

The DAWN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

A Heavenly Inheritance 2

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

The Source of All Love 12

God's Mercy and Grace 14

Abiding in God's Love 16

God's Love Restores 18

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

The Search for God's People—Part 3

Barnabas and Saul Sent Forth 20

In the Steps of the Lamb 30

Faith and Gold 48

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts 11

TALKING THINGS OVER

General Convention Bulletin 59

OBITUARIES 11

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS 62

CONVENTIONS 63

A Heavenly Inheritance

***“Blessed be the God
and Father of our
Lord Jesus Christ,
which according to
his abundant
mercy hath
begotten us again
unto a lively
hope . . . , To an
inheritance
incorruptible, and
undefiled, and that
fadeth not away,
reserved in heaven
for you.”
—I Peter 1:3,4***

THE THOUGHT OF LEAV-

ing this earth and going to heaven to spend eternity is inseparably associated with the beliefs of nearly all professed Christians. Among these, there have always been a few sincere and ardent believers to whom this has been a bright prospect, and which they have anticipated with a considerable measure of joy. To the vast majority, however, the idea of going to heaven has appealed only as

an alternative to going to a place of torment at death. Many professed believers would prefer to remain alive on the earth, but since they believe this is not possible, they would rather go to heaven than to eternal torture.

This is understandable, for according to common reasoning, the picture of heaven has not been drawn

in an especially inviting manner. Centuries of tradition have portrayed heaven largely as a place of idleness or, at best, of harp-playing and singing. The Bible clearly teaches that a heavenly hope is held out to the faithful followers of Jesus. (Phil. 3:14,20; Heb. 3:1; I Pet. 1:3,4) In addition, while it is impossible for our finite minds to understand heavenly conditions, the Bible assures us that there is a real purpose in exalting some to this high position. In God's divine arrangement, heaven is not designed as an escape from a fiery hell.

Jesus said to his disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2,3) Here we can properly think of the "Father's house" as the entire universe, and the "many mansions" as the numerous places of abode, or spheres of life, which had already been created at the time Jesus made this promise to his disciples. When Jesus said that he was going to "prepare a place" for them, he meant that it was a new place, one which did not yet exist. It did not mean, however, that other previously created "mansions" in his Father's house were to be unoccupied.

A PRIESTHOOD TO BLESS

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (Heb. 3:1) In Peter's epistle, we read, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." (I Pet. 2:9) These two texts reveal that those who receive

the heavenly calling are shown symbolically as being inducted into a priesthood. This terminology is based upon God's dealings with ancient Israel. There were twelve tribes of Israel, and one of them, the tribe of Levi, was set apart from the others to minister to the nation in holy things. One of the families within the tribe of Levi was chosen to be priests. The priests of Israel offered sacrifices and, upon the basis of their sacrifices, extended blessings to the people.

Thus, Paul and Peter explain that in the present age, beginning with Jesus' First Advent, God is calling a people to be a "priesthood" with Christ as Head, or High Priest. These also offer sacrifice, not of animals as did the priests of Israel, but of themselves—their lives to God's service. Jesus gave his human life for the sins of the world. As his consecrated followers, we are invited to be sacrificers with him. Based upon this work of sacrifice, Jesus and his faithful body members will extend blessings to the people. However, before that can take place, this antitypical priesthood is to be exalted to heavenly glory. Their calling is not only to a priesthood, but to heaven as well.

God's plan to bless the world of mankind through Jesus and his church is shown in his promise to Abraham, that through his "seed" all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Gen. 12:3; 22:18) The Apostle Paul identifies Christ as being the chief one of this "seed" class. (Gal. 3:16) Then in the closing verses of the same chapter he says, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor

female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."—vss. 27-29

The great objective of God's plan of salvation through Christ is the blessing of all the families of the earth—upon the earth! Hence, we see that the purpose of the heavenly calling is not to afford, for merely a few of God's favorites, an escape from unending torture. Rather, it is to select and prepare representatives from among mankind to be associated with Jesus in extending blessings of life to the remainder of the human race.

THE "BRIDE"

To help us understand more clearly all that is involved in the heavenly calling of a few, in order that they may be used as channels of blessing for the remainder of mankind, the Scriptures refer to these using various symbols. As we have seen, they are a "priesthood" to offer sacrifice, and later to extend blessings to the people. They are also spoken of as the "bride" of Christ. In the Book of Revelation, we read, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb [Christ Jesus] is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." "There came unto me one of the seven angels . . . , and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."—Rev. 19:7; 21:9,10

The "great city, the holy Jerusalem," is not a place to which Christians go to escape hellfire, but

is another descriptive name for the “bride, the Lamb’s wife,” composed of the true followers of Jesus. This symbolic “holy city” is shown as descending from God out of heaven after the saints are united with Jesus. The “gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.” (Rev. 21:25,26) The open gates of this city suggest that Jesus and his bride will welcome the peoples of earth to come in, and to receive the blessings of life provided for them through his death as the “Lamb that was slain.” (chap. 5:12) The faithful followers of Christ will not be sitting endlessly on clouds, playing harps. Instead, they will be engaged with Jesus, as his bride, in the great work of blessing all the families of the earth, restoring them to perfection and to oneness with God.

BEGOTTEN AGAIN

In our opening text, Peter speaks of Christ’s disciples as being “begotten . . . again.” When Nicodemus went to Jesus by night to learn more about him and the message he was presenting to the people, Jesus told him that to enter the kingdom of heaven he would have to be “born again.” (John 3:3,7) Nicodemus did not understand this, so Jesus explained that those who are born again can come and go as the wind, meaning that they are invisible and very powerful. This was Jesus’ way of describing some of the characteristics of those who enter into the heavenly inheritance. This was literally true of Jesus after his resurrection. With the exception of a few brief times he appeared to his disciples, he was invisible to human eyes. When he appeared in

their midst, they knew not from whence he came. When he disappeared, they did not know where he went. “So is every one that is born of the Spirit,” Jesus explained to Nicodemus.—vs. 8

It is this that is involved in our hope of being “born again” into the heavenly phase of Christ’s kingdom. In our text, Peter said that we are now “begotten” to this hope. This new life has begun in our minds. However, it will not come to birth until, in the resurrection, we shall be made like Jesus as invisible and powerful spirit beings. The Apostle John wrote concerning this glorious hope of the true Christian, saying, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, . . . we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (I John 3:2) As John explains, it is only those who are, in the resurrection, made like him, that will be able to see the Heavenly Father and the glorified Jesus.

THE “LAST TIME”

In the verse immediately following our theme text, Peter speaks of a revelation of the heavenly class in the “last time.” (I Pet. 1:5) In the plan of God for man’s salvation and restoration of the willing and obedient to perfection of human life on the earth, this present age is for the purpose of calling from the world a class who will receive a heavenly inheritance to live and reign with Christ. They have been unknown to the world, and often persecuted by those who have been blinded to the truth of the Gospel by the “god of this world,” who is Satan.—II Cor. 4:4

However, in the beginning of Christ’s kingdom—the final age or “last time” in the accomplishment

of the restoration of Adam's race in the plan of God—the true position of these faithful ones will be revealed. Then it will be recognized by all mankind that this “little flock” of misunderstood and sometimes persecuted followers of the Master were really God's true people, and that now they have been raised from the dead, exalted to heavenly glory, and together with Jesus, are the new spiritual rulers of the world.

It is fitting that these should receive a heavenly inheritance, for they gave up all earthly honor and advantage in order that they might devote their lives wholly to following in the footsteps of their Master, our Lord Jesus. The Apostle Paul was a good example of the full devotion of this class. He wrote, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of

the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 3:8-14

Paul’s use of the expression “high calling” is revealing. It indicates that those to whom the promise of a heavenly reward has been offered are invited to a very special place in the divine arrangement. It is not, as many would have us believe, an alternative to being tortured forever, as an emergency escape from an eternity of doom. It is not a matter merely of being “saved,” but a calling, an invitation, to participate in God’s plan for the blessing of all mankind.

