

The DAWN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

Born-Again Christians 2

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

Living by New Rules 14

Counting on Resurrection 16

New Beginnings 18

Becoming One Family 20

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

God and Creation—Part 15

The Truth About Hell 22

God's Covenants 38

Thankfulness for God's Works 55

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts 60

"FRANK & ERNEST"

Radio Listings 34

"Frank & Ernest" Ad 37

THE BIBLE ANSWERS

TV Listings 36

TALKING THINGS OVER 61

OBITUARIES 13

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS 63

CONVENTIONS 63

Born-Again Christians

***“Except a man be
born again, he
cannot see the
kingdom of God.”***

—John 3:3

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN

asked, “Are you born again?”

And, if so, how have you answered the question? It wasn’t

until about fifty years ago

that several evangelists started to have revivals in which Christians of various denominations were asked to rededicate their lives to God and to be ‘born again.’ Out of these revivals, crossing several Christian denominations, there sprang up a movement known as the Evangelical Christians. An article appeared in the *U.S. News and World Report* magazine on May 5, 2004, telling about these Christians, entitled “Nearer My God to Thee,” with a subheading “Their distinctive faith aside, evangelicals are acting more like the rest of us.” The article then went on to review the trends in this group of Christians, starting by calling attention to the success some of their writers have had in capturing the attention of U.S. readers through novels published, particularly the *Left Behind* series, having sold 42 million copies

worldwide, books written by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins.

WHO ARE THE CHRISTIAN EVANGELICALS?

Other of their writers are not as phenomenally successful, but still doing well, as Pastor Rick Warren (*The Purpose Driven Life*—more than 15 million copies) and Bruce Wilkinson (*The Prayer of Jabez*—over 9 million copies).

The article continues, saying: “Despite the booming popularity of evangelical artists and authors, evangelicals themselves remain an enigma to many outside the tradition—a people often stereotyped, whose agendas and motives are viewed with suspicion. They are a people, too, who often seem ill at ease with their own success and inside status in an America that they often regard as hostile to their values.

“Yet a new poll by *U.S. News* and PBS’s *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly* reveals that evangelicals—their distinctive faith aside—are acting more and more like the rest of us. They are both influencing, and being influenced, by the society around them. While they harbor deep concerns about the moral health of the nation, they are more tolerant than they’re often given credit for, pay far more attention to family matters than to politics, and worry about jobs and the economy just about as much as everyone else. And, while it comes as no surprise that while evangelicals are overwhelmingly Republican and back President Bush by a wide margin, nearly a quarter say they might vote for Democrat John Kerry. (The small portion of African-American evangelicals mostly support Kerry, but their

views often diverge strongly from the white majority.) ‘This is a group that is integrated into the mainstream,’ says Anna Greenberg, vice president of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, which conducted the survey in late March. ‘Evangelicals are just not that much different from the rest of America.’

“The statistics alone speak volumes. White evangelical Christians today make up roughly a fourth of the United States population. More than sixty million Americans say they are ‘born again’ and experience a daily personal relationship with God. Included among their numbers are farmers and factory workers, teachers and tycoons, doctors, lawyers, homemakers, and the current president of the United States. While they are slightly more likely to live in the South, and in small towns and rural areas, they reside in cities and suburbs in every region and are just slightly older and just slightly less educated than Americans in general.

NOT OF THE WORLD

“Yet, evangelicals have historically struggled over their relationship to the larger society. The New Testament teaches Christians to be ‘in the world’ but not ‘of the world.’ Evangelicals traditionally have interpreted ‘the world’ as non-Christian society. ‘Worldliness’ meant sinfulness and was to be avoided. Thus, evangelicals created their own parallel institutions—schools and colleges, music, books, movies, and magazines to preserve their biblical values.

“During the past half century, however, they have emerged from their self-imposed isolation in

the cultural backwater religion revivalism and biblical fundamentalism to attempt to carry out Jesus' command to 'make disciples of all nations.' In the process, they have become a potent force in American society. Their churches are growing at a time when many mainline denominations are languishing. Their colleges are attracting students in record numbers and turning out graduates eager to apply their faith vigorously in careers in business, education, government, and the media. And their increasing presence in the political arena has altered the dynamics of local and national politics by giving voice to a vast and predominantly conservative constituency.

"But their place in the world is still not a comfortable one, as Steve and Sharon Clausen well know. Steve, who owns a landscaping business in St. Charles, Illinois, a Chicago suburb, and Sharon, a stay-at-home mom, are parents of three teenage boys and preteen daughter. As third-generation evangelicals, they are, in their words, 'very plugged in' at their church—an 1,100-member evangelical congregation that features contemporary music and a cappuccino bar, but is devoid of such traditional churchly touches as an altar, an organ, or stained-glass windows. Steve leads a weekly men's Bible study group, and Sharon leads singing at Sunday services. The kids take advantage of a huge selection of youth activities, from soccer camps and Bible studies, to music and dance groups. What worries the Clausens most about life in America today is what worries lots of parents, Christian or not—the safety, happiness, and well-being of their kids.

CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN

“But lately, they say, it’s been harder to protect their children from the worldliness of the culture at large.”

The article then went on to describe the problems parents are having in sheltering their children from the culture and ravages of our society. Also explained, was their participation in politics. Although they take part in voting for candidates, most of them are not giving time or money to political candidates or causes. Only one third are active in this way. About 35% of the Evangelicals are termed free-style voters and will swing one way or another. They helped pave the way for Jimmy Carter’s election in 1976 and 55% of them voted for Clinton. Concerning President Bush, the majority feel as does Roberta Combs, President of the Christian Coalition who said, “We have a president who basically speaks for us. He’s said he’s a born again Christian, and we trust he’s in the public arena doing what he—and we—think is right.” The article ended on the note of calling attention to other trends among the Evangelicals and the effect American culture has upon them, to make them more like the ordinary American citizen.

THE BORN AGAIN CONCEPT

How did the evangelical movement start? What was the reason for adopting the ‘born again’ concept? Back in the 1950’s, after World War II had ended, there was an alarming decline in church attendance. In an attempt to reverse this decline, a number of crusades sprang up, held by several evangelists. The most noteworthy ones were those

conducted by Billy Graham, held in large stadiums in large cities around the United States and the world. The degree of decline can be seen in the Gallup poll statistics that showed church attendance had fallen to 49% in 1955, and continued down to 42% in 1970, and 40% in 1971. The movement got its greatest boost in 1976 when Jimmy Carter became president and was known to be a born-again Christian.

Being born again comes from the conversation held by Jesus with Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a ruler (teacher) in Israel. Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin who came to Jesus by night.

It is reasonable to suppose that he did so as not to be seen by others of his sect and position. This was because of the tremendous opposition to Jesus by the rulers of Israel, and especially those who were Pharisees. Apparently, Nicodemus was partially convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, but he wanted to be absolutely sure. Hence, he came to learn if the reports he had heard were true. He also wanted to talk to this wonderful man, without jeopardizing his position with the rulers of Israel.

The account of this visit reads as follows: "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and

be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”—John 3:1-8

THE GREEK WORD, *GENNAO*

Knowledge of this subject is dependent on understanding the basic Greek word *gennao* from which born is translated. It has often been said that the Greeks had a word for everything. The saying does not hold true in this case. The Greeks had only one word for ‘born’ and ‘begotten,’ whereas in English (and other languages) we have two distinct, but related, words. *Gennao* can be translated as either born or begotten. Throughout all of the New Testament, this Greek word *gennao* is found translated both ways—born and begotten. How do we know which is correct? We are clearly dependent upon the context for guidance. The Greeks made no distinction. To the Greeks, the process of procreation was described by a single word—*gennao*—and that word literally means to procreate. Since the father’s part in procreation is to beget, and since the mother’s part is to give birth, one has to know from the context whether the father or mother are directly involved, before one can tell whether *gennao* should be translated born or begotten.

