

The Dawn

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

GOD AND CREATION SERIES, Part 13

Heirs and Joint-heirs

"If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Romans 8:17

ONE OF THE amazing features of the Creator's plan for restoring the fallen race to life, and to at-one-ment with himself is that a limited number of mankind are invited to participate with Jesus, the Redeemer and Savior, on a partnership basis, sharing his glory and participating in the great work of extending blessings of life to "all the families of the earth." In our text these are referred to as the LORD's 'children' who are 'heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ'. In the context (vs. 22) we read, that "the whole creation," or as the **Marginal Translation** states, "every creature, groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," and in verse 19 we read that the "earnest expectation of the creature [the whole creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." It will be through the 'manifestation of the sons of God' that the promised blessings of life and happiness will reach the 'groaning creation'.

In many of the Old Testament promises of God pertaining to the future deliverance of the human race from sin and death there is no indication that the great Deliverer, the Messiah, would have others associated with him in this work; but some do reveal this fact. The prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 53, is one of these instances. It is in this prophecy that the suffering and death of Jesus are foretold, with the explanation that his soul would be made an offering for sin. In the 12th verse Jesus' high reward is described. Concerning him, Jehovah

says, "I will divide him a portion with the Great." Here the Creator is referring to himself as the 'Great', and saying that Jesus would be exalted to share his greatness. That this promise was fulfilled is confirmed in the New Testament. Paul speaks of the "exceeding greatness" of God's power "which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenlies." (Eph. 1:19,20) In Hebrews 12:2 we read that Christ is now "set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Peter writes concerning Jesus, saying that he is "gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."—I Pet. 3:22

Truly, Jesus was given a portion with the 'Great'. And in his Father's promise of this we find this further statement, "He shall divide the spoil with the strong." (Isa. 53:12) The word 'spoil' suggests the reward of a victorious struggle, or battle. The Apostle Paul in writing to Timothy urges him to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (II Tim. 2:3) Using a similar figure of speech, Paul again writes, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil."—Eph. 6:10,11

Paul explains in his letter to the church at Corinth that the "weapons of our warfare are not carnal," but nevertheless, "mighty through God," enabling the Christian to bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (II Cor. 10:4,5) And it is these who are 'strong in the LORD', and who successfully battle against the selfish spirit of the world, against their own fallen flesh, and against the efforts of the Devil to lure them away from obedience to the LORD, with whom the highly exalted Jesus 'divides the spoil'. Jesus said to his disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) Because he was an overcomer he received the reward of an overcomer, and in Revelation 3:21 he says, "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." It is possible that in making this promise to his followers, Jesus had in mind his Father's promise to give him a 'portion with the Great', and is saying, in effect, "My Father has fulfilled his promise to me; I have been highly exalted to his right hand; and now I will share my reward with other overcomers, those who are 'strong' because of trusting in the power of God to help them overcome."

On Mount Zion

As the Redeemer of the world, Jesus was led as a "lamb to the slaughter." (Isa. 53:7) He is the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) This title remains with Jesus after his exaltation to heavenly glory, and is used with respect to him in Revelation 14:1, which reads, "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." Mount Zion in Jerusalem was the 'Capitol Hill' of ancient Israel, and is used in the prophecies of the Bible to symbolize the kingdom of Christ, that promised "government" which rests upon his shoulder. (Isa. 9:6) And here we learn that in this 'government' there will be a hundred and forty-four thousand associated with him.

These are the strong with whom he divides the spoil of victory. They are said to have "his Father's name written in their foreheads." This identifies them as members of the divine family, the 'children of God' of our text, who are 'heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ'. They are shown with the Lamb because they will be associated with him in the kingdom work of extending salvation to the world. In the last verse of the prophecy of Obadiah we read, "Saviors shall come up on mount Zion, . . . and the kingdom shall be the LORD's." Jesus is, of course, **the** Savior of the world, but in this prophecy those with whom he shares his reward of exaltation and glory are also said to be 'saviors', because they participate in the kingdom work of restoring the dead world to life

Jews and Gentiles

In the Bible, a city is sometimes used as a symbol of a government. We are told that Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:10) So far as the record goes, God did not use the word 'city' in his promises to Abraham. All he promised him was that he would make of him a great nation, and that his 'seed' would bless all the families of the earth. Evidently Abraham took these promises to mean that one of his descendants would become the head of a government under the jurisdiction of which all the nations of the earth would receive a blessing.

This thought becomes more apparent when we consider the circumstances of Abraham's day. There were then no large metropolitan centers such as we call cities today. A city of that time was often made up of a relatively small association of people, the majority of whom were usually related to one another as members of one family, or tribe. Thus we have "the Horites in their mount Seir," the Amalekites, and the Amorites. (Gen. 14:6,7) These tribes might be spread out over considerable territory, but to whatever extent they were subject to governmental control, their government would be in the hands of the tribal heads in the city.

When God first spoke to Abraham he lived in Ur of the Chaldees. (Gen. 11:28) There he said to him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." (Gen. 12:1,2) Here God told Abraham that he and his 'seed' were to become the heads of a new nation. Abraham believed this, and left his home in Ur, went to the land God had promised to him, and dwelt in tents the rest of his life, waiting for the building of that 'city' which he visualized in the promise God made to him.

Abraham died in faith without receiving the fulfillment of the promises God made to him. But these promises were the bases of a hope that continued with his descendants from

generation to generation. When the Hebrew people left Egypt, God entered into a covenant with them, and promised that if they were faithful to his covenant he would make of them a "kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." (Exod. 19:5,6) Here, again, the thought of a kingdom, a government, is associated with the natural descendants of Abraham, his seed according to the flesh.

To actually inherit this kingdom it was required of the Hebrews that they be faithful to the covenant into which they had entered with the LORD. But they were not faithful except for short periods of time. Nevertheless, God continued to send his prophets to this people, reminding them of their obligation to the Law, and reiterating the promises of a coming Messiah, in association with whom their nation would rule the world. The final test of their worthiness of this exalted position was their opportunity to accept the Messiah when he did come.

But, as we know, the nation of Israel did not accept their Messiah. Under the leadership of their religious rulers they cried out against him and demanded that he be put to death. Near the close of his ministry, when it became apparent that the nation would reject him as their Messiah, Jesus said, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof," that is, the fruits of loving devotion and obedience to God. (Matt. 21:43) Here again the 'kingdom' is associated with a 'nation'. Israel could have been that kingdom nation, but now, as Jesus said, the kingdom was to be taken from Israel and given to another nation.

And what 'nation' is it to which the kingdom is given? The Apostle Peter answers this question. Writing to followers of the Master, the 'children of God', he says, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, . . . which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God." (I Pet. 2:9,10) Those who in 'time past' were not the people of God were evidently Gentile converts. Now they were the people of God, and part of that 'holy nation' to which the kingdom had been given.

Actually, however, this new nation is made up of both Jews and Gentiles. Although Israel as a nation rejected the Messiah, there were individual Israelites who enthusiastically accepted him and became his disciples. In John 1:11,12 we read concerning these, "He came unto his own [the Jewish nation], and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." These, then, are the first of the new nation to whom the kingdom was given, and the first also of the 'children' who are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

There were not enough believing Israelites to make up the foreordained number of these children of God who were to reign with Christ, so the Gospel invitation was extended to the Gentiles. Thus Gentiles who accepted the invitation became the people of God together with the believing Israelites. These become 'one' in Christ Jesus, and together with him constitute the faith 'seed' of Abraham through which all the families of the earth are to be blessed. As God looks upon these children whom he has made his heirs, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female." As Paul states it, all are "one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."—Gal. 3:28,29

The Hope of Glory

That members of the fallen and dying race would be given an opportunity of being associated with the Messiah as rulers in his kingdom, and sharing his glory, as well as the glory of the Creator, was kept secret until it was brought to light by Jesus and the apostles. Paul refers to it as the "mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."—Col. 1:26,27

To Christians in Rome Paul wrote, "By whom [Christ] we have access by faith into his grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5:2) The meaning of the expression, 'glory of God', is quite beyond the abil-

ity of our finite minds to comprehend. However, various promises of the Bible give us an inkling of what it implies. As we have seen, when Jesus was raised from the dead he was highly exalted to the divine nature, and to the right hand of God. The Apostle John wrote, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:2) John realized the limitations of the human mind in understanding matters pertaining to the spirit world. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," he concedes, "but we know that, . . . we shall be like him [Christ]."

Yes, like Christ, to whom was given "all power in heaven and in earth"; like Christ who was made a "quickening spirit" that he might give life to the dead world of mankind; and like Christ who is now the "express image" of his Father's person, having partaken of his glory. (Matt. 28:18; I Cor. 15:45; Heb. 1:3) These are some of the aspects of the 'glory of God' to which the children of God are heirs. They have to do with the personal glory of God, the glory of the 'divine nature'. And Peter writes that unto us have been given "exceeding great and precious promises" that by these we might become "partakers of the divine nature."—II Pet. 1:4

But there is also the official glory to which the Gospel Age sons of God are heirs. As Jesus was exalted to share his Father's throne, so we are promised, if faithful, that we shall sit with Jesus in his throne. (Rev. 3:21) Jesus is now the great King—the "King of kings," and his joint-heirs are to be made kings, to "reign on the earth." (Rev. 5:10) When the disciples asked Jesus what they would receive in return for taking up their cross and following him, he said that they would sit on "thrones," and that this would be during the time of "regeneration" when the human race will be restored to life and harmony with the Creator.—Matt. 19:28

God's Ruling House

Many fail to appreciate the great truths pertaining to the kingdom of Christ because they think of this kingdom as having been established at the time of his First Advent, failing to

realize that before the kingdom could begin to reign, all who are to be rulers in it must be "called," "chosen," and found "faithful." (Rev. 17:14) It is this feature of the divine plan that has been in progress during the present age. If Jesus alone was the King in this kingdom it would have begun to reign at the beginning of the age. But, as we have seen, his faithful followers are to reign with him, and these, as sons of God, together with Jesus, his beloved Son, as the Head, will be the divine ruling house.

The LORD's kingdom is symbolized in Old Testament prophecies by a mountain, and called the "mountain of the LORD's house." This simply means the kingdom of the Lord which will be in the hands of his ruling house of sons. This kingdom was not due to be set up until the 'last days', the last days, that is, of the reign of sin and death, the last days of Satan's rulership as the 'prince of this evil world.' The Prophet Isaiah wrote, "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills [dominating, that is, all the nations of earth]; and all nations shall flow unto it."—Isa. 2:2

Another prophecy pertaining to the 'last days' is found in the 2nd Psalm. Here Jehovah says, "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." (vs. 6) In the 8th and 9th verses Jehovah says to his Son, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen [the nations] for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." In Revelation 2:26,27 Jesus makes a promise to the children of God who are joint-heirs with him, saying, "He that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." Yes, the honor and authority of the kingdom which Jehovah promised to Jesus will be shared by the entire ruling house of sons.