CHILDREN AND HEIRS

In a passage already quoted, the Apostle John refers to this class to whom the high calling is extended, as being sons, or children, of God. Paul also wrote concerning these: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And 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. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.”—Rom. 8:16-19

The expression, “earnest expectation of the creature,” is translated more properly “earnest expectation of the creation.” (*Revised Version*) Here the reference is to God’s human creation—the entire world of mankind. Paul says that creation is waiting for the “manifestation”—that is, revealing—“of the sons of God.” He then adds that “the whole

creation” groans and travails “in pain together” until this manifestation comes to pass.—Rom. 8:22

The world of mankind, blinded by the great Adversary, Satan, does not understand the plan of God. The people are blind to the glorious provision of life through Christ which has been made for them by divine love. Nevertheless, in their groaning and travailing they are ever hopeful that conditions will change, and that happiness will in some way replace their misery. Pain and death shall indeed be destroyed in God’s due time. (Rev. 21:1-7) This will be done through the power of the Christ class, made up of Jesus the Head, and his body members, the house of sons, who have been made partakers of the heavenly calling.—Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18

When these children of God are revealed together with Christ, in power and glory, the promised kingdom of blessing all the families of the earth will begin. The sons of God themselves will occupy a heavenly position, being exalted to “glory and honour and immortality.” (Rom. 2:7) In this position of authority and power, they will be the instruments of God in extending blessings of health and life to all of mankind who, when they are enlightened, accept the gift of life through Christ, and obey the righteous and just laws of the kingdom which will then be in force. What a joyous prospect is thus laid before those who seek this heavenly inheritance! ■

*Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel,
who only doeth wondrous things.
Blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let
the whole earth be filled with his glory;
Amen, and Amen.”—Psalm 72:18,19*

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

MARCH 2—“Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, . . . think on these things.”—Philippians 4:8 (Z. '03-9 Hymn 130)

MARCH 9—“God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”—Hebrews 6:10 (Z. '03-59 Hymn 261)

MARCH 16—“We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren . . . and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”—I John 3:14,16 (Z. '99-88 Hymn 154)

MARCH 23—“Ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.”—Hebrews 10:32,33 (Z. '03-40 Hymn 13)

MARCH 30—“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.”—II Peter 3:11 (Z. '96-33 Hymn 143A)



OBITUARIES

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

Brother Archie Sanchez, Albuquerque, NM—January
31. Age, 84

Brother Leszek Kopczyk, Melbourne, Australia—
February 8. Age, 91

The Source of All Love

Key Verse:
“Beloved, if God so
loved us, we ought
also to love one
another.”
—I John 4:11

Selected Scripture:
I John 4:7-19

THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS

written in the Greek language, and two different sets of Greek words have been translated as the English word “love” in the *King James Bible*. The Greek word *phileo* describes a love associated with personal attachment, such as the love of family

or friends, given out of a sense of mutual affection. The expression “brotherly love” is a translation of the Greek word *philadelphia*, the noun form of the verb *phileo*.

The Greek words *agape* and *agapao* are the noun and verb forms of a different type of love. *Agape* is an unselfish, sacrificing love, given whether merited or not, and regardless of mutual fondness. It is a godlike love. The Apostle John uses these words frequently. In his three epistles, the word love appears thirty-eight times, and all are translated from *agape* or *agapao*.

In the verses of our lesson, John uses these Greek words to describe God’s love. “Love is of God; . . . God is love.” (I John 4:7,8) Describing how God has exercised his love through Jesus, John continues, “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. . . . [He] sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” (vss. 9,10, *New International Version*) In John’s gospel, he similarly refers to this great manifestation of God’s 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

The true Christian will desire to develop an unselfish, sacrificing, love. Such love goes beyond merely a benevolent feeling, or mutual affection, exercised one toward another. Rather, it is a love which impels one to sacrifice self-interest, pleasure, comfort, time, strength, and all that one has, for the blessing of others. This kind of “love [for] one another,” as cited in our Key Verse, requires much heart-searching, self-examination, and is developed over a period of time.

“If we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. . . . Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.” (I John 4:12,16, *NIV*) God accepts our love for one another as a manifestation of our love for him. Thus, we ask: Do we have a genuine interest and concern for our brethren’s highest spiritual welfare? When we learn of their difficult experiences, do we have sympathy and compassion? Do we pray for them, asking for grace, strength, and for the will of our Heavenly Father to be done on their behalf in all matters? Do we take time to encourage our brethren by sharing Scriptural promises in a note, an email, or by calling them?

Another test of whether we are developing *agape* love is our exercise of it toward all mankind, and having love even for our enemies. (Matt. 5:44,45) Unselfish love will cause us to have sympathy and to show mercy toward them. If our enemies, at some time in the future, are enlightened by the truth of God’s Word and, by his grace, manifest a desire to make amends for their wrongdoing, we will rejoice, if we truly have selfless love for them.

Let us seek to develop this kind of love, remembering that God is its source. If we fail, at times, in manifesting love toward our brethren, to mankind, or even for our enemies, we should not be discouraged. Instead, we should seek the throne of grace for God’s forgiveness, and ask for a greater measure of his spirit of *agape* love.—II Tim. 1:7 ■

God's Mercy and Grace

Key Verses: “*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*

Selected Scripture:
Ephesians 2:1-10

PAUL BEGINS HIS LETTER

to the Ephesian brethren by saying, “To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 1:1) In chapter 2, he reminds them that, because of Adam’s disobedience, the whole world of mankind is considered as “dead in trespasses and sins, . . . children of disobedience.” (vss. 1,2) This includes the footstep followers of Jesus. In another epistle, Paul explains why this is, saying, “By one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (Rom. 5:12) As a result, since Adam’s disobedience, Satan has been the “prince of this world,” and the “prince of the power of the air.”—John 12:31; Eph. 2:2

God’s great love and mercy, however, provided his only begotten Son, Jesus, as a ransom, or corresponding price, to redeem Adam and the entire human race. “For since by man [Adam] came death, by man [the perfect man Jesus] came also the resurrection of the dead.” (I Cor. 15:21) The Scriptures further explain that by God’s grace, Jesus “was made a little lower than the angels for the

suffering of death, . . . that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”—Heb. 2:9

The Scriptures differentiate between the hopes and promises of consecrated believers, the church, and those for the rest of mankind. Those having “an ear to hear” during the present Gospel Age, are being dealt with by God now, whereas the world’s hope is in the future earthly kingdom. (Matt. 6:10) At the present time, those who have heard, responded, and laid hold upon God’s grace, in Christ, are referred to individually as a “new creature.”—II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15

In the Key Verses of our lesson, God’s mercy and grace toward these New Creatures is explained by Paul. He states that God’s mercy is so rich, and his grace so abundant, that he “loved us” even when we were “dead in sins,” and provided the means of our salvation through Christ. The Heavenly Father’s love toward these New Creatures includes the additional hope and privilege of becoming “joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him.”—Rom. 8:17

Paul also speaks of the fellowship and communion these New Creatures have with the Heavenly Father and with our Lord Jesus in this present life, saying that God has “raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 2:6) These blessings have come to us, Paul continues, not because of our own worthiness—“By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”—vss. 8,9

If we have made a full and acceptable consecration to God, as New Creatures, we are reckoned as having been raised up out of the state of sin and death to “heavenly places,” a new condition of life in Christ. Let all such, therefore, who are “risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”—Col. 3:1,2 ■

Abiding in God's Love

Key Verse: *"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."*
—John 15:12

Selected Scripture:
John 15:1-17

ONE OF THE FINAL LESSONS Jesus gave his disciples before he died was that of the vine and the branches, recorded in John 15:1-8. In this parable, Jesus begins, saying, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." (vs. 1) As was his practice, here Jesus honored and glorified his Heavenly Father, emphasizing that God was higher and greater than himself. The expression "true vine" implies that there is also a false vine. This is described in the Bible as one that God "hath not planted," the "vine of the earth," a false, earthly system.—Matt. 15:13; Rev. 14:19

Continuing the parable, Jesus said, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (John 15:2) "Branches" in the parable refer to individual followers of Christ. "Every branch in me" indicates that each of us has an individual relationship with Jesus and the Heavenly Father. The phrase "he purgeth it" refers to God's pruning, accomplished through our experiences. God's methods of pruning must be understood as being for our spiritual benefit, otherwise we may get discouraged. Our pruning may involve the taking away of earthly wealth or cherished plans, the permission of persecution or sickness, or the loss of reputation and earthly friendships.

