

The DAWN

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“BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN”

“The virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the LORD is with thee: blessed art thou among women.”—Luke 1:27,28

THE FIRST PART of this article was published in the December, 1997 issue of *The Dawn* magazine. Part 2, a continuation of the topic, endeavors to establish Mary’s place in God’s plan by considering all of the known Scriptural references to her.

The angel, Gabriel, visited Mary to tell her that she would conceive, as prophesied in Isaiah 7:14. She wondered how this could be possible since she had not known any man. Gabriel explained to her that this child would be begotten by God’s Holy Spirit, and God would be his father. Thus, the life of the **Logos** was transferred to Mary’s womb and she bore a child who grew into the man, Christ Jesus.

When Mary and Joseph went to the Temple in Jerusalem for her purification, they also presented Jesus to the LORD. Two elderly ‘Israelites indeed’ had come to the Temple and quoted scriptures that

were a surprise to Mary. How many scriptures did Mary know? As a faithful Israelite she diligently attended services in the synagogue, and she was attentive to the words spoken by the rabbi and the words of the Psalms that were sung. This is evident from the words of the hymn of praise sung by Mary when she visited her kinswoman, Elisabeth. The components of this beautiful hymn recorded in Luke 1:46-55 are excerpts from Psalms 138:6; 103:17; 98:1; 33:10; 113:6; 34:10; and 98:3. Mary, however, did not know the true meaning of these scriptures until the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles and the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.—Acts 2:17,18,28

THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN

After the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary resided in a house in Bethlehem for a while. It was there that the 'wise men' from the East found them to present gifts and to worship the King of the Jews. (Matt. 2:1-11) First the wise men had gone to Jerusalem to ask the king where to find the "King of the Jews" (vs. 2), for they had been following his star. Herod did not know where Messiah would be born, and so he inquired for this information from the chief priests and the scribes. They promptly answered, "Bethlehem," citing Micah 5:2. Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem, asking to be told when they found the child so he could "worship him also."—Matt. 2:8

God, the Father, knew that the defenseless child, Jesus, was in jeopardy. Therefore God warned the wise men in a dream not to return to Herod, so they went back to their country by another route. (Matt. 2:12) Likewise, an angel of the

LORD appeared to Joseph in a dream, telling him to flee to Egypt because Herod would seek the child to destroy him. None of this could have happened if Jesus was part of a Trinity. When we see that God, the Father, was protecting his Son, Jesus, and that both were distinctly separate entities, how reasonable is the record of these events.

It was God, the Father, who knew of the murderous threat of Herod and took action to protect the young child, Jesus. True to form, as known by the Father, Herod had all children slain in the Bethlehem area, who were two years of age or under. Jesus, however, was safe in Egypt by then.

MARY, WHEN JESUS WAS TWELVE

Another incident, recorded in Luke's Gospel, concerns Mary when Jesus was twelve years old. He had accompanied his parents to Jerusalem, where they went every year to celebrate Passover. When it was time to return home, Jesus tarried in Jerusalem; but his parents did not know he was not with the returning group until they had traveled a day's journey. After searching among all their relatives and friends who were traveling together and not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem and searched for three days before they found him in the Temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them, and asking questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his remarks.

When his parents found him, his mother said, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you'. 'Why were you searching for me', he asked. 'Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?' But

they did not understand what he was saying to them.” (Luke 2:41-50, *New International Version*) If Mary was the mother of God, she surely would understand what he was saying. Jesus was now at an age where he could understand the Biblical prophecies—especially those which concerned his mission on earth as designed by his Heavenly Father.

MARY, DURING JESUS' MINISTRY

In the Bible there are only a few references concerning Mary at the time when Jesus first began his ministry. One incident, however, did occur at the very beginning of his ministry when Mary and Jesus and his disciples attended a wedding at Cana of Galilee. The celebration had run out of wine, and Mary made this predicament known to Jesus. Apparently she had some involvement with the wedding party. Our Lord's reply was, “Dear woman, why do you involve me? . . . My time has not yet come.” (John 2:1-11, *NIV*) We note that Jesus did not address her as ‘Mother of God’, ‘Queen of Heaven’, or by any special title given to her in later years. On this occasion Jesus proceeded to provide the wine, performing his first miracle.

Later, as Jesus began his ministry, there was the occasion when Mary, and Jesus' brothers also, sought Jesus. They wanted to speak to him as he was preaching to a crowd of followers. Jesus was told of this by one who brought the message to him. Jesus reacted by asking, “Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”—Matt. 12:46-50

This same incident is recorded in Mark 3:31-35 and Luke 8:19-21. Why did Jesus make this statement? It is because he was emphasizing that earthly relationships have no meaning when it comes to selecting “a people for his [God’s] name.” (Acts 15:14) Being the mother of the man, Christ Jesus, was not as important as being a disciple and true follower of Christ.

WHO WERE JESUS’ ‘BRETHREN’?

It is believed that Mary did not bring her own children with her, but that they were her nephews. The scriptural passages: Matthew 13:53-58, and Mark 6:1-5, record the visit Jesus made to the territory near his boyhood home, and the reaction of people who had known him, who said: “Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?” (Matt. 13:54-56) These ‘brethren’ are believed to be Mary’s nephews and our Lord’s cousins. In those times, cousins were called brothers.

These were the children of Mary’s sister-in-law, also named Mary, and the wife of Cleophas (also called Alpheus). The scriptural basis for this assertion is provided in the Appendix to this article.

MARY IN JOHN’S CARE

All these family relationships make more sense of the action that Jesus took while dying on the cross. He saw his mother and the other two Marys standing by the cross with the Apostle John. He entrusted his mother into John’s care. The Scriptures tell us, “From that hour that disciple

took her unto his own home.” (John 19:27) Would Jesus have done this if she had other children to look after her? Mary was now alone. Her husband, Joseph, had died; and now her son, Jesus, was about to die.

Mary had performed the task given to her by God very well. She gave birth to Jesus; she nourished him and cared for him as all good mothers do for their children. What reward did God plan for her? What position could be made available for her? Since Mary was descended from Adam, it was necessary for her to understand that Jesus was, indeed, Israel's and the world's Savior, and that he would restore the kingdom to Israel.

Believing that Jesus was man's Redeemer was no problem for Mary. She understood God's plan perfectly after the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles and her, and all the faithful disciples who formed the nucleus of believers assembled on the Day of Pentecost as instructed by Jesus.

THE BLESSINGS OF PENTECOST

When Jesus was resurrected from the dead, he showed himself on a number of occasions to this faithful company of believers. The last time they saw him was in Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts 1:1-12, before his ascension. Mary was there. They were told not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Holy Spirit. The eleven apostles were present and are named by Luke, assembling in the upper room. (Acts 1:13) “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.” (Acts 1:14) This is the last scriptural reference to Mary. Together with the other faithful

disciples (120), they waited until the Day of Pentecost when they all were blessed by the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. Before the day ended about 3,000 men and women of Israel were baptized accepting Jesus as their personal Redeemer and dedicating their lives to doing God's will by walking in the footsteps of Jesus. Mary was one of these chosen from Israel to be a member of the body of Christ. If she continued faithful unto death she would receive a "crown of life" and have the privilege of living and reigning with Christ.—Rev. 2:10; 20:6

There is no further mention of Mary in the Scriptures. There is very little in traditional writings as well. She remained with the Apostle John until she died. Traditional writings are contradictory and unreliable. Some say she died in Jerusalem. Others say she travelled to Ephesus with the Apostle John. What is important is that she no doubt was faithful in her consecration to do God's will, and we expect that she will be in the body of Christ, where there no longer is any distinction of personalities, and all who are faithful are one in Christ Jesus. "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."—Gal. 3:28

APPENDIX

During our Lord's ministry, there were many women who ministered to him and were his followers. There are six women named Mary mentioned in the New Testament: 1) Mary, the mother of Jesus; 2) Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha; 3) Mary Magdalene; 4) Mary, the wife of Cleophas and the mother of James, Jude, Joses, Simon, and

Salome, called the 'brethren' of our Lord, and by which it is believed that Cleophas and Joseph, the husband of Mary (the mother of Jesus), were brothers; 5) Mary, the mother of Mark; 6) Mary, a resident of Ephesus who ministered to the Apostle Paul.