Promises Conditional

Just as the kingdom promises God made to the natural descendants of Abraham were dependent upon being faithful to him and to the terms of the covenant into which they had entered with him, so throughout the Gospel Age God's kingdom promises to members of the prospective new nation—the "sons" who will make up his ruling house—are also conditional, those conditions again being faithfulness to him and to the doing of his will. The Apostle Peter admonishes these to add to their faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. . . . If ye do these things ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."—II Pet. 1:4-11

Another condition attached to God's promises of joint-heirship with Christ as ruling kings in his kingdom is stated by Paul in II Timothy 2:12: "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." This same condition is set forth in our text, which declares that we are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him." Again in Revelation 20:4 a similar thought is expressed. We read, "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

The 'beheading' referred to in the text last quoted is figurative, indicating that one has surrendered his own will and accepted the headship of Christ. It is a 'beheading' for the 'witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God'. It implies, in other words, full devotion to the cause of Christ, laying down one's life in his service and in proclaiming the truths of the 'Word of God'. To his disciples Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world." (Matt. 5:14) But "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Consequently, those who have borne witness to the truth have been persecuted. (John 3:19) Thus they have suffered and died with

Christ, encouraged by the hope of living and reigning with him.

Setting Up the Kingdom

It is in the 'last days' that the 'mountain of the LORD's house' is established, as we have seen. (Isa. 2:2) Authority and great power are required in the setting up of any governmental authority, especially when other kings have to be conquered—and Christ's kingdom is to be exalted above all others. When the enemies of Jesus put him to death, one of the charges against him was that he claimed to be a king. They probably thought that they had permanently disposed of this pretender. But they were mistaken. It was God who had decreed that Jesus should be a reigning king, so he raised him from the dead. Never before in the annals of history had such power been utilized to make sure of the establishment of a kingdom. In view of this miracle, it would be folly to suppose that any set of circumstances could prevent, or even delay, the fulfillment of God's kingdom promises as they centered in Jesus.

That mighty miracle was at the beginning of the Gospel Age. It was the introduction to that period in the divine plan during which the joint-heirs of Christ are selected and prepared to live and reign with him. As each of these has proved faithful unto death, it has been with the hope and assurance expressed by Paul concerning himself, when he wrote, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the LORD, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only; but unto all them also that love his appearing."—II Tim. 4:7,8

All the faithful children of God throughout the age have waited in the sleep of death until their 'fellows' were made ready to reign with Christ, and then, at this end of the age comes another mighty miracle in the setting up of the kingdom—their resurrection from the dead that they might be joined with Christ, share his glory, and live and reign with him. This is described as the 'first resurrection', and we read in Revelation 20:6 "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in

the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

Can God's plan to set his kingdom in the hands of his 'children' fail when such power is utilized to raise them from the dead? Surely not! Nor will the glorious work of that kingdom fail. It will bring peace to the people. The inhabitant of that day shall not say, I am sick; and death and hell will deliver up the dead which are in them.—Mic. 4:1-4; Isa. 33:24; Rev. 20:13

1994 Memorial Supper Date

THE PROPER TIME for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 p.m., on Friday, March 25, 1994.

We have a complete Memorial Service available for isolated brethren, or for any who care to have it, on both audio and video cassette. The audio cassette can be purchased for \$3.00 per copy, or is available free of charge on loan from:

**Dawn Recorded Lecture Service
199 Railroad Avenue
East Rutherford, NJ 07073**

The video cassette can be purchased for \$6.00, and is also available free on loan. Send your request to:

**Dawn Video Cassette Service
P.O. Box 4355
North Hollywood, CA 91617**

**THE CUT-OFF DATE for ordering
these tapes will be March 1st, so be
sure to order them in good time.**

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Kay White, San Francisco CA—September 21, 1993. Age, 100.

Brother Louis Ketko, Detroit MI—October 26, 1993. Age, 61.

Brother Joseph Szuba, Buffalo NY—November 7, 1993. Age, 77.

Sister Louise Fitzpatrick, Troutdale OR—November 11, 1993. Age, 87.

Sister Celia Fay, Yuma AZ—December 8, 1993. Age, 88.

Sister Mary Tolwinski, New Brunswick NJ—December 29, 1993. Age, 92.

Sister Jessie Czopor, Detroit MI—December 31, 1993. Age, 91.

Sister Ethel Webster, Haverhill MA—January 6. Age, 93.

Sister Kay Bell, Los Angeles CA—January 11. Age, 98.

Sister Myrza Kolliman, Wilmington DE—January 12. Age, 91.

Sister Alta Musgrove, Los Angeles CA—January 17. Age, 90.

Brother Bob Crozier, Sr., Orlando FL—January 19. Age, 89.

Sister Helen Dobrowsky, New York NY—January 23. Age, 71.

"I do not pray for these only, but also for those who are to believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."



—John 17:20,21, R.S.V.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

LESSON FOR MARCH 6

Saved by Faith

KEY VERSE: *"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."* — Romans 1:16

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Romans 1:1,3-17

IN PAUL'S OPENING salutation, he indicated that this letter was written to Christians, not to the unbelieving world. Since the Roman church, which he had never visited, was made up of both Jews and Gentiles, he identified himself as a servant or 'slave' of Jesus Christ; one "set apart for the Gospel of God." His letter was addressed to the "called of Jesus Christ: to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." (vs. 6) They were 'called' as ambassadors for Christ, who, like their Master, were commissioned to preach the Gospel of the kingdom. Paul referred to them as "saints" (vs. 7), because they were consecrated believers, separated for the service of God.

Paul had a long-felt desire to visit his brethren in Rome, and to preach the Gospel there. While they had accepted Christ and had become disciples, Jewish ideas and prejudices

were still a great influence in their thinking. He told them, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, . . . that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles." (vss. 11-13) In verse 15, he wrote, "As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are in Rome also." The Lord intended that he should do so when, as a prisoner in Jerusalem, "the Lord stood by him and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." — Acts 23:11

The theme of Paul's letter is that in the Gospel was the very power of God for the salvation of

The theme of Paul's letter is that in the Gospel was the very power of God for the salvation of those who believed, both Jew and Gentile. Writing to the Corinthians, he reiterated this point, saying, "Unto us which are saved it is the power of God." (I Cor. 1:18) Paul said on another occasion, "The Scripture, having forseen that God would justify the nations by faith, previously announced the glad tidings [the Gospel] to Abraham that, In thee shall all the nations be blessed." (Gal. 3:8, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) The angels announced a similar message at the time of Jesus' birth, which they expressed as "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." It will require the full thousand years of the Millennial Age to bless all the families of the earth with the joyful knowledge of divine grace in Christ. Christ "died for every man" and "he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."—II Cor. 5:15; I John 2:2

Another feature of the Gospel concerns the 'seed of Abraham' that is to perform the great work of blessing all the families of the earth. This 'seed' is to consist of Jesus, the Head, and the church, his body, 'whose names are written in heaven'. (Gal. 3:26-29)

This Gospel Age intervenes between the First Advent of Jesus and the time when the blessing of earth's billions begins. God is now selecting the 'little flock', trying and proving them, fitting them for the heavenly kingdom. The Apostle Peter declared, God has given "unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature."—II Pet. 1:4

This is the true Gospel we find set forth in the Scriptures by Paul himself, and of which he was not ashamed. This Gospel shows the character of our Creator in a most wonderful light—his wisdom to discern the end from the beginning; his power, able to do that which he pleases; his justice, squaring every feature of the plan from first to last, according to the most absolute features of righteousness; his love, whose lengths and breadths and heights and depths we have not yet been able to explore; a love which sympathizes with his creatures in their fallen estate; a love which provided a Savior; a love which prompted that Savior to give his life as our ransom price; a love which still pursues its original purpose of blessing all the families of earth through Jesus and the 'elect' glorified house of sons. ■

LESSON FOR MARCH 13

Receiving God's Gift

KEY VERSE: *"The promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith." — Romans 4:13*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Romans 4:13-25*

THE JEWS THOUGHT that because God had given them the Law at Mount Sinai, they were justified in God's sight by that Law. But receiving a law is not keeping that law. That is what the apostle taught when he said, "By the deeds of the Law no flesh could be justified in God's sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3:20) He added, "Where no Law is there is no transgression," for "sin is not imputed when there is no Law." — Rom. 4:15; 5:13

Looking at the life of Abraham, Paul saw a compelling example of the kind of faith that all people must have if they are to be able to receive God's gift of redemption. Abraham was not chosen by God to receive the promised blessing because he was obedient to God's Law, but because of his faith. If anyone was able to earn God's promised gift of salvation through obedience to the Law, then there would have been little need for the

exercise of faith that righteousness and life could be achieved through the redemptive work of Christ. Paul rationalized that since it is apparent the Law could not save anyone, then the exercise of faith in God's program for salvation through Christ becomes important and necessary.

All who have such faith are true descendants of Abraham. Speaking to consecrated believers, Paul said, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:29) Pointing to Abraham, Romans 4:17 reads, "It is written, I have made thee a father of many nations." Abraham in type symbolized God, and these words therefore imply that many nations would become children of God. The thought is clouded somewhat by the phrase, 'before him whom he believed'. The *Marginal Translation* reads, "like unto him whom he believed," referring to God, who frequently speaks in other places of

things not yet accomplished as if they were accomplished. Abraham was not yet a father of many nations. Paul is here referring to Christ, the antitypical seed of Abraham through whom, during the Millennial Age, all the families of the earth will be blessed and granted opportunity for regeneration as children of God.

Abraham was nearly a hundred years old, and his chances for parenthood at this point in his life was exceedingly slight. Moreover, his wife, Sarah, whom God had decreed would be the mother of the promised child, was not only ninety years of age, but had not borne children throughout her life. Even though he did not understand, Abraham trusted God's promise to make him the father of many nations and that all the world would be saved through faith, though reason and physical evidence indicated such a thing was impossible.

Hence Paul said, "Without being weakened in faith, he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb: yea, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that, what he had

promised, he was able also to perform." (Rom. 5:19-21, **RSV**) After some initial doubt, Abraham was able to believe with growing conviction that God both could and would fulfill the promise. This was the faith that justified Abraham to righteousness.

And this was not merely for Abraham's benefit. It was for us too, assuring us that God will accept us in the same way he accepted Abraham—when we believe the promises of God who brought back Jesus our Lord from the dead. Paul points out that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Rom. 15:4) Concerning this, Paul said, "We walk by faith, not by sight." (II Cor. 5:7) Faith in God and faith in Jesus as our Redeemer is the basis of our justification. "He was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification."—Rom. 4:25

Had Jesus not been resurrected, he could not have been the means of our justification. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." (I Cor. 15:17) But, praise the LORD, Jesus was raised again to life! "I lay down my life, that I might take it up again."—John 10:17 ■

LESSON FOR MARCH 20

Being Reconciled to God

KEY VERSE: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." — *Romans 5:8*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Romans 5:6-17*

TODAY'S LESSON IS a commentary on the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection, and what it accomplished for us, namely, a reconciliation between God and man.

Paul said, "At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. 5:6, *New International Version*) In the hour of need, Jesus submitted to death for the sake of us sinners. To emphasize God's love toward man, the apostle continues: "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (vss. 7,8) God showed his great love for us while we were sinners and undeserving of the sacrifice of his beloved Son on our behalf. As long as we continue to trust in the merit of our Redeemer's sacrifice, gratefully accepting the free gift of God's love, we have the fullest reasonable and

Scriptural assurance of salvation.

A further cause for rejoicing is the fact that we who believe have now received atonement with God—we are reckoned by the LORD as perfect through Christ, worthy to be called his sons, and to receive his favor as sons. (vs. 11) "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:1-3) Having this standing before the Heavenly Father, we are in a position to receive the additional favor of the high calling to be joint-heirs with God's dear Son in his kingdom.