Such pruning should be an encouragement to us,

because they show God's love, and that he is looking toward our highest spiritual interests. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Heb. 12:11) What a comfort it is to know that God is the one doing the "pruning" in our lives as branches of the true vine!

Jesus said that the purpose of our pruning is that we "may bring forth more fruit." This is not the "fruit" of building large, impressive church buildings. Otherwise, Jesus and the apostles bore no fruit. Likewise, these fruits are not our activities in the service of the Truth, nor the time, effort, or wealth used in such endeavors. Our activities in the service of the Truth and the brethren are only acceptable to God in proportion as they are the result of fruitage already developed in our character. These fruits of the Holy Spirit, Paul says, are "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."—Gal. 5:22,23

In our Key Verse, which follows the parable of the vine and the branches, Jesus says that we are to love one another as he has loved us. Such love is pure, unselfish, sacrificial, and is one of the key elements of character fruitage we are to attain. We are provided experiences in which to develop this love along various lines. These include comforting our brethren who may be "in any trouble," and by encouraging one another "unto love and good works." (II Cor. 1:4; Heb. 10:24) We also show forth this love by avoiding, in our words and actions, anything which might stumble, offend, or weaken our brethren spiritually. (Rom. 14:21) Instead, we are to be "kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another." (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13) Let us cultivate this fruitage of love so that it permeates our words and actions each day—toward our brethren, the world of mankind, and even our enemies—and thus abide in God's love. ■

God's Love Restores

***Key Verse: "Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."
—Joel 2:13***

***Selected Scripture:
Joel
2:12,13,18,19,28-32***

THE CONTEXT OF THIS

week's lesson is found starting in Joel 2:1, which states: "Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh." The expression "day of the LORD" is a period elsewhere described in the Bible as "a time of trouble," "great tribulation," and a "day of vengeance" which concludes this present Gospel Age. (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21; Jer. 46:10) In Joel's prophecy, this period is described as "a day of darkness and of gloominess. . . . A fire devoureth before them . . .

and nothing shall escape them." (Joel 2:2,3) The "fire" here spoken of is symbolic, and refers to destruction. In verse 10 we are told that the earth, symbolizing present, man-made institutions, "shall quake," and the heavens, denoting false religious systems, "shall tremble."

In verse 11, the prophet speaks of an "army" before which "the LORD shall utter his voice." God's wisdom will allow the hopes, fears, follies and selfishness of this great "army" of discontented mankind to work out his own grand purposes in the overthrow of present institutions—social, religious, political, and economic. These experiences will prepare mankind for God's kingdom of righteousness and peace, which will afterward be established in the earth.

This will mark a turning point in God's arrangements for man. Verse 12 elaborates on the "silver lining" to the previously described trouble. "Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart." One of God's main purposes in permitting this period of trouble, darkness, and gloominess is to enable mankind to turn, or return, back to their all-wise, powerful, merciful, and loving Creator for the solution to all their problems. Our Key Verse, from the *New Living Translation*, states: "Don't tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead. Return to the LORD your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish."

Later in this prophecy, Joel says, "Fear not," but "be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things. . . . Ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: . . . I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed."—vss. 21,26,27

"It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh." (vs. 28) Here is one of the many Scriptural proofs that the Holy Spirit is not a separate being. It is not possible to "pour out" a spirit being. Rather, the Holy Spirit is the power and influence of God. On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was given, or poured out, upon the apostles and other consecrated believers gathered in Jerusalem, Peter said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." (Acts 2:16) Following Peter's discourse, God's Holy Spirit was poured out also upon "about three thousand" whose hearts were touched by the Gospel message. (vs. 41) This pouring out of the Spirit was only upon the Lord's followers, not all mankind. However, in God's kingdom, soon to come on earth, his Spirit will be poured out "upon all flesh," and "all families of the earth [shall] be blessed," in accordance with God's immutable promise!—Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Acts 3:25; Heb. 6:13-18 ■

Barnabas and Saul Sent Forth

*“Separate
forthwith unto me,
Barnabas and
Saul, unto the
work whereunto I
have called them.
Then, fasting and
praying, . . . they
sent them away.”*

*—Acts 13:2,3,
Rotherham
Emphasized Bible*

IT WAS NOT LONG AFTER

their return from Jerusalem to Antioch that God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, gave indication to the brethren that Barnabas and Saul should begin spreading the Gospel message to other regions. Eager to cooperate, the ecclesia gladly sent them to engage in the work of sowing the seeds of truth in outlying countries. John Mark went with them, and they sailed for the island of Cyprus, arriving first at the port of Salamis. Cyprus was a logical place to begin their work because it was the original home of Barnabas. They began their preaching in the synagogue of the Jews. This became the practice of Barnabas and Saul in every place they visited, even though their mission was also for the Gentiles.—Acts 4:36; 13:4,5; Gal. 2:7

When the Lord called Saul, he said, “He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles,

and kings,” but he also added, “and the children of Israel.” (Acts 9:15) Therefore, before Saul went to the Gentiles, he first visited the synagogues to attempt to convince his fellow Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. Later, he wrote: “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; 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.”—Rom. 9:1-5

ISRAEL’S UNBELIEF TEMPORARY

Paul knew that the prophecies foretold the unbelief of his people and that God would not find a sufficient number for the body of Christ from among the Jews. Nevertheless, he had a strong desire for their salvation. This caused him to write: “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.” (Rom. 10:1) Again, he writes: “I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.”—chap. 11:13,14

Israel’s unbelief as a nation, Paul realized, would not be turned away until after their exalted Messiah’s return at his Second Advent. Thus, he could say, “I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise

in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”—vss. 25,26

WORK IN CYPRUS

We do not have a record of any success Saul and Barnabas had among the Jews on Cyprus, but we know of at least one Gentile who believed. It happened as a result of an open attempt by the Adversary to stop their work. This was done through a Jewish sorcerer named Barjesus, who tried to dissuade the local deputy from hearing Barnabas and Saul. We here note that it was at this juncture in Saul’s life that the record states his name was changed to Paul. Appropriately, Paul, endued with Apostolic authority from God, confronted the evil sorcerer, “set his eyes on him,” and called him a “child of the devil.” He further declared that the Lord would cause him to be temporarily blind, “and immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness.”—Acts 13:6-11

Serguis Paulus, the Gentile deputy of Cyprus, was so impressed with Paul’s power and his message, that he became a believer. (vs. 12) No one else is mentioned by name in this account of Paul and Barnabas’ stay in Cyprus. Later, one of those who became an assistant to Paul was Titus. He is not mentioned in the Book of Acts, yet we know from Paul’s letters that Titus accompanied him when he later went to Jerusalem, so the Jewish brethren could see a good example of the Gentiles who were now

in the body of Christ. (Gal. 2:1,2) Toward the close of Paul's ministry, Titus was sent to the island of Crete to help the brethren, and remained there for many years as an elder in the congregation. The home and birthplace of Titus is not known, but one of the speculations is that he may have come from one of the Mediterranean islands—Cyprus or Crete.

