. 3:2,3) From the bush came a voice declaring the phenomenon to be a manifestation of God's presence and power. Moses obeyed the command that he should take off his sandals, because it was holy ground on which he stood. He covered his face in reverence while he listened to the Divine message.—vss. 4-6

God's message reminded Moses of the foundation for his hopes and those of the Israelites. The statement, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," gave indication to Moses as to what this experience meant. Herein was God's reminder of the special promises which he had given to Abraham, and had renewed with Isaac and Jacob for an everlasting covenant. Thus, Moses was assured that God had not forgotten the good things which he had promised, and his faith and hope were re-established. As our Key Verses indicate, God's due time had come for the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, and he had chosen Moses as his human instrument to accomplish this great task.

As God's people, how often we find that we have experiences somewhat along the line of Moses. Frequently, we may feel a letdown when our efforts and plans for good works are initially rejected, only to find later that the Lord's hand was able to bring blessings to us and others out of our disappointments. How encouraging it is to learn that these lessons have been ordered by the Lord to better prepare us for future usefulness in his service. Let us have increased courage, stronger faith, and greater trust in God, even when we cannot trace him, knowing that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—Rom. 8:28 ■

Isaiah's Vision of God's Temple

Key Verse: *"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."*
—Isaiah 6:8

Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 6:1-10

THE PROPHET ISAIAH HAD observed the unfaithfulness of God's covenant people, Israel. Divine offers of mercy and forgiveness had fallen repeatedly upon heedless ears. Consequently, the Lord sent a different message, to which this lesson specially relates. Since this message would be a difficult one to proclaim, a vision was given to Isaiah of the majesty of God to encourage him, that he might volunteer to speak the Lord's words to Israel. In the vision, Isaiah saw God sitting on a throne in his temple. Above him were beings, called "seraphims," who proclaimed, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."—Isa. 6:1-3

The words of the seraphim could only be true in a prophetic sense, for the whole earth has not yet been filled with the Lord's glory. However, God would have Isaiah, and later his consecrated people of this Gospel Age, know that evil shall not always prevail. Indeed, several centuries later, Jesus' gave his followers a model prayer, which gives assurance that God's kingdom shall come, and his will shall be done, on earth, as it is done in heaven.—Matt. 6:9,10

Upon hearing the seraphim, Isaiah's first thought was

his own imperfection as a member of the fallen race. He said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." Nevertheless, Isaiah recognized the great privilege afforded him to be given a glimpse of "the King, the LORD of hosts." (vs. 5) As the vision continued, one of the seraphim brought a live coal from the altar of the temple, and therewith touched the prophet's lips. In the symbolic language of the vision, the Lord said to Isaiah, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." (vs. 7) By this, God indicated to Isaiah that because he realized his own blemishes, as well as the Divine majesty and goodness, he was now counted pure. In addition, he would be granted powers of speech which were not his own, but inspired by the Lord.

Upon hearing these words of the vision, Isaiah's heart was quickened with a desire to further engage in the divine service, no matter what the message. Consequently, as recorded in our Key Verse, when he heard the Lord inquire for one to speak to his people, Isaiah immediately responded, "Here am I; send me."

God's message to Israel, given by Isaiah, concerned their continued lack of faithfulness, which would eventually result in their being carried away into captivity. (vss. 9-12) This message was later repeated by Jesus and the Apostle Paul as applicable to Israel at that time. Only a "remnant" of Israelites accepted the Messiah, and were received into the higher dispensation of Divine favor of this Gospel Age.—Matt. 13:13-17; John 1:11,12; Rom. 11:5-11

The message of present truth which today continues to call God's people out of the world is, in many respects, like that which Isaiah delivered to Israel. It is a message that is not generally well received, especially by those who love sectarianism and the worship of human theories and creeds better than they love the Lord and his Word. However, what a privilege is ours to continue to present the Gospel message with the same zeal demonstrated by Isaiah!

■

God Calls Jeremiah

Key Verse: *“Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.”*
—*Jeremiah 1:8*

Selected Scripture:
Jeremiah 1:1-10

(Jer. 1:6) However, God makes no mistakes of who he calls. As we have seen in our previous lessons, Moses was reassured in his doubt by the angel of the Lord speaking from a burning bush, and Isaiah, likewise, was encouraged by the words and actions of the seraphim.

In the case of Jeremiah, God spoke to him more directly. He said, “Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.” The reassuring words of our Key Verse were then spoken by the Lord, following which, Jeremiah records, “The LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.”—vss. 7-9

Evidently God felt it necessary to reassure Jeremiah personally because of the severity of the message he was to deliver. Jeremiah is sometimes referred to as the “weeping prophet” because of the distress he felt as he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. In addition, mocking and persecution caused him to have doubts about fulfilling his mission, but his loyalty

ALL OF GOD’S HOLY PROPHETS displayed the essential character trait of humility. In this humility, each tended to have a sense of their own lack of ability and unworthiness. When called at a young age by God, Jeremiah responded, saying, “Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.”

to God overcame his weakness. On one occasion he testified, “I will not make mention of him [the LORD], nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.”—Jer. 20:9

Jeremiah’s resolve should be an example for us in our weakest moments. “Trial hath not taken you, save such as man can bear; faithful, moreover is God, who will not suffer you to be tried above what ye are able, but will make, with the trial, also the way of escape.” (I Cor. 10:13, *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*) Jeremiah’s fervent belief in God’s words is similar to that of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, as they listened to the resurrected Jesus, and later recalled, “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”—Luke 24:32

Jeremiah’s prophecy should have led the people of Israel to self-examination and a return to loyalty to God. The actual effect, however, was hostility. In response to his prophecy, the priests led the people in an angry attack upon the prophet. He was arrested and charged with speaking evil of his city in declaring its forthcoming destruction. (Jer. 26:8-11) Such was the foolishness of the Jewish priests. Could merely Jeremiah’s declarations bring things to pass? Furthermore, if he was truly God’s prophet, could their assault on him turn aside the divine purpose? Surely, the spirit of sin is not that of a sound mind, as is the Spirit of the Lord.