Notice that verses 13-17 are parenthetical, but fully in harmony with the main point

of verses 12 and 18-21. The apostle's parenthesis reads as follows:

"Sin was already in the world before there was law, though in the absence of law, no reckoning is kept of sin. But death held sway from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned as Adam did, by disobeying a direct command—and Adam foreshadows the Man who was to come. But God's act of grace is out of all proportion to Adam's wrongdoing. For if the wrongdoing of that one man brought death upon so many, its effect is vastly exceeded by the grace of God and the gift that came to so many by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ. And again, the gift of God is not to be compared in its effect with that one man's sin; for the judicial action, following upon the one offense, issued in a verdict of condemnation, but the act of grace, following upon so many misdeeds, issued in a verdict of acquittal. For if by the wrongdoing of that one man death established its reign, through a single sinner, much more shall those who receive in far greater measure God's grace, and his gift of righteousness, live and reign through the one man, Jesus Christ."—vss. 13-17, *New English Bible*

Therefore, he adds in verse 18, "As by the offense of one [Adam] sentence came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one [Jesus] the free gift came upon all men to justification of life: for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Adam, head of the entire human race, having sinned against God, could only pass on to his posterity a spark of life under condemnation to death. Jesus, by laying down his perfect human life a ransom sacrifice, paid the penalty upon Adam, thus gaining the right to restore him and his posterity—the entire human race. Paul explains: [God] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."—I Tim. 2:4-6

In the Millennial kingdom, Jesus, instead of Adam, will be the father, the life-giver of all mankind, as the Prophet Isaiah stated: "His name shall be called . . . the everlasting Father." (Isa. 9:6) "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."—I Cor. 15:22 ■

LESSON FOR MARCH 27

Delivered from Sin

KEY VERSE: *"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* — Romans 6:23

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Romans 6:3-14, 20-23*

OUR EARLIER LESSONS in the Book of Romans have focused on the need for, and the provision of, justification for human beings, and our reconciliation to God. Now Paul shifts his attention to the new life made available to those who accept God's gift by faith.

A short time before Jesus ascended to the Father, he instructed the eleven apostles to "go and teach [*Margin*, "make disciples of"] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19) As a disciple, or more accurately, 'learner' or 'scholar', receiving the rite of baptism is in response to having been called through the Gospel. First, it is a realizing one's own 'undone condition', and need of a redeemer because of father Adam's transgression; then belief in Jesus as that Redeemer; and, finally, making a full consecration. In essence

we are announcing, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." — Ps. 40:8

The Apostle Paul, in explaining the significance of baptism, said, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." — Rom. 6:3-5

When the apostle asked, 'Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?' he is addressing those who are already body members of Christ. What does it mean to be immersed into Jesus Christ? He is surely expressing the same thought set forth in I Corinthians 12:27: "Now you are the body of

Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (New International Version) Writing to the Colossians, Paul said, "You died and your life has been hidden with the Anointed One by God. When the Anointed One, our life, shall be manifested, then you also will be manifested with him in glory." (Col. 3:3,4, **Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott**) Those who are baptized into the body are now counted as members of our Lord, New Creatures in Christ, members under him, our Head, members of the church, which is his body. (Eph. 1:23) Now, as New Creatures begotten of God, he becomes our true Father, and in turn, the New Creature becomes a true son, possessing the spirit of Sonship, having the spirit of obedience.

When Paul said that we were "baptized into Christ's death," he made no mention of being baptized into water. Water immersion is merely a symbol representing the baptism or burial of our will—a decision that had been made earlier. Before immersion the candidate has recognized Christ as his ransom price, and has already fully consecrated himself to God's service, desiring to confess this through the symbol of water immersion, which Christ enjoined.

If we have died with Christ, we believe we shall also live with him. Paul said, Christ dies no more, and death has no more dominion over him. The apostle also explained this to us when he wrote, "In baptism you were buried with him, in baptism also you were raised to life with him through your faith in the active power of God who raised him from the dead. And although you were dead because of your sins . . . he has made you alive with Christ."—Col. 2:12, **NEB**

When we were in bondage to the power of sin, because of Adam's transgression, we were unable to serve the power of righteousness. We are instructed as sons of God to yield our bodies to his service as instruments for doing right. Paul cautioned the Galatians not to make a mistake about that. He said God is not to be fooled; a man will always reap the kind of crop he sows. If he plants seeds of evil, he will surely reap a harvest of spiritual decay, which may lead to death. If he plants good things of the Spirit, he will reap everlasting life. Let us learn to love doing what is righteous, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we do not become discouraged! (Gal. 6:7-9, **NEB**) See also Romans 6:23 and John 3:16 ■

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

Wells of Living Water

THE PHRASE, 'WELLS of water of life', comes from a text found in John 4:14, which reads, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Water is used in the Bible to symbolize various things, and in each instance its figurative meaning has to be determined by the subject matter in which it is used. For example, in Psalm 69:1 we read, "Save me O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul." Here water is used to symbolize trouble and affliction. A similar figurative meaning is attached to water in Jeremiah 9:1 where we read, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears."

In the language of the Bible, waters often denote a great multitude of people, as in Isaiah 8:7, "Now therefore: behold the LORD bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks." A similar symbolism is attached to the waters in Revelation 17:15, where it says, "The waters which thou sawest . . . are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

The Apostle Paul uses water to illustrate the cleansing power of the Word of God, the truth. In Ephesians 5:26, he writes concerning the sanctification of the church and its cleansing "with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." And in Deuteronomy 32:2, we read the words of the LORD saying, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." Here

we are reminded of the invigorating, life-giving power of the truth—the doctrines or teachings of the divine plan—and it is in keeping with this symbolism that we read of the ‘waters of life’.

No one can obtain everlasting life except through Christ, the appointed Redeemer and Life-giver. So the truth which brings us to Christ and points us to the privilege through faith and obedience of laying hold upon him, is very properly called the water of life. This everlasting life will be granted only to those who, when they learn of it and learn of the terms upon which it will be granted as a gift, zealously seek for it by living in harmony with the spirit of sacrifice and holiness. Yes, it is a gift, for Paul wrote in Romans 6:23, “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” In keeping with this we read in Galatians 6:8, “He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

In order to gain this everlasting life we must become the LORD’s sheep and follow his voice, the voice of the Good Shepherd. In John 10:27,28, Jesus is reported as saying, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” In John 17:3, in his prayer to the Father, Jesus said, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” The gift of eternal life will not be forced upon any. On the contrary, it must be desired and earnestly sought after. Paul writes of ‘laying hold’ of eternal life. “Fight the good fight of faith,” he declares in I Timothy 6:12, “lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”

If we have, by faith, partaken of the water of life then we should experience the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise as found in our text. His Word, his teachings, should be in us as a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. This well of water which springs up in the life of every Christian who is fully

consecrated to God's service, is the outflow of the truth for the blessing and refreshing of others. The Greek word in our text translated 'springing up', has the thought of 'gushing forth', or to 'leap out'. How true this is in our experience of presenting the truth to others. If we truly appreciate the truth as we should, if this refreshing water of life has vitalized our own lives, it is bound to 'gush forth' with living energy to those who have a hearing ear.

The words of Jesus recorded in John 7:37,38, corroborate this. It was on the great feast day and Jesus stood up amidst the multitude and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." ***Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*** reads, "Out of him shall flow rivers of living water." Thus the Lord shows that all the members of his body will be fountains of living water. This simply means that they will be active in giving forth the truth; the truth means so much to them, and it is such a joy to tell it out to others, that this ministry of the Gospel will be the uppermost thought in their hearts.

What a privilege it is! Surely our lives should be fully devoted to such an exalted cause. May we never lose an opportunity of cooperating with our Lord in giving out the water of life to others that they also may be blessed. If we are faithfully following in the footsteps of our beloved Lord and Savior, the water of life will issue forth from our lips at all times. Yes, it will gush forth. Who is there of the LORD's children who has not experienced the inestimable joy of presenting to others the glorious Gospel of salvation! And how that joy increases as we see some grow and develop in grace and knowledge of the LORD. Then they too become wells of water, springing up into everlasting life.

In order to continue as wells of water of life it is absolutely necessary that we keep ourselves in closest harmony and contact with our only true source of supply, and not seek other sources of water, as did the children of Israel. Concerning these the LORD said, as recorded in Jeremiah 2:13, "My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me the

fountain of living waters [the truth,] and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Here the LORD upbraids the children of Israel for having forsaken him, who is the fountain of living water. The LORD thus sets before us an example and is warning us against a similar wrong course. We forsake him when we forsake his Word and cease to appreciate the living waters of truth which he has provided for us in this harvest time, at the end of this Gospel Age. Those who do this are like the Israelites of old; their cisterns are leaky and they lose the truth. They cease to be wells of water. No longer can they 'gush forth' the true, the pure, the refreshing water of life, which is so invigorating to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

During our Lord's ministry, at the beginning of the Gospel Age, he selected twelve apostles and gave them the message of the kingdom. They were sent out to proclaim this message. Each and every one of these was to be a well of water. The water of life which 'gushed forth' from them has refreshed the entire church; and how invigorating their message is to us, even at this end of the age! Jesus himself was the greatest of all wells of water. Immediately after he came out of the wilderness, having been tempted by the Devil, he began his ministry. Many were attracted to him. In Luke 6:13-16, we are told that Jesus called unto his disciples, "and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; Simon, (whom he also called Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon called Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor."

Most of these were from the humbler walks of life. They were invited to become associates in the ministry of the Gospel and the record is that they forsook all to follow Jesus. These twelve were selected prior to Pentecost, when their full ministry began, in order that they might have the opportunity of being personally with Jesus and be specially trained by him. The apostles heard the Gospel message of the kingdom directly from Jesus, from his own lips. They beheld his mira-

cles—the wonderful works of God accomplished through him. What a tremendous power this must have been in their lives when later they went out into the unbelieving world to ‘gush forth’ the symbolic water of life, the truth, the Gospel of the kingdom.

In one of Jesus’ last appearances to his apostles after his resurrection, he said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.”—Luke 24:46-48

Thus the apostles became wells of water which we still have with us today. Today we still have their recorded testimony—we learn about the fruits of their labor, their discourses, their epistles, their counsel on the various topics of Christian doctrine and practice, as proof that they were wells of living water, that they were faithful in ‘gushing forth’ the water of truth to all in their day who had ears to hear. The Apostle Paul, who took the place of Judas, said, as reported in Acts 20:27, “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” What a wonderful well of living water he was. There are twenty-seven books in the New Testament and St. Paul wrote fourteen of them—more than half the books of the entire New Testament. Surely out of him did flow rivers of living water!

After the apostles fell asleep in death, and as Jesus had foretold in his parable of the wheat and the tares, Satan oversowed the LORD’s field with tares. During the Dark Ages these tares were wells of impure water. Instead of giving out the pure water of life they gave out waters of hatred, persecution, threats of eternal torture for all who did not subscribe to their God-dishonoring teachings and give their souls to them in abject, demoralizing obedience. During this period of time the great Antichrist was developed, a subtle and persistent opponent of true Christianity, and the most fiendish persecutor of the true saints. The rapid development of the Antichrist was remarkable. The ‘prince of this world’ was true

to his promise to give power and dominion as a reward for worshipping him.