AT ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA

When Paul and Barnabas had completed their labor in Cyprus, they sailed for the mainland of Asia Minor to a city in Pisidia called Antioch. There John Mark left them to go back to Jerusalem, and Paul and Barnabas continued with their missionary work. At Antioch, they went to the synagogue on the Sabbath, where they were invited by its rulers to speak. (Acts 13:13-15) Paul did not require prodding, but immediately stood up and delivered a marvelous discourse which is recorded in verses 16-41. His presentation was so impressive that many of the Jews and proselytes invited him to return on the next Sabbath and speak again.—vss. 42,43

On the following Sabbath, nearly the entire city assembled to hear, both Jews and Gentiles. (Acts 13:44) This caused some of the Jews to be envious, and they began to oppose and blaspheme Paul's words. Realizing that things were getting out of hand, Paul and Barnabas left the synagogue with these words: "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (vs. 46) Then they quoted this prophecy from the Old Testament, applying it to the situation confronting

them: "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."—Isa. 49:6

Verse 8 of this same prophecy reads: "Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages." These words establish that now, during the Gospel Age, is the "acceptable time" for the work of finding a people for God's name. When this particular "day of salvation" ends, God subsequently will bring the whole world into covenant relationship with himself under the New Covenant. Those whom God is seeking during the present age serve the interest of that New Covenant by preparing themselves for the future work of its glorious administration.

The Gentiles who listened to Paul now realized that no longer was his message confined to the synagogue. Instead, "as many as had become disposed for life age-abiding," believed, and "the word of the Lord went on to be carried through the whole country." (Acts 13:48,49, *Rotherham*) These expressions confirm the selected nature of the present Gospel Age call, which at that time had begun to take root. The Gentiles who believed Paul's words rejoiced in them. This ministry in Antioch continued for a while, possibly several weeks. Eventually, however, opposing Jews convinced the authorities to expel Paul and Barnabas from the area, but not until many new disciples were established in a knowledge

of the Truth, and had received evidences of the Holy Spirit among them.—vss. 50-52

TO ICONIUM, LYSTRA AND DERBE

Paul and Barnabas traveled east to Iconium, and, as was their custom, visited the synagogue first. Similar events transpired as before, and a goodly number of both Jews and Gentiles believed. However, opposition again came from unbelieving Jews, who also enlisted the support of certain Gentiles, until the entire city was divided—some siding with the apostles and others with their antagonists. In the end, the Jews prevailed, causing severe persecution. As a result of a plot to stone them, Paul and Barnabas were forced to leave, but not before a lengthy period was devoted to preaching the Word and helping the disciples to become established in the faith.—chap. 14:1-5

The two travelers then fled to the province of Lycaonia, where they preached in the cities of Lystra and Derbe. While they were in Lystra, a strange incident occurred. A man who had been lame from birth, and had never walked, was healed by Paul because of his faith. The people who witnessed this miracle were so awed by it that they began believing that Barnabas was Jupiter and Paul was Mercury—gods who came to them as men. As the excitement grew, the local “priest of Jupiter” arranged to offer a sacrifice to them as if they were gods. Paul and Barnabas had a difficult time trying to stop the proceedings, and to convince the people that they were just ordinary men. They rent their mantles and spoke to the crowd, explaining to them about the true God who made heaven and earth, and

finally restrained the crowds from offering their sacrifice.—Acts 14:6-18

Their popularity in Lystra was short-lived, however. The Jews of Antioch and Iconium joined forces and followed them to Lystra. Convincing the people that Paul and Barnabas were imposters, they found Paul and began stoning him. There are no details given of the incident. However, we can imagine as the stones began to hit Paul, the vision of Stephen may have flashed through his mind before he entered a state of unconsciousness and was dragged outside the city's walls and left for dead. It was a mournful group of disciples that gathered around their beloved teacher, supposing him gone. Miraculously, though, Paul regained consciousness, and arising, returned with the disciples to one of their homes. There he partially regained his strength, while the disciples talked over a plan for quickly getting him to a safer location. The next day, Barnabas and perhaps some others, took him to the neighboring town of Derbe. (vss. 19,20) Although the account does not provide any details, it was possibly there that Paul spent time recovering from his injuries. This may have been in the home of Timothy's family, who resided in Derbe, and of whom Paul speaks so highly in later writings.—Acts 16:1,2; 20:4

APPRECIATION FOR TIMOTHY'S FAMILY

Many years later, one of the letters Paul wrote as he neared the end of his life of service to the Lord was the Second Epistle to Timothy. Paul opens with a beautiful salutation and expresses his appreciation for Timothy and his example of faithfulness.

Because he was like a son to him, the apostle was inspired to write: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.”—II Tim. 1:1-5

It is in this letter that we learn of Paul’s great respect for Timothy’s mother and grandmother, who were both consecrated sisters in Christ, and of his love for faithful Timothy. In this epistle, he also calls to mind the very painful experiences which had first brought him to their home: “Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (II Tim. 3:10-12) At the time of the apostle’s first visit, Timothy was possibly in his teens, and no doubt keenly aware of these experiences of Paul, perhaps even assisting in the care given to his wounds in their home.

ADVERSARY THWARTED

We see how the adversary continually tried, but failed, to suppress the work of finding God’s people.

If Paul had been killed in Lystra, the witness efforts in Asia Minor may have suffered a major setback. Barnabas was spared this stoning experience. Possibly, since he was an older man, recovery would have been much harder for him, while Paul's relative youth and vigor helped him to recuperate quickly. Thus, even in these details, we see God's overruling hand.

When Paul was first called, the Lord told him through Ananias, "I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9:16) Certainly, he was learning that those who "live godly in Christ Jesus" must suffer persecution, and that not alone was he to suffer, but all the brethren would experience suffering as well, that they might learn this same lesson. Those who had tried to kill Paul must have followed up by also persecuting the brethren in these same cities. Later, as he returned to see these Christians, one of the key lessons taught by the apostle was that all the consecrated "must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."—Acts 14:22

RETRACING STEPS

Paul may have originally had in mind to visit his home town of Tarsus, which lay not far to the east from Derbe. However, he did not do so on this journey. The stoning incident had weakened him physically. More importantly to Paul, though, the success in finding so many interested brethren required that more attention be given to their needs. Thus, after staying awhile and finding many disciples in Derbe, he and Barnabas started back, retracing their steps to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the

truth to the brethren, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and encouraging them to endure what persecutions would come upon them.—Acts 14:21,22

One of their objectives in revisiting these classes was to make sure they would be organized properly along the lines of the instructions for qualifications of elders and deacons, which Paul later set down in I Timothy 3:1-13. It might appear from the wording of the account in Acts 14:23 that Paul and Barnabas did the selecting of the elders, performing a ceremony of ordination. However, the Greek word translated “ordained” in this verse means “to vote by stretching out the hand.” (*Thayer’s Greek Definitions*) This procedure is the same as used today by ecclesias of the Lord, in voting for elders and deacons, being no different than what Paul and Barnabas established.

After seeing to the selection of elders and deacons, Paul and Barnabas prayed with the brethren in each ecclesia, and commended them to the Lord as they departed their midst. On their return, they “preached the word” in Perga and Attalia, which were southern coastal towns of Asia Minor, sailing finally to the east and returning to Antioch, their home class. (Acts 14:23-26) Paul and Barnabas’ return must have been met with much rejoicing by the brethren. They had been gone for a long period of time, and there was much to discuss. The account states, “When they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.” (vs. 27) There could be no doubt in the minds of the Jewish brethren now. The “door of faith” was now open to all believers! ■

In the Steps of the Lamb

*“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.”
—Revelation 14:4*

THE “LAMB” IS ONE OF the symbolic titles that the Scriptures apply to Jesus. In Revelation 5:6, as John describes the vision given to him of God’s throne, he says that in the “midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain.” Here is revealed the lesson which is conveyed by the Lamb symbolism. It is a “Lamb as it had been slain,” denoting a full and complete sacrifice, even unto death. While this is the first reference to the Lamb in the Book of Revelation, this symbol of sacrifice in connection with the outworking of the plan of God is prominent throughout the Bible.