It is noteworthy that it was the priests and false prophets of Israel who called for the death of God’s true prophet. The Scriptures, as well as history, tell us this has frequently been the case. Nearly all the persecutions of Jesus, his apostles, and consecrated followers throughout the Gospel Age, have come from professed servants of God. Let us keep the courage and zeal of God’s faithful servants in mind as he calls us to witness the truth to the world.—Matt. 24:14 ■

Ezekiel's Commission

Key Verses:
“Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears. And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.”
—Ezekiel 3:10,11

Selected Scripture:
Ezekiel 3:1-11

house.”—vss. 7-9

As he did with Isaiah, God gave Ezekiel a vision of his power and glory, to infuse him with sufficient strength to carry out his mission. (Ezek. 1:1-28) In our Key Verses, God instructs Ezekiel to speak the prophecy, whether

TODAY'S LESSON FINDS the Prophet Ezekiel receiving his commission from God to speak to the “house of Israel.” (Ezek. 3:4,5) Like prophets before him, Ezekiel was called to bring adverse news to a disobedient nation. Similarly, God strengthened him against the opposition he would face from the people in carrying out his prophetic commission. He says, “The house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted. Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant [sharp stone] harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious

Israel will hear or not. Immediately after hearing these words, Ezekiel sees another vision similar to the first. (chap. 3:12-14) Through these miraculous events the prophet was being prepared and encouraged for use in God's service.

Ezekiel's prophecy details the coming destruction and captivity of Israel to Babylon because of their sins. However, woven throughout Ezekiel's prophecy against Israel is the recurring promise that, in due time, they would be saved, albeit through severe afflictions. This is most beautifully illustrated in the symbolic "valley of dry bones" prophecy in chapter 37, which foretells the rebirth of Israel as a nation.

Chapters 38 and 39 speak of enemies seeking to destroy Israel after she returns to her land, but God intervenes to destroy them. Chapter 40 to the end of the prophecy talks symbolically of the rebuilding of Israel's Temple and the resulting blessings which will be for all peoples. Like the healing waters described in Revelation 22, a depiction of life-giving waters is given in chapter 47 of Ezekiel. What beautiful pictures of God's promised kingdom are thus portrayed in his Word!

In God's dealings with Ezekiel we find lessons for our own commission as sons of God. Indeed, the words of God's holy prophets were not merely messages for Israel. The Apostle Paul describes how all their experiences were for our admonition. (I Cor. 10:1-11) Peter also makes it clear that the messages of all God's holy prophets point toward Jesus Christ as the Redeemer and Savior of the world.—Acts 3:20-24

Ezekiel was faithful in carrying out the commission of God despite the opposition of Israel's religious leaders. Today, the erroneous doctrines and creeds of men likewise clash with the Bible's message that the institutions of this "present evil world" will pass away, to prepare mankind for a "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—Gal. 1:4; II Pet. 3:13 ■

Amos Prophecies Against Israel

Key Verses: *“Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.”*
—Amos 7:14,15

Selected Scripture:
Amos 7:7-17

AMOS IS NOTED AS BEING one of the earliest of Israel’s prophets. He belongs to a period shortly before Isaiah, and about two centuries prior to Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Amos declares himself to have been of humble background. His parents were not prominent, nor was he educated as a prophet. Like David, he was a shepherd, and also a farmer, whom the Lord called to proclaim the troubles sure to come upon Israel unless a change of course should turn aside the deserved punishment for their iniquities.

The burden of Amos’ prophecy was to the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. However, the prophet’s message began with the adjoining nations. We can imagine Israel’s hearty approval when he forecast punishments to soon fall upon the Syrians, the Philistines, the nation of Tyre, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and Judah. However, when Amos spoke of the sins Israel had committed against God, and the just punishment which would result, their approval

doubtless turned to anger.—Amos 1:3-15; 2:1-16

In three visions, God showed Amos the symbolic results of his judgments upon Israel—a plague of locusts that would destroy their harvest, a fire which would consume a great part of the land, and finally a total overthrow represented by a plumb line, which would cut them off from God's favor. (Amos 7:1-9) Our Key Verse speaks to the loyalty and courage of Amos when he says, "The LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." Although his was an unpleasant message, Amos did exactly as the Lord instructed.

It is fitting that we conclude our lessons of God's use of certain holy ones to prophesy against Israel by considering Amos, for we can see the similarity of his calling to ours. Like Amos, God has not called many wise, mighty or noble according to the flesh during the Gospel Age, but the foolish, weak, base and despised among the world.—I Cor. 1:26-29

An important part of Amos' prophecy was quoted by the Apostle James in the council at Jerusalem. Speaking of God's ultimate purpose to save Israel and all mankind, he said, "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."—Acts 15:16,17; Amos 9:11,12

Although a limited spiritual fulfillment of this prophecy has taken place during the present Gospel Age, we are now living near to the time when it will fully come to pass. The building again of "the tabernacle of David" symbolizes the establishment of God's promised kingdom on earth, under the rulership of the greater David, Christ and his church. Under that kingdom arrangement, the "residue of men," all Jews and Gentiles alike, will be given an opportunity to "seek after the Lord." Let us be strengthened in our calling to proclaim that glorious coming kingdom. ■

Establishing the Brethren at Corinth

“Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.”
—Acts 18:9,10

PAUL WAS FORCED TO hurriedly leave Macedonia because of persecution. After departing, he sent a message to his two traveling companions, Silas and Timothy, that they should join him in Athens, where they would resume their journey together. As circumstances changed, both brethren were considerably delayed, and when Paul could wait no longer he went on alone to Corinth. Soon after he reached that city he began working at his trade of tent-making in order to secure a living for a while. This led him to become acquainted with fellow tentmakers, Aquila and Priscilla. This Jewish couple were new arrivals in Corinth, as a result of the edict to expel all Jews from Rome enacted by Emperor Claudius.—Acts 18:1-3

No doubt these circumstances were directed by God, who desired that these two devoted brethren should come to a better knowledge of his plan, and gain an understanding of his calling through association with the apostle. Paul was invited to live in their home, and stayed with them for nearly two years. (vss. 11,18) There, they labored together in their common trade and enjoyed the wonderful fellowship of the Gospel. It is likely that Aquila and Priscilla were the first brethren in Corinth to learn of God's plan, and to be baptized into the body of Christ.

They also were of great assistance to Paul in his ministry there. The Scriptures tell of their devotion and zeal for the Truth. In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house." (Rom. 16:3-5) This salutation is a fitting tribute to their characters, and an evidence of readiness to lay down their lives for Paul, their brother in Christ. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13) Those early Christians were severely put to the test, and have left a legacy of their brotherly love in action.

FAITHFUL BRETHREN

These faithful friends were also addressed by Paul in his final letter to Timothy: "Salute Prisca and Aquila." (II Tim. 4:19) Later, when Paul went to Ephesus, he stayed again with Aquila and Priscilla, who had evidently moved to that city from Corinth. From their home, he wrote to the brethren

in Corinth saying, “The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.” (I Cor. 16:19) From this we note that Aquila and Priscilla’s home was one of the places where the brethren held meetings. They served willingly in every way and indeed were true brethren in Christ.