As a counterfeit, this system has misrepresented the plan of God with reference to the selection of the little flock during the Gospel Age. It has set aside the real hope of the church, as well as the LORD's provision through Christ and the church for the blessing of the world during the millennial reign of Christ. Did the counterfeit kingdom of Christ hold and exercise power over the truly consecrated people of God and overcome them or 'wear them out', as the Prophet Daniel had foretold? We answer, yes. Every diabolic means that could be thought of was employed in an effort to crush out the spirit of true Christianity and to substitute the spirit, doctrines, and formalism of the Antichrist. In the poisoned water that issued forth from that corrupt system were the false teachings of inherent immortality, and trinity, eternal torture, etc. This was the time when, as pictured in Revelation 12:6, "the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Yes, here the true church was fed by the LORD with the water of life, and in 1799 when Papacy's power to persecute was broken, there began the 'time of the end', the day of the LORD's preparation. Then came 1874 when our Lord returned, and provided the feast he promised, as recorded in Luke 12:37, "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

Since then, wells of living water have been springing up and 'gushing forth' the water of life all over the world. Particularly is this true since the advent of the radio and TV. The widespread manner in which the truth has gone out over the radio and TV could be one of the ways that Jesus spoke about in Matthew 10:27: "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops." We might paraphrase this to read, "What I tell you during this time of darkness, that preach ye

from the tops of the radio and TV towers!" In any case we rejoice that now, at the very close of this Gospel Age, wells of water are 'gushing forth' the glorious message of the kingdom throughout the whole earth. Soon then will come the end when the actual kingdom will be established in the earth and life-giving waters will begin to flow out to all the families of the earth—not just the promise of life but actual life, to as many as will receive it on the terms of obedience upon which it will be offered.

The Prophet Ezekiel was given a vision of the actual waters of life as they will flow out to the people during the kingdom age. This vision is recorded in Ezekiel, the 47th chapter, and says that first it will be a small stream from under the door of the house, or the Temple. The prophet steps into the stream, and it comes up to his ankles. As the stream flowed downward it became deeper. After another thousand cubits it went to the prophet's knees. Another thousand cubits were measured and the water was up to his loins. Still another thousand cubits were measured and, at this point, the prophet said, "It was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." (vss. 1-5) Thus the waters, the river of life, will be so abundant that only those who willfully reject this loving provision of the LORD will fail to get life.

This is the same symbolic River of Life as described in Revelation, chapter 22, and in the 17th verse of this chapter we read, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come, . . . and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." In Ezekiel's vision of this river, and also John's, they see on both sides of the river trees of life, bearing twelve manner of fruit every month. This is John's description of the trees. Ezekiel tells us that the leaves of the trees are for 'medicine', and John writes that the leaves are for the 'healing' of the nations. Yes, in Christ's glorious kingdom, where the fruit of life and the leaves of the trees will heal the repentant peoples of the earth of all imperfections, then joy and happiness will eternally fill the earth. Of that time we read in Zechariah 14:8, 9 "It shall be said!

in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name [shall be acknowledged] one."

Another Millennial Age blessing in which the waters of life are seen being supplied to the people is given in Isaiah 12:3, which reads, "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation." These are the same wells that have throughout the Gospel Age been 'gushing forth' the promises of life. In this harvest period particularly, these wells have been proclaiming the glorious restitution hope, but in the kingdom the saints of God will be glorified and, together with the Lord, be giving actual life to the people. Their enthusiasm now for telling out the message proves them worthy of the participation with their Master in the actual work of giving life to the people—of being wells from which all the families of the earth will obtain the water of salvation.

Another beautiful picture of the church in association with Jesus in the kingdom is found in Revelation 14:1-5. The Revelator said, "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts [living ones], and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault."

The purpose of the 144,000 being with the Lamb on Mount Zion is clearly revealed in the last verse of Obadiah's prophecy where we read. "Saviors shall come up on Mount

Zion . . . and the kingdom shall be the LORD's." What a glorious prospect is here set before us of being saviors, those from whom the water of life will flow out to the people.

Eventually, as a result of this kingdom work giving help and life to the people, writes the Prophet Habakkuk (2:14), the whole earth "shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." Truly God's plan is wonderful, and may we endeavor to ever be more appreciative of the share he is permitting us now to have of 'gushing forth' the truth that others may be refreshed and blessed. May we, by the LORD's grace, be faithful unto death. No wonder John said in I John 3:1, "What manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us" ! ■



WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

MARCH 3—"Whatsoever things are just, . . . think on these things."—Philippians 4:8 (Z. '03-9 Hymn 196)

MARCH 10—"Exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."—Hebrews 3:13 (Z. '03-54 Hymn 200)

MARCH 17—"Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."—Matthew 25:28,29 (Z. '01-59 Hymn 309)

MARCH 24—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."—Hebrews 13:5 (Z. '03-41 Hymn 242)

MARCH 31—"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses"—I Timothy 6:12 (Z. '03-91 Hymn 197)

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

“A Corn of Wheat”

*“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die,
it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”*

—John 12:22-24

THE SCRIPTURES HAD foretold that Jesus would suffer much at the hand of his enemies, eventually being put to death by them. Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be “brought as a lamb to the slaughter.” (Isa. 53:7) But Jesus was not under constant attack by his enemies during the entire period of his ministry. True, the religious leaders of Israel as a group were always opposed to the Master, although there were individuals even among these who were inclined to be kindly disposed toward him, Nicodemus being one of them.

The rank and file of the Israelites were favorably impressed by Jesus’ ministry. They heard him gladly, and rejoiced in the many blessings they received at his hands. Indeed, it was this popularity among the common people that stirred up the jealousy of the religious rulers against the Master. This was particularly so toward the close of his ministry when Jesus awakened Lazarus from the “sleep of death.” “Behold,” they said, “the world is gone after him.”—Ps. 13:3; John 11:11-14; 12:19

This led to a determination on the part of the religious leaders in Israel that this man must be put to death. (John 12:9-11) Among those who had heard of Jesus’ miracle in raising Lazarus from the dead were “certain Greeks.” These may have been Jews who lived in Greece, or they could have been proselytes to the Jewish faith. In any event, they asked to see Jesus.—John 12:20,21

(Continued on Page 37)

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"FRANK AND ERNEST"

Sundays Unless Otherwise Noted

ARKANSAS

Little Rock KAAY 1090 6:30 a.m.
Marshall KCGS 960 4:30 p.m.

CALIFORNIA

Claremont KTSJ 1220 9:45 a.m.
Lancaster KVOY 1340 8:15 a.m.
Los Angeles(Span) KALI 1430 5:45 a.m.
Monterey KNRY 1240 8:30 a.m.
San Francisco KEST 1450 3:30 p.m.
Tehachapi KTPI FM 103.1 8:15 a.m.

FLORIDA

Jacksonville WXTL 1010 7:45 p.m.
Orlando WGTO 540 9:00 a.m.
St. Augustine WSOS FM 94.5 7:15 a.m.
St. Petersburg WTIS 1110 5:00 p.m.

ILLINOIS

LaSalle WLFO 1220 9:45 a.m.
West Frankfort WFRX 1300 9:15 a.m.

INDIANA

Hammond WJOB 1230 8:30 a.m.
Jeffersonville WXVW 1450 10:00 a.m.
LaPorte WCOE FM 96.7 10:00 a.m.
North Vernon WKRP 1460 8:00 a.m.

IOWA

Waterloo KXEL 1540 10:15 p.m.

KANSAS

Goodland KLOE 730 7:30 a.m.
Coffeyville KGGF 690 9:05 p.m.

KENTUCKY

Bowling Green WBGW FM 107.1 8:15 a.m.
Manchester WWXL 1450 7:45 a.m.
Winchester WHRS 10:30 a.m.

LOUISIANA

New Orleans(Sat.) WWL 870 9:00 p.m.

MICHIGAN

Battle Creek WOLY 1500 1:45 p.m.
Detroit WLQV 1500 9:30 a.m.
Fremont WSHN 1500 9:15 a.m.
WSHN FM 100.1 9:15 a.m.

MISSOURI

Excelsior Springs KEKS 1090 7:30 a.m.
Osage Beach KRMS 1150 8:30 a.m.
St. Louis(Sat.) KSTL 690 8:30 a.m.

NEW JERSEY

Camden WTMR 800 2:30 p.m.
Salem WJIC 1510 9:45 a.m.
WNNN FM 101.7 9:45 a.m.

NEW MEXICO

Los Alamos KRNS 1490 6:45 a.m.

NEW YORK

Buffalo WWKB 1520 11:00 p.m.
Buffalo WHLD 1270 12:00 noon
New York WOR 710 9:15 p.m.

NORTH CAROLINA

Wendell WETC 540 4:45 a.m.

OHIO

Cincinnati WLWA 550 7:00 a.m.
Cleveland WRKG 1380 7:45 a.m.
Fairfield WCNW 1560 6:00 p.m.

OKLAHOMA

Muskogee KHJM FM 100.3 5:00 p.m.

OREGON

Portland KKEY 1150 7:00 a.m.

PENNSYLVANIA

Allentown WHOL 1600 10:45 a.m.
Pittsburgh WPLW 1590 8:00 a.m.
Pottstown WPAZ 1370 12:45 p.m.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Beaufort(Sat.) WVGB 1490 1:00 p.m.
Charleston WOKE 1340 7:06 p.m.
Lexington WLGO 1170 12:30 p.m.

TENNESSEE

Nashville WSM 650 7:45 p.m.

VIRGINIA

Richmond WGGM 820 7:45 a.m.

WASHINGTON

Bremerton KBRO 1490 7:15 a.m.
Spokane KAQQ 590 7:00 a.m.
Tacoma KAMT 1360 10:15 a.m.

WEST VIRGINIA

Wheeling WWVA 1170 6:30 p.m.

WISCONSIN

Jackson WYLO 540 5:15 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE CHANGES.

WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

Canada

ALBERTA

Banff	CFHC 1340	11:45 a.m.
Brooks	CIBQ 1340	9:00 a.m.
Canmore	CFNC 1450	11:45 a.m.
Stettler	CKFQ 1400	7:45 a.m.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan	CKAY 1500	9:00 a.m.
	CKAY 1500	7:30 p.m.
Grand Forks	CKGF 1340	9:00 a.m.
Nanaimo	CHUB 1570	9:30 p.m.
Qualicum-	CHPQ 1370	9:30 p.m.
Parksville		

MANITOBA

Winnipeg	CKJS 810	9:00 a.m.
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ONTARIO

St. Thomas	CHLO 1570	10:45 a.m.
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SASKATCHEWAN

Rosetown	CJYM 1330	9:45 a.m.
Weyburn	CFSL 1190	8:45 a.m.
Estevan	CJSL 1280	8:45 a.m.

Angola and Zambia

Radio Africa #2 (Thurs.)	9:00 a.m.
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Argentina (Spanish)

Buenos Aires (Sat.)	FM Malvinas 91.5 mHz	10:00 a.m. & 10:00 p.m.
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Brazil (Portuguese)

Curitiba Radio Capital	1270 kHz	8:45 a.m.
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British West Indies

Grand Cayman	Radio Cayman	9:30 a.m.
Trinidad	Radio Trinidad 610	10:30 p.m.

Chile (Spanish)

Concepción	Unica FM 105.5	10:15 a.m.
Santiago (Sat.)	Radio Panamericana CB 142	10:00 a.m.

China

Costa Rica (Spanish)

San José Radio Sonora	105.9 FM, 700 AM	6:15 a.m.
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Kenya and Uganda

Radio East Africa	4:00 p.m.
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Mexico (Spanish)

Culiacán Ranchera	XECQ	8:30 a.m.
Guadalajara	XEWK 1130	8:30 a.m.
Monterrey	XHSR FM	10:00 a.m.
Tonon	XETB 1350	8:15 a.m.
Tuxtla Gutierrez	XEON 720	7:30 a.m.