With so many women with the name Mary, we depend on other scriptures to avoid confusion. John 19:25 is the principal scripture, which says, "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." Since it is unlikely that a family would use the same name for two sisters, it is reasoned that Mary, the wife of Cleophas, was a sister-in-law to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Commentators believe that Cleophas was the Syriac or Hebrew name of the father of the Apostle James the less, and that Alphaeus (Matt. 10:3) was his Greek name. Cleophas was believed to be the natural brother of Joseph, and their wives—both named Mary—were sisters-in-law. Mary, the wife of Cleophas, is mentioned as the mother of James the less in Mark 15:40. In some citations her other children are mentioned, such as in Matthew 27:56: "James and Joses"; or Mark 15:40: "James the less, and of Joses and Salome." The family of 'James the less' is mentioned on two other occasions where they are called our Lord's brethren, "James, Joses, and Simon, and Judas" (Matt. 13:53-58; Mark 6:1-5), but their sisters were not named except in Mark 15:40, where Salome is mentioned.

In addition to John 19:25, there is recorded in two other Gospels which women were at the cross when Jesus was crucified. Matthew says: "Many women were there beholding afar off, which

followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children."—Matt. 27:55,56

In Mark's Gospel we read, "There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; (who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem."—Mark 15:40,41

Finally, the Apostle Paul relates his visit to Jerusalem three years after his conversion, and reports seeing the Apostle James (the less—John's brother James had died). He refers to him as the Lord's brother (cousin, in our language).—Gal. 1:19 ■

GOD BLESS YOU

GOD bless you in the coming year
With hope and peace and joy;
His perfect love that casts out fear—
His love, without alloy.

God guard you in the year to come
Around your path each day
His angels' care be yours; and from
His storehouse, on your way,

May he supply your ev'ry need
And keep you safe indeed!

THE LORD PASSED by before him [Moses], and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."—*Exodus 34:6,7*

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JANUARY 1—"O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved."—Psalm 66:8,9 (Z. '03-3 Hymn 45)

JANUARY 8—"See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."—I Thessalonians 5:15 (Z. '01-297 Hymn 267)

JANUARY 15—"What doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—Micah 6:8 (Z. '02-172 Hymn 312A)

JANUARY 22—"Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD."—Psalm 31:24 (Z. '01-79 Hymn 126)

JANUARY 29—"The fear [reverence] of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."—Psalm 111:10 (Z. '96-155 Hymn 89)

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

LESSON FOR JANUARY 4

LIVING IN HOPE

KEY VERSE: *“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 by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”—I Peter 1:3*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *I Peter 1:1-12*

WHEN WRITING TO the “strangers” in Asia Minor (I Pet. 1:1), the Apostle Peter addressed many disciples including Gentiles, slaves and others who had been subjected to persecution and shunned by society because of their faith. His epistle was sent as an encouragement to strengthen their faith by reminding them of the living hope they had received through the mercies of God, and has since been an encouragement to Christ’s body members down to our day.

Man has always needed hope to plan for the future—something which gives a reason for living. Yet hope may refer nega-

tively to things we want to happen, while having little belief that they will actually come to pass. People often ‘hope against hope’ that some miracle might happen.

We, too, had no real hope before we came to Christ (Eph 2:12), but now our hope is grounded on God’s mercy—a hope anchored by God and guaranteed by Christ’s resurrection.—I Pet. 1:3

Jesus was resurrected through the power of God, and “raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25), thus making ours a living hope. As Peter declares in verse 3, God has “begotten us again unto a lively hope

by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

The word ‘begotten’ used here, and incorrectly translated “born” in verse 23 in the *King James Version*, is the Greek word ‘**an-agennao**’ and refers to spirit begetting, showing clearly that spirit begetting comes to the sons of God from God himself, our Heavenly Father. This is in agreement with the Apostle John’s declaration that the sons of God “were begotten, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” —John 1:13

Peter says that the substance of our living hope is a heavenly inheritance which will be revealed “in the last time” (I Pet. 1:5), which we now perceive through the begetting of God’s Holy Spirit. This hope of a future inheritance “that fadeth not away” (I Pet. 1:4) is reserved for the “partakers of the heavenly calling” (Heb. 3:1), those called “with an holy calling.” (II Tim. 1:9) The Apostle Paul describes it by saying, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling

of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:14) This high calling is a one-time offer during this Gospel Age to those who deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Jesus. (Luke 9:23) It makes our hope come alive so it is the directing force in our lives to prove faithful in our calling to God, remembering the promise, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—Rev. 2:10

Knowing the prospect of this heavenly inheritance, Peter says we should greatly rejoice, even when trials come to perfect our faith. These trials are but for a little while compared to the everlasting glory that will follow, and are the evidences that the Father is dealing with us as sons.

It is reasonable and necessary that we should suffer a while as Jesus did, so that we might share his glory with him. (II Cor. 1:5, 7; II Tim. 2:12) We are therefore comforted in the trials we endure daily as soldiers of the cross, by this living hope, and look forward to the outcome of our faith.— I Pet. 4:13 ■

LESSON FOR JANUARY 11

BEING GOD'S PEOPLE

KEY VERSE: *"Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."*—*I Peter 2:10*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *I Peter 2:10*

BEING GOD'S PEOPLE has different meanings at different times. In the Old Testament writings, we learn about the nation of Israel, who constituted God's people, with their alternating periods of faithfulness and unfaithfulness.—Exod. 6:7

In God's coming kingdom here on earth the entire redeemed human race will be the people of God, and will receive healing and blessings. In this lesson the Apostle Peter addresses God's people during the Gospel Age—those who are sacrificing their earthly ambitions for the hope of a heavenly reward in the first resurrection. (Rev. 20:6) Peter explains that this people is "chosen of God, and pre-

cious," and will be built up into "a spiritual house"—the temple of God.—I Pet. 2:4,5

God's people during this present Gospel Age have the responsibility Peter wrote about, saying "that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (I Pet. 2:9) We were once in darkness, separated from God, but were called to be his people. Our primary purpose is now to preach the glad tidings of the Gospel, to "let" our "light so shine before men, that they may see your [our] good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—Matt. 5:16

By God's people becoming "an holy priesthood"

(I Pet. 2:5), they are able to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul emphasized that these sacrifices should totally dominate our lives when he said, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." —Rom. 12:1

As priests, God's people are separated from the world for the purpose of service. This priesthood is the result of our coming to the Lord Jesus Christ—laying aside all weaknesses of the flesh (I Pet. 2:1), and offering sacrifices. (vs. 5) They are in the world, yet are not of the world. (John 17:14) Those who remain faithful unto death will become royal priests in the kingdom, when the glorified church will become instructors in righteousness to the world of mankind.

By coming to Jesus, we, too, become living stones which will be "built up a spiritual house." (vs. 5) Peter does not say we will build this spiritual house, but rather that we will be built up into it. Each stone will be shaped, chiseled

and polished to fit perfectly in place according to God's design. As part of this spiritual house which is being built upon the solid foundation of Jesus as a ransom for all, we become "precious" to God (vs. 7) as his people today.

God's people are "a peculiar people" (Tit. 2:14), in the sense that they are separate from the world. They are a "people for a purpose," implying that God has a special mission in life for them. —I Pet. 2:9, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*

These have been redeemed with Christ's precious blood (I Pet. 1: 18, 19) and have consecrated themselves to the LORD, offered up sacrifices holy and acceptable to God showing forth the praises of the Heavenly Father and his only begotten Son. Their lives are completely dedicated to God. They have therefore become 'the people of God', and have 'obtained mercy' so that God considers them his 'special treasure'. (vss. 9,10, *Margin*) What could ever be a greater treasure in all the earth? ■

SUFFERING FOR DOING RIGHT

KEY VERSE: *“If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”—I Peter 4:16*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *I Peter 3:13-21; 4:12-16*

AS FOLLOWERS OF Christ, we are to be a blessing to those around us, mirrors reflecting the example that God has given us in Christ. Peter suggests that this is possible only by sharing with others the hope that enables us to bear life's greatest difficulties. When we are tested by fiery trials we are to consider Christ's sufferings and the privilege we have of sharing in them, and the glory will follow.—II Tim. 2:11,12

Our Lord's sufferings even unto his death on the cross is a wonderful example to his church. We read, “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might

bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” (I Pet. 3:18) As the ransom price for Adam, Jesus—unlike the typical animal sacrifices offered annually for Israel's Atonement Day—needed to be offered only once for the sins of the unjust. (Heb. 9:25-28; Rom. 5:6-9,17-19) Peter explains that Jesus suffered for the purpose of bringing us to God, and that his resurrection guarantees its effectiveness. Jesus' suffering enables us to come to God through similar suffering and, as a result, we are blessed. “If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye” (I Pet. 3:14), and, “if ye be reproached for the

name of Christ, happy are ye.”—I Pet. 4:14

Inasmuch as we are developed through suffering, Peter tells us we should be eager to do only what is good. (I Pet. 3:13) As the ultimate source of goodness, we look to Jesus, “the author and finisher of our faith . . . lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”—Heb. 12:2,3