In the New Testament, *gennao* has been translated forty-nine times as begotten and only thirty-nine times as born. In some of the cases where born was used, it would have been more appropriate to have translated *gennao* as begotten because of the context. There is an example which illustrates the inconsistency that can occur because of the failure to properly analyze the context. This example is in I John 5:18: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." In this text, the word *gennao* occurs twice, and even though applying to our Heavenly Father on both occasions, it is translated 'born' in one case and 'begotten' in the other. One would expect that for consistency sake, the same word would have been used. *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott* translates *gennao* both times in this text as "begotten."

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SPIRITUAL CLASS

Jesus knew of God's plan and that it involved the development of a class (followers of Jesus) who would be born on the spirit plane. This development was a primary work, whereas the establishment of an earthly kingdom involving Israel was secondary. In trying to help Nicodemus understand that the main purpose of his ministry was the selection and development of this class, Jesus used the natural procreative process as an illustration. God, the father (father means life-giver) would give a new life with great powers to this class. They would be born as spirit beings after their development.

The *King James Version* of this third chapter of John (verses three and seven) uses the expression “born again”. Other reliable translations (such as *WED*, *Rotherham*, *Moffat*, *American Revised*) use “born from above”. The emphasis is definitely that the begetting is from heaven and the birth is in heaven. Although it means being born again (a second time), it does not pertain to another earthly experience. Nicodemus asked how a person might be born when old. Was he to enter again into his mother’s womb? The answer was no. Jesus was speaking of a spirit birth, and said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6) Jesus also called Nicodemus’ attention to another illustration, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”—vs. 5

BEGOTTEN OF GOD

Jesus’ association of water with Spirit begetting and spirit birth may have caused Nicodemus to think of the work which was being done by both John the Baptist and his disciples, and the disciples of Jesus. The people of Israel were being baptized by John for the remission of sins and were being reinstated into covenant relationship with God. There was more meaning to the baptism of Jesus. Jesus had indicated by water immersion a willingness to die as a sin offering, and to be raised in newness of life (by being begotten by God’s Holy Spirit). Hence, if faithful, he would be born again on a spirit plane,

and he was, upon his resurrection. But there is a further significance to the water. Water is also a symbol for Truth. Our begetting is described by the Apostle James as a begetting with the 'word of truth.' "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." (James 1:18) Note the reference to 'firstfruits' in this text. It should be compared with I Cor. 15:23, where the resurrection is described as occurring first with 'Christ the firstfruits.' "Every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming [*Greek parousia*, or presence]."

God has drawn unto Jesus, his Son, those he wants to be in his immediate family, and in turn Jesus has chosen them (see John 15:16). Consequently, God has begotten them by his Holy Spirit. This begetting is to a new nature and a heavenly hope. These have not become spirit beings immediately, but, instead, have entered a state of development. So also in the earthly illustration of procreation: the father gives life by starting the new life in embryo form; the mother nurtures and develops the embryo until finally it is born of her. The Christian, as a New Creature, begins to understand spiritual things which the natural man cannot understand. (I Cor. 2:14) But he cannot be born on the spirit plane until he completes the trial period of development (corresponding to the development of the embryo in the natural picture). The resurrection of the New Creature as a powerful spirit being corresponds to the birth on a spiritual plane.

THE MOTHER OF US ALL

It has been emphasized that the Greek word *gennao* must be associated with either father or mother to be translated as beget or born. We know that God, the Father, begets this class with the Holy Spirit. Who then is the mother that gives birth to this class of spiritual beings? We are not left in darkness concerning our mother. The Apostle Paul uses an allegory in Galatians, fourth chapter, to explain this to us. Abraham, Sarah and Hagar, Isaac and Ishmael are used as illustrations. In the allegory, Abraham represents God, the Father. Sarah as his wife, represents the original promise and covenant (called the Grace Covenant). For centuries there were no children by this covenant. So also, Sarah was barren and had no child. When Hagar was given to Abraham as a wife, she pictured the Law Covenant. Ishmael pictured natural Israel developed under the Law Covenant. Finally, the seed of promise was born—Isaac, picturing the Christ, developed under the Grace Covenant (see Gal. 3:29). The Apostle Paul made a comparison of Hagar to Mt. Sinai (symbolic of the Law Covenant), and of Sarah to Jerusalem (symbolic of the Grace Covenant), finally, saying in Galatians 4:26, “Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.” ‘Jerusalem which is above’ pertains to the heavenly promise, and the development of a heavenly class. The Apostle Paul, in support of this point, cites an Old Testament prophecy from Isaiah 54:1, “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the

desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.”

In the fifth verse of this prophecy, it plainly states that God is the husband of this barren woman, who finally has many children. “Thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.” This prophecy tells of much rejoicing because of the many children which are born through the promise of God. So also, there will be much rejoicing when the last member of the Christ class faithfully fulfills the covenant of sacrifice, and the wonderful task of blessing all the families of the earth begins. ■

“God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved.)”

—Ephesians 2:4,5

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Dorothy McCasland, Naugatuck, CT—September 21. Age, 89

Sister Maxine Carnegie, Los Angeles, CA—September 24. Age, 62

Brother Ed Lamel, Los Angeles, CA—October 10. Age, 79

Living by New Rules

Key Verse: *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”*
—Matthew 5:17

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 5:17,18,21,
22,27,28,31-35,
38,39,43,44

ALL THE DISCIPLES TO

whom Jesus was speaking in the context of today's lesson were Jews. They were very familiar with the various laws, commandments, and ceremonies which the nation of Israel had been under since the days of Moses, when God first gave them his Law at Mount Sinai. How appropriate it was that here, on another mount, Jesus took the opportunity to explain

some of the features of their Law and how they related to what God would now require of them as followers of his Son, and of a 'higher' law than that given to Moses. In our Key Verse, Jesus very wisely qualifies what he is about to say by stating that in no way did he come 'to destroy' the Law they had been given under Moses. Quite the opposite was true. It was a perfect Law and, as such, required a perfect human being to keep it. No one, up until now, had been able to claim the perfection needed to fulfill the Law's strict requirements. Jesus, however, was a perfect human being, and, continuing in our Key Verse, says that one of his purposes in coming to earth was to fulfill, or keep, that very Law which no one else had been able to do. As he says in the very next verse, "I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."—Matt. 5:18

Having made these statements, Jesus then embarks upon the real focus of his lesson. He points out that the measurement for his disciples in determining their success in keeping God's law is not to be found just in their ability to keep the letter of the commandment in an outward form. Rather, the true measure of a disciple's obedience to God is shown in the innermost thoughts of the mind and intents of the heart. Referring back to numerous commandments of the Law, he says, "Ye have heard that it was said . . . Thou shalt not kill; . . . Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: . . . An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy."—Matt. 5:21,33,38,43

Under the higher law of Christ, the above commandments take on new meaning. For example, not only is it a sin to kill, but Jesus says that now "whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." (Matt. 5:22) Not only should we not swear our oaths to the Lord, Jesus says that we should "Swear not at all; . . . But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay." (vss. 34,37) No more should we require the strict justice of 'an eye for an eye,' but rather show the spirit of tolerance, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." (vss. 39,40) No longer are we to hate our enemies, but Jesus says, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."—vss. 44,45

When Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment, he answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and the second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law."—Matt. 22:36-40 ■