God told Adam and Eve that if they transgressed his law they would die: “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Gen. 2:17) When they ate of the forbidden fruit they were sentenced to death. God also spoke to the serpent, telling him that Eve’s “seed . . . shall bruise thy head.” (Gen.

3:14,15) This statement, while veiled in symbolic language, implied that in some way, not yet revealed, the results of Satan's victory over our first parents would be eradicated.

Later, the two sons of Adam and Eve brought sacrifices to the Lord. Cain's offering consisted of the fruit of the field, while Abel presented a lamb. (Gen. 4:2-5) We read in Hebrews 11:4 that "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." For Abel's faith to enter into the offering of this more excellent sacrifice, it must be that the Lord had revealed to him in some manner that this was the kind of offering that would be acceptable.

It is doubtful that Abel understood why the offering of a lamb would be pleasing to the Lord. However, in the light of the plan of God as it unfolds to us throughout the remainder of the Word of God, we can now understand. Our first parents sinned and were sentenced to death. That condemnation was passed on to their offspring, because all would be born in sin. Yet, God had made a statement which implied that in some way sin was to be remitted, resulting in a release from the sentence of death. Thus, very early in the unfolding of his plan, God began to reveal, using the Lamb symbol, that "without shedding of blood is no remission."—Heb. 9:22

BLESSINGS PROMISED TO ALL

Some two thousand years later, the Lamb symbolism is again brought to our attention. This is in connection with God's dealings with Abraham. God promised this faithful patriarch that through his "seed" all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Gen. 12:3) Abraham's faith *(Continued on page 36)*

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(Continued from page 31) was severely tested in waiting for the birth of this promised seed. He did not understand that the seed which God spoke of in his promise was Christ.—Gal. 3:8,16

After many years of waiting, Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah. To their understanding, Isaac was the seed of promise. However, when this beloved son grew to manhood, God asked Abraham to offer him up as a burnt offering. (Gen. 22:1-19) Abraham had developed great faith in God and in his promises. He believed that if he gave Isaac up as a sacrifice, God would raise him from the dead, to fulfill his promise that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Heb. 11:17-19) Thus, Abraham proceeded to comply with God's request.

Consequently, we see Isaac stretched out on an altar to be sacrificed, and Abraham with his knife raised to slay his son. Herein we are informed of an important truth relative to God's plan. Before all the families of the earth can be blessed through the seed of Abraham, a loving Father must give up his Son in sacrifice. As the Scriptures continue to unfold the plan of God for the salvation of the world, we learn that the Father who gives his Son in sacrifice is our loving Heavenly Father, who gave his "only begotten Son" for the redemption and salvation of the world. (John 3:16) A ram, or lamb, was provided as a substitute for Isaac, picturing how God would provide his beloved Son as the Lamb, and through his sacrifice all mankind might be blessed.

DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT

Centuries after Abraham's day, his descendants were held captive in Egypt by Pharaoh, and God sent

Moses to deliver them. Pharaoh, who in this situation might well represent Satan the Devil, was not willing to release the Hebrew children from bondage. Various plagues were inflicted upon Pharaoh and his people, the last one being the death of the firstborn. Some of these plagues fell also upon the Israelites.

God gave instructions to Moses and Aaron as to how the people of Abraham could save their firstborn from death. Each family was to slay a lamb. The blood was to be sprinkled upon the lintels and doorposts of their houses. During the night, the lamb was to be eaten. Under the protection of the sprinkled blood, the firstborn of the Hebrews were saved from death, and the next day the Israelites were all delivered from their slavery in Egypt. (Exod. 12:1-13,28-42, 50,51) Here again, the symbolism of the slain Lamb is brought dramatically to our attention.

We note that the blood of the lamb first brought salvation to Israel's firstborn. In Hebrews 12:23, the Apostle Paul speaks of the "church of the firstborn." The Scriptures also reveal that, following the salvation of the church of the firstborn during the present age, all mankind is to be delivered from the bondage of sin and death. This, too, is made possible through the Lamb that is slain, and is illustrated by all of Israel being delivered from Pharaoh's hand.

"TO THE SLAUGHTER"

The prophecies of the Old Testament also refer to the slain Lamb. In Isaiah's prophecy, we read, "The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." (Isa. 52:10) The "arm" of the Lord is Jesus in his exalted kingly glory, the

seed through whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed. How reassuring it is that through him “all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”

However, in the next chapter, Isaiah asks, “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” Instead of this arm of God being revealed to all nations, as Isaiah had previously seen in his prophetic vision, he now sees Christ as having “no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: . . . we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”—chap. 53:1-3

Isaiah continues his prophetic description of the disesteem in which Jesus was held by the people, and of the cruel persecutions which were inflicted upon him. In verse 7, we read, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” Thus, the one who in God’s plan of redemption and deliverance was destined to bring salvation to “all the ends of the earth” first became the Lamb which was slain.

THE LAMB IDENTIFIED

John the Baptist identified the Lamb foretold in the Old Testament. As he saw Jesus approach him, John said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) John spoke under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and may not have understood the full import of his statement. To us, however, it is clear that he was speaking of

the one who was the antitype of the lamb which Abel offered to God. This, also, was the one foreshadowed by the lamb which God provided as a substitute for Isaac on the altar of sacrifice. Here is the one typified by Israel's Passover lamb which was slain, and the one Isaiah foretold would be led as a "lamb to the slaughter." Here was the real Lamb, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

In corroboration of John's testimony, the Apostle Paul referred to Jesus as "Christ, our Passover lamb," identifying him as the antitype of Israel's Passover lamb. (I Cor. 5:7, *English Standard Version*) Peter, too, confirmed this same truth, writing, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world."—I Pet. 1:18-20

Thus, we see that the Lamb symbolism is traced through the Old and New Testaments, finding its climax in the Book of Revelation. In this vision, John sees the "Lamb as it had been slain" as the one found worthy to "open the book," which was held "in the right hand of him that sat upon the throne." (Rev. 5:1-7) Later, he sees the Lamb on "Mount Sion," and speaks of the time when "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Finally, John views a "river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."—chap. 14:1; 19:7; 22:1

THE LAMB EXALTED

Associated with many of the Bible's references to the slain Lamb is another line of prophetic testimony which is quite different in character. Peter sums up this additional testimony, saying that the Holy Spirit, speaking through the prophets, "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (I Pet. 1:11) Many of the prophecies pertaining to the sufferings of Christ, shown in part by the symbolism of the slain Lamb, also reveal wonderful promises of the exaltation and glory of the Lamb which would follow his suffering and death.

A wonderful description of this promised glory is presented in verses which follow the previously cited words of Revelation, chapter 5. In this subsequent depiction, John writes: "I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne . . . : and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."—vss. 11,12

It is in keeping with this that in chapter 14, as noted earlier, we find the Lamb standing on Mount Sion. Having been rewarded with "the glory that should follow," he is now highly exalted. It has been suggested that, in the natural realm, when sheep and goats are left to roam as they will, the goats invariably climb to the tops of the hills, while the sheep ordinarily seek the low places and valleys. To John, it must have seemed very unusual that a lamb should be seen on Mount Sion.

This brings to light a vital truth concerning Jesus, the Lamb of God. He did not attain to his high position on Mount Sion by means of self-exaltation. Being sheep-like, he had sought the low places. Jesus humbled himself, and because of this his Heavenly Father had exalted him. Paul calls this to our attention, saying: "Let this disposition be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though being in God's form, yet did not meditate a usurpation to be like God: but divested himself, taking a bondman's form, having been made in the likeness of men; and being in condition as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And therefore God supremely exalted him, and freely granted to him that name which is above every name; in order that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those beneath; and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God the Father."—Phil. 2:5-11, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*

In the 12th chapter of Hebrews, we are given another example of Jesus' humility, which resulted in his exaltation by God. Here, Paul admonishes us to look upon Jesus as a guide in our own endeavors to be pleasing to the Heavenly Father. We read: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."—vss. 2-4

“CONTRADICTION OF SINNERS”

Jesus endured an almost constant contradiction of sinners from the beginning of his ministry to the end, when on the cross he cried, “It is finished.” (John 19:30) This contradiction was in small things as well as in matters of great importance. Even the great truths concerning his life were contradicted. He was the Son of God, but this was contradicted. He came to earth to be Israel’s Messiah and king, and this also was contradicted. Indeed, it was the contradiction of these vital facts concerning Jesus that led to his crucifixion.