New Zealand

Whakatane	IXX	8:10 a.m.
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Nigeria

Radio Africa (Thurs.)	7:45 p.m.
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Panama (Spanish)

Panama City (Fri.)	HOQ 1250	6:15 p.m.
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Peru (Spanish)

Trujillo	105.7 FM	9:30 a.m. & 10:00 p.m.
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Philippines

Manila (Sat.)	DZAM 1026 kHz	7:15 p.m.
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Portugal (Portuguese)

Vila Nova de Gaia Radio Minute	8:45 a.m.
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Russia (Russian)

Novgorod	FM 71.3	10:00 a.m.
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Sri Lanka

Columbo (Sat.)	Radio Sri Lanka	7:15 p.m.
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Tonga

Nuku' Alofa (Mon.)	10:15 a.m.
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Uruguay (Spanish)

Montevideo Radio El Espectador	810	8:00 a.m.
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THE BIBLE ANSWERS TV PROGRAMS

UNITED STATES: *New Jersey Cable TV—Programs are shown every Sunday evening at 6:00 p.m. E.T.*

Nostalgia Network—Programs are shown every Sunday afternoon at 1:30 p.m. E.T.; 12:30 p.m. C.T.; 11:30 a.m. M.T.; 10:30 a.m. P.T.

Cincinnati, OH, TV 25—Programs are shown Sundays at 8:30 a.m. E.T.

Pittsburgh, PA, WNEU TV 63—Programs are shown Sundays at 9:00 a.m. E.T.

CANADA: Programs are shown every Sunday morning. Consult your local newspaper for the station in your area.

Atlantic Time—10:30 a.m. Eastern Time—9:30 a.m.

Central Time—8:30 a.m. Mountain Time—7:30 a.m.

Pacific Time—6:30 a.m.

Keystone Inspirational Network Every Sunday Morning

CALIFORNIA

Hemet TV 53
Palm Springs TV 20
Sacramento TV 62
Twenty-nine Palms TV 25

DELAWARE

Wilmington TV 14

FLORIDA

Pensacola TV 12

GEORGIA

Rome TV 56
Tifton TV 5

IDAHO

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Baton Rouge TV 52
Crawley TV 65
Lake Charles TV 63

MARYLAND

Leonardtown TV 52

OHIO

Bucyrus TV 54
Findlay TV 6
Marietta TV 26

PENNSYLVANIA

Coudersport Cable 66
Lancaster TV 49
Williamsport TV 5
York TV 49

SOUTH CAROLINA

Monks Corner Cable 6

SOUTH DAKOTA

Sioux Falls TV 48

TENNESSEE

Union City TV 9

TEXAS

Corpus Christi TV 55
Falfurrias TV 7

NEWFOUNDLAND

Harbour Grace TV 25

Eastern Time—11:30 a.m.

Mountain Time—9:30 a.m.

Central Time—10:30 a.m.

Pacific Time—8:30 a.m.

(Continued from Page 31)

These 'Greeks' presented their request to Philip, who in turn spoke to Andrew, and then the two spoke to Jesus about it. Jesus was not one to hold aloof from those who wanted to see him and to learn more through his ministry, but he did not grant the Greeks the audience for which they asked. Instead, he said to Philip and Andrew, who had relayed the Greek's request to him, "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified." To this he added, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

This might seem a strange response to those who had requested an audience with Jesus. Actually, however, when we keep in mind God's great plan of salvation through Jesus, it is quite logical. The Greek men who wished to see him had doubtless been impressed by what they had heard about him; and if they found that the reports concerning Jesus were true, were willing to give their support to his cause.

But this was not the sort of 'fruit' for which Jesus was looking at the time. Even though he should continue his earthly ministry, implemented by miracles, until the whole world actually did accept him as their honored leader, nothing worthwhile would be accomplished, for the people would continue to die. Jesus came into the world to save mankind from death, not temporarily, but permanently.

Jesus' miracles brought temporary blessings to some. Certainly Mary and Martha must have rejoiced to have their brother restored to them, and Lazarus himself was doubtless glad that he had been awakened from the sleep of death. But later Lazarus died again. His sisters also died. So did all those whom Jesus had restored to health and life. No, this was not the great objective of Jesus' ministry. The miracles which brought him so much popularity were designed to show forth his coming kingdom glory, when all who believe and obey will be restored to permanent health and life, so that there "shall be no more death."—John 2:11; Rev. 21:4

In order for permanent salvation from death to reach the people through Jesus it was necessary that he die, "the Just for the unjust." (Acts 24:15; I Pet. 3:18) As he explained in

the brief parable, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." Even though the whole world should accept Jesus as leader and king, he would still be alone so far as the great objective of his ministry was concerned, unless he died to redeem the people from death. Jesus loved those 'Greeks' who asked to see him. He loved them so much that he was ready to die for them. And since the time had come for him to die, he took this way of impressing upon the minds of his disciples that at the moment he had something more important to do than to build up a following.

Much Fruit

In his parable Jesus explained that when a 'corn of wheat' falls into the ground and dies, it brings forth 'much fruit'. This is the natural process involved in producing a crop of wheat, and how beautifully it illustrates that which results from the death of Jesus. Think of the worldwide yield of 'fruit' that will result from his death, the death which involved the giving of his flesh for the life of the world! (John 6:51) All the "ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Isa. 35:10

But this fruitage of Jesus' death does not appear all at once. We, his followers, are "a kind of firstfruits" of this provision. (James 1:18; Rev. 14:4) 'Afterward' there will be the "great multitude"; then the Ancient Worthies, who will be brought forth in a "better resurrection"; and, finally, the whole redeemed world of mankind, Jews and Gentiles. (Heb. 11:35; 12:11; Rev. 7:9; I Tim. 2:4-6) While Jesus died 'alone' on the cross, forsaken by all those who were for him in his popularity, and misunderstood even by his own disciples, nevertheless his death will lead to an abundant fruitage, for ultimately to him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Phil. 2:8-11

Jesus drew a considerable crowd of listeners, but this was not the important thing. so far as the plan of God for that

time was concerned. Speaking of his death from another standpoint, Jesus said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John explains that in this statement Jesus was indicating what death he should die; that is, that he would be lifted up upon a cross.—John 12:32,33

But the people who were then being drawn to him did not comprehend what Jesus really meant. They sensed that he spoke of dying, but this they did not understand. How could Jesus die if he were truly the Christ of promise? To their understanding, the Messiah would never die. (vs. 34) Jesus did not attempt to explain further. He simply encouraged them to follow what light they could discern from his teachings, implying that if faithful to this, they would see greater light later, in God's due time. Then Jesus retired from the crowd, which, although it had witnessed many of his miracles, did not actually believe on him in the full sense.—vss. 36,37

True Believers

The prophecies had foretold that the people as a whole would not believe on Jesus in the sense of becoming his true followers. (vss. 38-40) Jesus was not surprised at this, but he took occasion to point out to those who might then have an ear to hear, what would be involved in true discipleship. After explaining that 'as a corn of wheat' he must die if fruitage was to result from his ministry, he added, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me [into death]; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."—vss. 25,26

Multitudes were ready at that time to acclaim Jesus as the miracle-working Messiah, but few indeed were willing to follow him into death; to be 'planted together' with him as 'wheat' in order that they might together with him bring forth much fruit through the blessing of all the families of the earth. Yet this is the purpose of Christian discipleship during the Gospel Age, the age in the divine plan which was being introduced by Jesus.

Later on, in the 'upper room', Jesus explained this point in greater detail. He said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." (John 14:12) Here Jesus is comparing the permanent blessings which will reach the world through his death with those temporary blessings which then resulted from his miracles. He is saying that his faithful followers, who suffer and die with him, will share in bringing forth that future fruitage of blessings to the world of mankind. Even the true disciples of Jesus at that time did not comprehend the fullness of meaning which was attached to these words of the Master. Not until they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost did they really comprehend the privilege which was theirs of suffering and dying with Jesus, that they might live and reign with him, sharing in the dispensing of kingdom blessings of health and life to all the willing and obedient of mankind.

The 'Bread' and the 'Cup'

A few days after these circumstances, Jesus met with his disciples in the upper room to partake of the Passover Supper. Jesus, knowing that he was about to be put to death as the antitypical Passover Lamb, realized the solemnity of the occasion. He knew that very soon he would be planted in the ground as that 'corn of wheat'. He was aware of the fact that within a few hours he would be lifted up on the cross to die for the sins of the whole world, and that this was the only way he could draw all men unto himself as the Redeemer and Life-giver of the people.

Jesus knew that as the antitype of the Passover Lamb he was soon to be led to the slaughter, and that in the Father's due time his blood would provide for release from condemnation, first of his footstep followers of the Gospel Age, and later the release of all mankind from sin and death in the Millennial Age. In view of this he deemed it important, and in harmony with the Father's will, that he institute a memorial of his own death—a simple ceremony which would help to keep his followers reminded, not only of what he had done for them and for the world, but also of what they would have the

privilege of doing together with him, as his partners in the divine plan of salvation.

So, as they were eating the Passover Supper, Jesus took some of the unleavened bread, and some of the wine, or "fruit of the vine," and used them to institute the Memorial Supper. We read that he "took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the [New Covenant, ***Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott***], which is shed for many for the remission of sins."—Matt. 26:26-28

This was not intended to be a new form of the Passover Supper. It was designed to be a memorial of the death of the antitypical Passover Lamb. The broken bread, and the wine (the product of the crushed grape) denoted suffering and death. The wine symbolized Jesus' poured-out life. In John 6:48-51, Jesus used bread to symbolize his flesh, his humanity. In this way—by the two-fold symbolism employed in the Memorial Supper—we are reminded not only that a life has been poured out for us and for the world, but that it was a perfect human life.

How appropriate it is that once each year we should be so forcefully reminded of the basis of our reconciliation with God, and of our eternal salvation from death! As we progress in the narrow way which leads to glory, honor, and immortality, we should become more and more aware of our own unworthiness of the grace which is daily bestowed upon us. Every failure in thought, word, and deed should keep us reminded of this; and if we take these experiences properly to heart we might well become discouraged except as we remember God's provision through Christ which makes acceptable our imperfect works. One of the reminders of this is the Memorial Supper. Surely, then, this simple service should be a great source of strength to every faithful follower of the Master.

Our Share

The Apostle Paul gives an additional thought as to the significance of the 'bread' and the 'cup'. He wrote. "The cup of

blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (I Cor. 10:16) The Greek word here translated "communion" means 'partnership', so Paul is telling us that we have a partnership in partaking of the shed blood and broken body of Jesus. This coincides with Jesus' own assertion that we have the privilege of following him into death.

We have no unforfeited life of our own to offer to our Heavenly Father in sacrifice. We could not present our bodies a living sacrifice except for the provision of the imputed life of Christ, the merit of his shed blood. But with this provision of divine grace, we not only can, by faith, enjoy the imputed life of Christ, but can also have the assurance that when we lay down our lives in sacrifice, following in the footsteps of the Master, we are having a partnership in his suffering and death. Thus, when we partake of the Memorial emblems, we remind ourselves of this great privilege which has been granted to us in the divine plan, of suffering and dying with Jesus that we might live and reign with him.

After-Supper Lessons

In John's Gospel, chapters 13-17, we have recounted for us some of the wonderful things which Jesus brought to the attention of his disciples following that last Passover Supper which he ate with them. These lessons are good for us today, and might well be kept in mind in connection with our partaking of the Memorial Supper.