Counting on Resurrection

Key Verse: “*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*”
—*I Corinthians 15:55*

Selected Scripture:
I Corinthians
15:42-57

THE APOSTLE PAUL IN I Corinthians, chapter 15, goes into much detail concerning the hope of the resurrection that will eventually become a reality for all mankind. He says in verse 22, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” He continues (verse 23) by saying that there is to be an “order” to this resurrection. First, those who are part of the “firstfruits” class will be raised from the dead to a heavenly reward, then “afterward” the remainder of mankind will be raised during the time of Jesus Second Coming (Greek *parousia*, or presence) to life here upon the earth. Later in this chapter, Paul reiterates the fact that there is to be both a heavenly as well as an earthly resurrection. He explains it this way, “Someone will say, How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come? You fool! That which you sow does not come to life [in the resurrection] unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own. . . . There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the

glory of the earthly is another.”—I Cor. 15:35-38,40 *New American Standard Version*

The Apostle Paul talks specifically about those who will receive heavenly bodies in the first phase of the resurrection. These will be the faithful members of the church, “they which follow the Lamb.” (Rev. 14:4) Paul says that the beginnings of their heavenly hope were “sown in corruption; . . . sown in dishonour; . . . sown in weakness;” of this fleshly experience, but that the result of their faithfulness even unto death will be that they are “raised in incorruption: . . . raised in glory: . . . raised in power.” (I Cor. 15:42,43) Continuing, he says “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”—vs. 49

In the above statement Paul shows that in order for one to partake of the heavenly resurrection, they must experience a change of nature, from the earthly to the heavenly, for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” (I Cor. 15:50) This change will come in the resurrection. “We shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, . . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” (vss. 51-53) Shortly, following the completed resurrection of the church—the ‘firstfruits’ of verse 23—will be the general resurrection of all the rest of mankind. Thus the Apostle Paul could say of that time, “Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” (vs. 54) These words, together with those of the Key Verse, show the glorious outcome of God’s plan, that through the victory of the firstfruits—Christ and his church—death itself will be ‘swallowed up.’ The sting of death, and victory of the grave, will be ended with the general resurrection of mankind right here upon the earth, where they will learn righteousness. ■

New Beginnings

Key Verse: *"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."*

—II Corinthians 5:17

Selected Scripture:
II Corinthians
5:11-21

REASONING UPON THE

beautiful doctrine of the ransom, should draw all of us to a greater appreciation and love of God, and a desire to show our gratitude to him by serving him to the best of our ability each day of our lives. Our lesson today lays emphasis to this matter. The Apostle Paul correctly reasoned that if indeed one (Jesus) "died for all" as a ransom, then it must have been

true that all were counted as "dead." Recognizing this fact, those who now have gained life as a result of that redemptive work should live with the purpose of serving him who "died for them." (II Cor. 5:14,15) Our lesson continues with the further thought that since all of fallen man has been purchased with the blood of Jesus, we should view them, as well as Jesus, from a new perspective. First, we should see man now as a product of God's grace, and that all will gain the full benefits of the ransom "in due time." (I Tim. 2:6) Second, we should view Jesus no longer as a man, but as the glorified Christ, exalted to the right hand of God. Citing Paul's words to this effect, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."—II Cor. 5:16

Paul, in the Key Verse, especially addresses those of mankind purchased by Jesus who, in advance of the world in general, specially recognize what has been done on their behalf. They have a desire to be ‘in Christ.’ That is, they desire to develop a character likeness to his, realizing that such a character is pleasing and acceptable to God. They desire to think, speak, and act in as full accord as possible with the example set by Jesus, and want to do the will of God in every circumstance of life, just as Jesus did. Prophetically it was spoken of Jesus’ desire, “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” (Ps. 40:8) One who strives to emulate these sentiments of Jesus, Paul says in the Key Verse, ‘is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.’ We are New Creatures in the sense that all our goals, aims, and ambitions are now centered in doing the will of God and developing the character of Christ. The former desires of worldly gain, earthly ambition, and all the other generally fallen tendencies of the flesh are reckoned as dead by God, and are to be constantly kept under control of the new mind, the new will, the New Creature.

Those, who have thus consecrated themselves to God and are New Creatures in Christ Jesus, have the wonderful privilege of being ministers of reconciliation—messengers of a future hope—to the rest of the world. “God . . . hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; . . . and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” (II Cor. 5:18,19) This current work of ‘reconciliation’ that Christ’s footstep followers are engaged in, is preparatory to the greater work of reconciliation in the kingdom, when all mankind will be given the opportunity to attain perfect life here upon the earth. Christ and his church, those faithful New Creatures, will be the heavenly rulers of that kingdom, the promised seed which will bless “all the families of the earth.”—Gen. 28:14 ■

Becoming One Family

Key Verse: Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”
—***Ephesians 2:19***

Selected Scripture:
Ephesians 2:11-21

THE MESSAGE OF THE

Gospel of Christ was first preached to the Jews by Jesus and the Apostles. Later, beginning with the conversion of Cornelius (see Acts, chapter 10), the Gentiles also had the Gospel preached to them. It was largely to a Gentile audience that Paul's letter to the Ephesians was addressed. In

today's lesson, he first reminds the brethren at Ephesus that at one time they were not in covenant relationship with God. He says, "Remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." (Eph. 2:11,12) This all changed, however, as a result of Christ's First Advent. His death was as a ransom for Father Adam. Since in Adam's loins was contained all his future progeny, both Jew and Gentile, we see that Jesus' death as a ransom for Adam secured the hope of life for all mankind. Truly, as Paul said, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."—I Cor. 15:22

This message of hope was a special joy to the Gentiles, because they had never before been considered as

part of God's family. Explaining the reason for this joy, Paul says, "Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2:13) In verses 14-18 of our lesson, he further explains the new oneness of the family arrangement in Christ. In verse 14, he says that the blood of Christ has "broken down the middle wall of partition" between Jews and Gentiles—the barrier which kept them apart. Part of the process of breaking down this wall was the fact that Jesus established a higher law, a law of love, which eliminated the need for the Jews who came into Christ to any longer keep the "law of commandments contained in ordinances." (vs. 15) Paul also speaks in these verses of the peace resulting from the blood of Christ. First, his blood brought peace with God (see Romans 5:1) to all those who believed, whether Jew or Gentile. Second, this peace with God which was mutually, and equally, shared by all who put their faith in Jesus' blood, placed both Jew and Gentile on equal footing, thus bringing peace to their relationship with one another. In Christ, Jews could fellowship with Gentiles, and Gentiles with Jews, for they were all of equal standing in him, all purchased by his blood. So complete was this peace and oneness of God's family that Paul even says they all now have "access by one Spirit unto the Father."—vs. 18

In the Key Verse, Paul sums up the matter for the Gentiles, using the symbolism of citizenship. Whereas at one time they were considered 'foreigners,' now they are 'fellowcitizens' of God's household. He concludes his lesson by using the example of a building, beautifully describing its various features, all of which, working together and in harmony, bring honor and glory to the Heavenly Father. "[Ye] are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."—Eph. 2:20,21 ■

The Truth about Hell

“The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.”
—***Revelation 20:13***

AS A RESULT OF SATAN’S

lie to Mother Eve, “Ye shall not surely die” (Gen. 3:4), traditional theology has changed the meaning of death from the absence of life to separation from God in a place of endless and excruciating torture. Accepting the unscriptural theory that there is no death, it was reasoned that the wicked could not be worthy of spending eternity in happiness with the righteous souls. The theory of torture in hell for these seemed an obvious solution.