Peter says that we may suffer for doing good or for doing evil, and the question becomes, “How do we endure suffering,” especially suffering for righteousness’ sake? Rejoicing is not a normal response to pain and suffering, but when following Christ it leads to a great reward. The Scriptures teach, “As much then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.”—I Pet. 4:1

We are to be “partakers of Christ’s sufferings.” (vs. 13) The Greek word translated “partakers” is *koinonos* and means “a sharer or partner,” and is of the same root as used by the Apostle Paul in describing

our joint participation in the Lord’s memorial. (I Cor. 10:16) We want to be partners with Christ, to share in his sufferings in order to share in his resurrection (Phil. 3: 10), which is the ‘glory to come’. (I Pet. 5:1) What a great blessing this will be! In order to suffer for what is right, Peter says we must “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” (I Pet. 3:15) This means searching the Scriptures daily and studying to show ourselves approved to God.—Acts 17:11; II Tim. 2:15

We should always be prepared to tell others what Christ means to us, and to make a defense of why we live as we live. This defense is made in “meekness,” which carries the thought of strength under control, and of reverence achieved by sanctifying God in our hearts, rather than having the idea of timidity or of fear. We will not be ashamed for suffering as Christians, but rather we “glorify God on this behalf.”—I Pet. 3:16; I Pet. 4:16 ■

LIVING IN HUMILITY

KEY VERSE: *“Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”—I Peter 5:5*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *I Peter 5:1-11*

CHRISTIAN HUMILITY is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and it means having a sober evaluation of one's abilities, not thinking too highly or too lowly of ourselves. (Phil. 2:3-5) Pride, the opposite of humility, is characteristic of our society. (Mal. 3:15) The world is not striving to have the mind of Christ, or to become humble as he was (Phil. 3:8), but we are.

The Apostle Peter, exhorts us to “be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” (vs. 5) We see humility in light of the New Testament as a necessity of the Christian faith. The best example of humility is our Lord Jesus, who de-

scribed himself as “meek and lowly in heart.”—Matt. 11:29

Jesus set the standard of service when he washed the feet of his disciples, declaring, “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” (John 13:14, 15) Putting on humility, then, implies a readiness to serve. If, like Jesus, we humble ourselves before God, we will be exalted in the future (vs. 6) with “a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” (vs. 4) Like the elders, Peter was exhorting, we should feed the flock “because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve.”—vs. 2, *New International Version*

Humility includes having faith in the promises of God. Jesus likened pure Christian humility to a child, saying in Matthew 18:4: "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Peter referred to this childlike humility saying, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." (vs. 6) Humility begins with our trust in God. The Apostle Paul said, "God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tried beyond your ability; but with the trial, will also direct the issue, that you may be able to bear it." —I Cor. 10:13, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*

With this trust in our Heavenly Father to care for us even in our trials, we are invited to cast all our cares upon him, all our anxieties and worries during our lifetime. Our trust should not be passive, but we are expected to make an effort to do some things for ourselves.

Peter said, "Therefore, let even those who are suffering according to the will

of God, commit their lives in doing good to a faithful Creator." (I Pet. 4:19, *WED*) We are to cast off our anxieties and to walk circumspectly. We must be "sober" (vs. 8), serious, self-controlled, to keep on guard against attacks from all directions. Paul warned the Ephesian elders to be alert against heresy (Acts 20:31), and advised other congregations to "watch" in prayer and thanksgiving (Col. 4:2); and "stand fast" in the faith. (I Cor. 16:13) We are to watch and stand fast because Peter refers to Satan as "a roaring lion" on the prowl trying to "devour" the sons of God.—vs. 8

As long as we exercise faith, the Adversary cannot devour us. Although our persecutions many times cause discouragement, Satan cannot destroy us. Peter tells us, "Whom resist stedfast in the faith" (I Pet. 5:9), and James assures us that if we "resist the Devil, . . . he will flee from you."—James 4:7

Pride is a well-known ploy used by Satan to stumble us. We need to come to God in prayer for strength to resist the Adversary. ■

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

THE PLAN OF GOD IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS— PART 7

THE PROMISE AFFIRMED

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

VERSES 1-8 “And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

“And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

“And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

“As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

“Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

“And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their genera-

tions for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

“And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

According to the *Marginal Translation*, God’s statement to Abram that he should be ‘perfect’, more properly should read ‘upright’ or ‘sincere’. Abram was a member of the fallen and dying race, and perfection of conduct was quite beyond his ability. But he could be upright and sincere before the LORD. This is possible for all of God’s people, and nothing short of this is acceptable to the LORD.

God’s reference in this chapter to the making of a covenant with Abram was a reiteration of the covenant he had already made, and an enlarging on some of its features.

In keeping with the importance of meanings attached to names in connection with the unfolding of the Divine plan, the LORD changed Abram’s name to Abraham, meaning the ‘father of many nations’. The original statement of the covenant assured blessings to all nations through the promised seed, but here the LORD amplifies that thought by promising that Abraham would be the father of the nations who thus would be blessed. The term father means life-giver, and this would seem to be God’s way of explaining that the “blessing” the nations would receive through Abraham’s seed was to be that of life.

The Apostle Paul quotes this promise (Rom. 4:16-18) and indicates that all who exercise the faith of Abraham in the promises God made to him,

thereby qualify to be his 'seed'. Some of this seed will be earthly, and some spiritual, but the important truth which Paul stresses is that one does not have to be a natural descendant of Abraham in order to be part of his seed.

"Kings shall come out of thee," God promised Abraham. The principal fulfillment of this promise is in connection with the spiritual seed of Abraham—Jesus the Head and the church, his body. (Gal. 3:16,27-29) Jesus will be the King of kings, and his church will reign with him as kings for a thousand years.—Rev. 5:10; 20:4

Abraham, although living in Canaan at this time, was a stranger in the land, or as the *Marginal Translation* expresses it, 'a sojourner'. Abraham died without possessing the land which God promised to him—as did Isaac and Jacob. But they will, nevertheless, possess the land when they are restored to life in the resurrection. It is most important to keep God's viewpoint in mind in our study of his Word lest we fall into serious error in our endeavors to determine how some of his promises are fulfilled.

VERSES 9-14 "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

"This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

"And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

"And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your genera-

tions, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.

“He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

“And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.”

Circumcision was a ‘token’ of the Abrahamic Covenant. Paul speaks of it as a ‘sign’ of the faith which Abraham already exercised toward God and his promises. God stressed the importance of this token of the covenant by decreeing that any of the household of Abraham thenceforth who did not comply with it were to be destroyed.

In passing, it is well to note that the importance God attached to this token of the covenant rules out all possibility that any of the natural descendants of Abraham who have strayed away from the LORD, and have ceased to observe the sign of circumcision, could be especially used or honored by him.

When the LORD said that any soul that was not circumcised should ‘be cut off from his people’, the least we could understand from it is that such a one would cease to be considered by God as a child of Abraham, or in any sense of the word an heir to the rich promises made to him.

In the New Testament, circumcision is used to symbolize singleness of heart and purity of purpose. It is much the same thought as is contained in the LORD’s statement to Abraham that he should be

‘upright and sincere’. While the spiritual seed of Abraham are not called upon to practice the literal rite of circumcision, they are admonished to circumcise their hearts, and to put away all filthiness of the flesh.

It is appropriate that the token of the all-comprehensive Abrahamic Covenant should be circumcision, for when we take into consideration the New Testament explanation of what circumcision signifies, it means that none will receive the blessings promised under the Abrahamic Covenant except upon the basis of purity of heart and motive before the LORD and an abiding faith in his promises and the righteousness of his laws.

VERSES 15, 16 “And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.

“And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.”

Here the LORD reveals to Abraham that Sarai’s name was to be changed to Sarah—signifying ‘princess’—inasmuch as she was to be the mother of kings. The apostle explains the manner in which Sarah is considered by the LORD as being the mother of kings, stating that it is because she symbolizes the covenant by which the spiritual seed of Abraham is developed. Thus Sarah is the mother of the same kings of whom Abraham is the typical father, that is, the kings who are to reign for a thousand years for the blessing of all the families of the earth.—Gal. 4:22-31

VERSES 17-22 “Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be

born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

“And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

“And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

“And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

“But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

“And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.”

Abraham had great faith in the promises of God, but it was not a perfect faith. At times it wavered, and one of those times is recorded in this passage. Despite Sarah's barrenness, Abraham had faith to believe, when God first made the promise to him, that she would bear him a son, because she was then much younger. But now, in addition to her barrenness, she was ninety years old; so when the LORD told him this time that Sarah would bear a son, Abraham fell down on his face and laughed.