First there was that meaningful lesson which Jesus taught by washing his disciples' feet. After performing this menial service, Jesus said to his disciples, "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (vss. 12-15) Any true disciple of Christ should be glad for the opportunity of performing any menial service for his brethren which opportunity might provide. Failure to

appreciate this privilege would mean that we have made little progress in the narrow way of sacrifice.

Besides, true humility in service has an application in the larger aspects of our relationship to God. Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 2:5) Then Paul explains what he has in mind. He mentions the high position of Jesus before he came to earth to be man's Redeemer, and that he was willing to humble himself and give up his exalted position and to "be found in fashion as a man." Even after this, Jesus was willing to humble himself still further by being obedient to his Heavenly Father's will even unto death—yes, even the ignominious death of the cross.—vss. 6-8

It was because of this spirit of humility before God, a humility that was reflected in his approach even to the little things of life, that Jesus was worthy of being exalted to the right hand of God and given a name "which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."—vss. 9-11

Jesus' Attitude toward the Unfaithful

To begin with, Judas was in the upper room that night along with the other eleven disciples, but Jesus did not upbraid him before the disciples. Jesus explained, simply, "I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." (John 13:18) Then Jesus explained directly, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." (vs. 21) Jesus did not identify which of the disciples this would be, so they wondered.

John apparently was closest to Jesus, leaning on his breast, and Peter requested John to try to find out from Jesus which of the disciples it was who would betray him. So John asked, "Lord, who is it?" (vs. 25) "Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop [*Margin*, "morsel"], when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop, Satan

entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly."—vss. 26,27

The revealing thing about this statement is that the disciples did not know what Jesus meant in his words to Judas, "That thou doest, do quickly." Perhaps only John, to whom Jesus explained concerning the sop, at this point knew that Judas was to be the betrayer. The other disciples supposed that Jesus had sent Judas to buy bread, or other supplies. How wonderful was this attitude of Jesus toward his betrayer!

Is that our attitude toward those who would injure us? All too often, perhaps, we think of our enemies as those whom we have a 'right' to accuse, and of whom to make examples. Too often, perhaps, our 'fellowship' is concerned mostly with the weaknesses of others, and what they may have said or done against us. The Memorial season is a good time to examine ourselves along this line, and to remember the example of Jesus, who refrained from announcing to his disciples just who his betrayer would be. They found this out when Judas appeared at the Garden of Gethsemane and betrayed Jesus by a kiss; but meanwhile, Jesus' own heart and mind had remained loving and sweet, unsullied by thoughts of the unworthy, and what their unworthiness would mean to him.

A New Commandment

It was in the upper room that night that Jesus gave his disciples that "new commandment, . . . that ye love one another; as I have loved you. . . . By this," Jesus said, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples." (vss. 34,35) The 'all men', we would suppose, refers to all who profess to be followers of the Master. Surely our love for one another should be a strong testimony to these that we are really in earnest in our endeavors to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

Jesus loved us to the extent that he laid down his life for us. Do we have this sort of love for the brethren? In this context we might well think of our brethren as not only those who **now** know the truth and are walking in the narrow way, but those also whom the LORD **is calling** to this honored position in his plan. These will become our brethren, and it is our privilege to lay down our lives by taking the truth to them

in any and every way possible. In a word, we are laying down our lives for the brethren when we sacrifice all that we have in the service of the LORD, as directed by his Word. Let us keep this in mind also, as we partake of the Memorial Supper on the evening of March 25th this year.

Take Heed

Jesus explained to his disciples that he was going away, and that they could not “follow” him then. (vs. 36) Peter did not understand this, for he was confident that he was willing to go anywhere with Jesus, and said so. He said, “Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.” (vs. 37) Peter meant this with all his heart. Under the circumstances, he doubtless sensed that some great tragedy lay just ahead for the Master, and he was willing to be on the scene to make sure that Jesus came through safely, even if this should cost him his life.

Jesus’ reply was, “Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.” (vs. 38) What a heart-searching lesson this is for each one of us! It is a warning against being too sure of ourselves, and of our own standing before the LORD. It is this lesson that is brought to our attention in the statement, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”—I Cor. 10:12

We should have confidence and assurance, but in the LORD, not in ourselves. Of ourselves we would utterly fail. But, “He is faithful that promised”; “What he had promised, he was able also to perform.” (Heb. 10:23; Rom. 4:21) Paul wrote to the brethren at Philippi that he was confident that the LORD, who had begun the good work in them, was able to complete it. (Phil. 1:6) This is true of all the LORD’s people, and this—not our own abilities—should be the basis of our confidence as once more we partake of the ‘bread’ and the ‘cup’.

The Joy Set before Us

It was the joy set before Jesus that enabled him to endure the cross and despise the shame. (Heb. 12:2) And in the

upper room that night Jesus set a glorious joy before his followers. After cautioning Peter against too much self-assurance, he explained that his going away was to prepare a place for his disciples, and that he would come again to receive them unto himself, that where he was, there they might be also. What a glorious prospect this must have been to them!—John 14:2,3

True, the disciples did not at that time understand the full import of this promise. Even after Pentecost John wrote, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:1-3) Nor do we have a full comprehension yet. In general terms, we know that it implies "glory and honor and immortality." (Rom. 2:7) It means that we shall possess the divine nature, and share with Jesus the joy of being in the presence of our Heavenly Father. (II Pet. 1:4) These things we know, and in them we rejoice; and our rejoicing in this hope enables us to endure the cross as we continue to partake of the 'bread' and the 'cup'.

The Comforter

In making known to his disciples that he was going away from them for a while, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to be their Comforter and guide. (John 14:26; 16:13) The meaning of this promise—like the other things which he said—was obscure to the disciples that night in the upper room. However, when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them, as it was at Pentecost, they could realize what a wonderful provision of divine grace it really was.

And think what it means to us today! By one Spirit we have all been baptized into the body of Christ. By the Holy Spirit we have become the children of God. We are anointed by that Spirit—anointed to proclaim the glad tidings of the kingdom and thereby to bind up the brokenhearted. We have the witness of the Spirit that we are the children of God; and we have been sealed by "the Holy Spirit of promise."—Rom. 8:16-18; Eph. 1:13

The Holy Spirit is the holy power of God, and we can rely on that power to supply all our needs of strength, courage, and guidance as we continue to lay down our lives in sacrifice. Jesus said to Peter that Satan desired him, that he might sift him as wheat. (Luke 22:31) Satan desires all the faithful followers of the Master, and just as much so today as at the beginning of the age. But Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith might not fail; and, as recorded in the 17th chapter of John, he has prayed for all of us. (Luke 22:32; John 17:9,20,21) Let us rejoice in the assurance that our Heavenly Father is still answering this prayer of his beloved Son, and caring for each one of us, supplying all our needs.

"Not of the World"

"If the world hate you," Jesus said to his disciples that night before the crucifixion, "ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:18,19) One of the practical lessons in this is that our friends are not those of the world, but the Lord's brethren, and ours.

The Memorial season is a good time to renew our love for the brethren, and to resolve that we will appreciate them more than ever. They are our people, because they are God's people. And this does not mean just a few of them, or certain ones whose dispositions are compatible with ours according to the flesh. It means all the brethren. The LORD has called them all out of the world, and to himself. Are we honoring his choice by extending our understanding and love to all whom he has chosen? This is an important question to ponder in our hearts at Memorial time.

Summing up his admonitions to his disciples that night before he was crucified, Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) Today the hearts of the world are filled with apprehension and with fear, but in Jesus

we can have peace, that peace of God which passes all human understanding.

And we, also, can overcome the world in this way. We can and should rejoice in the glorious fact that ultimately all the world will have an opportunity to live because Jesus died for them. This also we can keep in mind as this year we again partake of the bread and the cup. On Memorial evening we will behold, in thought and memory, the Lamb of God, the Lamb that was slain. We will also remember that as a 'corn of wheat' he fell into the ground, symbolically speaking, and died, and therefore, that much fruit results—both the firstfruits and the afterfruits—the church of the firstborn, and all humanity.—Heb. 12:23; John 5:28, **RSV**

We will also keep in mind that we have the privilege of suffering and dying with the Master, and if faithful in this, will share with him in bringing forth the fruits of sacrifice manifested in the blessing of all the families of the earth. May God grant that we shall be faithful! ■

Bible Students General Convention July 16-21, 1994



Missouri

IT IS NOT too early to begin making plans to attend the General Convention in St. Joseph, MO, at the same college we used in 1992. The program is in the planning stage. Prices for accommodations on the campus were printed on page 13 of the January *Dawn* magazine. A Registration Form was printed on page 62 of the February *Dawn* magazine. The Registration Office is OPEN. Write, or phone:

**General Convention Registration
1425 Lachman Lane
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272
Phone: (310) 454-5248**

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

Armor of God Series, Conclusion

The Sword of the Spirit

—Ephesians 6:17

THE LAST OF the accoutrements of the armor is described in the last part of the 17th verse of the 6th chapter of Ephesians. We read there about “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” In Matthew 11:29, our Lord referred to himself, saying, “Learn of me; I am meek and lowly in heart.” Just how do we in our minds reconcile the image of meekness with that of an armed soldier? We have heard of the breastplate, the sandals, the shield and the helmet; all for protection. They are defensive in nature. There is no conflict between a meek individual and one attempting to defend himself. But the sword presents a different aspect, since it is both an offensive weapon and a defensive weapon. We suggest that in the context of Ephesians 6, the sword should also be viewed solely as defensive—in exactly the same way as the other elements of the armor.

Let us look specifically at the 13th verse. Here Paul says: “Take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to **withstand** in the evil day, and having done all, **to stand.**” That was the purpose for the armor. We are to stand our ground in the evil day, and the sword helps us to do that.

The 17th verse defines the sword. There is no speculation required. Paul says, “The sword is the Word of God.” Frequently, in years long gone, a speaker might ask the question, “How many swords do we have here today?” Then each one in the audience would hold up their Bible. It is true that the Bible is the Word of God. But the Bible, as a closed book in your hand, or in your head, is not the sword. It is,

however, what energizes your sword. The sword is your tongue!

Notice in Revelation 1:16, John describes someone 'like unto the Son of man'. "He had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." There is the sword. In Revelation 2:16, the message to the church in Pergamos, reads: "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." The sword is not in your hand, but it is in your mouth. John is representing words as though they were a sharp sword. The words pronounced by the Lord cut and penetrate deeply. The **20th Century New Testament Translation** of the **Greek** reads this way, "I will contend with such men with words that will cut like a sword."—Rev. 2:10

A long time ago, we heard a speaker whose topic was "God's Workshop." In the discussion of this topic, the speaker reviewed supposed conversations among the tools, when the master was absent from his workshop. They were discussing which one was most important in working on the masterpieces that came from the master's hand. The speaker said: "Just as the chisel arose to deliver a cutting remark, the master entered the room." Most of us, at one time or another, have been on the receiving end of cutting remarks. Some of us have even been guilty of delivering them from time to time. This illustrates what harm the tongue can do.

The psalmist also pictures the tongue as a sword. In Psalm 57:4, we read. "My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword." The same picture is given in Isaiah 49:2: "He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me."

It is the Word of God that is in your mouth that Paul pictures as the sword. Hebrews 4:12, making that point, reads: "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. and of the joints and marrow, and is a dis-

cerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” We suggest that the sword is your tongue, and its purpose as described by Paul is a defensive one in the picture of the armor of God.

