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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

WHY GOD PERMITS EVIL

The nation was shocked by the news of the terrific explosion that destroyed the front portion of the Federal Office Building in Oklahoma City, OK, on April 19th. As the U.S. Government started a heroic rescue effort and an immediate probe to find the culprits, it was evident that the toll would exceed 166 people dead, including 19 children.

Shortly after this occurred, an article appeared in many major newspapers under the title, "Where Was God in Oklahoma City?" We quote from that article:

"The Oklahoma City tragedy raises the Big Question for the monotheistic religions: If God is totally powerful and perfectly good, why do the innocent and the righteous suffer?"

"Why do children die in terrorist bomb explosions? In drive-by shootings? Abusive homes? Why do the virtuous die of horrible diseases? In earthquakes, fires, floods, hurricanes? In war?"

"Sages through the ages have engaged in heavy theological lifting, known as theodicy, to reconcile God's omnipotence and goodness with the presence of evil."

"The clergy and spiritual counselors must translate often complex concepts and tenets into clear, comforting answers for grieving believers, sometimes including themselves."

"That was the task of the Rev. Billy Graham at a recent memorial in Oklahoma City. Noting he'd been asked

many times why a God of love and mercy would allow such a terrible thing, he said: 'I don't know. I can't give a direct answer. I have to confess that I never fully understood, even for my own satisfaction. I have to accept by faith that God is a God of love and mercy and compassion, even in the midst of suffering'.

"To skeptics, his words may seem impotent. Yet psychiatry, psychology, and sociology hardly rise to the occasion when asked why, offering jargon-laced diagnoses, dredging childhood for clues, assessing socioeconomic status.

"As many have done, Graham turned to an ancient story in Hebrew Scripture. 'Over 3,000 years ago', he began, 'there was a man named Job who struggled with the same question'. You're familiar with the drama. In an argument with Satan, God points to Job as a model of human readiness to believe in God. Job is prosperous, pious, a loving husband and father. Satan says it's easy to be devout when things are going well, but can his faith endure disaster? Suddenly, as a test, Job's seven sons and three daughters are killed. He loses his wealth; he's afflicted with a painful disease; his wife derides him. 'And in the midst of this suffering', Graham related, 'Job asked: Why?'"

The article does not provide an answer to Job's question, but a Dawn booklet entitled, "Why God Permits Evil," does supply the answer. We here reprint, in two parts, the contents of that publication.

PART ONE

***"Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,
thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that
thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."***

—Genesis 2:17

WHY DOESN'T GOD do something about all the suffering that is in the world today? Why does God allow an innocent baby to sicken and die? Multitudes are killed or

mained by tornadoes, cyclones, typhoons, and earthquakes—cannot God do something about this? When hundreds are killed in accidents over a single weekend, has God no pity? As far back as history reaches, man has suffered and died in war, pestilence, famine, and calamities. And all in every generation have finally died, having been beaten down by the great enemy, Death. Abel, a son of Adam, whose sacrifice was pleasing to the LORD, was the first to die, being murdered by his brother, Cain. Today more than a hundred thousand humans die every day. Our hospitals and mental institutions are filled with the suffering and dying. No wonder many are wondering where God is, and what he is doing about the distresses of humanity.

JOB SEEKS THE ANSWER

The question of why God permits evil is not a new one; it has been asked by thinking men and women throughout the ages. Thousands of years ago a faithful servant of God named Job became personally concerned with discovering the meaning of his own suffering. The record of this is found in a book of the Bible which bears Job's name. The first verse of this book informs us that Job was an upright man who feared God and shunned sin.

Job was a prosperous man, abundantly blessed by the LORD along material lines. "His substance . . . was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east." (Job 1:3) Job was also blessed with a large family, and he desired that they too should be blessed by the LORD. Job prayed for his family, and offered sacrifice, because "it may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts."—vss. 4,5

But experiences were ahead for Job for which he was not wholly prepared. Satan, the great adversary of God and men, charged that this servant of the LORD was loyal to God only because of the abundance with which the LORD had blessed him. In answer to this charge God permitted Satan to inflict calamities upon Job to test his fidelity. God had no doubt about the outcome, and in his wisdom he knew that

the temporary suffering he permitted would, in the end, prove to be a great blessing to Job.

Job did experience great trouble. "There was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."—Job 1:13-19

JOB STILL LOYAL

Job's reaction to these evil tidings was: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." We read that "in all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." (vs. 21,22) Then God permitted further troubles to come upon Job. His health was taken away. He was smitten with "boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape him withal; and he sat down among the ashes." Then Job's wife turned against him and said, "Curse God, and die." To this Job replied, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"—Job 2:7-10

Job did not turn away from God when trouble came upon him, as so many throughout the ages have done. His chief

concern was to know why God permitted him to be afflicted with such bitter experiences, and throughout his book we find evidences of his search for this understanding. After Job was stricken down with disease, three of his friends came to comfort him. Later in the book we are informed that the views they expressed to Job were not correct.—Job 42:7

There is chapter after chapter of philosophizing by Job and his three friends. But what it all amounts to is that, according to his friends, Job was suffering because he had committed some gross sins which he was hiding from them, and for which he had not repented and sought God's forgiveness. Job, of course, knew that he was not perfect, but he also knew that he had not willfully transgressed God's laws, so he did not accept this explanation.