In his heart, the passage indicates, Abraham doubted that such a thing could come to pass, and arising from the ground, he pleaded before the LORD, “O that Ishmael might live before thee?”—to be the seed of promise, seems to be the thought of this petition. God assured Abraham that Ishmael

would live, and would become the father of a great nation, but as far as the promised seed was concerned, Sarah was to have a child, his name was to be Isaac, and Isaac would be heir to the promise.

‘At this set time in the next year’—here was a time prophecy of considerable importance to Abraham. He had waited many long years for God to fulfill his promise, yet during all that time, no indication had been given as to how long that wait would need to continue. God has tested the faith of most of his people along this same line of waiting. The disciples asked Jesus, “Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” and Jesus replied, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”—Acts 1:6,7

Often when the time nears for expected events to occur, the LORD reveals the secret to his servants. Noah labored long years in building the ark, with probably no definite idea of when the Flood would come, but finally the LORD said, “Yet seven days.” (Gen. 7:4) So now with Abraham the LORD said, ‘At this set time in the next year’. In view of what Abraham was thinking in his heart concerning the unlikelihood of Sarah bearing him a son, perhaps the LORD gave him this definite information as a means of strengthening his faith.

VERSES 23-27 “And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham’s house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.

“And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

“And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

“In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.

“And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.”

These verses simply relate the fact that Abraham was quick to obey the instructions of the LORD regarding the token of the covenant. ‘In that selfsame day’, the account reads, he proceeded to have all the males in his household circumcised, including himself and his son, Ishmael. There is much evidence in the Scriptures that the LORD appreciates prompt obedience. In the case of Abraham his promptness would indicate also that his faith in God’s promise concerning Sarah had been fully restored and that he desired to carry out every detail pertaining to his part in the covenant. ■

NOAH BUILDED AN altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; . . . neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. . . . And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.”

—Genesis 8:20,21; 9:12,13,15

“I WILL COME AGAIN”

NO ONE CAN read the New Testament with any degree of care without discovering that the brethren of the Early Church were men of hope as well as of faith. We know that the ancient prophets and other worthies were heroes of faith, and that they also had hope.

The Early Church seems to have excelled in hope as well as in faith. The brethren then were in an expectant attitude. They seemed to be on tiptoe, looking for and hastening unto a certain event. They referred to it in such various ways as ‘a lively hope’, ‘the blessed hope’, ‘this hope’, ‘one hope’, ‘our hope’, ‘the hope set before us’. This hope so captivated their attention as to almost divert them from ordinary work and duty.

What was that hope which at once possessed and cheered those early Christians? According to Paul in Titus 2:13, it was “that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” They believed with all their hearts in Jesus Christ; in his wondrous life of miracles and grace, in his sacrificial death on Golgotha’s Hill, that he had triumphed over the grave,

and had come forth to the resurrection of life. Some of them had seen him in his ascension on high. Moreover, they remembered his words when he said to them, "I go to 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) They also remembered how the two men in white apparel had said, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."—Acts 1:11

These were precious promises to the Early Church. The authority for them was from the LORD himself. The meaning was apparent for, in a word, it meant that although the Lord had gone, he would come again. He would be absent for only "a little while," until the preparation for "the times of restitution." (John 16:16; Acts 3:21) When that blessed time should come he would appear again, and each member of the Early Church seemed to say, as Job prophetically said, "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." (Job. 19:27) It was around the hope of our Lord's Second Advent that their communion with each other centered.

Some may say, however, "Why should the Early Church have been so concerned about their Lord's return? They had communion with their Heavenly Father, with their Lord, and with his brethren. They also had the precious truths of God's Word to think upon, so the question of when the Lord might return should not have mattered a great deal." Such reasoning is unscriptural and is used by some to minimize the importance of the Lord's return. Those who underestimate the

importance of this doctrine and pass the subject off as being inconsequential in the Scriptures and to the Christian life, cannot have been careful enough in their study of the Word of God.

Indeed, how much, of the New Testament writings deal with our Lord's return! Let us look to the Scriptures to see how the Early Church viewed their Lord's return. I Thessalonians is commonly believed to be one of the earliest epistles written, and the first by the Apostle Paul, dating to about A.D. 50 or 52. In the first chapter, verses 9 and 10, the apostle testifies, "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven."

The second chapter ends with a reference to the church's prospect of "our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming [Greek *parousia*, 'presence']?"—vs. 19

At the close of chapter three, the prayer is offered that "he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming [Greek, *parousia*, 'presence'] of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."—vs. 13

Chapter four finishes with the announcement made by direct inspiration, that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." (vs. 16) The epistle then ends with a prayer by the apostle that they who received his epistle may be "preserved blameless unto the coming [Greek, *parousia*, presence] of our Lord Jesus Christ."—I Thess. 5:23

In II Thessalonians there are forty-seven verses, and many of these, particularly in chapters one and two, pertain to our Lord's return. The apostle declared, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels," "taking vengeance on them that know not God." He points out further that Christ "shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe . . . in that day."—II Thess. 1:7-10

Paul also went to some length in the second chapter to offset the misapprehension on the part of some, who had concluded that the Lord had then already returned. He besought the brethren to steadfastness "by the coming [presence] of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him." The apostle also reflected on the "brightness of his coming," and the "consolation and good hope" it would bring.—II Thess. 2:1,8,16

I Corinthians is another of Paul's earlier writings. It proves that the brethren at Corinth also had taken up the hope of their Lord's return. Here the apostle writes, "Ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 1:7) He urged the brethren not to sit in judgment of one another, but to wait "until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts."—I Cor. 4:5

Even with respect to the Memorial Supper the apostle does not forget the Lord's return, for he says: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (I Cor. 11:26) When Paul taught the brethren at Corinth what the order of the resurrection would be, he wrote, "Christ a First-fruit; afterwards,

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SUNDAYS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

ALABAMA

Guntersville
WTWX 95.9 fm 6:45 a.m.

ARKANSAS

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

CALIFORNIA

Concord(Fri.)
KATD 990 12:00 noon
Monterey KNRY 1240 8:30 a.m.
Paso Robles
KNCR 103.1fm 10:00 p.m.
Riverside (Sat.)
KPRO 1570 8:00 a.m.

FLORIDA

Jacksonville
WIOJ 1010 7:45 p.m.
St. Petersburg
WTIS 1110 5:00 p.m.

GEORGIA

Augusta WGAC 580 8:00 a.m.

ILLINOIS

LaSalle WLPO 1220 9:45 a.m.
Marion WFRX 1300 9:15 a.m.

INDIANA

Hammond WJOB 1230 8:30 a.m.
LaPorte
WCOE 96.7 fm 10:00 a.m.
North Vernon
WKRP 1460 8:00 a.m.

KANSAS

Goodland KLOE 730 7:30 a.m.

KENTUCKY

Bowling Green
WBGN 107.1 fm 8:15 a.m.
Lexington WMJR 1380 10:30 a.m.

MAINE

Portland WLOB 1310 6:30 p.m.
Rumford
WWMR 96.3 fm 6:30 p.m.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston(Mon.) WROL 950 6:30 p.m.
Springfield WACE 730 6:30 p.m.
Worcester WCRN 830 6:30 p.m.

MICHIGAN

Livonia WLQV 1500 9:30 a.m.
Fremont WSHN 1500 9:00 a.m.
WSHN 100.1 fm 9:00 a.m.

MISSOURI

Osage Beach
KBMX 101.9 fm 8:30 a.m.

NEW JERSEY

Camden (Tues.)
WTMR 800 2:30 p.m.
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103.1 fm 9:00 p.m.
Salem WJIC 1510 9:45 a.m.
WNNN 101.7 fm 9:45 a.m.

NEW YORK

Buffalo WHLD 1270 12:00 noon
Monticello
WJUX 99.7fm 9:00 p.m.
New York WEVD 1050 6:45 a.m.
Pomona WJUX 94.3 fm 9:00 p.m.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro (Tues.)
WQMGM 1510 3:00 p.m.
Zebulon WETC 540 4:45 p.m.

NORTH DAKOTA

Fargo WDAY 1500 8:00 a.m.

OHIO

Cincinnati WSAI 1530 8:30 p.m.
Lorain WRKG 1380 7:45 a.m.

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Carlisle WHYL 960 8:15 a.m.
Pittsburgh KQV 1410 7:30 p.m.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charlestown
WOKE 1340 7:45 a.m.

TENNESSEE

Camden WFWL 1220 7:00 p.m.
Nashville WSM 650 7:45 a.m.

VIRGINIA

Brookneal WODI 1230 6:45 a.m.
Chester WGGM 820 7:45 a.m.

WASHINGTON

Spokane KAQQ 590 7:00 a.m.