The importance of such brethren cannot be over-emphasized. The work being done by God during this Gospel Age does not rest solely upon the shoulders of more prominent individuals. This lesson is emphasized in the *Daily Heavenly Manna* for March 8, which brings to our attention the text, “Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him.”—I Cor. 12:18

The comments on this Scripture read: “No member of the body of Christ can say that he has no need for another member, and no member may say that there is nothing whatever that he can do in the service of the body. Under the guidance of our glorious Head each member who is filled with His Spirit, and desirous of serving Him, may do so. When the time for rewards shall have come, who knows how much of the usefulness of Paul and Apollos may be accredited to some of the humble ones, such as Aquila and Priscilla, who in various ways ministered to and encouraged and supported their abler brethren in the Lord’s work.”—Reprints, page 3152

PAUL GOES TO THE SYNAGOGUE

Going back to Paul’s arrival in Corinth, we read in Acts 18:4 of his initial ministry in the synagogue. His reasoning on the Scriptures apparently was

forceful, but not controversial, and he was able to persuade both Jews and Gentiles who heard his message. It appears from this that Paul was very careful in his presentation of the Gospel of Christ at the outset of his work in Corinth. The memory of experiences during his first journey when overzealous Jews incited riots against him, and stoned him nearly to the point of death, as well as his recent experiences in Thessalonica and Berea, caused him to be more subdued and cautious when preaching the Truth.

Silas and Timothy finally arrived in Corinth from Macedonia with a good report for Paul. The brethren in that region, particularly in Thessalonica, were suffering severe persecution at the hands of both Jews and Gentiles. However, they were receiving these experiences well, and were growing in grace and knowledge. Paul later told of the comfort he received from this report. "Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, [was sent] to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: That no man should be moved by these afflictions, for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain. But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you. Therefore, brethren, we

were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith.”—I Thess. 3:2-7

This report was so encouraging to Paul that it inspired him to speak more boldly to the Jews in the synagogue at Corinth concerning Jesus. The account states, “When Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.” (Acts 18:5) This more straightforward message had an immediate and expected effect. Many Jews began to ridicule and oppose Paul, blaspheming him violently. He sternly denounced them, and said that he would no longer preach to them, but from that time forward his message would go to the Gentiles.—vs. 6

However, some had already accepted Paul’s Gospel message. Crispus, chief ruler of the synagogue, and his family, were among these. They believed that Jesus was Christ, the Messiah, and were baptized. Paul no longer used the synagogue, but instead accepted the offer of a home adjoining the synagogue for a meeting place. It was the home of a man named Justus, a sincere worshipper of God. There Paul continued to preach to all who would listen, and “many of the Corinthians . . . believed” the Gospel.—vss. 7,8

PAUL ENCOURAGED BY THE LORD

It is evident that the constant verbal abuse and life-threatening experiences which accompanied Paul’s missionary work up to this time was taking its toll on the apostle. Paul needed some encouragement, and God overruled circumstances for its accomplishment. Our opening Scripture states that the Lord spoke to Paul at night by a vision. He encouraged him not to be afraid, but to continue

speaking the message. The Lord further assured Paul that he would be with him, and no hurt would come to him. The Lord knew Paul was concerned that his speaking out boldly would result in a potentially hazardous situation. However, Paul was given assurance that in Corinth God would overrule the opposition. His preaching would have its desired effect, because the search for God's people in that city was to be very fruitful, resulting in many who would be called into the body of Christ.

We find that God was true to his promise. No one hurt Paul during his stay in Corinth, although his preaching continued to make enemies, especially among the Jews. By the Lord's overruling, protection was given to Paul through the magistrates and civil rulers of Corinth. As he continued his preaching, certain Jews, including Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, decided they should take action against Paul. They brought him before Gallio, a Roman officer, and said, "This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law." (Acts 18:12,13) Paul was set to defend himself, but to his surprise, there was no need for him to do so. Gallio spoke up and said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters." (vss. 14,15) Gallio must have had some previous acquaintance with the Jews and their law. He would not be deceived into believing that Paul was violating any civil law, and he sent them away.

Generally, when accusations of this sort were leveled against Paul, he would bear the brunt of a

beating or imprisonment, being considered the cause of the turmoil or riot. However, on this occasion things were different. It was Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, who was seized and summarily beaten, while Paul went unhurt. Indeed, God did keep his promise, and in this instance allowed the accusers and attackers to suffer.—Acts 18:17

When some take courses contrary to God's will, corrective lessons may come to them as a result. These measures are to help them realize the error of their ways. Sosthenes must have soon realized that the protection given to Paul by the Roman officers was directed by God. It is very possible that he talked with Crispus, the former ruler of the synagogue, who had been converted and was aware that Paul had been assured of God's special protection. Sosthenes, pondering upon this experience, and no doubt receiving earnest sympathy from Paul, evidently began to attend the meetings, and soon was converted. Several years later, while at Ephesus, Paul mentioned Sosthenes when writing to the brethren at Corinth. His opening greeting reads: "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother." (I Cor. 1:1) This dear brother and beloved member of the class in Corinth had by that time come to Ephesus to assist Paul in the work.

SATAN UNSUCCESSFUL

This obvious attempt by the Adversary to disrupt Paul's work was unsuccessful. Not only had he been protected by the overruling power of God, but the very one who had brought accusation against him was converted and became a helper in the Gospel.

Encouraged, Paul continued his witnessing efforts in Corinth, during which he also established a congregation in Cenchrea, a port city just to the east. We do not know much about the brethren from that city, except for a sister named Phebe, who lived in Cenchrea, but later traveled to Rome. In his epistle to the Romans, Paul wrote: “I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.”—Rom. 16:1,2

Sometime before his brief stay in Cenchrea, Paul had evidently taken a Nazarite vow. Now, however, while in Cenchrea, the period of his vow had come to an end, and in accordance with the law of the Nazarites, he shaved his head. (Acts 18:18; Num. 6:18-21) We do not know conclusively the reason for the vow, or how long a period Paul placed himself under it. We might speculate that it involved his awareness of the upcoming difficult and hazardous trip to Jerusalem, nearly all of which would be by sea, and cover a distance of nearly 1,000 miles.