As this God-dishonoring teaching was taking shape, there were probably very few who enthusiastically espoused it. Therefore the more humane, although equally false, theory of purgatory was perhaps welcomed as mitigating the horrors of endless torture. Those tortured in this humanly conceived place of suffering would eventually

escape; for, when their souls were purified by pain, they would, according to this theory, be ushered into heavenly bliss.

But, as we have previously observed, there is no mention of purgatory in the Bible. The Protestant fathers, in their desire to be loyal to the Word of God, and to discard all man-made teachings, especially those emanating from Rome, renounced their belief in purgatory, and eliminated all mention of it in their creeds. They concluded that the Divine plan for all who were not good enough to go to heaven when they died was that they should suffer eternally in a hell of blistering torment.

HELL IN THE BIBLE

Those who discarded the purgatory dogma, and retained merely the eternal torture doctrine, found the word hell in both the Old and New Testaments. We are speaking now, of the older English translations of the Bible. In the Old Testament, hell translates the Hebrew word *sheol*. In the New Testament three Greek words are translated hell; namely, *hades*, *Gehenna*, and *tartaroo*.

The Hebrew word *sheol* appears in the Old Testament sixty-five times. But it is not always translated hell. Thirty-one times it is translated grave, and three times pit. But thirty-one times it is translated hell in our *Common Version English* Bibles, and, with the false meaning that has, through misuse, been attached to the word hell in the minds of the not-too-careful students, this helps to support the torture hallucination.

The variation of translation, however, should at once raise a question concerning the real meaning

of the Hebrew word *sheol*. Certainly the meaning of the word does not change to suit the whims of the translators. The fact that it can be translated grave and pit without doing violence to the text in which it is so translated makes one wonder why it should not always be translated by these better understood English words. However, regardless of these variations, the word *sheol* describes the only hell with which the ancient servants of God were acquainted, and also the only hell God mentioned in his inspired Word for the first four thousand years of human experience. Whatever the nature of this hell might be, it is expressed by the word *sheol*. Since God is unchangeable, we can rest assured that every thought he conveyed to the minds of his ancient servants through the word *sheol* is still true today. Bearing out this thought is the fact, as we shall discover, that the hell of the New Testament is the same as the hell of the Old Testament.

Does the Hebrew word *sheol* and the Greek words in the New Testament describe the traditional hell of the Dark Ages? (1) The traditional hell is a place of endless torture, whereas the Bible teaches that hell is a condition of unconsciousness, the state of death. (2) Tradition has it that hell is a place into which only the wicked go when they die, but the hell of the Bible is a condition into which both the righteous and the wicked go at death. (3) The hell invented in the Dark Ages is a place from which no one will ever return, but the hell of the Bible will give up its dead. Let us examine these points as we find them in the Word of God.

UNCONSCIOUS IN HELL

First, we will turn to the Old Testament, where the word *sheol* is translated hell. We do not need to depend upon a Hebrew scholar's definition of this word, for the Bible itself reveals its meaning. We find this information in Ecclesiastes 9:10, which reads, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Here the word 'grave' translates *sheol*, and the text says that there is no 'knowledge' in *sheol*, that it is a condition of unconsciousness. This means that those in hell—the hell of the Bible, that is—do not suffer, are not in torment.

RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED

The first time the Hebrew word *sheol* appears in the Old Testament it is used by the righteous patriarch Jacob. He had been deceived into believing that his son Joseph had been slain by a wild beast. Jacob was heartbroken, and indicated that he would continue to mourn for his son until he died. In expressing his great grief he used the word *sheol*, saying, "I will go down into the grave [*sheol*] unto my son mourning."—Gen. 37:35

Here it is clearly evident that Jacob expected to go to *sheol* when he died, and *sheol*, let us remember, describes the only hell of the Old Testament. This statement therefore proves that the righteous go to the Bible hell at death. Later Jacob affirmed his understanding of where he would go when he died. It was when he was protesting against his son Benjamin being taken down to Egypt. He said, "My son shall not go down with you; for his

brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave [*sheol*, hell].”—Gen. 42:38

Job was another righteous man, a servant of God, who expected to go to *sheol* when he died. His case is most interesting. God had permitted a very severe trial to come upon him. He was undergoing acute suffering, mentally and physically, so much so that he felt he could no longer endure, so he asked God to let him die. In his prayer for death, Job said to God, “O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave [*sheol*, hell], that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!”—Job 14:13

This was Job’s way of asking God to let him die. He knew that in death he would be in *sheol*, the Bible hell. The reason Job prayed to go to *sheol*, is because he knew that those in *sheol* are unconscious. Job was suffering almost beyond the point of human endurance, so in his prayer for death he was crying for relief from suffering, which relief he knew he would find in *sheol*, the Bible hell.

NOT NECESSARILY PERMANENT

Job, however, did not wish to remain in hell permanently, for in his prayer he asked God to appoint him a ‘set time’ and ‘remember’ him. Then he added, “All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change [from death to life] come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.” (Job 14:14,15) Thus Job expressed his hope of returning from *sheol*, in the resurrection, which is con-

trary to the teachings of the Dark Ages relative to the creedal hell.

The word *sheol* is again translated grave in I Samuel 2:6, which reads, “The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave [*sheol*, hell], and bringeth up.” The thought of this text is the same as that expressed in a prayer by Moses in which he said to God, “Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.” (Ps. 90:3) This seems to be a reference to the sentence of death that came upon our first parents, a sentence which plunged the whole world into death, destruction, *sheol*. But God’s plan is to restore the dead to life, which means that those in *sheol* will not remain there. Hell will give up its dead.

WHY THE VARIATIONS IN TRANSLATION?

It is proper to inquire why the translators of our *Common Version* Bible did not in every instance translate the Hebrew word *sheol* by the same English word. Why did they at times use the word grave and at other times hell? It is obvious that this variation of translation must of necessity make it more difficult for the ordinary reader of the Bible to ascertain the real truth about hell.

In examining the work of the translators it appears that the general rule they seemed to follow was that when the righteous were involved they used the word grave, but when the text referred to the death of wicked persons, *sheol* was translated hell. To the casual reader this was sure to lead to the erroneous conclusion that the righteous and the wicked go to different places when they die—the righteous into the grave, and the wicked into

hell. With the meaning that became attached to the word hell during the Dark Ages, this meant that the wicked go to a place of torture.

Let it be said on behalf of the translators, however, that the English word hell did not always have the thought of torture. Like many other words, it has undergone a complete change of meaning. Originally hell meant simply to conceal, to cover. The British ‘helled’ their potatoes for the winter, which simply meant that they buried them in the ground to protect them from the winter’s frost. We do not know whether or not the translators had this original meaning of the word hell in mind when they used it to translate the Hebrew word *sheol*, or whether they hoped that the reader would take its attached meaning and reach the conclusion that the wicked go to a place of torment.

JESUS IN HELL

Usually the translators employed the word hell in texts that refer to the death of the wicked, and grave when the reference is to the righteous. There are exceptions to this rule, a very noteworthy one being Psalm 16:10. This text reads, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” Here we have a ‘Holy One’ expressing confidence that God would not leave his soul in hell, in *sheol*.

In the New Testament we learn that the Holy One whose soul was not left in hell was Jesus, the Redeemer and Savior of the world. This is confirmed by the Apostle Peter in the sermon he preached on the Day of Pentecost. At that time there was an outstanding display of Divine power,

the Holy Spirit of God. God's Spirit, or power, which had brought the whole universe into existence in that "beginning" in which "God created the heaven and the earth;" the same Spirit of God which "moved upon the face of the waters," forming the oceans, regulating the tides, and causing the waters to swarm with fish (Gen. 1:1,2), now had come upon the disciples to accomplish still another aspect of the Divine plan.