When Jesus was baptized, he heard his Heavenly Father say, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3:17) Forty days after this, as he came out of the wilderness, Jesus was confronted by Satan. The devil took him, in vision, “into the holy city” and sat him “on a pinnacle of the temple,” and said to him: “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.”—chap. 4:5,6

Jesus resisted this temptation, replying, “It is written . . . , Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” (vs. 7) Forty days before this the Heavenly Father had given him assurance of his sonship, and Jesus had complete confidence in the fact that he was the only begotten Son of God. He knew that to do anything in the way of seeking further confirmation of this fact would have been wrong, especially such a foolish thing as to leap from a pinnacle of the Temple.

Satan also tempted Jesus in connection with his kingship. Concerning this we read: “The devil taketh

him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” (Matt. 4:8,9) Jesus knew that in his Father’s due time he would take over the rulership of the kingdoms of this world, and he did not propose to enter this inheritance on the devil’s terms. He replied, “It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”—vs. 10

When the mob came from Jerusalem to Gethsemane to arrest Jesus, he said to the religious leaders, “When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.” (Luke 22:53) Previously, Jesus had said to these religious hypocrites that they were of their “father the devil.” (John 8:44) Satan is the prince of darkness, and Jesus’ remark, “this is your hour,” implied that Satan would now be permitted to do whatever he wanted to with Jesus.

SONSHIP AND KINGSHIP REJECTED

Jesus was arrested and taken to the high priest’s house, where he was humiliated and tortured until morning. Then he was taken before a council consisting of “the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes.” “Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God?” (Luke 22:66,70) To this question, Jesus replied, “Ye say that I am.” To his persecutors this meant that Jesus had confessed, so they said, “What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.”—vss. 70,71

The point here is that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. Therefore, his acknowledgment of this fact

was not blasphemy. His persecutors, though, did not believe this. Hence, their charge of blasphemy was part of the contradiction of sinners. The same Satanic mastermind which three and one-half years before had said to Jesus, "If thou be the Son of God," prove it by casting yourself down from a pinnacle of the Temple, was now seemingly victorious. Jesus had not proven to the Jewish leaders that he was the Son of God, and was now judged worthy of death for blasphemy.

However, the religious leaders of Israel did not have the authority to put Jesus to death. Only the Roman government could do this, so he was taken before Pilate, the governor, where he was charged with claiming to be a king. If this were true, it could be construed as insurrection against Rome. Pilate asked Jesus, "Art thou a king?" Jesus replied, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."—John 18:37

Following this, Jesus was scourged, a crown of thorns was put upon his head, and he was clothed in a purple robe and hailed "King of the Jews!" (chap. 19:1-3) Later Pilate "wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS." (vs. 19) Jesus was the King of the Jews and was destined to be King of the whole world—the "King of kings." (Rev. 17:14) In these moments, though, everything that was being said about his kingship by his enemies was only a further manifestation of the contradiction of sinners. Jesus had refused to bow down and worship Satan in order to become king over the nations, and now he was condemned to death because he rightly claimed to be a king.

Those who watched Jesus being crucified cried out to him, “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” (Matt. 27:40) This was the identical challenge that had been hurled at Jesus by Satan, when he called upon him to leap from a pinnacle of the Temple to prove his claimed sonship. Jesus then refused to tempt his Heavenly Father, but now a final opportunity was given to him. By coming down from the cross, he could prove that he was the Son of God. By refraining to do so, his claim was construed to be false—another manifestation of the contradiction of sinners.

The bystanders also shouted: “He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.” (vs. 42) Once again, Jesus refused to vindicate himself in the eyes of his enemies, choosing rather to endure the contradiction of sinners. Little did his enemies realize that by refusing to save himself, he was providing salvation to them, and to “all the kindreds of the earth!” (Acts 3:25) Jesus thus permitted himself to be led as “a lamb to the slaughter,” not opening his mouth in self-defense, or seeking otherwise to justify himself before his enemies. Upon his resurrection, the Heavenly Father highly exalted him. Jesus had humbled himself, and now we find the Lamb on symbolic Mount Zion.

FOLLOWING THE LAMB

Here the narrative becomes of vital interest to us. John states that on Mount Zion with the Lamb there are “an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.” (Rev. 14:1) Our opening text informs us that these on

Mount Sion with the Lamb are those who follow the Lamb wherever he goes, a walk which will ultimately lead to Mount Sion. There is no other way to attain this exalted position and be with the Lamb except to follow him. Following human leadership is not the way to reach Mount Sion. Reliance on our fallen flesh will likewise not take us to Mount Sion. There is just one way to reach this exalted position, and that is to “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.”

What is that “way” in which the Lamb so faithfully walked and thereby reached Mount Sion? It was the way of humiliation, suffering, and finally, death. It was a way in which contradiction of sinners was continually hurled against him. It was a way in which he, as a Lamb, opened not his mouth to defend himself, voluntarily allowing others to think that he was wrong—so wrong that they considered him as an enemy who should be put to death.

Can we walk in such a way as this, and are we doing so? It is unlikely that we will ever be contradicted on such major issues as was Jesus. However, the principle is the same, even if the things in which we are contradicted may often seem relatively insignificant. One of the strongest desires of the human heart and mind is to have the good will and acceptance of others. Even in the discussion of minor Scriptural details, we like to prove that we are right. Having the “last word” is usually very important to the flesh. Such, though, was not the disposition of the slain Lamb.

Let us compare ourselves with Jesus along this line. At times, we might feel like doing something dramatic to prove that we are special in God’s sight.

How much more acceptable it is, though, that we quietly keep on doing the Lord's will from day to day, unnoticed by those around us. (I Cor. 1:27-31; I Pet. 3:4) God may use little things to test us along this line. It is well, then, to scrutinize the innermost thoughts of our hearts to make sure we are humbly submitting to any contradiction of sinners that may come to us in consequence of our walk, as we "follow the Lamb."

Peter gave us the correct thought when he wrote: "What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."—I Pet. 2:20-23

Let us continue to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, following the Lamb in the way of sacrifice and death. By so doing, and by continuing to endure the contradiction of sinners patiently and victoriously unto death, the Heavenly Father will exalt us in due time. (I Pet. 5:6) We will then be with the Lamb, as part of the "hundred forty and four thousand" sons of God who have his name "written in their foreheads." When "the kingdom shall be the LORD'S," we will, with the Lamb, be "saviours" on Mount Sion, and rule in righteousness for the blessing of all mankind. (Obad. 21) What a glorious prospect awaits those who faithfully "follow the Lamb!" ■

Faith and Gold

***“That the trial of
your faith, being
much more
precious than of
gold that
perisheth, though
it be tried with fire,
might be found
unto praise and
honour and glory
at the appearing of
Jesus Christ.”
—I Peter 1:7***

THE WORD “FAITH”

appears only twice in the *King James* translation of the Old Testament, but is found in 229 verses of the New Testament. The two Old Testament texts where the word faith is used are Deuteronomy 32:20 and Habakkuk 2:4, in which it is translated from Hebrew words signifying “faithful” and “truth.” Two interesting

Scriptures in the New Testament which speak about faith are these: “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God;” and “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”—Eph. 2:8; Heb. 11:6

Ephesians 2:8 seems to say that faith is a gift from God, yet in Hebrews 11:6 we are told that if we do not have faith, we cannot please God. As we consider whether these statements are in conflict or not, we note one dictionary definition of faith, as follows: “a belief that does not rest on logical proof or material evidence.” If we have faith in God, we will believe him, and have a trusting acceptance of

his will for us, even though our reasons for doing so may not seem logical to others. Is this kind of faith, we might ask, a gift from God, or does it come from within an individual's heart and mind?