BRIEF STOP IN EPHEBUS

Finally, Paul left the brethren of these new congregations in Corinth and Cenchrea, and set sail for Syria. Aquila and Priscilla sailed with Paul, their destination being Ephesus, which was a port of call along the way. Paul took advantage of the ship’s layover in Ephesus to go to the synagogue and reason with the Jews. They desired that he stay longer, but he could not do so at that time. He “bade

them farewell,” but promised, “I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.” (Acts 18:19-21) Paul did indeed return to Ephesus on his third missionary tour, and spent the better part of three years there.—Acts 19:1,8,10

As Paul was completing this second journey and preparing for his third, another servant of the Lord, named Apollos, came through Ephesus. He was a Jew from Alexandria, well versed in the Scriptures and a gifted orator. He believed that Jesus was the Messiah, and preached this message with boldness in the synagogues of the Jews. He was fervent in spirit and understood many scriptures as having had their fulfillment in Jesus. However, his knowledge was incomplete as he only knew of the baptism of John. When he went to the synagogue at Ephesus and spoke about Jesus being the Messiah, he became acquainted with Aquila and Priscilla. They had taken up residence in Ephesus following Paul’s departure, and continued to expound the Truth as opportunity afforded. They befriended Apollos, taking him aside and explaining more accurately God’s plan, in particular the baptism of Christ.—Acts 18:24-26

After coming to a more complete understanding of the doctrine of baptism, Apollos told Aquila and Priscilla of his desire to go to Corinth, in the province of Achaia. They wrote to the brethren at Corinth and exhorted them to receive him, which they did. Apollos was a welcome addition to their congregation. With his talent for speaking, and enthusiasm for the Truth, he helped fill the void left by Paul’s departure. (vss. 27,28) Once again, we see how the Lord amply provided various servants to continue the search for his people.

PAUL'S JOURNEY CONCLUDES

Meanwhile, when Paul arrived at Caesarea, and had “gone up” to Jerusalem, he “saluted the church” there. Then, leaving Jerusalem, Paul finally came to his journey’s end, arriving at his home class at Antioch, in Syria. (Acts 18:22) We can be certain that the brethren were happy to see him, as it had been more than three years since he had left Antioch with Silas as a fellow traveler. Later, Timothy had joined them in Derbe, Luke in Troas, and Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth. Now Paul returned alone. Timothy and Silas had stayed in Corinth to help the brethren there. Luke was in Philippi, and Aquila and Priscilla remained at Ephesus.

For what length of time Silas remained at Corinth, we do not know. He may have returned to Jerusalem after a short while, as he is no longer mentioned as Paul’s traveling companion or helper. Silas, also called Silvanus, was later mentioned by the Apostle Peter, and apparently became his assistant until Peter finished his earthly sojourn.—I Pet. 5:12

During his third journey, Paul wrote to the brethren in Corinth on two occasions. In his second letter, written from Macedonia, he reminded the brethren of the preaching done in their midst by himself, Timothy and Silas. (II Cor. 1:19) These three brethren had done a remarkable work in Corinth. God had used them to search out the people for his name whom he had known were in that city. A large congregation of brethren in Christ was firmly established there because of their faithful, courageous, and tireless efforts in proclaiming the Gospel message. ■

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Our Partnership in the Gospel

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”
—*Philippians 1:3-6*

IN OUR TEXT THE WORD fellowship is derived from a Greek word which includes the thought of partnership. The Apostle John used the same Greek word when he wrote, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship [partnership] with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”
—I John 1:3

This partnership with the Father and with his Son is very real, as evidenced by Jesus’ prayer which John recorded: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. . . . That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in

me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.”—
John 17:17,18,21,22

To the brethren at Corinth Paul wrote: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, . . . and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” (II Cor. 5:19,20) The “word of reconciliation” which has been given to the consecrated followers of the Master is the Gospel message, the good tidings of God’s plan for the reconciling of the world. We have a partnership in this plan, or, as Paul states it in our text, a “fellowship in the gospel.”

COMPANIONSHIP

There are various aspects to our partnership in the Gospel, and all of them important. One of these is a blessed companionship with the Father and with his Son, and with those of like precious faith. Cherished indeed is the privilege of communing with our Heavenly Father through our beloved Redeemer and Elder Brother, Christ Jesus. How meaningless our Christian walk would be without the consciousness that we are constantly overshadowed by divine love.

Second only in importance to the companionship we enjoy with the Father and his Son is the friendship of our brethren. Paul appreciated this very much, and how beautifully he expressed it to the brethren at Philippi in the words of our opening

text, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, . . . For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.” Here is the outpouring of thanks to God for what the companionship and partnership of the Philippian brethren had meant to the great Apostle Paul. His every remembrance of them brought him comfort and encouragement.

“THE FIRST DAY”

Paul speaks of the first day of his fellowship with the brethren at Philippi. This is a reference to the time when this ecclesia was established, and it was indeed a day long to be remembered. It occurred during Paul’s second missionary journey, when Silas was his traveling companion and helper. Timothy joined them at Derbe and Lystra, and apparently, Luke also at Troas. Beginning at Troas, Luke, the author of the Book of Acts, included himself in the party through his use of the words “us” and “we.”—Acts 16:1-3,10,11

It was at Troas that Paul, in a vision, heard the call, “Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” (vs. 9) It was in response to this call that they went to Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia. They remained in Philippi a few days, and then, as Luke records, “On the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.”—vs. 13

Evidently it was a very informal gathering, and the women assembled at this place of prayer were glad to hear what Paul had to say. Among them was “a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God.”

Luke says that the Lord opened her heart, and that “she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.” (vs. 14) Lydia’s interest in the Gospel was more than a casual one, for she “attended”—that is, gave attention—to the things Paul spoke.

Lydia’s interest deepened, and she was baptized, along with those of her household. Her interest was further demonstrated by her invitation to Paul and his companions to be guests at her home. How beautifully she extended this invitation: “If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there.” To this Luke adds, “And she constrained us.”—vs. 15

TROUBLE ARISES

As was true in nearly every place Paul visited, trouble arose in Philippi. Here it came in connection with “a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination.” (Acts 16:16) For several days she kept announcing the presence of Paul and his companions, saying, “These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.” Paul knew that this was not a genuine recognition on her part, but a trick prompted by Satan through an evil spirit, for the purpose of bringing gain to her masters. Paul was grieved by this, and commanded the evil spirit to come out of her.—Acts 16:17,18

The spirit obeyed, which meant that the damsel was no longer of profit to her masters. They complained to the authorities, and Paul and Silas were imprisoned. At midnight, these two servants of God were singing and praying when suddenly an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, throwing

open the doors. The keeper of the prison was awakened, and seeing the doors open, supposed that all the prisoners had escaped. Paul reassured him that this was not the case. The prison keeper was so impressed that it led to his acceptance of the Gospel.—vss. 19-34

With the coming of morning the magistrates sent word that Paul and Silas should be released. Paul, claiming the rights which were his as a Roman citizen, demanded that those who had unjustly imprisoned him now appear and personally lead them out of prison, which they did. The authorities, now fearful due to their violation of Roman law, suggested that in the best interests of all concerned it would be well for Paul to leave the city. He agreed to this, but before departing, went to the home of Lydia for a farewell meeting with the brethren who had gathered there.—vss. 35-40

In a general way, it was doubtless this entire visit to Philippi which Paul refers to in our text as that “first day,” and what a blessed season it was. While it was only a brief visit, the first ecclesia in Europe had been established, and Paul had secured Lydia and the others, including the jailer, as friends and brethren in Christ for the rest of his life. No wonder he thanked God upon every remembrance of them!