In the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the apostles were empowered to speak in various foreign languages; and the enemies of Jesus charged that this unusual conduct of the disciples was merely a case of their being intoxicated by strong drink. The Apostle Peter was quick to answer this charge. First he said, "These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing that it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." (Acts. 2:14-16) Joel had prophesied that God would pour out his Spirit upon his servants and handmaids, and Peter identified what was happening as a fulfillment of this prophecy.

Then Peter continued his sermon, saying, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right

hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”—Acts 2:22-27

It will be recognized that the Apostle Peter quotes Psalm 16:10, applying it to the death and resurrection of Jesus. This means that Jesus went into the Bible hell when he died. Hell, as we have seen, is the death condition. We read concerning Jesus, “He hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”—Isa. 53:12

Jesus took the sinner’s place in death. Since, through Adam, all mankind was condemned to death—to the Bible hell—if Jesus were to redeem Adam and his race it was essential that he take this penalty upon himself. For this reason he ‘poured out his soul unto death,’ going into the Bible hell. It was by this means, as Isaiah states, that Jesus bore ‘the sin of many’—that is, of all mankind. Paul wrote, “As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”—Rom. 5:18

HADES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

When the Apostle Peter quoted Psalm 16:10, the prophecy which reveals that Jesus’ soul was in the Bible hell from the time of his crucifixion until his resurrection, he used the Greek word *hades* to translate the Hebrew *sheol*. Thus, we know, upon the basis of this inspired authority, that *hades*,

which is translated hell ten times in the New Testament, has the same meaning as *sheol* of the Old Testament; the state, or condition of death.

It is the Greek word *hades* that is translated “hell” in Matthew 11:23, which is a prophecy by Jesus concerning the destruction of the wicked city of Capernaum. It reads, “Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell [*hades*].” From this we see that even a city can go into the Bible hell. It is an historical fact that Capernaum was completely destroyed, that it went into oblivion, into *hades*.

In Revelation 1:18, we find another very revealing use of the Greek word *hades*. The resurrected Jesus is here speaking to the Apostle John, and he says, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [*hades*] and of death.” Jesus had been dead, in *sheol*, *hades*, as a substitute in death for Adam and his race. The result of this is explained by the Apostle Paul who says, “To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.”—Rom. 14:9

To be ‘Lord’ of the ‘dead and living’ is to have control over them. It is this fact that Jesus symbolizes by ‘keys’—I ‘have the keys of hell and of death’—that is, Jesus, by virtue of his own death and resurrection, now has the authority and power to liberate from death those who are in *hades*, and to restore to health and life those who are dying. Paul explains the philosophy of this when he says, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”—I Cor. 15:22 ■

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God's Covenants

IN THE OLD Testament, the Hebrew word that is translated 'covenant' or 'covenants' means a solemn compact, or agreement. Its Greek equivalent in the New Testament is sometimes translated 'covenant' and sometimes 'testament.' These words are not in themselves biblical doctrines, nor are they used exclusively in the Bible to describe God's attitude toward, or relationship with, his people. When they are used with respect to God and his creatures they convey the idea of being in harmony with him, in contrast to being alienated from him.

Addressing Ephraim and Judah through the Prophet Hosea, the LORD said, "They like Adam have transgressed the covenant." (Hos. 6:7, *Marginal Translation*) From this it is evident that God considered himself in covenant relationship, or agreement, with Adam. The reasons are obvious. Adam had been created in the image of God. His whole being would naturally be in harmony with God. Knowing and doing God's will would be the joy of his life.

There were certain details of the Divine will which needed to be spelled out for Adam. As a test of his obedience, the LORD placed a restriction on his freedom. He was forbidden to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 2:16,17) This

restriction was a part of the covenant, or agreement, between the Creator and Adam. As Creator, God had the right to dictate all the terms of the agreement; and Adam, being created in the image of God, would naturally accept these terms as being just and good, and in his own best interests.

But Adam transgressed the covenant, not because he was out of harmony with it, but because he yielded to temptation. However, he had the ability to resist temptation, so his transgression was not due to weakness. Thus he forfeited the blessings provided by the covenant, the chief of which was life. He was expelled from his garden home into the unfinished earth to die. God and Adam were no longer in agreement, in covenant relationship; Adam had alienated himself from his Creator.

RECONCILIATION

Although Adam's transgression of the covenant brought upon him and his progeny condemnation to death, God did not cease to love his human creation. He had a plan for their reconciliation, a plan that would lead even to the restoration of life. A very general statement of this plan says, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3:16

The Apostle Paul presents a similar thought. He wrote, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." (II Cor. 5:19) Through Christ, Adam and all his progeny are to have an opportunity to return to harmony with God, and to receive the blessings originally provided in God's covenant with Adam, including everlasting life.

In his dealings with Abraham, God began to reveal the details of his plan for reconciling the world to himself. He promised Abraham that through his seed "all families of the earth" would be blessed. (Gen. 12:3; 22:18) This promise was repeated on various occasions, and finally God bound, or secured, it by his oath. This was after Abraham had proved his implicit trust in God by his willingness to offer his son Isaac in sacrifice.—Gen. 22:16-18

Abraham did not realize the tremendous scope of God's plan of blessing as it was comprehended in the promise that through his seed 'all families of the earth' would be blessed. Indeed, none of the ancient servants of God fully understood all the implications of the promise God made to Abraham. It was only with the First Advent of Christ, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon his apostles, that the meaning of the Abrahamic Covenant became clear.

For example, Paul wrote, "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. 3:16) How could Abraham know that the promise God made to him did not apply to Isaac, nor to Jacob, but to One who would be born into the world thousands of years later? Jesus was, of course, through his mother, a natural descendant of Abraham; but this fact alone did not qualify him to be the seed that was to be developed in fulfillment of the covenant God made with Abraham, the covenant that he bound by his oath.

Paul elucidates this point by expressing his regret over Israel's failure to accept Christ, and their consequent loss. Paul wrote concerning them, "To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory,

and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”—Rom. 9:4-8

Paul then refers to God’s dealings with Abraham as an illustration of the point he is making. We quote again, “This is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.” (vs. 9) In Romans 4:18 and 22, Paul enlarges upon this, showing that it was through Abraham’s faith that Isaac, the promised seed, was born. Isaac was a child of faith, for God honored Abraham’s faith and by a miracle enabled Sarah to conceive and bear a son.

We understand then, from Paul’s reasoning, that the true seed of Abraham must, like him, exercise obedient faith in the promises and covenants of God. That this was true of Jesus there can be no doubt, and it was his faith and obedience that qualified him to be the seed of promise. The right of becoming sons of God belonged to all the natural descendants of Abraham, but it was incumbent upon them, through faith and obedience, to prove themselves worthy of this birthright, and Jesus did thus qualify. Jesus, then, was the first genuine spiritual seed of God’s agreement, or covenant, with Abraham.

FELLOW MEMBERS

While in Galatians 3:16 the Apostle Paul, referring to the promise made to Abraham, explains that it implied 'one' seed, and that one seed was Christ, in verses twenty-seven and twenty-nine he explains further that as many as "have been baptized into Christ," and thus "have put on Christ," are also "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." This is because, as he explains in verse twenty-eight, "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

The one seed, therefore, is composed of Jesus and the members of his true church, the church which is his body. "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," Paul wrote, "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ."—I Cor. 12:27,12

It is clear, then, that the truly consecrated followers of Jesus, those who are baptized into his death, are a part of the one seed of Abraham, that seed through which all the families of the earth are to be blessed. These also are the faith product of the agreement, or covenant, which God made with Abraham.