EVIL MEN PROSPER

Besides, Job knew that frequently evil men prospered, and apparently escaped the evils that come upon so many. So he answered his friends: "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth [Margin, 'mirth'], and in a moment go down to the grave [without suffering a long, painful illness]."—Job 21:7-13

While Job knew that the explanation offered by his friends was not the true one, yet he did not understand why God was allowing him to suffer so severely. In a beautiful, poetic manner he describes his search for an understanding: "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him; but he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."—Job 23:8-10

GOD'S REPLY

Beginning with chapter 38 of this remarkable Book, the LORD answers Job's searching. This answer is couched largely in question form. The many questions were designed to remind Job that he really knew very little about God, and because of his limited knowledge in every field where the LORD manifests himself, he should not be surprised at failing to comprehend fully why he was being permitted to suffer.

Is this not an important viewpoint for us to keep in mind? When we ask why God doesn't do something about human suffering, are we not assuming that if God had the intelligence we possess he certainly would do something? And then, perhaps, if we do not see our wishes carried out, we may tend to doubt that there is a God. If we find ourselves following this approach, it would be well to consider the questions which God asked Job.

There are four chapters of these questions. They all concern the wonders of God's Creation. God asks Job if he was present when he laid the foundations of the earth; if he understood the laws by which the tides of the sea were controlled. He asks him about the instincts and habits of the various birds and animals, and even of the great monsters of the sea. Then Job is asked if he can explain the wisdom and power that are represented in these marvels of Creation.

As the questioning proceeds, Job interrupts and says, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further."—Job 40:4,5

AN IMPORTANT LESSON FOR ALL

Job was beginning to understand that it was not for him to judge God according to his own limited understanding. This is also a good lesson for all of us. It is not for us to lose faith in God, or even to criticize him. The proper attitude is one of humility, and of earnestly seeking the answer to our questions from the only proper source, the Word of God.

Job finally learned the meaning of his severe trial. He learned that its loving purpose was to give him a clearer

understanding of God, that he might serve him more faithfully and with greater appreciation. He speaks of this clearer understanding as 'seeing' the LORD, instead of merely having heard about him. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee." (Job 42:2-5) Since he had gained such a wealth of understanding, Job's brief period of suffering must have seemed to him to have been a most valuable experience.

Besides restoring Job's health, we read that "the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. . . . And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren."—vss. 12-15

AN ILLUSTRATION

God's design in the general permission of evil throughout the ages was, and is, the same as in the case of Job. God created Adam a perfect human, in his own image. Being in the image of God implied an ability to reason. "Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?" (Job. 38:36) It was the Creator. This was in contrast to what we call instinct, which had been given to the lower animals.

God did not desire his human creation to be like robots, without a sense of understanding. So man was given the ability to learn, and was free to govern himself by the knowledge he attained. What man would do with this knowledge was ultimately to determine his eternal destiny.

Man acquires knowledge through his five senses. He learns from *observation* by exercise of his sense of sight, and by *information* from what he hears. Man feels pain when he comes in contact with boiling water, and learns by *experiencing feeling* to temper the water he uses. Man smells the fragrance (*experiencing odors*) of a rose and is delighted by it, but turns in revolt at the presence of unpleasant odors. Man appreciates the taste of wholesome

food (*experiencing taste*), but learns to avoid unpalatable things, even though they may appear beautiful.

We see that in the exercise of his five senses, man learns from observation, information, and experience.

If man was to continue as a faithful child of God, it was essential that he receive a knowledge of evil as well as of good, that he might be able to make an intelligent choice between the two. God does not desire blind worship, but a fidelity to, and trust in him, which is based upon understanding and appreciation. God desires those to worship him who "worship him in spirit and in truth," Jesus said. (John 4:23,24) To accomplish this for Adam and his offspring is one of the major objectives of the permission of evil in the great divine plan of human salvation from sin and death. ■

BLESS THE LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.

~Psalm 103:1-11,14,22

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDY LESSONS

LESSON FOR AUGUST 6

RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL

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

SELECTED SCRIPTURE Isaiah 6:1-8

THE KEY VERSE in this week's lesson is Isaiah's response to the vision he had concerning the glory of God. His people, the nation of Israel, were falling further into idolatry and false worship, and his prophecy was a warning to them to repent of their ways. God would not tolerate this kind of behavior. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isa. 1:3) The prophet was given the task to take this message to his people, and God gave him this special vision as an inspiration. His response was a positive one: "Send me."

In this vision, which took place in the Temple at Jerusalem, Isaiah was given a glimpse of the majesty of

God as he sat upon his throne. Within this scene were seraphim who supported the throne, thus representing the attributes of the Most High God—justice, wisdom, love, and power. (Isa. 6:1,2) And, it was one of the seraphim who proclaimed to another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." (vs. 3) Then the doorposts of the Temple were shaken, and the house of God filled with smoke. (vs. 4) This symbolized the shaking of the nation of Israel, and the removal of them as a favored people. It also pictured the dimming of their eyes to the greatness of God, and his special providences over them.

Later, Isaiah examined the weaknesses of his flesh and pondered the great responsibility that was before him to present the message and glory of God to the Israelites. He said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.—Isa. 6:5

But God knew the condition of Isaiah's heart. He wanted him to know he had been chosen as a special servant to the children of Israel. The Spirit of God would touch the lips of the prophet and enable him to go forth in full confidence with special powers of speech. "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."—vss. 6,7

This was a special blessing from God to his prophet. But, this was not all, for he further said: "Also I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (vs. 8)

The prophet responded with eagerness to carry the message to his people.