CONFIDENT IN THE LORD

In our text, Paul expresses his confidence that the Lord, who had begun the good work in the hearts and lives of these faithful brethren at Philippi, would complete that work. When writing this epistle, Paul was not sure whether he would

have the opportunity of seeing the brethren at Philippi again. Thus, the tone of his words seemed to be that of a farewell message. In this light, how meaningful is his assurance that God would be abundantly able to complete in them the “good work” which had been started.

In this understandable manner, Paul set forth one of the very fundamental aspects of true Christian fellowship. We have the blessed privilege of being used of the Lord in various ways to assist one another in the narrow way. Our relationship with God, however, should be so vital, and our faith in him so strong, that we will be able to stand faithful without the direct and personal help of our brethren in Christ, if in God’s providence such circumstances might be ours.

It is true, indeed, that the Lord uses his people to assist and strengthen one another. While we are told, “work out your own salvation,” with confidence that God is working in us to “will and to do of his good pleasure,” we are to also recognize the many helps he provides to accomplish this work. (Phil. 2:12,13) He has provided apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for this purpose. (Eph. 4:11) Indeed, God uses all his consecrated children, as opportunity affords, to comfort and strengthen their fellow brethren. We cannot deliberately isolate ourselves from the Lord’s people, expecting to grow strong spiritually, and to make our calling and election sure.

We are to accept these helps from our brethren as from God, but must lean upon him, as Peter states: “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” (I Pet. 5:7) Paul desired that the

brethren at Philippi realize that the Lord would help them even if he should be put to death in a Roman prison. We, too, should keep in mind that God is able to work in us by any means, and through whomsoever he may choose. This is one of the rich blessings which accrues to those in partnership with the Heavenly Father.

MOTIVATED BY LOVE

Our fellowship in the Gospel is motivated by love. Paul continues, "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."—Phil. 1:9-11

Paul knew that the hearts of the Philippian brethren were filled with love for the Lord and his people. He knew that they held a special place in their hearts for him. Paul did not want them to make the mistake, however, of supposing that Christian love is without principle. Those who are truly motivated by Christian love also have discernment. They are able to "approve things that are excellent," and to stand against that which they know to be contrary to the divine will.

Paul wanted the Philippian brethren to abound in the kind of love he described to the church at Corinth. This is a love that "suffereth long, and is kind." It is a love that "envieth not." It "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked,

thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”
—I Cor. 13:4-7

In his letter to the brethren at Philippi, Paul describes how the outworking of love should manifest itself in their fellowship with one another. “If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”—Phil. 2:1-4

Those who abound in true Christian love, and are able to “approve things which are excellent,” will be “of one accord, of one mind.” Their discernment will enable them to determine the truly essential things, and will not insist that the brethren all agree with them on matters of minor importance. With such mutual recognition, there can be true “fellowship in the gospel.”

However, where there is strife, true fellowship is defeated. If in our association with the Lord’s people we are always seeking ways of forwarding our own interests, we lose the spirit of true partnership, for love “seeketh not her own.” If we would rather see others favored than ourselves, then we have the true spirit of Christian love, and when all in an ecclesia hold this viewpoint, the “fellowship of kindred minds” is indeed “like to that above.”—*Hymns of Dawn*, #23

WITNESSING

Another essential aspect of fellowship is to be active in bearing witness to the Gospel message, and Paul reminds the brethren at Philippi of this. He explains that because of his imprisonment “many of the brethren in the Lord . . . are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” To this he added, “Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will.” Paul did not approve preaching the Gospel through envy and strife, but he did rejoice that the Gospel was preached, and wrote, “Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”—Phil. 1:13-18

In the next chapter Paul writes, “Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.”—chap. 2:14-16

Paul rejoiced greatly that the Gospel was being preached. He was doing all he could to proclaim the message, even while in prison with his feet in the stocks. He told the brethren at Philippi that if they continued faithful in holding forth the Word, he would rejoice “in the day of Christ,” for it would be evidence that his ministry had not been in vain. He would be assured that there were other brethren who had caught the real meaning of their fellowship in the Gospel. Hence these would continue faithfully to make known the glad tidings for the blessing of others.

“STRIVING TOGETHER”

Fellowship in the Gospel also involves the need for the Lord’s people to work together, even “striving together for the faith of the gospel.” (Phil. 1:27) We are also to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 3) It is a mistaken notion that to abound in love implies a lack of desire to stand for the great fundamental principles of the Truth. Love will not be contentious, but it will contend. Indeed, love will give life itself for the defense of the foundation principles of Truth. Those who are unwilling to strive together for “the faith” of the Gospel’s message are lacking in the true spirit of our blessed fellowship.

How zealous Paul was in striving for the Gospel. Referring to some who were attempting to bring the brethren under the bondage of the Mosaic Law, he wrote, “We did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.” (Gal. 2:5, *New American Standard Bible*) When the Thessalonian brethren became somewhat confused concerning the second coming of Christ, he wrote a second epistle specifically to clarify the subject for them. He did not take the attitude that it made no difference what they believed.

In Paul’s final epistle, he wrote: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.”—II Tim. 2:15-18

SUFFERING WITH CHRIST

Fellowship in the Gospel includes the privilege of suffering for and with Christ. Paul wrote, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." (Phil. 1:29) Paul wrote from experience. He was informed at the beginning of his discipleship that he would be called upon to endure much suffering for the name of Christ, and how true it had been.—Acts 9:15,16

In presenting evidence to the brethren at Corinth that his ministry was approved by the Lord, Paul wrote concerning some of his suffering: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."—II Cor. 11:24-27

Although conditions in much of the world now are different than they were in Paul's day, some of the ways in which he suffered as part of his fellowship in the Gospel are still possible. For example, he mentions "journeyings" and "weariness and painfulness." Are we willing to journey for the Lord, even though it may be at great cost to ourselves? Are we willing to devote sufficient time and energy in the service of the Gospel that it results in "weariness," and which might, perchance, even be accompanied by some "painfulness?"

If outright persecution in the Lord's service does not come upon us, we may wonder just how we can suffer with Christ, and for his name's sake. However, we can each give up some of the comforts of life, and give ourselves so wholeheartedly to the carrying out of the terms of our consecration that we will experience some weariness and painfulness. Indeed, it is only such voluntary sacrifice and suffering that is acceptable to the Lord.