HAGAR AND SARAH

In Galatians 4:22,31 Paul presents an allegory in which he uses Hagar, or Agar, Abraham's bondmaid, and Sarah, his wife, to help us understand our relationship to the covenant which God made with Abraham. In Paul's day many in the church were Jewish converts, and it was difficult for some of these to free themselves entirely from the Law that was given to the nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai.

Some of these were even endeavoring to persuade Gentile converts that they should subscribe to and practice certain features of the Law. It was to help these to a better understanding of the matter that Paul presents this allegory.

He reminds us of Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. The two mothers, he explains, would be like the two covenants—"the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar." On the other hand, "we, brethren, as Isaac was," writes Paul, "are the children of promise."—Gal. 4:24,28

In this lesson on the covenants, Paul refers to a prophecy of Isaiah (54:1), which speaks of a barren woman who finally was blessed with many children. Sarah, we know, was barren, and even became too old to bear children. Yet God rewarded the great faith of Abraham and Sarah and by a miracle, Isaac was born. But Isaac was merely typical of the promised seed of blessing. God's agreement, or covenant, with Abraham, like Sarah, remained barren for a long time until it finally began to give birth to the promised seed. Jesus was the first, the Head, of this faith and spiritual seed of Abraham.

THE LAW COVENANT

Meanwhile God made another covenant. It was made with the natural descendants of Abraham, the nation of Israel. This is the covenant referred to by Paul as being the one established at Mount Sinai. This covenant in no way interfered with the functioning of the covenant God made with Abraham. Paul asserts that it could not "disannul, that it should make the promise [to Abraham] of none effect."—Gal. 3:17

“Wherefore then serveth the law?” Paul asked. He answered, “It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.” (Gal. 3:19) ‘To whom the promise was made.’ This is a significant statement. It reveals that at the time God made the promise to Abraham, he knew the covenant would remain barren for a long time. Therefore, when the natural descendants of Abraham became a nation, the Law Covenant was made with them to hold them together as a people until the time came in his plan for the true ‘faith seed’ of Abraham to be developed.

Those composing the true seed of Abraham were to be God’s channel of blessing to mankind. Abraham’s natural descendants were given the first opportunity to qualify for this high position in the plan of God. Their obedience to the terms of the Law Covenant would have prepared the nation to accept Christ when he came, and, through faith, together with him, become the seed of promise. To the nation God said, “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”—Exod. 19:5,6

In God’s covenant with Israel they agreed to keep his Law, the intent of which is summed up in the Ten Commandments. On God’s part he promised to bless them in “basket” and in “store” in proportion to their faithfulness. (Deut. 28:5) If they could, and did, fully obey, he promised to give them life. (Gal. 3:12) Besides, as we have seen, they were to be made a ‘kingdom of priests and an holy nation.’

Israel was not faithful to the Law Covenant, so they lost all three of these promised rewards of faithfulness. The final test was the coming of Jesus to be their Messiah. Rejecting him caused Jesus to say that the kingdom would be taken from them. (Matt. 21:43) They were driven from their land and scattered throughout the earth, and through the centuries they have been a persecuted people. Certainly none of them has gained life through the Law. Like all the remainder of the world of mankind they have continued to die.

A NEW COVENANT

God foreknew the failure of Israel as a people, and through the Prophet Jeremiah promised to make a “new covenant” with them. (Jer. 31:31-34) Here then, is another of God’s covenants, the promise being that it would be made “with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.” At the time this promise was made the nation of Israel was divided, and the LORD includes both segments in the promise of the New Covenant. Introducing his promise of the New Covenant, the LORD says:

“It shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD. In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children’s teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.”—Jer. 31:28-30

In principle, this ‘sour grape’ illustration may be properly applied to the entire human race. Adam

ate the sour grape of sin, and all his progeny have suffered the consequences; for all in Adam die. But it also has a national application to Israel. Those who rejected Jesus and were responsible for his death said, "His blood be on us, and on our children." (Matt. 27:25) Their scattering and suffering since has been the 'edge' on their teeth that has resulted.

But, as the LORD's promise assures us, this was not to continue forever. "The days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD."—Jer. 31:31,32

It is important to notice that this New Covenant is made with those who broke the Old, or Law, Covenant. It is made following first, the scattering and punishment of Israel, and, then, their regathering. Another point important to note is that the New Covenant is 'not according to the covenant' which the LORD originally made with Israel at Mount Sinai.

This 'not according' aspect of the New Covenant is explained in verses thirty-three and thirty-four, which read, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

TYPE AND ANTITYPE

The Law, Paul informs us, was “a shadow of good things to come.” (Heb. 10:1) We may properly think of the Law Covenant as being a type of the New Covenant. The necessary preparation for, and making of, the typical covenant did not require a great deal of time, but its final consummation was a spectacular occasion. The antitype of this is far grander, even as an antitype is always greater than a type. God’s law was the basis of the typical covenant, and the will of God, his law, will also be the basis of the New Covenant.

In the making of the typical covenant there was (1) Moses, the mediator; (2) the writing of the Law on tables of stone, and its acceptance by the people; and (3) the shedding and sprinkling of blood. (Exod. 24:3-8) All these must, and do, have their counterpart in the making of the New Covenant; but on a much grander scale, even as the glories of heaven are far superior to the Most Holy of the Tabernacle that typifies them.

(1) In the New Testament, Christ is identified as being the “mediator of the new covenant.” (Heb. 12:24) Just as Jesus alone is not the entire promised seed of Abraham, but has his body members associated with him, so these same body members are referred to by Paul as “able ministers of the new testament,” or covenant, as it is in the Greek text.—II Cor. 3:6

(2) In the antitype, there is also a writing of the law, but as should be expected, in a far different and better way. In the antitype, the law is not written on stone, but, as Paul explains, on “fleshy tables of the heart.” (II Cor. 3:3) Jesus, by virtue of his

perfection, already had the law within his heart, but the writing of the law on the fleshy tables of the hearts of his body members, who together with him will serve as 'able ministers' of the New Covenant, is the work of the entire Gospel Age. Not until this aspect of making the New Covenant is complete, will the promise of Jeremiah 31:31-34 begin to be fulfilled.

In the type, Moses was hidden in the clouds surrounding Sinai while the Law was being written on the tables of stone by "the finger of God." (Exod. 31:18; Deut. 9:10) When he appeared with the Law, his face shone so brightly that the people could not "stedfastly behold the face of Moses." (II Cor. 3:7) Paul shows that the antitype of this is when Christ appears in glory. (vss. 8-11) The promise is that then his body members will "appear with him."—Col. 3:3,4

Paul places great emphasis on this glory phase of the antitype. He concludes this lesson with the expression, "Seeing then that we have such hope." (II Cor. 3:12) The antitype of the glory feature of the making of the Law Covenant is not yet a reality, only a hope, and, as Paul wrote, we do not hope for that which is already possessed.—Rom. 8:24,25

But it is a glorious hope, a hope of the "glory that excelleth" (II Cor. 3:10), a hope of the "eternal weight of glory," which will become a reality if we endure patiently our "light affliction" which is "but for a moment," (chap. 4:17) It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory."—Col. 1:27

Christ, as the "Lamb that was slain," and together with him the hundred and forty-four thousand who will share the glory of his kingdom, are shown

as standing on “mount Sion.” (Rev. 5:12; 14:1) Thus ‘Sion [Zion]’ is symbolic of the spiritual phase of the kingdom, and the promise is that “the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem [the resurrected Ancient Worthies, the visible phase of the kingdom]. (Micah 4:2) For ‘the law to go forth’ from Zion, Zion must have the law, and it is this law that the Zion class has been receiving, having it written in their hearts throughout the Gospel Age.