Within this vision is a grander view of the future Kingdom of God that will be established over all nations. During the present Gospel Age, the LORD's people have responded with anticipation to the call which has gone forth. They have had a glimpse of the glory of God while living in a society which is going further into degradation and turmoil. Their message is one that brings hope for the future time when God will sit on his throne, and when the whole human family will appreciate his love and care over them.

Jesus came unto his own people as their king and Messiah. He was rejected by the vast majority, and the prospect of inheritance in the future kingdom was therefore extended to the Gentiles. As we read in Acts 13:47, "I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

These, in turn, along with a faithful remnant of Israel, respond by saying: 'Here am I, send me'. ■

ONLY GOD CAN PROTECT

KEY VERSE *"Say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and the son of Remaliah."*—Isaiah 7:4

SELECTED SCRIPTURE *Isaiah 7:2-6, 10-17*

THIS WEEK'S LESSON begins with Ahaz as king of Judah, who was of the royal lineage of David. (I Chron. 3:9-13) During Ahaz's reign, Pekah was king of the northern kingdom of Israel, while Rezin was king of Syria. (Isa. 7:1) Although problems often arose between Judah and Israel, on this occasion an alliance had been formed between Syria and Israel which, in turn, had caused the king of Judah to tremble in fear. We read in verse 2: "Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind."

Ahaz knew that an alliance of this nature could result in disaster to himself and his people. The uniting of

the two nations against Judah had actually been formed during the latter part of the reign of Ahaz's father, Jotham. (II Kings 15:32-38) Ahaz apparently inherited this problem after his father's death. There may also have been something of a personal nature in the alliance against Judah. "Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him." (II Kings 16:5) Perhaps Rezin and Pekah had a personal quarrel with Ahaz.

Although Ahaz had done much evil during his reign—even to the extent of offering his own children in sacrifice (II Chron. 28:1-4)—he, nev-

ertheless, carried on the line of David from which our Lord Jesus was born. (Matt. 1:9) Isaiah, therefore, received instructions from God to take his son, Shearjashub, with him to rendezvous with Ahaz.—Isa. 7:3

God instructed Isaiah to reassure Ahaz that the alliance against him would fail in its attempt to depose the House of David, and place the son of Tabeal on the throne of Judah. If they had been allowed to succeed, it would have meant the end of the Royal House, along with its Messianic promises. "Thus saith the LORD God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people."—Isa. 7:7,8

Isaiah continued by saying, "The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son [Pekah]. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." (vs. 9) A more detailed account of this war is recorded in II Kings 16, and II Chronicles 28. However, when the Edomites and the Philistines joined the con-

federation against Judah (II Chron. 28:17,18), Ahaz, in turn, appealed to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, to come to Judah's aid.—II Kings 16:7-9

Isaiah's message to Ahaz was to inform him that not only would the alliance against him fail, but that Ephraim itself would cease to be a nation within a period of sixty-five years.

Even more importantly, there was to be a 'sign' to indicate the continuance of the House of David, notwithstanding the king's unbelief. Ahaz declined the offer of a sign because of his unwillingness to seek the will of God in the matter. He, no doubt, also reasoned that his new alliance with the king of Assyria would resolve the immediate danger, as well as preserve his involvement in idol worship. Nevertheless, the sign was publicly rejected.

The House of David was to be preserved, "therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."—Isa. 7:14

Only God could preserve the royal genealogy of Immanuel—even through one such as Ahaz. ■

FAIR WARNING

KEY VERSE *“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.”*

—*Isaiah 1:16,17*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE *Isaiah 5:8-12,18-23*

THE FIFTH CHAPTER of Isaiah's prophecy begins with the parable of the vineyard, which represents the nation of Israel. God prepared his vineyard by fencing it about, gathering the stones from it, and planting it with choice vines. He also built a tower, and a winepress, and waited for its fruitage. But the fruitage was unsatisfactory. It brought forth "wild grapes."—Isa. 5: 1,2

God had made a covenant with his people, promising Israel special blessings. He gave them his Law, spoke to their prophets, and guided them in many special ways, and they were assured of divine favor as long as they remained faithful to the divine law. That meant having true

love for God, as well as for their neighbors; but they proved unfaithful in both instances—losing their special relationship with God, while experiencing the series of 'woes' which Isaiah prophesied.

"Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!" (Isa. 5:8) The Israelites were tempted by their desire to be rich—joining their lands together to increase their acreage with very little regard for the rights of the poor to earn a living on their property.

"Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame

them!" (vs. 11) They became intoxicated with wine, while their merry-making, feasting, and over-indulgence led them away from God.

"Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope: That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!" (Isa. 5:18,19) Those in authority used their influence as cords of falsehood to carry out their own selfish schemes, and greed was the order of the day. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil!" (vs. 20) Evil practices were acceptable, while truth and equity were treated lightly. They put bitter error where sweet truth had once been.

"Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" (vs. 21) Neglecting divine law led to pride. They put their trust in themselves instead of in God. "Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!"

(vss. 22,23) Selfishness and pride led to arrogance and self-justification. They became intoxicated with their own will.