FAITHFULNESS—TODAY

It is our privilege to have fellowship in Christ's sufferings, not by waiting for some sinister form of government to come into power and inflict persecution, but by voluntarily carrying out daily the terms of our consecration in laying down our lives as witnesses for Jesus and for the Word of God. Conditions around us might change so that the Lord's people would be persecuted, but we can be assured that God would give us strength for whatever may come. (Ps. 28:7; Isa. 40:31) He will also give us strength today to continue faithfully laying down our lives in his service day by day.

Only those who are faithful in the use of all their opportunities today will be prepared for the experiences of tomorrow. To use our opportunities of fellowship in the Gospel, with all its blessed implications, involves the necessity of maintaining the viewpoint expressed by Paul when he wrote: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. 3:13,14 ■

A Song of Messiah

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”
—*Revelation 19:7*

THE BIBLICAL DECLARATION respecting Adam and Eve is that they were created in the image of God, blessed, admonished to be fruitful, and certified as being “very good,” or perfect, like all the Creator’s handiwork.—Gen.

1:27,28,31; Deut. 32:4

Their disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit caused them to be condemned to death and cast out of the Garden of Eden. Nevertheless, in mercy, God, as he condemned the serpent, gave our first parents the promise, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” —Gen. 3:15

A PROMISED SEED

The serpent, which was the instrument used to beguile our first parents, was actually a personification of Satan, the author of all sin. (Rev. 20:2) The identity of the “seed” that would ultimately destroy Satan was obscured from Adam and Eve, but the hope that this would sometime occur endured in their hearts.

More than two thousand years after sin entered the world, God confirmed this hope of a “seed” in a covenant made with Abraham. Because he had obediently prepared to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, God promised that through Abraham’s seed, all the families of the earth would be blessed.—Gen. 22:15-18

The Jews, Abraham’s natural descendants through Isaac and Jacob, have clung to the hope that their Messiah would fulfill this prediction. Devoted Christians now accept Paul’s declaration, that this promised seed consists of the glorified Christ and his faithful body members, who are “heirs according to the promise” made to Abraham.—Gal. 3:16,29

A POETIC FORECAST

A most beautiful portrayal is penned by David, who focuses upon the central figure of God’s plan of salvation, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In David’s descriptive words, he also makes reference to Jesus’ associates in the great redemptive work. He begins, “My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.”—Ps. 45:1

It has been suggested that this psalm was composed for a festive occasion, and possibly was penned in anticipation of one of the weddings of Solomon, David’s son and future king of Israel. Since it has been included as a portion of the sacred writ, however, we may properly view it as an admonition for the church, the espoused “bride” of Christ. (II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 21:2,9) Thus, there is a deeper significance to these words than merely reflecting on some past occasion of a royal wedding.

From the descriptions given in the various passages of this psalm, we suggest that in verse one and in most verses, the “king” referred to is our Lord Jesus Christ. In the natural order of things, none of us has ever seen a perfect specimen of humanity. To be sure, there are some very handsome or beautiful individuals in the world. Sometimes, however, those who are physically attractive may be lacking those qualities of inner beauty that would make them appeal to us in the fullest sense. It is that inner loveliness which especially marks Jesus. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” and as a result, was “made higher than the heavens.”—Heb. 7:26

We read in John 7:31,32 that many people believed in Christ after seeing his miracles and hearing him speak. This happened to such a degree that the Pharisees sent officers to capture him. However, his manner and majestic presence was so overpowering that these officers returned to the chief priests and Pharisees empty handed. When they were questioned as to why they had not brought Jesus, they replied simply, “Never man spake like this man.”—vss. 45,46

REWARD FOR FAITHFULNESS

Thus, even though his enemies despised and rejected Christ, he was the epitome of beauty, truth, purity and righteousness. His character stood head and shoulders above every human being who ever lived. Because of his faithfulness and obedience to God in laying down his life, Christ Jesus has been highly exalted to the divine nature, and he is the one who is described in this royal wedding song of the psalmist. “Thou art fairer than the children of

men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.”—Ps. 45:2

Our glorified Lord is no longer a suffering servant, but has been exalted and “given a name which is above every name.” (Phil. 2:9,10) Present world conditions and the fulfillment of various prophetic signs suggest we are living in the time described in the Scriptures as the “day of the Lord,” and that Jesus’ invisible presence at his Second Advent has commenced. Our Lord’s presence is as “a thief” in the night, in which he has entered Satan’s house for the purpose of breaking it apart. (I Thess. 5:2-4; Matt. 24:43) Indeed, the many changes observed during this Time of Trouble demonstrate that the present social and ecclesiastic order is being removed, to make way for God’s kingdom of righteousness. There is the exposing of many systemic injustices, as people clamor for their presumed rights on every front, while governmental forces are incapable of solving these grievances. Similarly, turmoil occurring in various houses of worship has largely eradicated mankind’s confidence in their spiritual guides, as their followers are keenly aware of many practices that do not square with justice and righteousness.—II Pet. 3:10-13

In God’s kingdom, for which Jesus taught his disciples to pray, the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth. (Isa. 11:9; Jer. 31:34) At that time, Christ, the heavenly bridegroom, along with his church as the bride, will provide instruction as to God’s plan for the salvation of all the human family who desire to live in peace and harmony with each other. During this time, Satan will be bound and no longer able to deceive mankind. (Rev. 20:1-3) Obedience to just

laws will be enforced, but mankind will be grateful for divine intervention in their lives to accomplish this. “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.”—Ps. 45:3-5

In another of David’s psalms, the ending of this present evil order is graphically portrayed, as he writes prophetically of this time. “The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. 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 heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.”—Ps. 46:6-10

KINGDOM OPERATIONS

When the law of righteousness is established, all opposition to the work of the incoming king will cease. Under his rule, mankind will submit to the government which will be in existence at that time. God’s law will go forth from Mount Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Isa. 2:3; Mic. 4:2) As that period of judgment does its work, all who will ultimately attain life on the earth will respond to the instruction provided by Messiah through those faithful servants of past ages. Then it will be true

that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Hab. 2:14) Christ, who was despised by the religious rulers during his earthly sojourn, will manifest his great power and glory, which will be recognized by all. “That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil. 2:11

The psalmist continues: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” (Ps. 45:6,7) Paul quotes this passage, and tells us that the “throne” of which David prophesied is that of Christ Jesus. The apostle states, “Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever.” (Heb. 1:8) The word “God,” as used by Paul as well as the psalmist, has the meaning of “magistrate” or “mighty one,” and can apply, depending on the context, to either the Heavenly Father or his Son Christ Jesus. In this case, Paul makes it clear that “the God,” the Heavenly Father, has told his glorified Son that he is a mighty one, “a God,” and has been given a throne, from which he will exercise rulership.