In the type, after the Law was written on the tables of stone and presented to the people, they simply agreed to obey its various precepts. But in this, the antitype will also be much grander than the type. How widely different indeed are the two procedures, and the results. In the antitype, the law is not presented to the people on tables of stone by an imperfect human mediator, but by the Divine Christ, with the law of God contained in the very being of every one of this glorified company.

In the type, upon hearing the Law read to them, the people said, “All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.” (Exod. 24:3) But in the antitype, and through the ministry of the Divine Christ, while there will first be a willingness to receive and obey the law, the making of the covenant will continue until the law is written in the hearts of the people, and in their inward parts. Simply to say that they will keep the law will not be enough. Before the people then can enter into full covenant relationship with God, his law must become a very part of their beings. This implies a restoration to perfection, a returning to that covenant

relationship with God enjoyed by father Adam prior to his transgression.

(3) Before the Law Covenant could actually become operative with Israel, blood must be provided. (Exod. 24:3-8) This blood was used to sprinkle “both the book, and all the people.” (Heb. 9:19,20) Moses referred to this blood as the “blood of the covenant,” or testament. Blood is also provided for the making of the New Covenant. On the night before Jesus was crucified he referred to his own sacrificed life as the blood of the New Covenant.—Matt. 26:28

In the type, the blood of the covenant was first used to sprinkle the book of the Law, so also in the antitype. This symbolized the fact that the demands of the law had to be satisfied with respect to every aspect of the New Covenant. As we have seen, in the antitype the body members of Christ, as “able ministers of the new testament [covenant]” (II Cor. 3:6), are likened to the tables of stone on which the Law of the typical covenant was written. Under God’s perfect law, these would not be acceptable to God except through the blood of the covenant. In this connection Paul wrote, “Our sufficiency is of God,” because he has provided the blood. (vs. 5; chap. 9:8) Thus the antitypical tables of stone are made acceptable through the blood, while the law is being written in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

With this use of the blood of the New Covenant finished, will come the antitypical sprinkling of all ‘the people,’ which will seal, and thus make operative the promises of God to give life. Concerning the New Covenant, God promised, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no

more.” (Jer. 31:34) Paul wrote, “Without shedding of blood is no remission.”—Heb. 9:22

One of the promises in connection with the original Law Covenant was that if the nation was faithful it would become a priestly nation, representing God as the teacher of the people. But this is not one of the provisions of the antitypical covenant. Concerning the time when the New Covenant has been fully made with the people, the LORD said, “They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD.”—Jer. 31:34

“OUT OF SION”

From Exodus 24:12 we learn that the tables of the Law were provided for Moses in order that he might teach the people; so Jesus and his joint-heirs, the Zion class, will be the source of the law to Israel and all nations throughout the millennium. One of the results of this is mentioned by Paul, when he wrote, “There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” (Rom. 11:26) This is to take place, Paul indicates, after “the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”—vs. 25

In this chapter, Paul explains that many of the descendants of Abraham, as “natural branches” (vs. 21) were broken off from the tree of promise, and that the Gentile branches are “grafted in” to take their places. (vs. 17) Thus the opportunity to qualify as the faith seed of Abraham, which is to be the channel of blessing to all mankind, has belonged to Gentiles as well as to Jews.

With the full, predestinated number of this faith seed selected and proved faithful, there will begin the work of the new age, the work of making a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, and eventually with all mankind. This is the work described by the statement, 'There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.' Paul writes concerning God, "This is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." (Jer. 31:34; Rom. 11:27) What more definite time identification could we have for the beginning of the blessings promised under the New Covenant?

After presenting God's glorious program for blessing Israel under the New Covenant, Paul adds, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Rom. 11:29) It is to be remembered, that God's 'gifts and calling' are not unconditional. For example, God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants, but in the final reckoning the only ones among them who will dwell in it forever are those who will qualify under the New Covenant terms.

God promised the Israelites that if they would obey his law they would become a nation of priests. Every Israelite, beginning with the coming of Christ, who has met this condition, has received the promised reward.

Because the nation as a whole broke the Law Covenant, God promised to make a New Covenant with them. This promise also stands sure. If, when the time comes, there are any who do not yield to the molding influences of the Holy Spirit, as it will then be poured upon all flesh, they will not receive its blessings.

CLEANSING THROUGH THE BLOOD

The great objective of every aspect of God's plan is the reconciliation of the fallen and dying race to harmony with the Creator. The blood of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, is essential to the carrying out of every aspect of this plan. Those of the faith seed of Abraham, called from the world and prepared to be the future channel of blessing to all mankind, need the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ will also be needed to sprinkle all the people as they are brought into heart harmony with God's law under the New Covenant.

Paul brings these two uses of the blood together for us in Hebrews 9:14,15. We quote, "How much more [than the typical blood] shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God [as able ministers of the New Covenant]? And [or also] for this cause [that is, the cause of purging consciences through the blood] he is the mediator of the new testament [covenant], that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament [the Law Covenant], they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Certainly Gentile believers were not transgressors of the Law Covenant, so Paul is simply telling us that in addition to what the blood of Christ accomplishes for the faith seed of the present age, it will also be used by Christ, as Mediator of the New Covenant, which was promised to those who transgressed the Law Covenant.

In a reference to God's promises to Israel, Paul says, as we have noted, "The gifts and calling of

God are without repentance.’ Israel was a called people. Wonderful gifts, or promises, were made to this people. And they will receive the inheritance promised, that great inheritance of life—perfect, unending life—with God’s law written in the hearts of all. What a glorious prospect for Israel and the whole world of mankind, who will be blessed with Israel by also coming into the New Covenant!

We have Paul’s word for it that, allegorically, Sarah represents the covenant arrangements under which the faith seed of Abraham are brought forth; and that Hagar foreshadowed the Law Covenant arrangements under which the nation of Israel lived for so many centuries. (Gal. 4:21) After the death of Sarah, Abraham married again. The name of this wife was Keturah. Several children resulted from this marriage, and while the Scriptures do not so state, we could think of these many children of Abraham, mothered by Keturah, as representing all who will receive the blessings promised in the Abrahamic Covenant, the blessings which were to come through his seed typified by Isaac.

These promised blessings of the covenant God made with Abraham imply the restoration of all mankind to perfection of human life here on the earth, and the restoration of that covenant relationship with God forfeited by Adam. No wonder the Apostle Paul, contemplating these wonderful arrangements of the Divine plan of reconciliation through Christ, wrote, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”—Rom. 11:33 ■

Thankfulness for God's Works

***"The works of the
LORD are great,
sought out of all
them that have
pleasure therein."***

—Psalm 111:2

IN THE UNITED STATES,

November is the national thanksgiving month; and the people of this country have much for which to be thankful. From the standpoint of material blessings, we enjoy bounties of food, clothing, and housing far beyond those of other nations. Indeed, in large areas of the world the masses are in a state of abject poverty and want. In the United States the people also enjoy freedom of speech and action along religious, as well as political, lines. This, also, is a cause for deep gratitude and thankfulness.