Jesus taught a parable illustrating the same lesson. A householder planted a vineyard, and took special care of it. He put a hedge around it, and prepared a winepress and tower for it. But, when he sent his servants to receive the fruitage they were beaten and killed, and his son was rejected.—Matt. 21:33-39

There is symbolism which applies to both houses of Israel—the natural house after the flesh, and the spiritual house of the Gospel Age church. The church-state systems of Christendom have joined themselves together to amass wealth and prestige at the expense of the people. They became intoxicated with the spirit of the world, the 'wine' of Babylon. In pleasure-seeking madness they abandoned the laws of God, and usurped authority over their subjects. But ultimately these systems and their leaders will go into oblivion.

However, until the present, there endures a faithful class, loyal to God. ■

DISOBEDIENCE BRINGS DESTRUCTION

KEY VERSE *"The LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets."—II Kings 17:13*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE *II Kings 17:6-14*

WHILE AHAZ WAS king of Judah, a new king took power over the ten northern tribes of Israel. The new king was Hoshea, but he, too, did many evil deeds. During this period the kingdom of Assyria became dominant in the affairs of Israel, and Hoshea was forced to pay tribute to the Assyrian king, Shalmaneser. He became a servant to King Shalmaneser, and maintained his puppet regime only as long as he remained obedient.

Meantime, Hoshea made a secret alliance with King So of Egypt, strengthening his power against Assyria. Shalmaneser, however, found out about the conspiracy with Egypt, and when Ho-

shea failed to bring his annual tribute to the king, he was bound and cast into prison.

The capital city of the northern tribes of Israel was at Samaria, which withstood a siege of the Assyrians for three years before its final collapse, and its people were taken into captivity. (II Kings 17:1-5) "In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." (vs. 6) This marked the end of the ten-tribe kingdom, known also as Ephraim. The two-tribe kingdom of Judah was

taken captive by the Babylonians a few years later because of their infidelity to God.

“So it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods.” (vs. 7) The Israelites had fallen into idolatry and false worship. “They set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: and there they burnt incense as did the heathen.” (vs. 10,11) Although God pleaded with his people to turn from their evil deeds, they rejected him, as well as the covenant which had been made with their fathers.

Throughout the troubled history of the Israelites, God silently carried his plan forward for the eventual birth of Messiah. He made a covenant with them, and had given promises to guide them if they remained obedient to his Law. Although there was a tendency toward idolatry and false worship in both kingdoms, there was a greater sense of faith and desire to know the true God of Israel in Judah. And this was by

God’s design, for, as one of his very early pledges promised, “the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” (Gen. 49:10) Some, while residing in Ephraim, who possessed greater faith and therefore greater faithfulness, removed themselves to live and be identified with those residing in Judah. They recognized the advantages of greater religious freedom.

Many of these experiences are typical of the spiritual house of Israel during the Gospel Age. When the apostles died, the Early Church witnessed a great ‘falling away’ from the simple faith which they, and Jesus, had taught. The LORD’s people were, figuratively speaking, again taken into captivity by Babylon, and forced to worship its idols and false teachings. However, there were those who recognized the need to remain free from such things, who removed themselves from its corrupting influences.

Some of these Christians may be among those who are found faithful even unto death.—Rev. 2:10 ■

A LIVING HOPE

***“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

THE GREEK WORD in our text which is translated “lively,” is, according to Professor Strong, a primitive verb meaning, ‘to live’. It is the same word which, in three places in the New Testament, is translated “quick,” in the expression, “the quick and the dead,” meaning, obviously, the living and the dead. The hope, then, to which Peter says we are begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, is a living hope, not a temporary ‘dying’ hope, which vanishes with the passing of time or changing of circumstances.

The begetting of the Holy Spirit constituting the footstep followers of Jesus “New Creatures” (II Cor. 5:17), is accomplished by the “Word of truth.” (James 1:18) And, of course, to us the Word of truth pertaining to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead has had much to do with our becoming Spirit-begotten sons of God; but it would seem that this was particularly true of the Apostle Peter.

The full significance of Peter’s testimony in this connection is better understood and appreciated by recalling some of the circumstances which caused the resurrection of Jesus to assume such an important place in his heart and mind. Peter was one of the greatly beloved disciples of Jesus, and called

to be one of the twelve apostles. He was thoroughly convinced that his Master was the promised Messiah of Israel, and of the world. When Jesus asked his disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" it was Peter who responded, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."—Matt. 16:16

But prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, there was much concerning the plan of God as centered in the promised Messiah that the disciples did not understand. They knew that the Messiah was to be a great king, and that he would establish a government of peace and security through which Israel and the world would be blessed. Since Jesus was the Messiah, they were confident that this kingdom or government would be set up by him in Israel, and without any undue delay.

Jesus was popular with many of the common people of the day who followed him from place to place to hear his words and see his miracles. This enraged the religious rulers who were jealous of him, causing them finally to plot against him to rid themselves of his influence. The disciples, however, had confidence that since he was the Messiah, nothing could interfere with the divine purpose to be carried out through him. They rejoiced as they heard him preach the Gospel of the kingdom. The record is that Jesus went "throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him."—Luke 8:1

Yes, the 'twelve' heard the glad tidings of the kingdom as day-by-day, and from city-to-city, and village-to-village, Jesus both preached the message and demonstrated what the Messianic Kingdom would do for the people. Peter must have become increasingly enthusiastic and more and more convinced, not only that Jesus truly was the Messiah, but also that the kingdom and its blessings were at hand. Indeed, as he saw it, the kingdom blessings were already being poured out to those who had faith to receive them.