WEST VIRGINIA

Wheeling WWVA 1170 6:15 p.m.

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ALBERTA

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

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan CKAY 1500 10:00 p.m.
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CHPQ 1370 9:30 p.m.

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Weyburn CFSL 1190 8:45 a.m.

BRITISH WEST INDIES

Trinidad Radio Trinidad 610
10:30 p.m.

CHILE (Spanish)

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San Jose Radio Sonorara
105.9 fm and 700 am 6:15 a.m.

MEXICO (Spanish)

Culiacán Ranchera
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Guadalajara
XEWK 1130 8:30 a.m.

NIGERIA

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

PANAMA (Spanish)

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

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Trujillo 105.7fm
9:30 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.

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Manila
DZAM 1026 kHz 7:45 a.m.

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Swaziland SWAZI 8:15 p.m.
Commercial Radio 1400 am
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*“O send out Thy light
and Thy truth: let them
lead me; let them bring
me unto Thy holy hill,
and to Thy tabernacles.”*

Psalm 43:3

THE BIBLE ANSWERS TV PROGRAMS

SUNDAYS UNLESS OTHERWISE LISTED

ALABAMA

Birmingham	12	6:30 a.m.
Florence	WXFL	6:30 a.m.
Florence	F28AP	6:30 a.m.
Guntersville	Chan. 5	10:30 a.m.
Guntersville	Chan. 5	7:30 p.m.
Guntersville (Mon.)	Ch.5	7:30 p.m.
Tuscaloosa	403BF	6:30 a.m.

ARIZONA

Phoenix	K23BJ	5:30 a.m.
Phoenix	KBHC	5:30 a.m.

ARKANSAS

Fort Smith	KDFD	6:30 a.m.
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CALIFORNIA

Chico	K2210	4:30 a.m.
Los Angeles	TV6	4:30 a.m.
Los Angeles	KPAL	4:30 a.m.

FLORIDA

Jacksonville	(Sat.) WTEV	
	(Ch. 47)	6:00 a.m.
Miami	WWFD (Ch. 8)	7:30 a.m.

GEORGIA

Atlanta	W34AG	7:30 a.m.
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HAWAII

Honolulu	Cab.Chan.22	11:30 a.m.
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ILLINOIS

Champaign	W41BL	6:30 a.m.
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INDIANA

Evansville	WJTS	6:30 a.m.
Evansville	WBP	6:30 a.m.
Evansville	TV24	6:30 a.m.

KANSAS

Wichita	KSMI	6:30 a.m.
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KENTUCKY

Lexington	WOGBC	7:30 a.m.
Lexington	W10BM	7:30 a.m.
Lexington	W02BP	7:30 a.m.
Lexington	W07BY	7:30 a.m.
Louisville	406AY	7:30 a.m.
Louisville (Tues.)	WBNA	8:30 a.m.
Paducah	WQTV	6:30 a.m.

MAINE

Augusta	W67BE	7:30 a.m.
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MARYLAND

Baltimore	WMJF	7:30 a.m.
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MICHIGAN

Grand Rapids	W25BI	7:30 a.m.
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NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque	K31CT	5:30 a.m.
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NEW YORK

New York (Wed.)	WLNY	6:30 a.m.
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NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro	WAUE	7:30 a.m.
Raleigh	W67CD	7:30 a.m.
Wilmington	WSSN	7:30 a.m.
Wilmington	TV 10	7:30 a.m.

OHIO

Cleveland	WOHZ	7:30 a.m.
Columbus	WDLR	7:30 a.m.

OKLAHOMA

Tulsa	KPOC	6:30 a.m.
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OREGON

Portland	K25EB	6:30 a.m.
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PENNSYLVANIA

Wilkes Barre	W35AT	7:30 a.m.
Wilkes Barre	W47AO	7:30 a.m.
Wilkes Barre	W65CE	7:30 a.m.

UTAH

Salt Lake City	KSGF	5:30 a.m.
Salt Lake City	KVLY	5:30 a.m.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Washington	WTMW-14	9:30 a.m.
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WISCONSIN

Green Bay	W04CW	6:30 a.m.
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On Sunday, January 18th, "Frank and Ernest" will discuss the interesting topic, "Divine Healing." Free circulars are available which announce this program, and you are invited to send for as many as you can use. Address your request to:

The Dawn

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(Continued from Page 31)

those who are Christ's at his appearing." (I Cor. 15:23, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) This must have brought much hope and joy to their hearts! Even when Paul had to utter the warning, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema" he straightway softens the admonition by adding, "Maranatha," meaning 'the Lord comes'.— I Cor. 16:22

In the epistle to the Philippian brethren, the time of the Second Advent is repeatedly referred to as "the day of Christ," and for this day they were taught to wait patiently. The apostle has this prayer to offer: "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent [*examine the differences, Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*]; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ."—Phil. 1:9,10

The Apostle Paul also revealed his own attitude of heart toward the Lord's return. He testified, "I am indeed, hard pressed by the two things [life or death];—(I have an earnest desire for the returning, and being with Christ, since it is very much to be preferred)." (Phil. 1:23, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) From this testimony, we realize that the apostle was facing death on one hand, and a life of suffering for Christ on the other. Of the two, he could not choose which would be preferable, but he did have 'an earnest desire' for the third option, and that was 'for the returning, and being with Christ'.

Again Paul exhorted the Philippian brethren to hold forth "the Word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." (Phil. 2:16) If we were to

leave out the words, 'in the day of Christ', the apostle's exhortation would lose its force and meaning. Leaving in those words, we see how wisely he used the Second Advent to make clear that his labor on their behalf would have been in vain if they failed to hold forth the Word of life.

Paul was not alone in cherishing the hope of our Lord's return, for he writes, "Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." (Phil 3:20,21, *New International Version*) By stating the matter in the plural as he does, he reveals that the brethren at Philippi also shared his glorious hope.

In Paul's first letter to Timothy, the apostle gave his beloved 'son' various charges and did not hesitate to weave in the assurance of the Lord's return to enhance his message. He wrote, "O man of God, flee these things [the desire for earthly advantages]; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, . . . I give thee charge in the sight of God, . . . that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."—I Tim. 6:11-14

Expressing his contempt for the great enemy, death, Paul says, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. . . . Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (II Tim. 4:6-8) The

apostle's indifference to death can only be attributed to the fact that he was looking forward to the Lord's return, when he would receive the fruition of his hopes.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is no exception to the apostle's writings in this respect. Here we find that the Lord's return is of vital concern not only to the church, but also to the world. He writes, "Unto them [that is, the world] that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin [without a sin-offering] unto salvation."—Heb. 9:28

The Hebrew brethren were urged not to forsake "the assembling" of themselves together, "as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. . . . For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."—Heb. 10:25,35,37

Nor was Paul the only New Testament writer who laid such great emphasis on our Lord's return. Noting the writings of some of the other apostles, we find them also making use of the Second Advent truth to give spiritual vitality to their messages. James wrote, "Wait patiently, therefore, Brethren, till the coming of the Lord. Behold! the husbandman expects the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it, till he receive the early and latter harvest. Be you also patient; establish your hearts, Because the coming of the Lord has approached."—James 5:7,8, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*

The Apostle Peter makes much and effective use of the doctrine of the Second Advent. To saints that were suffering he writes: "Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of

your faith . . . might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”—I Pet. 1:6,7

Also, he wrote: “Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”—I Pet. 1:13

“When his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”—I Pet. 4:13

“When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” —I Pet. 5:4

“There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming [Greek, *parousia*, ‘presence’]? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation. . . . But, beloved, . . . the LORD is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; . . . but the Day of the LORD will come as a thief in the night.”—II Pet. 3:3-10

“What manner of persons ought ye to be, . . . looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?”—II Pet. 3:11,12

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”—II Pet. 3:14

The Apostle John cherished the same glad hope, and by it sought to stimulate the church. His words were: “Little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.” (I John 2:28) “We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is; and every

man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”—I John 3:2,3

Even when we turn to the Book of Revelation we find the Second Advent prominently presented before the brethren. According to John’s own words, the whole book is a “Revelation of Jesus Christ.” The burden of its message deals with the Second Advent of our Lord. In it we have the facts, circumstances, and judgments connected with our Lord’s unveiling, or Apocalypse.