Although not equal in glory to the Almighty Creator, the glorified Christ is “The mighty God,” having been made so by the power of the Father. (Isa. 9:6,7) God’s Son has earned the right to rule, symbolized by a scepter, because of his faithfulness in carrying out his sacrificial course during his earthly ministry. Thus, Christ Jesus not only is the agency by which the work of the Day of the Lord is to be accomplished, but his invisible presence will continue throughout the coming kingdom to

accomplish the mediatorial function of reconciling mankind back to the Heavenly Father.

The following quote seems to be in harmony with this thought: “The relationship of the Son to the work of restitution with which this Seventh Epoch-Day will close and bring terrestrial perfection, will be wholly different from any of his previous works. In all the previous creations, the Son simply acted for Jehovah, using powers and energies not in any sense his own; but in this grand work to come he will be using a power and authority that are his own—which cost him . . . humiliation, culminating in his crucifixion. By that transaction, which the Father’s wisdom and love planned for him, he ‘bought’ the world, bought Father Adam and all his progeny, and his estate—the earth—with all his title to it as its monarch ‘in the likeness of God.’”—*Studies in the Scriptures*, Volume 6, page 47

CHARACTERISTICS OF BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE

Christ’s love for righteousness and hatred of iniquity were striking qualities of his character. He had a profound appreciation of righteousness in every facet of his life, but he also would not gloss over iniquity or sin. One illustration of this latter point was the hardness of the Pharisees, who condemned Jesus for doing good on the Sabbath in the healing of a man with a withered hand. (Mark 3:1-4) We then read in this connection: “When he [Jesus] had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.” (vs. 5) Our Lord was angered and

grieved at the evil spirit which the Pharisees demonstrated. After he performed the miracle, they took counsel together as to how they might kill him. (vs. 6) It is because the Master “loved righteousness, and hated iniquity,” that God, his Heavenly Father, anointed him with the Holy Spirit without “measure,” or limit.—John 3:34; Heb. 1:9

Jesus’ footstep followers do not receive the Holy Spirit without measure, as he did. However, they may acquire it in a greater portion, depending upon their faithfulness in utilizing the measure which God has already bestowed upon them. Indeed, they must similarly develop a love for righteousness and an abhorrence of sin and unrighteousness. God has given assurance that he will provide his Holy Spirit in sufficient measure to help in the accomplishment of this important endeavor.—I Cor. 12:7; Rom. 12:3

“All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.” (Ps. 45:8) The spices mentioned permeate the garments of the anointed bridegroom, and may refer to character qualities demonstrated by our Lord that were evidenced during his earthly sojourn. We are reminded of the Scripture that speaks of being “clothed with humility,” a character trait profoundly evident in the Master. (I Pet. 5:5) Paul further states that Christ’s “offering and . . . sacrifice to God” was “a sweetsmelling savour.”—Eph. 5:2

In Psalm 45:9, David identifies one who stands as “the queen in gold of Ophir.” This reference may aptly picture the completed church beyond the veil as the king’s wife, the bride of Christ, “the Lamb’s wife,” attired in gold, symbolic of the divine nature.

(Rev. 21:9; II Pet. 1:4) These faithful overcomers will reign with Christ a thousand years.—Rev. 20:4,6

A PROFOUND INVITATION

The grandest invitation ever extended came from God himself during this Gospel Age, in which he has invited individuals from among the world of mankind to be a bride for his Son. (Ps. 45:10,11) This invitation was at first made exclusively to the nation of Israel, but as a nation they rejected the offer. In Jesus' parable of those invited to a wedding feast, we read of the excuses that were made, which are instructive with regard to Israel's rejection of God's invitation. "They all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. . . . And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."—Luke 14:15-24

Commencing with Cornelius and his house, the Gentiles were given the opportunity to become part of the bride of Christ. This is aptly illustrated in the latter portion of Jesus' parable. "The lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel [meaning constrain or entreat] them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."—vss. 23,24

PROMISES FOR THE BRIDE

In some cultures, there are arranged marriages whereby the parents decide who their children will marry. In such cases, the love between the two parties may not have much to do with the marriage decision and subsequent wedding. While it is true

that God is seeking a bride for his Son, there will most assuredly be a reciprocal love of the highest kind when the wedding takes place. It will also not be after the marriage that this bride and groom will learn to love each other.

Christ has been very active in demonstrating love for his prospective bride. The Scriptures describe what he has done on our behalf if we prove faithful to him. He promised to prepare a place for us. “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:2,3) Jesus also left us a legacy of peace that passes human understanding, even in the midst of experiences that cause turmoil to our fleshly interests. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”—vs. 27

Christ has made us free from Adamic condemnation by imputing his righteousness to us. This justification “by faith” in the blood of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice is based upon God’s acceptance of our unreserved consecration to do his will. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, . . . who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”—Rom. 5:1,9; 8:1,4

There are many other blessings we have received from our espoused bridegroom, which assist us in our pilgrim journey along the narrow way. We also have a special promise, which will be fulfilled if we prove faithful. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”—Rev. 3:21

FEATURES OF THE KINGDOM

We have been called for the purpose of taking part in fulfilling God's eternal purpose regarding mankind, which is to reconcile them back to the Creator in the next age. From a personal standpoint, the exaltation of the bride of Christ in glory will be like no other wedding in all eternity. John the Revelator described this scene with these symbolic words: "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."—Rev. 19:7-9

Returning to the words of the psalmist, we read: "The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace." (Ps. 45:13-15) In this instance, we suggest that the opening phrase, "the king's daughter," refers to the Heavenly Father and his "daughter," those called to be his consecrated children during the Gospel Age. (Rom. 8:16,17) In David's prophetic description of this class, he indicates they are being specially prepared to be brought to their king and bridegroom—Christ Jesus—and to enter into his palace as his bride.

As his prospective and espoused bride at the present time, we have been clothed with the imputed

robe of Christ's righteousness. (Isa. 61:10) Upon this symbolic robe we are to embroider the various fruits and graces of the Spirit—meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly kindness and love, so that it becomes a beautiful “raiment of needlework.” (Gal. 5:22,23; II Pet. 1:4-8) By faithfulness in developing these character qualities, though our outward works are deficient, our efforts and heart's desire will be such that we will be “all glorious within,” and made fully perfect in the “first resurrection.”—Rev. 20:6; Jude 24

ASSOCIATES OF THE BRIDE

The “virgins her companions” that follow after the bride shall rejoice as well. Those virgins appear to represent a spiritual class, though with lesser glory, in that they are “companions” of the king's daughter. Yet, this implies righteousness and love for the Lord on their part. It would not be expected that the bride class would have as associates those who were not in harmony with God and walking in a similar manner as themselves.