What could the enemies of Jesus do against one who had power to heal the sick and raise the dead? Surely the Master had divine power on his side to protect him from any harm which the scribes and the Pharisees might imagine they could inflict upon him. This was true! But what Peter did not realize

in advance was that Jesus would voluntarily surrender himself to his enemies and allow them to put him to death.

Seemingly, the first time Peter realized the possibility of such a tragedy as this was when Jesus announced to his disciples that this is exactly what he intended to do. Matthew 16:21 reads, "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

This was disturbing to the disciples, especially to Peter, and Peter endeavored to do something about it. The next verse says that Peter "took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." The word rebuke is a translation of the Greek word *epitimao*, which is translated "charged" in Mark 8:30.

It was not, then, so much a rebuke by Peter as a 'charge', a command, forbidding Jesus to go to Jerusalem where his enemies could lay hands on him and put him to death, which he had indicated his intention of doing. And we can imagine Peter's concern in the matter! The record says that he "took" Jesus—that is, seemingly, took him aside, and possibly in his earnestness even seized his arm—and with emphasis told his Master that he simply must not do this thing, that no king had ever attained power and established a government by surrendering to his enemies.

But Jesus rebuked Peter, saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Matt. 16:23) From the human standpoint Peter's reasoning may have been correct, but he was not expressing God's viewpoint. He did not comprehend that Jesus had come into the world to die as man's Redeemer, and that this sacrifice was necessary before his kingdom of glory could be established.

Addressing all his disciples, Jesus added, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (vss. 24,25) This was a challenge which the disciples were not then fully prepared to accept, largely because they did not understand its full implications. Jesus had indicated his intention

of sacrificing his own life. To them this was serious as well as mysterious, but now he had invited them to die with him.

He explained, furthermore, that those who embarked upon such a voluntary course of sacrifice would lose their lives if they attempted to save them. How could the disciples understand this? It was quite beyond the comprehension of the natural mind.

PETER'S GROWING CONCERN

The fact that Peter was severely rebuked did not turn him aside from following his Master. Later, after they had entered Jerusalem, and had partaken of the Passover for the last time, Jesus told his disciples that they would all be offended because of him, and that Peter would deny him. Peter answered, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee."—Matt. 26:31-35

And it was in all sincerity that Peter said this. In fact, he intended to do his utmost to prevent Jesus from carrying out his plans of surrender and voluntary death. This becomes apparent as we consider Peter's action when the mob came to the Garden of Gethsemane to arrest Jesus. Peter drew his sword in an attempt to prevent the arrest, and severed an ear from the servant of the High Priest. He doubtless intended to sever his head!

But, again, Jesus thwarted Peter's purpose, commanding him to put up his sword, explaining that if he wanted protection he could ask his Heavenly Father, and more than twelve legions of angels would be sent for the purpose. But Jesus did not request the angels, and Peter could see that his Master was intent upon his program of surrender. Later, he denied his Master, and was again rebuked by him.

And then Jesus was put to death. He who had done no wrong, who had spent his time and his strength "preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom," was dead. What now would become of their kingdom prospects? Peter had failed to prevent the death of the Messiah—a death which he looked upon as a tragedy, since, as he saw it, it brought to an abrupt end the hope of seeing the kingdom established, and of participation in that kingdom.

THE RESURRECTION

The darkness which settled over the land as Jesus died was equaled only by the gloom and despair which filled the hearts of the disciples when they realized that their Master was dead. During the hours that followed, their minds probably turned from one happy event to another which they had experienced with Jesus as they witnessed the joy of those to whom he preached and 'showed' the kingdom. Was this just a dream, pleasant for awhile, but now turned into a nightmare?

Thus a night and a day and another night passed, with no explanation to soothe their perplexed and broken hearts. But then news, startling news, reached them. The women who went early to the burial place learned that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Go quickly and tell his disciples, they were instructed. And then a special commission, "Tell Peter." (Matt. 28:7; Mark 16:7) When they heard the news, Peter and John "ran both together" to the tomb to verify the report.—John 20:3,4

Verse 9 gives us the amazing information that the disciples did not yet know the scripture that Jesus would rise from the dead. Actually Jesus had told them several times that he would be raised from the dead, and that it would take place on the "third day." (Matt. 16:21) Apparently they had been so shocked by Jesus' announcement that he expected to be put to death that they did not take seriously what he had said concerning the resurrection. No wonder their hopes were dashed when he was crucified! And no wonder they 'ran' to the sepulchre when they heard the report that he was raised from the dead!

Oh, some of them seemed to have a vague recollection that Jesus had said something about the resurrection. When he met two of them on the way to Emmaus and they told him the cause of their sadness, they added that it was now the "third day" since these things had happened (Luke 24:21), as though they had thought it possible that he might return on the third day. But this hope was not a bright one. To them the Messiah was dead, and with his death their hope of the kingdom had been snuffed out.

They soon became convinced, of course, that Jesus actually had been raised from the dead. But their association with

him was far different than it had been before. As a matter of fact, they seldom saw him, and when they did, he did not remain long with them. During one of his appearances he had a heart-searching talk with Peter, commissioning him to "feed" his "sheep" and his "lambs." (John 21:15-17) But just how to do this Peter did not seem to know, nor did Jesus explain.