THE SOURCE OF FAITH

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17) The Apostle Paul in this verse tells us that no one can believe unless they hear. In the same context, he also says that no one can hear unless “a preacher” is “sent.” (vss. 14,15) Thus, without question the “sent preacher” is a gift from God. Two-thirds of the world's population is non-Christian, and it is likely that a majority of these have never heard of the only “name under heaven given among men” by which there is “salvation.” (Acts 4:12) It might at first seem unlikely that so many have never heard the Bible's message of salvation, since knowledge is so easily obtained today. However, simply having knowledge available is not enough. There must also be a desire and hunger for knowledge before it can be absorbed.

By way of example, most professed Christians likely know very little about Buddha, Confucius, or Mohammed. It is not that we have no ready access to information about these people and the religious systems they founded. Such information abounds, and is at our fingertips, but it only becomes knowledge to us if we have a strong desire to delve into its understanding. In the case of God's plan of salvation, as laid out in the Bible, a strong desire to know about these things is necessary. However, merely having a desire to know is not all that is necessary in order to have faith which will “please God.”

Jesus' disciples did not understand why he did not speak plainly to the people. They asked, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" (Matt. 13:10) Jesus answered his disciples, saying, "Speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. . . . For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."—vss. 13,15-17

In the Book of Proverbs, we read: "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them." (Prov. 20:12) This truly is a gift from God. However, what we do after we see and hear is up to us. Many loved the "gracious words which proceeded" out of the mouth of the Master. Even his enemies marveled that no one ever "spake like this man." (Luke 4:22; John 7:46) Yet, this brought no lasting benefit unless they acted on what they heard—few did.

Noting again Paul's words in Ephesians 2:8, he says we are "saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Although faith might be considered in a certain sense to be a gift from God, being "saved"—that is, salvation—is most certainly a gift. In another place, Paul emphatically states that those who now follow in the footsteps of

Jesus are “justified by his blood,” and “saved from wrath through him.” (Rom. 5:9) The world of mankind will be saved later by the merit of the same blood. These arrangements pertaining to salvation are things that come only “by grace,”—unmerited favor from God—a gift to us and all mankind.

Finally, we quote the following comments, which also indicate that faith can be considered a gift from God. “We have knowledge of God, and this knowledge, which is granted us as a grace or favor, brings us to the place where we are enabled to exercise faith. Faith in a great measure rests upon knowledge. Knowledge reveals God’s character; the Divine Revelation makes known to us certain facts respecting God’s purposes, and we see the purposes thus outlined to be in harmony with the character of God. This enables one to believe the promises; and believing them, we are enabled to act upon them. This is faith. Our faith, while it is of ourselves in the sense that we must exercise it, is of God in the sense that he supplies the necessary elements from which that faith is to be compounded.”—*What Pastor Russell Said*, pp. 266,267

THE TRIAL OF OUR FAITH

In our opening text, the Apostle Peter speaks of the “trial” of our faith, and that it is “more precious than of gold that perisheth.” The Greek word translated “trial” in this verse is used in only one other place in the New Testament, where it is also associated with faith. We quote: “The trial and proving of your faith bring out endurance and steadfastness and patience. But let endurance and steadfastness and patience . . . do a thorough work.” (James 1:3,4,

The Amplified New Testament) Rarely do most professed Christians talk about the trying, or proving, of their faith. This is evidently because many incorrectly believe that “once in grace, always in grace,” and since they profess belief in Jesus Christ, they claim they are saved, with no particular need of further development.

Yet, the Scriptures tell us we must develop certain character fruitage if we are to make our calling and election sure. Faith is an integral part of this. The Apostle Paul stated: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” (Gal. 5:22,23) To this, Peter added: “Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; . . . knowledge; . . . temperance; . . . patience; . . . godliness; . . . brotherly kindness; . . . charity [love]. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:5-8

There are good reasons for our trials. In the above verses, James says that the trial of our faith develops patience, and Peter lists patience as one of the qualities we are to “add” to our faith. Trials of faith make us into something better than we would be without them. They are, as our opening text states, of greater value than gold which is “tried with fire.” Gold is not put into the fire to hurt it, but to purify it, and to make it suitable for fashioning into priceless objects of beauty.

GOLD

Gold has several interesting characteristics. It is not concentrated in just a single region of the earth.

Both silver and gold are widely dispersed. Gold is the first mineral named in the Bible. Genesis 2:11,12 says there was gold in the land of Havilah, and that the gold in that land was good. Since gold is valuable in any form, the word “good” perhaps means it was found densely concentrated in gold nuggets instead of small particles or flakes as is common today.

Gold is the most malleable of all metals. It can be hammered into an extremely thin sheet, which is called “gold leaf.” Just as a potter molds clay as he pleases, a goldsmith can work gold into whatever he chooses. One gram of pure gold can be drawn into a thread two miles long. A text in Lamentations equates the malleability of gold with pottery: “The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!”—Lam. 4:2

Gold is the least chemically active of all the metals. This means that its beauty, luster, and intrinsic value are not decreased, regardless of what other minerals, metals, rocks, or elements, may be found with it or attached to it. One could go so far to say that it does not react in a negative manner to anything of this earth.

If one had a gold nugget, which was found embedded in a rock, it might at first be partially separated by breaking the rock into small pieces, but this is not enough. A very hot fire is needed. It requires heat of almost 2000° F to melt gold, and thus separate it from the impurities surrounding it. Evidently, man’s ability to generate heat of this magnitude goes back a long time. Genesis 13:2 says, “Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.” To be considered rich in silver and gold must

have necessitated the ability to melt these precious metals, detaching them from various impure substances, that they might attain such high value.

GOLD AND SILVER SYMBOLIC

Gold is a symbol of that which is divine. In Israel's Tabernacle arrangement, gold was only used inside the Holy and Most Holy compartments. Therefore, only the priests saw the gold. This was appropriate, since, as Paul says, they were "accomplishing the service of God," the divine Creator. (Heb. 9:6) We believe gold is also a symbol of the Gospel Age church, because they are promised to be "partakers of the divine nature." (II Pet. 1:4) Silver, which is very precious, but of lesser value than gold, is an apt symbol of the "great multitude," who, as John points out, are not pictured on the throne, as is the church, but are "before the throne."—Rev. 7:9

Other scriptures are in harmony with these thoughts. Speaking prophetically of Jesus, Malachi said, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness." (Mal. 3:3) This text equates gold and silver with the "sons of Levi," a group that consisted of a few priests and many non-priests. They all, however, were used by God as servants of the Tabernacle in various capacities.

Similarly, in the Book of Numbers, we are told that the Levites had no inheritance in Israel's land. "I am thy part and thine inheritance," God said. (Num. 18:20) Thus, these typical arrangements point forward and teach that both the "gold" and "silver"

classes of the present Gospel Age do not receive an earthly inheritance, but their reward is in heaven.

“In a large house there are dishes and bowls of all kinds: some are made of silver and gold, others of wood and clay; some are for special occasions, others for ordinary use.” (II Tim. 2:20, *Good News Bible*) In this verse, the silver and gold refer to classes who have had their faith “tried with fire,” and come forth precious in the sight of the Heavenly Father. Thus, they receive a place of honor in this “large house.” The wood and clay have value, too, but not to the same degree. “He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”—Job 23:10

DEVELOPING FAITH

Earlier, when considering Ephesians 2:8, we saw that salvation is a gift of God, and that the resulting opportunity to develop faith is also a gift from him. There is another text which implies that faith given by God can be apparent in varying degrees: “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit.” (I Cor. 12:7-9) Paul continues in verse 10, listing the gifts of miracle-working, prophecy, discerning of spirits, ability to speak in diverse languages, and interpretation of languages.