“Behold, he cometh,” is the promise of the Book. (Rev. 1:7) The “words of this prophecy” could not be understood if the Lord’s return were doubted or lost sight of. (Rev. 1:3) In the midst of its mysteries, the Master’s voice is heard crying, “Hold fast till I come.” (Rev. 2:25) The longing desire of the apostle himself for our Lord’s return is expressed when he says, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”—Rev. 22:20

Apart from the writings of the apostles, we can still see very good reasons for the Early Church believing in our Lord’s return. Why? Because our Lord himself said that he would come again. Since both the Master and his servants all testified alike, the conclusion was obvious—the Lord would surely return. The Master himself taught—“If I go . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself.” (John 14:3) “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”—John 14:18

Our Lord spoke of himself as the “Son of man,” who should “come in the glory of his Father,” and as the “nobleman” who “went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.” Also, as the “Master” for whose coming the servants were to watch; as the “Bridegroom” whose appearing all

the wise virgins would hail; and as the "Lord" who would come and reckon with the stewards of his house. In these and many other ways the gracious Lord assured his loved ones that he would return.

We often have heard it said that at death men go to their reward—but not so, said those in the Early Church, for the Lord had named another time: "At the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible." (I Cor. 15:52) Jesus taught that "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." (John 5:28,29) Peter made it clear that only when the "chief Shepherd shall appear, [shall] ye . . . receive a crown of glory." (I Pet. 5:4) Paul did not expect to receive his reward until "the LORD, the righteous Judge" would give it to him "at that day."—II Tim. 4:8

The Early Church did not vainly hope that the world would become better and better. They knew from the Scriptures that "evil men and seducers [Diaglott, 'impostors'] shall wax worse and worse." "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." (II Tim. 3:1) So wretched a condition was the world to be in that the question was asked by our Lord, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"—Luke 18:8

Some might question the value of tracing the Early Church's viewpoint of our Lord's return. What difference would it have made in their character development if they had not been eager for our Lord's return? Bringing the matter down to the present time, the question naturally arises, Would it make any difference in our character development if we did not believe in the Lord's presence, or were indifferent to it?

The thought is sometimes advanced that those who possess mature Christian characters would be enjoying such a close walk with the Lord that whether he was now present, or would not be present for another thousand years, would make very little difference. This argument may, on the surface, sound plausible, but when analyzed, will be found to contradict the Scriptures violently. With one accord, the Scriptures point to the Lord's Second Advent as being an event with which every true Christian would be vitally concerned.

How did the Early Church's interest in the Lord's return affect their character development? How does our belief in the Lord's presence affect our character? The Master answered this matter for us. He said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." And where is our treasure? "Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from [Prof. Strong says 'ek' translated 'from', can also be translated 'on account of' or 'for'] the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching."—Luke 12:34,36,37

To those back there in time who loved the Lord, whose treasure was in heaven, their hearts were in heaven also, and they greatly rejoiced in the promise of our Lord's return. They knew that when he returned they would enter into their heavenly reward, and be forever with their Lord.

Can the bride class now, therefore, be indifferent to the cry, "Behold the bridegroom"? Surely not! Anyone who is indifferent to the Lord's presence cannot fully appreciate its meaning. If the

Early Church was so captivated by the promises of the Lord's return, is it not reasonable that we, who are now living at the time of his presence should be thrilled with the wonderful news, and be zealous in telling it to others? If, as we know, there is so much in the New Testament referring to our Lord's return, should not we, who are living in the day of his presence, herald forth the wonderful news?

If the Apostle Peter was 'looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God', how strange it would be for us, who are living in that day, to be indifferent to it! If John closes the Book of Revelation with the prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus," shall we contradict him by displaying an attitude of little concern? No, dear brethren, by no means!

Isaiah foretells the work of the feet members of the body of Christ, saying, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him [Christ] that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; . . . for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion."—Isa. 52:7,8

The Early Church earnestly looked for our Lord's return! But we, brethren, are living in the day when he has returned! We have heard his "knock," and have opened unto him, and are supping with him. How blessed is our portion indeed!—Rev. 3:20 ■

NOT FORSAKING the assembling of ourselves together, . . . but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

—*Hebrews 10:25*

A EUROPEAN PILGRIM TRIP

**TAKEN BY BROTHER AND SISTER M. BALKO AND
BROTHER AND SISTER K. FERNETS**

OUR FIRST STOP was Warsaw, Poland, where two young brethren met us and took us to the meeting place called, 'The House of Prayer'. The younger of the two was our translator and companion for the two weeks we were in Poland. We called him 'Aaron' because he was our mouthpiece, and we appreciated his service to the LORD and to us.

The Polish Elders' Committee arranged our visits to meet with thirteen ecclesias. We met with many brethren new to us, while some we had become acquainted with on a previous trip. The largest gathering was a one-day convention at Chelm, where 650 brethren attended and there was standing room only. We found the spiritual growth of the brethren inspiring. Their difficult experiences of the past have been replaced with freedom to meet, and the capability of tying together the brethren in the bonds of love.

Among the highlights of this portion of our visit was a trip to the Retirement Center at Miechow, where, with the help of many brethren, the needs of a large number of elderly have been

grandly provided for. The home is well kept and is a very comfortable place for those who can no longer maintain their own homes. The brethren were busy installing an elevator in this home, which will enable easier access to the upper floors. A staff takes care of the temporal needs of all there, and the spiritual welfare of all is the prime concern of those who help with administration of the home. We were able to spend a few hours with the residents.

Our brethren in Poland ponder the same questions we do in the United States, and long for the kingdom to bring an end to earth's dark night of weeping. The questions asked were: 'Is Satan being bound?' 'What should we pray for?' 'What are our responsibilities toward our fellow men?' And, of course, 'When will the kingdom be set up?'

On our last day in Poland we were again greeted by many brethren we had visited on this trip. It was a 'farewell' visit and our hearts rejoiced at the tie that binds our hearts together, even though we are separated by many miles. In the afternoon, the van arrived from Lvov with Ukrainian elders who drove us to their area. This van, purchased with the aid of the American Dawn and Ukrainian Dawn of Canada, has proved to be of great value and service to the brethren of Ukraine. Although the first stop was a village close to the border of Ukraine, we had to wait a number of hours in order to get clearance to cross.

The economic conditions of Ukraine have deteriorated, mainly due to lack of work. The villages fare a little better since the people have large gardens and are still able to raise poultry and farm animals. The brethren have learned to live under

these conditions, learning patient endurance. They look forward to the joy of assembling for study and fellowship.

Both those who are isolated, as well as those in ecclesias, are strong in the faith. We met with brethren in sixteen distinct areas, large and small ecclesias, and isolated brethren, as well as young adult gatherings. We were asked questions on God's kingdom, and the Second Presence of Christ. The brethren in Ukraine are known for their love of singing hymns and psalms, and we enjoyed participating with them.

While in the Lvov area we had the privilege of serving at two funerals in the same village, and only three houses from each other. Two elderly sisters finished their courses only a week apart. Funerals here are attended by many neighbors as well as brethren. Several discourses are given. A final sermon is given at the grave, emphasizing the beautiful hope and surety of a resurrection for all the human family. This is deemed a great witness opportunity.

The brethren are striving to make their 'calling and election sure', and to spend much time with their young people, hoping to keep their eyes focused on the values of the Truth. Many Bible helps in the Ukrainian language are available, and we brought books and Bibles to them which the brethren greatly appreciated. They are also enjoying the video cassette, "For this Cause," which was translated into Ukrainian and made available to them through the combined efforts of the Dawn in the United States, and the Ukrainian Dawn in Winnepeg.

Our family in the LORD was greatly increased because we had the joy of meeting many brethren for the first time. Their love and zeal for the LORD will remain with us for many, many days. Again, we must say that all our arrangements were so graciously provided by the elders as we journeyed to the villages.

The last stage of our journey took us to Romania where again we became overwhelmed by the number of brethren whom the LORD has watched over in their days of peril, trials, and lack of freedom. Entrance into the country was by car, with some relatives willing to drive us, as it was not expedient to go by train. We were accompanied by brethren for our week's visit in Romania, and these were our companions and translators as before.

Although it was harvesttime in the villages, the meeting places were filled with brethren. Sometimes the services would begin at eight o'clock in the evening and last until midnight. Then a light lunch would be served before we made our way back to our places of abode. The eagerness in their faces was wonderful to behold as they rejoiced to hear that 'old, old story', and as they sang praises to God. As in Poland and Ukraine, we were greatly surprised to learn how the Truth message had reached them many years ago through brethren from back home, and whose names were known to us.

Discussions in the nine meetings we attended focused on the same matters as in other countries, such as the kingdom, Israel, is Satan being bound, our need to be knit together in the bonds of love and truth, and in service one to another.

Our departure from Romania was by train to Budapest, Hungary, then by air to Warsaw, Poland.

We sadly bid our dear brethren farewell, for they all had made our visit so precious. We were graced with the companionship of a young brother who served as our translator for the day-and-a-half we were in Budapest. We also had the privilege of meeting with a brother and sister who live on the outskirts of the city. How good to know that the LORD has kept their faith strong even though it was tested through many trials due to lack of freedom.