Previously, Jesus had sent them out into all the towns and villages of Israel to preach the glad tidings of the kingdom. But now what were they to do? He gave them no instructions—not until he appeared to them for the last time before his ascension. Then his commission was for them to tarry at Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit, after which they were to be his witnesses "unto the uttermost part of the earth."—Acts 1:4,8

This was fairly definite, but even then they were to 'tarry'. However, they did not tarry long. Jesus fulfilled his promise. The Holy Spirit was poured out upon them at Pentecost, and almost instantly they saw the meaning of all that had happened during the past fifty-three days. Peter acted as spokesman—yes, Peter, the man who charged Jesus not to go to Jerusalem to be arrested and killed! Peter, who drew his sword to make sure that his charge was carried out! Peter, whose hope in Jesus and in the kingdom was blasted by the crucifixion—this same Peter stood up on the Day of Pentecost and explained the necessity for Jesus' death, and quoted a prophecy from the Old Testament which foretold both the death and resurrection of Jesus.—Ps. 16:10

PETER "CONVERTED"

In the 'upper room' on the night before Jesus was crucified, he said to Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke 22:32) Peter was now converted. The Holy Spirit had revealed to his sincere heart and mind the completely wrong viewpoint he had entertained which had caused him to oppose his Master and endeavor to hinder the carrying out of the divine plan. And now that he saw the true meaning of Christ's suffering and death, and grasped also the intent of Jesus' invitation to his disciples to take up their cross

and follow him, he was prepared to fulfill the commission to 'strengthen' his brethren.

In Peter's first epistle we find one of his outstanding efforts to strengthen his brethren, not merely in a general way, but particularly in connection with their privilege of suffering and dying with Jesus. In verses 10 and 11 of the opening chapter he establishes the fact that the sufferings of Christ had been foretold by the Old Testament prophets, and throughout the epistle he emphasizes that the followers of Jesus participate in these foretold sufferings—that this is the will of God for them.

And how appropriately and effectively he introduces this subject! This intrepid disciple, whose whole being rebelled against the idea of his Master suffering and dying when he had done no wrong, speaks of the "abundant mercy" (I Pet. 1:3) of the Heavenly Father in continuing to deal with him despite his error and his opposition—mercy manifested in begetting him again to a living hope "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

When we are begotten by the Spirit as New Creatures, it is, of course, a begetting 'again', not of "corruptible seed," but of "incorruptible." (vs. 23) But the word 'again' is especially fitting in Peter's experience. True, he was not a New Creature until he was converted and enlightened by the Holy Spirit. But he did have a hope, the hope of the kingdom, the hope of sharing with his Master, the Messiah and King in that kingdom. But that hope died when Jesus was crucified, and only the resurrection of Jesus, together with the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit gave it to him 'again'.

And now it was a better hope. It was a living hope—a hope that would continue to live and shine brighter amid the storms of persecution and the death-dealing opposition of the children of darkness. This glorious kingdom hope was not now dependent upon temporal success and earthly glory. It was a hope that shone brighter as the joys and comforts of life faded, a hope that could no longer be dimmed by the darkness of circumstances which might settle down upon his life.

Yes, as Peter explains further (I Pet. 1:3,4), this: "begotten . . . again" hope was "to an inheritance incorruptible, and un-

defiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you [us]." When Peter was following Jesus up and down the country as he went from place to place 'preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom', he knew nothing of the heavenly inheritance. He thought of the kingdom as being entirely earthly. He visualized himself associated with Jesus as a man—a fisherman exalted to the rank of an associate king.

But now the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit had opened up this entirely new, heavenly vista before him. He knew now what Jesus meant when he spoke of saving his life by losing it. Jesus had sacrificed his human life, but had been raised from the dead and been highly exalted to the divine nature, above angels and principalities and powers. And now Peter was setting his affections upon the same glorious things above, rejoicing in a living hope, the hope of 'an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away'.

"THE JUST FOR THE UNJUST"

Now Peter could understand why Jesus was put to death although he had done no wrong. If Jesus had done wrong, his death would not have been acceptable for the redemption of the world. He had to die the just for the unjust (I Pet. 3:18), otherwise he could not bring us—and mankind in general—into at-one-ment with his Heavenly Father. Now that Peter understood this, his whole viewpoint on Christian suffering changed. That against which he once rebelled, he now accepted with thanksgiving.

We read in I Peter 2:20,21: "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." When Peter heard Jesus' invitation, "Take up your cross and follow me," he was not impressed. In fact, he was so intent upon preventing Jesus from bearing the cross that he gave little consideration to the invitation. To him, the whole idea of suffering and dying for doing good seemed wrong and unnecessary.

But now he was 'converted'. Not only did he see this matter in its true light, but because of his own experiences he was able, as Jesus had commissioned, to 'strengthen' the brethren. So, in Chapter 3, verses 13 and 14, he writes, "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled."

No longer did Peter see the death of Jesus as a tragedy. He knew, of course, that his enemies had spat upon him, placed a crown of thorns upon him, and flogged him. He knew that they had hung him upon a cross until he died. But Peter also now knew that they had not triumphed over Jesus. He had surrendered to his enemies, and they had put him to death, but God had raised him from the dead. He had lost his life; but, in losing it sacrificially, he had gloriously saved it. And Peter knew that this also would be true of every faithful follower of the Master, and as New Creatures no enemy could triumph over them.