There has not been a call during this Gospel Age to a lesser class, as we are “called in the one hope” of our calling. (Eph. 4:4) Those who ultimately make up this group of the bride's “companions” seem to be aptly described by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 3:9-16. In this passage, some, although called and accepted to be part of “God's building,” fail to properly build upon the foundation of Christ the gem-like qualities of character that are necessary to be part of the “temple of God,” and which will stand up to the fiery trials that will most assuredly come. These others, Paul

states, tend to build with “wood, hay, stubble,” materials which, when fiery experiences come, are burned.

The apostle says that those who build in this manner over the course of their Christian walk “suffer loss,” that is, the loss of being part of the completed temple of God. Thankfully, however, because in their heart they still love the Lord, God’s mercy is manifest on their behalf. We cite Paul’s full statement in this regard: “If any man’s work be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” These companions of the bride are elsewhere designated a “great multitude,” the number of which is unknown because it is not a called out class. Whatever may be the reasons they do not attain the “mark for the prize of the high calling,” they, nevertheless, wash “their robes,” and make them “white in the blood of the Lamb.”—Phil 3:14; Rev. 7:9-14

EARTHLY REPRESENTATIVES

“Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.” (Ps. 45:16,17) Abraham is referred to as a “father,” and we suggest this reference collectively refers to the prominent Jewish forebears and their prophets. (Luke 1:73) The lives of some of these individuals of past ages are chronicled, especially as to their great faith, by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews chapter 11. Isaiah 2:3, which speaks of the Word of the Lord going forth from Jerusalem, seems to point to the role of these faithful ones of old

as the earthly representatives of God's kingdom. Thus, through the work of God's Son, the great king, his bride, her companions, and faithful earthly representatives, the work of bringing the human family back to perfection will result in everlasting praise to God for his authorship of this wonderful plan of redemption.

THE GLORIOUS OUTCOME

In summary, Psalm 45 gives a beautiful outline of God's plan of redemption for mankind. The central figure in this love song is Christ Jesus, for whom the Heavenly Father is seeking a bride. Those who have responded to the invitation during this Gospel Age are urged to faithfulness, as they embroider their imputed robe of righteousness with the graces of the spirit. Realizing that the time is short, we should press on with diligence to the end that we will be "faithful unto death" and become a part of the Christ, who will bless all the families of the earth.—Rev. 2:10; Acts 3:25

"Then I saw thrones, and those seated on them were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him a thousand years."—Rev. 20:4-6, *New Revised Standard Version* ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

J. Freer		Sturgis, SK	7-9
Sturgis, SK	July 7-9	Selkirk, MB	10
Detroit, MI	July 12, 13	Moorhead, MN	11
Reynoldsburg, OH	July 21, 22	Indianapolis, IN	23
Greenfield, OH	July 23	St. Louis, MO	24
B. Keith		Kansas City, MO	25
Kalispell, MT	July 4	Denver, CO	27
Saskatoon, SK	6	Boise, ID	29
		Rogue River, OR	31

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

G. Balko		B. Jakubowski	
Sturgis, SK	July 7-9	Prince Albert, SK	July 1-3
R. Charlton		R. Liberda	
Sturgis, SK	July 7-9	Phoenix, AZ	July 2
O. B. Elbert		A. Oystryk	
Prince Albert, SK	July 1-3	Prince Albert, SK	July 1-3
Sturgis, SK	7-9	J. Parkinson	
L. Griehs		Prince Albert, SK	July 1-3
Prince Albert, SK	July 1-3	B. Siwak	
K. Humphreys		Sturgis, SK	July 7-9
Prince Albert, SK	July 1-3		

OBITUARIES

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

Brother David Larson, Ebensburg, PA—May 3.

Age, 77

Sister Edith Irvine, Los Angeles, CA—May 9. Age, 88

Sister Maria Grudzien, Miechow, Poland—May 12.

Age, 86

CONVENTIONS

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

PRINCE ALBERT/SASKATOON CONVENTION, July 1-3—Siwak Farm RR1 Stn Mpp, Prince Albert, SK Canada S6V5P8. Contact A. Siwak. Phone: (306) 764-7692 or Email: ahsiwak@inet2000.com

EAST SASKATCHEWAN CONVENTION, July 7-9—Sturgis Community Hall, Hwy. #9, Sturgis, SK, Canada. Contact N. Paley, Box 1522, Canora, SK S0A0L0. Phone: (306) 563-5441 or Email: thepaleys@sasktel.net

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 15-20—University of Pittsburgh, 450 Schoolhouse Road, Johnstown, PA. Contact E. Kuenzli. Phone: (407) 670-4189 or Email: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com

OKPU ALA NGWA CONVENTION, August 2—Class Meeting Hall, Okpuala Ngwa, Abia State, Nigeria. Contact C. Godwin. Email: nyerugo@yahoo.com

NIGERIA GENERAL CONVENTION, August 25-27—Central School Obudi Agwa Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact C. O. Egbu, #24 Fayemi Street Coca Cola Mokola Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Phone: 2348033339949 or Email: egbucaje@gmail.com

JACKSON CONVENTION, September 2,3—FaHoLo Camp and Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Grass Lake, MI 49240. For information, contact B. Davis. Phone: (517) 788-6552 or Email: r2d2lad@comcast.net

NEW YORK CONVENTION, September 2,3—Double-Tree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. Contact G. Passios. Phone: (201) 939-3196 or Email: gpassios11@verizon.net

SEATTLE CONVENTION, September 2-4—(New location) Bastyr University, 14500 Juanita Drive NE, Kenmore, WA 98028. For reservations and information, contact L. Flinn. Phone: (206) 518-2678 or Email: laurie@flinn.us

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 9,10—Comfort Inn, 4725 University Drive (Hwy. 72), Huntsville, AL 35806. Phone: (256) 562-2525. Mention “Huntsville Bible Students” when making reservations. Contact J. Cothren. Phone: (256) 852-8505 or Email: jimmycothren@att.net

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, September 23,24—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact D. Farchione. Email: Debfarchione@aol.com

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, September 30-October 1—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact L. Mlinek@verizon.net

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 21,22—Masonic Hall, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA. Contact M. Allard. Phone: (805) 773-2962 or Email: medlallard@juno.com

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 28,29—South Seminole Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry, FL 32707. Contact J. Kuenzli. Phone: (407) 831-2098 or Email: jkuenzli@cfl.rr.com

DETROIT/METRO DETROIT JOINT CONVENTION, October 29—Pleasant Ridge Community Center, 4 Ridge Road, Pleasant Ridge, MI. Contact G. Zandler. Phone: (248) 399-8843 or Email: ngzendler@wowway.com

*“If we love one another, God dwelleth in us,
and his love is perfected in us.”*

—I John 4:12