However, a Christian, wholly devoted to knowing and doing God's will, can take little comfort in the realization that he has more to eat and wear, and a better home in which to live, than the people of other countries. We accept this manifestation of the LORD's goodness with appreciation, but long for the time to come when the people of all nations will share alike in the good things of earth; not

because man will find a solution for human problems, but through the fulfillment of the promises of God to establish a worldwide kingdom of righteousness through the agencies of which “all families of the earth” will be blessed.—Gen. 12:3

THE WORKS OF THE LORD

As followers of the Master, and firm believers in the promises of God, our chief cause for thankfulness this year, as at all times, is in the works of the LORD; and we continue, as our text indicates, to seek out the works of the LORD in the sense of learning more about them as they are revealed to us in his Word. So far as man is concerned, these works of the LORD begin with the creation of the earth and the ordering of its affairs to be the eternal home of man. These works include the Divine provision for man to live forever on the earth. (Gen. 3:22) While disobedience to God’s law temporarily interfered with the accomplishment of this design, it is still to become a reality; for we are assured that the LORD did not create the earth in vain, but formed it to be inhabited.—Isa. 45:18

God permitted sin to sting man to death, knowing that this was the only effective way in which the human race could learn the terrible results of disobedience to Divine law. (I Cor. 15:56) Following the transgression of our first parents, God’s works have been carried on through his beloved Son. This has been an expression of Divine love—“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) All will eventually be given an opportunity to believe in Christ,

and those who do, and who obey the laws of the kingdom, will be saved from perishing forever.

THE SELECTION OF THE CHURCH

Jesus said to his disciples, "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 13:11) "Many prophets and righteous men," he explained, "have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them." (vs. 17) The same is true today, and if they have been revealed to us, it is another wonderful cause for thankfulness. The mysteries of the kingdom are the works of the LORD. Those to whom they have not been revealed hold the mistaken view that all who do not accept Christ in this life are forever lost and, according to the view of many, to be lost means to suffer an eternity of torture in a hell of fire and brimstone.

How thankful we should be to have been delivered from this hallucination, and to realize that the works of the LORD for the present age in his plan are not the enlightenment and conversion of the whole world, but merely the calling out from the world of a people to be associated with Jesus as priests and kings in his thousand-year kingdom. (Acts 15:14-18; Rev. 20:4) We thank God for the assurance that this work will be victoriously accomplished in his own due time, and that then, through Christ and the church, God's promised blessings of joy and life will flow out to all mankind.

It is erroneously supposed by many that all who are saved through the blood of Christ will be taken to heaven. It is true that those who suffer and die with Jesus will live and reign with him. Jesus

promised that he would prepare a place for these, and receive them unto himself. (John 14:1-3) Concerning these, Hebrews 3:1 explains that they are “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.” But the works of the LORD are not completed with the calling and exaltation of these who are to live and reign with Christ.

THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

The Divine purpose in this aspect of God’s plan is that through these highly exalted ones, with Jesus as their Head, his oath-bound covenant with Abraham will be fulfilled—that covenant which promised the blessing of ‘all families of the earth’ through his “seed.” Christ is that ‘seed.’ (Gal. 3:8,16) But his footstep followers are to be associated with him in the fulfillment of the promise, for Paul also wrote, “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”—Gal. 3:29

The way that leads to this high position in the Divine plan for the blessing of all mankind is not an easy one. It is a rugged and difficult way. It is a way of sacrifice and suffering. It is a way contrary to the worldly spirit of selfishness, greed, and gain. It is a way that foregoes the pleasures of the world in order to enter into the joys of the Lord. Despite the trials and difficulties of this narrow way, there is a wonderful peace that comes from the assurance that “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”—Rom. 8:28

And what is this purpose? Aside from the call and exaltation of these kings and priests, what are

the further works of the LORD that are yet to be accomplished? They are the blessing of all the families of the earth upon the earth. What a great cause for thankfulness it is to realize this! The works of the LORD do not include the creation of an abyss of tormenting fire into which all are to be thrown who do not qualify to live and reign with Christ. Instead, as the psalmist further wrote, “His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion.”—Ps. 111:3,4

In the last verse of this psalm we read that the “fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,” and also that “a good understanding have all they that do his commandments.” (vs. 10) The ‘fear’ of the LORD is more properly the reverence of the LORD. If we are to be blessed with the wisdom that is from above, we must have a proper reverence for the LORD. If we reverence the creeds of men and our own opinions more than we reverence the LORD, we will not be blessed with the ‘beginning of wisdom,’ and the mysteries of the kingdom will not be revealed to us.

LETTING OUR LIGHTS SHINE

The psalmist states, ‘A good understanding have all they that do [obey] his commandments.’ As we learn the truth concerning the works of the LORD, it is essential that we direct our lives in harmony therewith; if we are to grow in grace and in knowledge. One of the commandments of the LORD is that we let our light shine. If we have been blessed by the Truth, then it is incumbent upon us that we

bear testimony to the enlightenment we have received. We cannot hide our light under a “bushel” and expect the LORD to increase our understanding of the wonderful works of his plan. (Matt. 5:15) But may our great appreciation of the Truth give us courage and strength to tell out the glorious message of God’s love, that the works of the LORD are great. May we continue to be truly thankful that we have been found worthy to have these works of the LORD revealed to us. ■

“Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees!

“Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands.

“I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws.”

—Psalm 119:5-7, New International Version

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

NOVEMBER 4—“He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.”—Philippians 2:7 (Z. ’00-318 Hymn 299)

NOVEMBER 11—“Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue [fortitude].”—II Peter 1:5 (Z. ’04-10 Hymn 202)

NOVEMBER 18—“The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”—Psalm 34:7 (Z. ’97-120 Hymn 293)

NOVEMBER 25—“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.”—James 1:13 (Z. ’04-7 Hymn 356)

“I Wish I Knew What To Do!”

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SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

M. Balko

Seattle, WA November 28

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

M. J. Balko

Louisville, AL November 14

L. Wesol

St. Petersburg, FL November 14

K. Fernets

New Haven, CT November 7

CONVENTIONS

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

NEW HAVEN CONVENTION, November 7—Italian-American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven, CT. Contact Mrs. Richard Suraci, 171 Johnson Road, Hamden CT 06518. Phone: (203) 248-3793

JERSEY CITY PRE-THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, November 21—The Loyalty Lodge, 1912 Morris Avenue, Union, NJ. Contact Marilyn Rodriguez, 210 Whalen Street, Manville, NJ 08835. Phone: (908) 595-9246

SAN DIEGO THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, November 25,26,27,28—Doubletree Club Hotel, 1515 Hotel Circle South. Phone: (800) 489-9671 or (619)

881-6900. Contact hotel directly for reservations. For additional information, contact Kathy Rice, 1217 Ridgeway Lane, Escondido, CA 92029. Phone: (760) 480-6249

IBADAN, NIGERIA CONVENTION, December 4—Obatej Schools, No. 4 Oba Akenzua Crescent, Onireke Ibadan. Contact Cajetan O. Egbu, No. 2 Darlington Street, Mokola Ibadan.

CHICAGO NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, December 31, January 1,2—Elk Grove High School, 500 W. Elk Grove Blvd., Elk Grove Village, IL. Contact Roberta Tabac, 4N233 Norris Avenue, West Chicago, IL 60185. Phone: (630) 231-1874

PHOENIX NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, December 31, January 1,2,3—LaQuinta Inn, 2510 W. Greenway Road. Phone: (602) 993-0800. Contact hotel directly for reservations. For other information, contact Janell Porcolab, 21941 N. 107th Drive, Sun City, AZ 85373. Phone: (623) 362-2056

SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 18,19, 20—The Clarion Hotel, 2600 Auburn Blvd. For reservations contact Donna Burke, 10771 Wood Reed Court, Nevada City, CA 95959. Phone: (503) 265-8252

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