They may say all manner of evil against you. They may threaten, even imprison you, or put you to death, but that will not affect you as a New Creature. It will only help you enter into your inheritance that fadeth not away with the loss of earthly joys and life. But with such loss, your living hope is translated into a glorious reality.

"THINK IT NOT STRANGE"

"Beloved," wrote Peter, "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (I Pet. 4:12,13) How this must have 'strengthened' the brethren of the Early Church, even as it encourages us today! It is only as we lose sight of our living hope of the inheritance which is reserved in heaven for us that we think our suffering as Christians is 'strange'. Otherwise we rejoice in this evidence that the "Spirit of glory and of God" is resting upon us.—vs. 14

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God," Peter continues, "that he may exalt you in due time." (I

Pet. 5:6) What height of salvation is involved in entering into our glorious inheritance for which we now have such a living hope! "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10) "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." (Rev. 3:21) But this exaltation is conditional upon humbling ourselves under "the mighty hand of God."

What a strengthening thought this is! Our sufferings are not due to the individuals or circumstances with which they may seem to be directly associated. When the plan of one of Judah's kings was thwarted, God said, "This thing is of me." (I Kings 12:24) So it is with all of our experiences as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. It is God who permits our "fiery trial" (I Pet. 4:12), his hand that is pouring the "cup" (Matt. 20:22,23) of which we have the privilege of partaking. His mighty and loving hand was upon Jesus to test him; and it is so with us.

"Think it not strange," then, when the 'fiery trials' seem to increase and become greater than we can bear. Let us remember, rather, that it is under God's hand that they come upon us. 'This thing is from me', he is saying, and realizing this, let us humble ourselves and accept his providences in the spirit of thankfulness, knowing that the "spirit of glory and of God resteth on us."—I Pet 4:14

After admonishing us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, it is not without reason that Peter writes, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." (I Pet. 5:7) Since, by faith, we are endeavoring humbly to accept every experience of life as being by divine permission and overruling, we also are privileged to claim his promises of grace to help in every time of need.

The LORD tries us, but knows that in order to pass through the tests victoriously, we will need his help. He is not testing our endurance according to the flesh. He is trying our hearts. Our flesh shrinks from these fiery trials, but if we continue to humble ourselves under his mighty hand, we can also cast all our care upon him. David wrote, "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."—Ps. 27:14

We do not cast our care upon the LORD with the expectation that he will protect us from trials. We know that our "outward man" (II Cor. 4:16) must perish before the 'living hope' of our inheritance, which is reserved in heaven for us, can mature into reality. It is not pleasant for the flesh to perish, but in casting our care upon the LORD we do so with the assurance that his wisdom knows just how to regulate our trials, and to temper the 'heat' involved.

Most important is the fact that in casting our care upon the LORD we keep our minds and hearts alert to his abundant mercy in begetting us to such a living hope—a hope that fades not away—a hope of joys to come which in itself will give strength to endure the "light afflictions" which are "but for a moment," knowing that, if faithful, we will soon enter into an "eternal weight of glory."—vs. 17 ■

"THOU SHALT MAKE a Mercy Seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the Mercy Seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the Mercy Seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the Mercy Seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the Mercy Seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.

And thou shalt put the Mercy Seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I [Jehovah] will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy Seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the Ark of the Testimony."

—Exodus 25:17-22

LOST "KEYS" OF KNOWLEDGE

"Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?"

—John 18:37,38

THE QUESTION, "WHAT is truth?" asked by Pilate of Jesus has been in the minds of many throughout all the ages. Today the word truth is often used rather loosely, and applied to ideas, viewpoints, and philosophies; these may in reality be far from the truth. Even in the fields of science much is accepted as truth and may not really be true; and religiously the situation is even more confusing.

Since Pilate addressed his question to a religious leader, he doubtless had religion in mind—What is religious truth? Jesus did not answer Pilate; but in the Upper Room the night before, he said in prayer to his Heavenly Father, "Thy Word is truth." (John 17:17) The written Word of God at that time consisted of the Old Testament Scriptures. In God's providence there has since been added the New Testament Scriptures; and now we may consider the entire Bible, or the Word of God, as the 'truth'.

There is much in the Bible upon which all of its adherents agree, such as its historical, ethical, and devotional teachings. All rejoice in its many assurances of God's love and care for his people. But to most Bible readers, the precious Word seems to be thought of as nothing more than a book of ancient historical records setting forth many good and wholesome precepts which, if we allow ourselves to be guided by them, will make us better men and women. It is a good book by which to live, but few realize that also contained in the blessed Bible is God's wonderful harmonious plan for the recovery of the human race from sin and death.

Even when we say this, many will ask, "What do you mean by God's plan? I believe it is God's plan for all faithful believers to go to heaven when they die, and all the rest of mankind to go to. . .," well—very few like to say just where. Anyway, the thought is that they are 'lost', and this word carries a very dreadful connotation in the minds of most people. It is true that the Bible does have much to say about a heavenly reward for the faithful followers of Jesus. Jesus said to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go, . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2,3) What the Word of truth does not teach, is that all who are not disciples of Christ for whom he went to prepare a 'place', are eternally 'lost'.

What has really been 'lost' in this connection, is the great truth that those whom Jesus is now taking from the world are to live and reign with him for the purpose of extending the opportunity of salvation to the remainder of mankind, the living and the dead. This truth is a 'key' of knowledge that, if properly used, will help to reveal the glorious harmony of the Bible, as well as the fullness of God's love for the whole world of mankind—the world whom he so loved as to send his Son to be their Redeemer and blesser.