En route by plane to Warsaw and then to the United States, we commented on how quickly the five weeks had gone by. We went home with memories that will last a lifetime, and we truly were aware of the LORD's watchcare over us during those weeks, returning with a determination to be a good example and to help the brethren who are in need. We felt the prayers of many in the LORD's family with us, and thank God for the blessed privilege of meeting so many of his children who touched our hearts with their outpouring of love and hospitality. We appreciate their example of faith nurtured under trying conditions, both in World War II, and the postwar period. ■

OBITUARIES

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

Norbert Matuja, Detroit, MI—November 14. Age, 74
Sister Ruth Edwards, Clearwater, FL—November 22.
Age, 70.

Brother Leo Valentine, San Leandro, CA—November 25.
Age, 103.

Sister Ruth Brandes, Portland, OR—November 29. Age,
82.

OUR REJOICING IN THE LORD

*“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.”—
Psalm 46:1-3*

ANOTHER YEAR IS beginning. For those not acquainted with the plans and purposes of God, 1997 was a year of increasing tension and fear; but to us to whom it has been given to know “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 13:11) the “fear not” announcement of the angel on the night Jesus was born has never meant more. (Luke 2:10) Every circumstance in the world which causes fear to strike deeper into the hearts of those who do not put their trust in God, causes us to “look up” and “lift up” our heads, knowing with increasing certainty that our deliverance “draweth nigh.”—
Luke 21:28

Our sympathy goes out to the suffering world, and we long for the time to come when, if we are found worthy, we will enjoy the blessed privilege of shining forth with Jesus as the ‘sun’ in that glorious kingdom in which none will molest nor make

afraid, and peace and health and life will be assured to all. This sympathy is an active one. By it we are moved to do all we can to tell the suffering world about the kingdom which is so near. And what a joy the proclaiming of the kingdom message has brought to the hearts of the brethren and those who know the plan of God!

Because God "is our refuge and strength" in this time of "trouble," we will not fear, says the psalmist, "though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." (Ps. 46:1,2) Throughout the year, those who have been taking heed to the sure Word of prophecy, have seen the signs which signify the removal of the symbolic earth—that is, the social order which Paul described as "this present evil world." (Gal. 1:4) The people of the world have also seen this 'removal' taking place, but not knowing the ultimate purpose of God in connection therewith, the hearts of many have been filled with fear.

"There is a river," David continues, "the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." (Ps. 46:4) These 'streams' seem clearly to symbolize the many promises of God which outline the Divine plan, and they rejoice the hearts of those who have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. That 'city' represents the people of God who are 'alive and remain' during these early years of the Master's presence. While fear fills the hearts of others, these are made 'glad'.

Above all things, we rejoice in the LORD! Through the truth we have learned to know him, and to put our trust in him. Next to the LORD, we rejoice in the truth which has revealed his wisdom,

justice, love, and power to us. We rejoice also in one another, in the privileges of fellowship we enjoy with the LORD's people of 'like precious faith'. In this respect, especially, the year 1997 has been a blessed one, for there are many evidences that brethren have been blessed by the LORD.

This is as we should expect, for each year brings us a little closer to the kingdom, and as our preparation keeps pace with passing time, each year should find us more emptied of self, and more filled with, and controlled by, the Holy Spirit. It is by this "one Spirit," wrote Paul, that we have all been baptized into one body. (I Cor. 12:13) The more, therefore, that self-will is conquered and the will of the LORD allowed to control our minds and hearts, the stronger will be our affinity for other members of the body, and the greater our joy in fellowshiping with them.

The "time of trouble" (Dan. 12:1) which is upon the world is leading to increasing chaos everywhere, and along all lines of human endeavor. The 'earth' is truly being 'removed', just as the psalmist foretold. Paul prophesied the same ending of Satan's world, saying that the LORD at this time would shake, not the symbolic earth only but the symbolic heaven also. The apostle then speaks of "those things which cannot be shaken," and explains that he refers to a "kingdom which cannot be moved."—Heb. 12:26-28

How beautifully this harmonizes with David's assurance that "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her when the morning appeareth." (Ps. 46:5, *Marginal Translation*) The 'earth' is being 'removed', the 'mountains' are being 'carried into the midst of the sea', but 'she [the

church] shall not be moved'. Since the First Advent of Christ, the LORD has been preparing his kingdom. Now that work is nearly complete, and he is especially in the midst of the last members of the kingdom class. This 'kingdom' cannot be removed. As individuals we could lose our opportunity to share in it by unfaithfulness to our vows of consecration. From this standpoint we should take to heart Paul's admonition, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest," any of us should "seem to come short of it." (Heb. 4:1) We do not fear because the earth is being removed, but we should have this 'fear' mentioned by Paul; that is, an alertness or watchfulness to make sure that we are not neglecting any of the means of Divine grace by which we are kept from falling short of being part of the kingdom class. Peter expresses a similar thought saying, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."—II Pet. 1:10

To this blessed assurance, Peter adds, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (vs. 11) This is the kingdom which shortly will manifest itself in power and great glory, the kingdom we are 'receiving', as Paul puts it, during this time when all earthly kingdoms are being removed. We are the "children" of the kingdom now (Matt. 13:38), but if we are faithful even unto death we will be with our Lord in glory, and will actually reign with him a thousand years.

"God shall help her" (Ps. 46:5), the psalmist declares. Every consecrated follower of the Master can testify that throughout the year the LORD has

indeed been a refuge and strength, that he has provided help in every time of need. But the 'help' here mentioned seems to be a special reference to the use of Divine power in the final deliverance of the last members of the church. This is the 'help' that is given to the LORD's people when the morning star appears.

The 'day star', which introduces the morning, has already risen. One by one the feet members of the body are passing over, receiving their abundant entrance into the kingdom beyond the veil. For all the faithful remaining ones, the time is short. Shall we not, then, as Peter admonishes, "gird up the loins" of our minds, and "be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought" unto us "at the revelation of Jesus Christ"?—I Pet. 1:13

As we begin this New Year it is with confidence that regardless of what our experiences may be, whether bitter or sweet, the LORD will be with us to give wisdom and strength in every time of need. The shortness of the time in which to make our calling and election sure should increase our zeal to know and to do the Father's will; not only with respect to the personal application of the truth in our lives, but also in making known the glad tidings to others. Opportunities for bearing witness to the truth were never greater.

Those who sacrifice time, strength, and means to proclaim the kingdom message can all testify to the rich blessings their efforts have brought into their own lives. The truth becomes more precious to us, and is a more powerful influence in preparing us for the kingdom, if we use it for the blessing of others. This will continue to be true throughout this new year, and all the years to come.

Let us rejoice in all the wonderful opportunities the LORD is giving us to proclaim “good tidings unto the meek,” and to “bind up the brokenhearted.” (Isa. 61:1-3) Not only should we rejoice that through the truth the LORD has removed fear from our hearts, but we can also be joyful in the fact that he has commissioned us to “say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.”—Isa. 35:4 ■

BEGINNING A NEW YEAR

Look not with sadness on the passing of the year,
Behold it as you would a sunset glow
That streaks the sky with red and gold 'ere night
descends
To say, “Fair day, 'tis time for you to go.”

Regrets will come, for resolutions oft we break.
The unsaid word, the duty never done.
Lessons O so hard to take and understand—
Ah! but have you counted victories won?

God turns a brand new page within our book of life
For us to start a chapter fresh and new.
Forget the blots and errors of the pages past,
Remember, God in love forgets them too.

So greet the New Year just come in with upturned
face.
Upon the ladder-rung we can't stand still
But must climb upward, step-by-step to reach our
goal
And thus our fondest hopes we shall fulfill.

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

WITNESSES ON A REGULAR BASIS

Dear Brethren: I do witnessing to several persons in Ohio and Kentucky on a regular basis. I have met with a group of women in my niece's home in Kentucky—Bible Belt territory!

These women, ages 50 to 65, have interest in learning how to study the Bible. I would like to have "*Three Keys to the Bible*," to check it, to learn whether I could use it in witnessing to at least eight persons who have asked me to help them.

One is a college-age girl who shows some special interest in the Plan of the Ages Chart, and the Israelites before Christ as a type. The truth of the Bible grows more precious as I learn more of the treasure with which no worldly riches can compare. God bless each dear one at the Dawn. Much love.—*OR*

"MAKES" HER DAY

Dear "Frank and Ernest": Thank you for coming out with a very informative and spiritually-nourishing radio program. I am from the Philippines. Work and ambition brought me to this beautiful place two years ago. A stranger here, I felt lonely, afraid, and anxious about my future. Then I heard your program on radio station DZAM. I listened and was impressed, touched, and enlightened. Since then I have never missed a single broadcast.