From this list, we might conclude that only a few had the gift of faith, just as only a few possessed the gift of healing, or of prophecy, or speaking or interpreting other languages. In one sense, this is true. At

the beginning of the very next chapter, the Apostle Paul talks about a unique kind of faith, describing it as “faith, so that I could remove mountains.” (I Cor. 13:2) Jesus used a similar expression about that degree of faith, when speaking to his disciples, he said, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.”—Matt. 17:20

Many of us have known consecrated believers who have shown that kind of exceptional faith, as they follow the leadings of the Lord. Such mature and fully developed faith, however, is rare. Nevertheless, we all must have some degree of faith when we come to God. A good start in faith is vitally important, but it is not enough. Faith must be developed and crystallized.

Each of us is being given the experiences we need so that our faith grows. “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity [love] of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth.” (II Thess. 1:3) Here Paul commends the Thessalonian brethren because their faith was growing. During his earthly ministry, the apostles requested of Jesus, “Increase our faith.” (Luke 17:5) This is exactly what he did. In the hours before Jesus’ crucifixion, Peter’s faith failed him to the point where he denied the Lord three times. By the end of his life, however, Peter had become strong in the faith, because he had been developed by his experiences.

Most of us would probably concede that our faith needs further improvement. At times, we believe fully, but at other times our faith weakens. Jesus

said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow”—that is, do not be overanxious about it—“for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.”—Matt. 6:33,34

It is good that we each consider how much of our time is devoted to seeking the kingdom of God, and how much is devoted to seeking other things. If we truly believe, if we have a faith that could move mountains, there should be no question about it. We would be seeking “first the kingdom of God” all of the time, and not be anxious about the things of tomorrow.

The most well-known Scriptural definition of faith is found in Hebrews 11:1: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” This verse in the *New International Version* reads: “Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”

The remainder of Hebrews chapter 11 is filled with many Old Testament examples of faith in action. In all instances, we see it was not merely that the named individuals said they believed God. They all did something to demonstrate their faith, and went through a process of development to reach that point. Similarly, as we are developed in the “school of Christ,” our conduct should demonstrate our faith, so that the world will see that we have “been with Jesus” and learned of him.—Acts 4:13

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Everything we have is gift from God. The salvation we have received now, and which the world of mankind will receive in the next age, is because of

God's grace. God has given us opportunities to hear about him through his Word and through those who have explained that Word to us. Two-thirds of the world today know virtually nothing about the one through whom salvation has been provided—Jesus.

Faith is so important that it is impossible to please God unless we have it. The Apostle Paul wrote that faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Our faith starts small but if we are rightly exercised by our experiences it grows. Our faith is said to be "tried with fire" like gold, to make us suitable for a place of honor in God's house.

Gold has many characteristics which make it a fitting symbol of the church. Each member of this "little flock" of faithful believers, after receiving refining experiences to remove all dross, will receive the divine nature. Just as the church is precious to the Heavenly Father, so is all mankind. The Prophet Isaiah tells us a day is coming when God will consider man more precious than gold: "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir."—Isa. 13:12

May we never lose our faith. It is faith that made us acceptable to God, and it is faith that insures our ultimate salvation. "The just shall live by faith: but if any draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." "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." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith!"—Heb. 10:38,39; I Tim. 6:12; I John 5:4 ■

General Convention Bulletin

July 15-20, 2017

THE 2017 GENERAL CONVENTION is only a few months away. Now is the time to make your plans to attend and participate in the blessings of this annual gathering of the Lord's people. Once again, the convention returns to the facilities of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Air conditioned hotel-like rooms with private bathrooms in the Living-Learning Center (LLC), family-style apartments (also air conditioned) with private bathrooms (APTS), and housing with two rooms sharing one bathroom (not air conditioned) in other facilities will be available on campus. A child may sleep on a bedroom floor at no charge if both beds are occupied.

All room and meal costs for children 12 years old or younger will be paid by the convention. In addition, 100% of the cost of those from ages 13 through 17 will be refunded if the young person attends at least 75% of the studies for his or her age group. This subsidy does not cover meals paid for at the door.

The convention will provide one shuttle bus leaving the Pittsburgh airport in the early evening for the college in Johnstown on Friday, July 14. There will also be a shuttle bus leaving the college in the early morning hours for the Pittsburgh airport on Friday, July 21. There will be a \$10 charge per person each way for this service.

General Convention Registration

330 Jasmine Road—Casselberry, FL 32707

E-mail: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com (407) 670-4189

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 14, 2017				
Saturday, 15th				
Sunday, 16th				
Monday, 17th				
Tuesday, 18th				
Wednesday, 19th				
Thursday, 20th				

Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals ☐
or 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts) ☐

Check: ☐ private bath **or** ☐ shared bath
☐ double occupancy ☐ single occupancy
☐ interested in APTS

Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)

Address:

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

L. Griehs		T. Krupa	
Orlando, FL	March 4-6	Orlando, FL	March 4-6
S. Jeuck		H. Montague	
Atlanta, GA	March 19	Gulfport, MS	March 11,12
B. Keith		P. Mora	
Orlando, FL	March 4-6	Orlando, FL	March 4-6

MOVING?



If you are moving, please let us know six weeks before you move so that we can change the address on your Dawn subscription.

2017 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after sunset on Sunday, April 9, 2017.

A complete Memorial Service is available for isolated brethren, or for any who wish to have it.

The audio cassette tape, CD, or DVD can be purchased for \$6.00. All are also available free on loan, from:

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Please place your order by April 1, if possible.

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.

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 4-6—Holiday Inn Orlando International, 5750 T. G. Lee Boulevard, Orlando, FL 32822. For room reservations, call the hotel. Phone: (407) 851-6400. Specify “Florida Bible Students” to guarantee special convention rate. Deadline for special rate is February 25, 2017. For other information, contact M. Balko. Phone: (407) 339-7580 or Email: mbalko@cfl.rr.com

NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION, March 11,12—Holiday Inn Gulfport/Airport, 9515 Highway 49, Gulfport, MS 39503. For room reservations, contact the hotel at (228) 679-1700 (fax 1701). Mention New Orleans Bible Students. For other information, contact M. Costelli. Phone: (228) 861-2822 or Email: michael@simpkins-costelli.com

DETROIT CONVENTION, April 1,2—Quality Inn of Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48083. Contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588 or Email: nemeshfp@aol.com

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, April 14-16—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Boulevard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Contact S. Thomassen. Phone: (505) 268-8170 or Email: srbt@juno.com

NTAK OBIO AKPA, NIGERIA CONVENTION, April 14-16—Ntak Obio Akpa, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Convention Theme: I Peter 1:10-12, Hebrews 11:40

METRO DETROIT CONVENTION, May 6,7—Brighton Community Center, 555 Brighton Street, Brighton, MI 48114. Contact J. Kienast. Phone: (248) 496-5611 or Email: jenkienast@gmail.com

CHICAGO CONVENTION, May 27-29—Prisco Community Center, 150 W. Illinois Avenue, Aurora, IL 60506. Contact J. Farrell, 310 S. Lambert Road, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137. Phone: (630) 469-9511 or Email: secretary@chicagobible.org

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, May 27,28—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91504. For room reservations (subsidized rate of \$55/night ending April 23), contact N. Nekora. Phone: (310) 454-5248 or Email: npnekora@aol.com. Other information, contact T. Parkinson. Phone: (818) 288-2765 or Email: ti77park@gmail.com. Please place LABible in subject line of the email.

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, June 4—Sheraton Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA. Contact R. Griehs. Phone: (267) 456-8889 or Email: rgriehs@gmail.com

PORTLAND CONVENTION, June 16-18—Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel, 8235 NE Airport Way, Portland, OR 97220. Phone: (503) 281-2500. Contact B. or C. Hislop. Phone: (503) 691-2699 or Email: bwhislop@aol.com or claudiahis@aol.com

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

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

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 15-20—University of Pittsburgh, 450 Schoolhouse Road, Johnstown, PA. See pp. 59-61, this issue, for registration.