How do we use the sword to defend ourselves? A good way to answer that question is to see how our Lord defended himself with his sword or tongue, when he was tempted by the Adversary in the wilderness. After his baptism he went into the wilderness, and near the close of the forty days, the Adversary came to him. In Matthew 4:3,4, it says, “When the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” But Jesus answered and said, “It is written . . .” (vss 6,7) The temptor said, “Cast thyself down for it is written . . .” And Jesus said unto him, “It is written again . . .” And in verses 9 and 10 the tempter says, “All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” Then said Jesus unto him, “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written . . .” All three times, Jesus did not even consider debating the Adversary. The Word of God in his mouth provided all of the defense that he needed for any situation in which he found himself.

The Adversary’s behavior here is a good illustration of how he hurls the fiery darts at his various targets. One way is an appeal to the gratification of one’s own fleshly appetites. If that fails, he tries to appeal to one’s pride; and if that fails, then he suggests that perhaps there is an easier way to accomplish your objective. The Adversary will even quote Scripture, himself, to try to shake our complete faith in, and devotion to, the LORD. But the Word of God in the mouth of Jesus was better than any literal two-edged sword could ever be. When we are at a loss how to proceed, the Word of God provides all the direction we could ever want.

Note the comments in Acts the 15th chapter, on the question of whether the Gentiles ought to be accepted into the fellowship or not. After this had been debated and they had heard the report of Peter, then James spoke, “Simon [Peter] had told us how for the first time God had looked with favor on the Gentiles, and has chosen from among them, a people dedicated to his name. This is in agreement with the words of

the prophets." (Acts 15:14,15, **Knox Translation**) Notice how this became part of James' sword in considering the problems of the church at that time.

The ability to quote the words of God is not enough. For instance, remember Eve in the Garden of Eden. She could quote the words of God. We quote Eve, as recorded in Genesis 3:3, "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." When you read this account, you can get the strong impression that she did know the words of God, but was not quite sure whether or not she believed them. She seems to have been readily willing to accept the suggestion of the Adversary. Therefore, she could be implying that perhaps God **was** lying. She agreed and proceeded to carry out the suggestion the Adversary gave her. From this incident we can see that just because we know the Word of God, it is not enough. You have to know it; you have to believe it; and then you have to act on that belief. Eve did not do that.

Most tools that we have today require maintenance. If you do not believe that, then do not maintain them, and you will soon discover that you are in trouble! The sword is no exception. In fact, so is the whole armor. If the sword were simply the Word of God, it would not need any maintenance. The Word of God remains the same: yesterday, today, and tomorrow. But since the Word of God is what energizes our swords—our tongues—we do need to maintain our sword. How do we do this?

Paul said to Timothy, "Try hard to show yourself worthy of God's approval, as a laborer that needs not to be ashamed. Be straight-forward in your proclamation of the truth. Avoid empty and worldly chatter. Those who indulge in it will stray further and further into godless courses." (II Tim. 2:15,16, **New English Bible**) Our first rule of maintenance to keep our sword sharpened and rustfree is to work at being worthy of God's approval. We do this by daily study and meditation on his Word, as we try to understand just what the truth is. If we do not apply ourselves to this step, it would be like driving a car without putting any fuel in it. Soon the car is going to stop because it has no energy sum-

ply. You have to put the energy into the car in order to get the benefit from it. We have to do that too.

Another helpful rule is to commit texts of Scripture to memory. Centuries ago, many literary works were memorized because there were not the huge number of books available that we now enjoy. We have concordances of the Bible, and they are a wonderful aid. But even if we do not remember exactly where a particular scripture is, we should know that a particular scripture exists, and a few of the key words it contains. Then we can use the concordance to find it. Jesus had the entire Old Testament recorded in his mind. He applied texts from the Old Testament appropriately, no matter what situation he was in. We ought to do the same, so far as possible. In I Peter 3:15, **New English Bible**, "Be always ready with your defense whenever you are called to account for the hope that is in you, but make that defense with modesty and with respect." This is a good example of the defensive idea of the sword.

There is still another rule, which is extremely important! Do not depend upon your own wisdom in this battle. One single text of scripture is more powerful than anyone's opinion. Eve attempted to reason with the Adversary when she should have continued to quote God's words, and to put her trust in them.

And, finally, no matter how complete our armor is, no matter how skilled we are in its use, without prayer we will be defeated. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." (Eph. 6:18) In I Thessalonians 5:17, Paul said, "Pray without ceasing." Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright. Maintenance applied to the complete set of armor is all important. ■

What various hindrances we meet
In coming to the Mercy Seat!
Yet who, that knows the worth of prayer,
But wishes to be often there.

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer keeps the Christian's armor bright,
And Satan trembles when he sees,
The weakest saint upon his knees.—*Hymns of Dawn*, #323

YOUNG ADULTS BIBLE STUDIES

THE GOLDEN THREAD SERIES, Conclusion

Ephesians to Revelation

EPHESIANS

THIS BOOK OF the Bible is a letter which Paul wrote to the disciples of Jesus who lived in the city of Ephesus, which was in Asia, in the illustrious district of Ionia. Years before, Paul had visited Ephesus and preached to the people about Jesus. In this city, Paul healed sick people, just as Jesus had done, and many of them believed in Jesus.

At that time, nearly all the people in Ephesus were worshippers of the false goddess, Diana. There was a huge temple in the city called the Temple of Diana. Besides, there were many fortune tellers who deceived the people and took money from them for their service. Paul stayed there for some time, performing miracles and witnessing to the Gospel of salvation through Jesus. Many of the fortune tellers and deceivers realized they were doing wrong; they brought their books of instruction into the public square and burned them, which caused a great deal of excitement!

The artisans of Ephesus who made silver images of Diana to sell to the people of the city, noticed how many were beginning to believe in Jesus. They were afraid no one would want their images of Diana anymore, and they would be without a means of making a livelihood. So they began to talk against Paul. It was not long before they had the people of Ephesus stirred up. A huge crowd surged into the Temple of Diana, shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The mayor of Ephesus, a very wise man, quieted the people and reluctantly the crowd left the temple. No harm was done this time. And despite this opposition and threat to Paul's life, the work of God was accomplished in that city; some there became disciples of Jesus. To these he later wrote this letter, advising them to be "followers of God, as dear children."—Ephesians 5:1

PHILIPPIANS

Paul wrote many letters, and this Book of the Bible is another of them. It was sent to the disciples of Jesus who lived in Philippi, a city in Macedonia. After Paul had been traveling for a long time on one of his missionary journeys, he had an unusual dream where he heard a voice saying to him, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us."—Acts 16:9

So Paul and the disciples with him obeyed the call, and set off for Macedonia. Philippi was the first city they visited in this country. Paul knew from his dream that God wanted him to go to Philippi, and it was not long before he learned the reason why. Soon after arriving they found a place just outside the city where good people were in the habit of going when they wanted to pray together. Believing that this would be an excellent location to tell about Jesus, Paul went there. A number of people gathered in that place for worship were glad to hear about his Gospel message, and several believed and became disciples of Jesus. One of them was a fine lady and business woman named Lydia. She was a 'seller of purple' dyes, or perhaps purple cloth. Lydia opened her home to Paul and to the brethren in Philippi, where they held their study meetings and fellowshiped together.

Paul encountered serious trouble in Philippi on one occasion. Evil men were using as a fortune teller a woman who was possessed of a devil. When Paul walked past her, the evil spirit caused the woman to cry out to the people, saying that Paul was a servant of God who could tell them how to get life. Although this was indeed true, Paul knew it was wrong for any message to come through an evil spirit. Using his miraculous powers, he caused the evil spirit to leave the woman. This meant she was no longer useful to the men who had taken advantage of her affliction to obtain money. Becoming enraged, they took their complaint to the authorities, accusing Paul and Silas of being troublemakers: "These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city."—Acts 16:20

Strong feelings were aroused against Paul and Silas, and they were beaten and thrown into a dark dungeon in chains.

Even though their backs were swollen and sore from the beating, and the hard floors did not allow them to rest comfortably, nor did the heavy iron chains which bound them, they were not discouraged. Instead of worrying or complaining about their ill treatment, they began to sing hymns of praise to Jehovah. They considered it an honor to be worthy of suffering pain and discomfort as a result of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Suddenly, they felt a shaking and a quaking! A great earthquake shook the very foundations of the prison. The doors were thrown wide open, and the prisoners' chains broke loose! The prison-keeper feared that the prisoners would all escape and he would be held responsible; he decided he had better kill himself. But Paul prevented him, calling out, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." (Acts 16:28) The jailer was so impressed with Paul and Silas that he was willing to hear what they had to say about Jesus. He believed what they told him, and became a disciple. His family also became Christians!

The morning following the earthquake, Paul and Silas were released from prison, and advised to leave the city. Before they left they arranged for all the disciples to meet together in Lydia's home one last time, where they talked together about all the wonderful care God had provided for them.

Paul loved the brethren at Philippi. Long years after these experiences, while he was a prisoner in Rome, he wrote this letter to his dear friends, the Philippians. In the letter he encouraged them to continue serving God faithfully, as disciples of Jesus, and to do it joyfully: "Rejoice in the LORD always, and again I say, Rejoice."—Philippians 4:4

COLOSSIANS

This is still another of Paul's letters. It was sent to the disciples who lived in Colosse, which was a city in Asia Minor. The Bible does not tell us much about the brethren there, but Paul knew them well, and wrote them a very beautiful letter. One interesting and important piece of counsel he gave to

them was, "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the LORD."—Colossians 3:20

THESSALONIANS, I and II

The disciples of Jesus to whom these letters were written by the Apostle Paul lived in a city called Thessalonica, in Macedonia. Paul was the first to preach the Gospel in Thessalonica, assisted by two faithful disciples, Timothy and Silas.

The synagogue was the first place they visited when they arrived in Thessalonica. There they found some men who were glad to learn about Jesus. Besides the Jewish believers, quite a number of Greeks became Christians.

However, there were many who did not like to hear about Jesus, and several of these conspired to make trouble for Paul. The schemers went to the home of Jason, a believer, expecting to find Paul and Silas, but they were not there. Disappointed in not finding them, they seized Jason and some other disciples who were at his home, and took them before the city rulers, demanding they be punished. "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also," they charged. (Acts 17:6) The authorities, however, decided Jason and his companions had done nothing worthy of punishment, and released them. But it was thought best for Paul to leave Thessalonica for his safety's sake; he left that very night.—Acts 17:10

After he had been gone a long while, he wrote these two letters to them. He had heard that the Christians in Thessalonica were zealously preaching the glad tidings, and this made Paul very happy. In his second letter to them he encouraged them with this advice: "Be not weary in well-doing!"—II Thessalonians 3:13

TIMOTHY, I and II

The first and second books of Timothy are letters written by Paul to a faithful disciple of Jesus named Timothy. He and his mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, learned about Jesus from Paul and became disciples while Timothy was a very young man. He later joined Paul on his missionary journeys, and worked closely with him. Paul loved him dearly, and called him 'his son, Timothy'! Paul was Timothy's

spiritual father, the one who had first introduced him to the truth about the Son of God.

Paul's second letter to Timothy was written while the apostle was a prisoner in Rome, only a little while before he died. In this letter he tells about his trial before the wicked emperor, Nero, of Rome. He writes that all of the disciples deserted him during that difficult experience, except Luke. But, nevertheless, the LORD helped him, and he was delivered from the mouth of the lion. A gory method of killing Christians at that time was to condemn them to fight lions in the arena. While the lions killed and ate their victims, thousands cheered the beasts on. God allowed Paul to escape this ordeal.