The program will always be the source of my strength and inspiration. It simply keeps me going, and always 'makes' my day. I pray that you continue the good work that you have started because you have indeed touched a lot of lives.

Kudos to the staff!
God bless you all.—*Philippines* ■

TALKING THINGS OVER

STATISTICAL REPORT

for the year ended September 30, 1997

IN THE FISCAL year 1997, the Dawn had a net loss before bequests of \$451,272. Bequests in 1997 were much lower than in 1996. Those received in 1996 gave the Dawn a net gain and we were able to increase our radio and television witness activities. In 1997 revenues from contributions and income other than bequests fell 45.0% over 1996, while expenditures increased 7.2%.

	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
All revenue other than bequests	\$350,531	
<u>Expenditures</u>		
Radio		\$239,496
Television		148,393
Other Media plus Editorial		26,428
Pilgrim Service		24,062
Other Foreign Work Support		40,767
Operating Expense and Supplies Plant		172,811
Operating Expense House		48,893
Shipping and Mailing		60,765
Outside Printing		40,194
Total before bequests	<u>\$350,531</u>	<u>\$801,809</u>
Loss before bequests	(\$451,272)	
Bequests	<u>75,105</u>	
Loss after bequests	<u>(\$376,167)</u>	

The sizable bequests in 1996 served to wipe out the loss, while the 1997 bequests amounted to only 16% as much as received the year before, and only had a slight impact on reducing the large loss for the year.

To cover this year's costs and to keep operating at a higher level, it was necessary to use considerable funds from our reserves in order to continue the same level of witness activity. This activity is 51% greater than in 1996.

We are happy to report responses to the messages on radio and television have been good.

In the shop, a Rosback (used) book binder was purchased to reduce costs and to once again put vinyl covers on our printed books.

The year before, a Danka Risograph (high-speed duplicator) was purchased. It was put to good use in 1997, making 750,000 impressions. The Minuteman saddle stitcher continues to perform well.

There have been opportunities for service by the Dawn using new technology. We now have E-mail capability, and also have established a Web Page on the Internet. Every month *The Dawn* is put on the Web Page worldwide.

The brethren at the Dawn, along with their many co-laborers everywhere, thank God for the privilege of working for him.

We know that "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."—Heb. 6:10 ■



TALKING THINGS OVER

General Convention Bulletin

July 25–30, 1998—Johnstown, Pennsylvania

THE 1998 GENERAL CONVENTION will be held on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Pennsylvania. The rooms in one facility (called the Living/Learning Center and abbreviated LLC here) all have private bathrooms, small refrigerator, and microwave. Families may be more interested in a two-story townhouse (abbreviated TH). These have two bedrooms and a bath upstairs, and a living room, kitchen, and bath downstairs. A child could sleep on the couch in the living room.

Rooms in Laurel Hall are more like what we have had before. Two bedrooms share one bathroom. The rooms in the LLC are air conditioned; all other rooms are not. Prices of LLC and TH rooms are the same; rooms in Laurel are less. Townhouses are more distant from the auditorium.

The cost of room and meals for those who are 5 years old or younger will be paid by the convention. Once again, half the price for those who are 6 through 17 years old will be refunded if the person attends at least 75% of the Bible classes while at the convention.

Those who stay for the entire week now have the option of selecting a package price with or without breakfast.

Here is a summary of the prices:

	ages 18 and up	13-17	6-12
Breakfast	\$4.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
Lunch	6.00	5.00	4.00
Dinner	<u>8.00</u>	<u>7.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>
Total, three meals	18.00	\$15.00	\$12.00
Lodging (per night)			
dbl occ (LLC and TH)	\$16.00	\$13.00	\$8.00
dbl occupancy (Laurel)	\$14.00	\$11.00	\$6.00
single occ (LLC and TH)	\$30.00	n/a	n/a
single occupancy (Laurel)	\$19.00	n/a	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals			
dbl occ (LLC and TH)	\$198	\$164	\$114
dbl occupancy (Laurel)	\$184	\$150	\$100
single occ (LLC not TH)	\$296	n/a	n/a
single occupancy (Laurel)	\$219	n/a	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 12 meals			
dbl no brkfst (LLC+TH)	\$174	\$146	\$96
dbl. no brkfst (Laurel)	\$160	\$132	\$82
sngl no brkfst (LLC+TH)	\$272	n/a	n/a
sngl no brkfst (Laurel)	\$195	n/a	n/a

A van service between Pittsburgh and Johnstown will be provided at a cost of \$10 per person in each direction. Let us know your flight arrival information if you want to take advantage of this service.

General Convention Registration

1425 Lachman Lane --- Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

E-mail to Nekora@aol.com (310) 454-5248

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Lodging
Friday, July 24, '98				
Saturday, 25th				
Sunday, 26th				
Monday, 27th				
Tuesday, 28th				
Wednesday, 29th				
Thursday, 30th				

Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals

-or- 7 nights, six lunches and six dinners only

Check: private bath (LLC) Townhouse Laurel
 Double occupancy Single occupancy

Names and Ecclesia name (age if under 18)

Address:

Telephone number [evenings]: area code ()

Flight info into Pittsburgh, PA., if you want to be picked up:

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

J.B. Brown	Melbourne	December 30,31 to January 5
Brisbane, Aust. December 20,21		
Gympie December 22,23	Christ Church, NZ	January 6-8
Perth December 26-29	Auckland	10-12

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

C. Chandler	K. Fernets
Phoenix, AZ January 1-4	Phoenix, AZ January 1-4
R. Gorecki	R. Shahan
Claymont, DE January 11	Middletown, NY January 25

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 Ave., East Rutherford, NJ 07073

PHOENIX NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, January 1,2,3,4—Quality Hotel, 3600 North Second Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85013. Make reservations directly with hotel: (602) 248-0222. Mention Phoenix Bible Students for special rate. Contact E. Bachorski with meal count and for other information. Phone: (602) 546-0430

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA CONVENTION, January

10,11—Cape Coral Masonic Temple, 244 Santa Barbara Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33910 For information contact: Ed Futchkar, 3460 N. Key Dr. #306E, North Fort Myers, FL 33903
Phone: (941) 997-3008

DETROIT MONTH-END CONVENTION, January 25—Redford YWCA, 25940 Grand River, Redford Twp. Contact: Frank Nemesh, 2183 Babcock Dr., Troy, MI

48084.

Phone: (248) 649-6588

LOS ANGELES, CA,

January 25—Auditorium, 248 E. Olive Ave., Burbank. Contact: Robert Wagoner, 901 N. Westwood, Santa Ana, CA 92703 (or e-mail RnRWagoner@aol.com)

Phone: (714) 542-8466

SACRAMENTO, CA, February 13-15

—Beverly Garland Hotel, 1780 Tribute Rd., Sacramento, CA 95815. Reservations should be made directly with the Hotel. Phone: (800-972-3976). Mention Sacramento Bible Students for special rates. For other information, contact: Betty Lankford, 6000 19th Avenue, Sacramento CA 95820

Phone: (916) 457-0569

ROCKLAND CONVENTION, February 22

—Comfort Inn, Nanuet, NY. Contact: Mrs. Russell Shalieu, 1040 Johnston Dr., Watchung, NJ 07060

Phone: (908) 756-4954

NEW ORLEANS/PASS CHRISTIAN BIBLE STUDENTS CONVENTION, March 7,8

—Holiday Inn, Hwy. 90/Pratt Ave., Gulfport, MS. For hotel reservations: Bonnie Moran, (601) 864-4310. Other information: Mrs. Ward Buel, 214 Magnolia St., Pass

Christian, MS 39571

Phone: (228) 452-4351

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 7,8,9

—Holiday Inn at the Orlando Arena, 304 West Colonial Dr., Orlando, FL 32801. Contact Bob Goodman for meal count and information, 426 Sundown Tr., Casselberry, FL 32707

Phone: (407) 695-6815

FRESNO, CA, 45th ANNUAL PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 27,28,29

—Holiday Inn, Fresno Airport, 5090 E. Clinton Ave., Fresno, CA 93727. Contact Mrs. Robert Wilson, 2103 N. Price, #112, Fresno, CA 93703 for reservations *before March 13th*.

Phone: (209) 255-2214

COLUMBUS, OH, BIBLE STUDENTS PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 28,29

—Contact Secretary: Lisa Knapp, 1855 San Remo Dr., Columbus, OH 43204, for location and directions.

Phone: (614) 486-0431

1998 BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 25-30

—Johnstown, PA

1998 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 9-14

—Miskolc, Hungary