Because so many of the disciples forsook Paul in his time of great need, he particularly wished to see Timothy, and to be comforted by his fellowship.

TITUS

The New Testament Book of Titus is still another letter written by the Apostle Paul. Titus was a Gentile believer in Jesus who traveled and worked with Paul faithfully, accompanying him to Ephesus and Jerusalem, as well as other cities. Titus was on the island of Crete at the time this letter was sent to him. In it Paul explains how to accomplish the LORD's work in that place.

PHILEMON

The Book of Philemon is named after the faithful disciple of Jesus by that name. He lived in Colosse, where other disciples of this city met together to discuss the Word of God in his home. Philemon was a businessman who owned many servants, or slaves. He had one slave, Onesimus, who ran away. According to the custom of those days, this was an unlawful thing for Onesimus to do.

Onesimus went to Rome, and was in that city at the time when Paul was there as a prisoner. Although the apostle was confined to his home, he was allowed to have visitors, and Onesimus was one who came to see him. When Paul told him the good news of salvation, he believed it and became a disciple of Jesus, just as was his master, Philemon.

Those who believe in Jesus and become his disciples must do all they can to correct their past wrong-doings. Onesimus had treated Philemon badly by running away from him, and now that he had become a Christian it was his duty to return to his former master. That was a difficult thing for him to do. But Paul helped to make it a little easier by writing a letter to Philemon, explaining that his former slave had become a disciple of Jesus, and was now returning to him. He asked Philemon to receive Onesimus kindly, and to treat him as a brother, not as a slave. When Onesimus returned to Philemon, he took this letter with him—the letter which is now the New Testament Book of Philemon.

HEBREWS

This is another letter written by the Apostle Paul, this time to disciples of Jesus who had been born Israelites, or Hebrews. Paul was a very wise man, and he knew there were some things which these Hebrew disciples needed to have explained, so he wrote this letter to them for that purpose.

Although the letter was written to Hebrew disciples, it has lessons for all of us. It contains suggestions as to the meaning of the Tabernacle types of the Old Testament, and makes comparisons between the old sacrifices offered in the Tabernacle arrangement and the better sacrifices of the Gospel Age—Jesus and his church.

Paul advises, "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Hebrews 2:1), and remember what we have learned in the Bible.

JAMES

The full name of this Book is "The General Epistle of James," which means the letter was written to all the disciples of Jesus, especially those who had been Israelites. James was a disciple of Jesus before Jesus was crucified. He lived in Jerusalem, and it was there that he wrote this letter. One of his suggestions is that we should be "swift to hear, and slow to speak." (James 1:19) It means that we should listen to what other people say to us, and to be careful of what we ourselves say.

PETER, I and II

These two Books of the New Testament are called "The General Epistles of Peter." We have already learned that Peter was one of Jesus' faithful disciples, and one of the twelve apostles. Before he became a disciple of Jesus he earned his living as a fisherman. When Jesus called Peter to be a disciple, he said to him: "Follow me and I will make you [a fisher] of men."—Matthew 4:19

One of the important truths that we learn from Peter's letters concerns God's great plan of the ages, and how it progresses. He called the period of time from the creation of Adam and Eve until the time of the Flood **the first world**, which was overflowed with water and came to an end. He tells us that we are living in the **world which now is**, which will end when Christ establishes his kingdom on earth. At that time, the third world will begin, which will be called **the heavens and the earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness**, and he tells us that of this world there will be no end!

JOHN, I, II, and III

In addition to the Gospel of John, this apostle also wrote three letters to the disciples of Jesus. He is the only one who wrote both a record of Jesus' life, and also wrote letters to the church. We are glad he did because he includes important lessons in them, such as, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." (I John 2:1) Jesus had said that those who will be rulers in his kingdom must be like children—trusting and obedient to God, their Heavenly Father. Just as children who love their parents will do what their parents want them to do, so Christians will love Jehovah and will do what he wants them to do. In the last letter, John, who was elderly, and had a fatherly concern for the church of God, wrote, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."—III John 4

JUDE

The full name of this Book is "The General Epistle of Jude," which, once again, means that he wrote this letter to all the disciples of Jesus. It is not a very long letter, but it contains some important truths. Jude wrote about the cities of

Sodom and Gomorrah, which were destroyed by God because the people were so very wicked. These cities were near the place where Abraham lived, and they were destroyed during his lifetime. The people who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah behaved in a way God does not approve, but they did so in ignorance. God saw best to put those wicked people to sleep in death. They will be resurrected when Christ is king over the earth, and then they will learn how to please God and keep his laws. If, at that time, they obey God, they will not die, but will have everlasting life!—Ezekiel 16:46-63

REVELATION

This is the last Book of the Bible. It was written by the Apostle John, but he wrote only what he was told to write by our Lord Jesus. John recorded a description of an amazing vision he saw while he was a prisoner on the island of Patmos.

The very first verse of this book calls it, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" which God gave unto him. So it was Jesus who appeared to John in a vision and showed him all the wonderful things God wanted his Gospel church to understand. However, this book is a very difficult one to comprehend. It is full of symbolic pictures. In it John tells us that he saw beasts, horses, locusts, and a sea of glass. He tells us of a wicked city which was like a birdcage full of dirty and ugly birds. Basically, Revelation is a highly pictorial book containing the history of the Gospel Age, outlining what would happen during that long period of time when the call went forth to find and test the faithful footstep followers of Jesus, and prove them worthy to be part of the great 'seed' of blessing promised to Abraham thousands of years earlier. The symbolic beasts and horses, and all the other things John saw, are merely pictures of systems, or powers, or other important elements in this process. In this book, God teaches us by the use of significant illustrations.

One of the beasts John saw in his vision tried to fight against the Lamb, but the Lamb was victorious. This means that no matter what is done to interfere with God's plans for the blessing of all mankind, it will not succeed. God has

promised that Jesus, his Lamb, shall be king over the whole earth and nothing whatever can prevent that promise from coming true!

John also gives a description of God's Lamb standing on top of Mount Zion. Mount Zion is one of the illustrations God uses to picture that wonderful kingdom in which Jesus will be the ruler. John says he saw 144,000 people with the Lamb on Mount Zion, and they had followed him there. They are the faithful footstep followers of Jesus who try to conform their lives to God's will for them, just as Jesus, their leader, did. This will be their reward after they have proved faithful unto death, and have been resurrected by God as Jesus was.

In another portion of the vision, John saw God and the Lamb sharing one throne, and before that throne everyone on earth and all the angels in heaven were unitedly praising him.

Today there are so many people in the world who do not know anything about God's loving plans, and, because of this, they have no knowledge of his worthiness to be praised. But in the time described by John's vision—the kingdom of Christ—everyone will know about God's great love and will want to praise him, just as Christians praise him with their hearts and lips and hands now.

We are thankful for the stories of the Bible, and thankful that those stories repeat over and over again God's great love! We are also glad that Jesus loves us, and that he died for us on the cross so that all might be made alive again. We are glad Jesus is to be king over the whole earth, and that then there will be no wars, no sickness, no death. His promises of a resurrection for all will come true some day soon, and you will be able to see many of the ancient people you have learned about in the stories of the Bible! You will see Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and will hear Noah tell all about building the ark!

All the people we have been introduced to, wicked and righteous, will be made alive again! The faithful footstep followers of Jesus we learned about in the New Testament will be resurrected to life with Jesus as spirit beings in heaven.

But all those wonderful, brave, faithful people of the Old Testament from Adam and Eve to John the Baptist, will be resurrected to life right here on the earth: Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, and all the other men and women who tried to be pleasing to God and to obey his righteous laws.

Yes, all these marvelous promises have been made by God in his Word, each one adding its strand to the Golden Thread of promise, making it stronger and stronger, so that we know that all his promises will come true! ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

These speakers are routed through the Pilgrim Department of the Dawn, or by classes associated with the Dawn. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: Dawn Bible Students Association, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.

M.J. Balko

Detroit, MI March 18-20

R. Gorecki

Fresno, CA March 4-6

G.M. Jeuck

Middletown, NY March 13

S.R. Jeuck

Detroit, MI March 18-20

T. Krupa

Fresno, CA March 4-7

Phoenix, AZ 9

T. Krupa, Cont.

Albuquerque, NM March 11-13

Dallas, TX 15

San Antonio, TX 16

Denver, CO 20

Bosler/Laramie, WY 21

Salt Lake City, UT 22

E. Kuenzli

Albuquerque, NM March 11-13

G. Passios

Claymont, DE March 13

CONVENTIONS

FRESNO PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 4-7—ECCO

Conference Center, Oakhurst, CA.

Deadline for reservations is

February 18. For information and

reservations, contact Mrs. Virginia

Wilson, 2103 North Price St., #112,

Fresno, CA 93703.

Phone: (209) 255-2241

THIRTY-SIXTH ANNUAL FLORIDA BIBLE STUDENTS CONVENTION, March 5,6,7—Plaza

Inn, 603 Lee Road, Orlando. For in-

formation, contact: Larry Young,

1458 Lady Amy Drive, Casselberry

32707.

Phone: (407) 695-2798

ALBUQUERQUE PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 11-13—For information and reservations, contact Sister Roberta H. Buss, Albuquerque Bible Students, P.O. Box 9172, Albuquerque, NM 87119.

Phone: (505) 877-2866

NEW ORLEANS & PASS CHRISTIAN CONVENTION, March 12,13—Beach Holiday Inn, 1600 East Beach Blvd., Gulfport, MS 39501. For information contact Mrs. W.C Buel, 214 Magnolia Dr., Pass Christian, MS 39571.
Phone: (600) 452-4351

GROTON-NEW LONDON PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 13—Groton Municipal Building, 295 Meridian St., Groton, CT. For information contact Mark Grillo, 70 Pautipaug Hill Road, Sprague, CT 06330.
Phone: (203) 822-6085

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 18,19,20—Macomb Community College, 14500 12 Mile Rd., Warren, MI. For information and reservations contact Mr. George Tivador, 11202 Lorman, Sterling Heights, MI 48312.
Phone: (810) 978-7444

NEW YORK CONVENTION, April 10—Ramada Inn, Two Bridges Road & Route 80 (Exit 52), Fairfield, NJ. Contact Mrs. Ann Truth Lange, 76 Longview Ave., White Plains, NY 10606 by **April 1st** if you if you want to be included in the hotel's lunch count.
Phone: (914) 948-5428

LOS ANGELES, CA, April 17—Burbank Auditorium, 248 E. Olive Ave., Burbank. For information contact: Mr. Stephen Mengos, 8355 Santa Ynez, San Gabriel 91775
Phone: (818) 286-0766

BOISE, ID, April 22-24—Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main St. For reservations, contact: Mrs. Donna Allers, 2438 Bruins Circle 82704.
Phone: (208) 3375-6873

PITTSBURGH, PA, April 24—Parkway Center Inn, 875 Greentree Rd., For information contact: Mr. Charles Martig, 94 So. Harrison St. 15202
Phone: (412) 734-9269

ASILOMAR CONVENTION, May 27-30—Pacific Grove, CA. For reservations contact: Mr. Tom Marshall, 1089 Bluebell Dr., #1108, Livermore, CA 94550
Phone: (510) 443-0567

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 16-21—Western Missouri State College, St. Joseph, MO. More information will be available in forthcoming issues of *The Dawn* magazine. **See page 48 of this issue** for additional information.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 7-12—Poitiers, France. For information, contact: International Convention, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272.
Phone: (310) 454-5248 ■