Mankind will be restored to life on the earth, so all the promises of God pertaining to this wider aspect of the divine plan are descriptive of earthly blessings. Peter uses the expression, "times of restitution of all things," and adds, "which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21) Just think,

here is a great truth of the Bible found in the writings of all the prophets, yet it is completely ignored by all the 'orthodox' churches in Christendom! It is a lost 'key' of knowledge to the vast majority who read the Bible, so they endeavor to spiritualize its earthly promises, and because of this, become more and more confused.

THE KINGDOM HOPE

The kingdom of God includes the kingdom of Christ, and is prominently taught in the Bible, in both the Old and the New Testaments. The prophecies of the Bible associate this kingdom with the promised Messiah, or Christ. We read, "The government shall be upon his shoulder," and "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." (Isa. 9:6,7) Daniel wrote, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom."—Dan. 2:44

When Jesus came, John the Baptist announced, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3:1-3) Practically all of Jesus' teachings were associated directly or indirectly with the kingdom. His parables related to the kingdom, and to preparation of the kingdom; some of them pertaining to a counterfeit kingdom set up by the Devil to deceive the people. Jesus encouraged his disciples with the hope of reigning with him in his kingdom, saying, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—Luke 12: 32

In the last three chapters of the Bible we are furnished with a symbolic description of the establishment and work of the kingdom. The followers of Jesus are shown coming forth in the "first resurrection" to live and reign with him "a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6) A "holy city" (Rev. 21:2) comes down from heaven, and the "tabernacle of God is with men" (vs. 3), and there is "no more death." (vs. 4) We see "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:3), and from that throne there flows "a pure river of water of life" (vs. 1), and the people are invited to, "Come. . . . and . . . take the water of life freely."—vs. 17

But this wonderful kingdom teaching has also been lost to the vast majority of professed Christians. Indeed, the modernist Christian world is inclined to (Cont'd on page 36)

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

NORTH CAROLINA

Wendell WETC 540 4:45 p.m.

OHIO

Cleveland WRKG 1380 7:45 a.m.

PENNSYLVANIA

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

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charlestown WOKE 1340
7:45 a.m.

TENNESSEE

Nashville WSM 650 7:45 p.m.

VIRGINIA

Richmond WGGM 820 7:45 a.m.

WASHINGTON

Spokane KAQQ 590 7:00 a.m.

.... WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

CANADA

ALBERTA

Banff CFHC 1340 11:45 a.m.
Brooks CIBQ 1340 8:00 a.m.
Canmore CFNC 1450 11:45 a.m.
Stettler CKFQ 1400 7:45 a.m.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan CKAY 1500 9:00 a.m.
Duncan CKAY 1500 10:00 p.m.
Grand Forks CKFG 1340 9:00 a.m.
Qualicum-Parksville
CHPQ 1370 9:30 p.m.

MANITOBA

Winnipeg CKJS 810 9:00 a.m.

ONTARIO

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

SASKATCHEWAN

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



Argentina (Spanish)

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

British West Indies

Trinidad Radio Trinidad 610
10:30 p.m.

Chile (Spanish)

Talcahuano Radio Almirante Latorre

Costa Rica (Spanish)

San José Radio Sonorara
105.9 fm & 700 am 6:15 a.m.

Mexico (Spanish)

Culliacán Ranchera
XECQ 8:30 a.m.
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.

Peru (Spanish)

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

Philippines

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

South Africa

Swaziland SWAZI
Commercial Radio 1400 AM
Shortwave 49m 6156 kHz
8:15 p.m.

Uruguay (Spanish)

Radio CX32 1170 kHz 9:00 a.m.

(Cont'd from page 31) make light of it. A mistranslation of Luke 17:21 makes Jesus appear to say, "The kingdom of God is *within* you," but it should read, "God's Royal Majesty is *among* you." All the marvelous kingdom promises and prophecies of the Bible have been made to mean nothing more than righteous desires of the heart which it is vainly hoped may one day control the lives of the majority of mankind.

To the extent that churchmen can enter into and control politics, it is hoped that the righteous desires of the people may become implemented by civil laws that will more effectively control evil, and to this arrangement is often applied the name 'kingdom of God'. However, the hope of the real kingdom of promise has been lost, with the result that the only hope held out for a better world is based on nothing more than the vain wish that fallen man can some way or other raise himself up through his own efforts.

But how meaningful are the Bible's promises of the kingdom when we take God at his word! After assuring us that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end," the Prophet Isaiah added, "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." (Isa. 9:6,7) As followers of the Master, called to suffer and die with him that we might live and reign with him, we have the privilege, through faithfulness and the LORD's assisting help in time of need, to make our "calling and election sure" (II Pet. 1:10) in order that we may reign with Christ. But the setting up of the kingdom, and its successful functioning for the blessing of all the families of the earth, does not depend upon human efforts. 'The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this'.

If we ignore this great truth we are setting aside another important 'key' to a proper understanding of the Bible, for without it much of the Word of God has no vital meaning. By using this key, God's kingdom promises come to life, and we are given a glorious and comforting hope of coming peace and joy and health and life for all the willing and obedient of mankind. In a word, the kingdom teachings of the Bible reveal that in the promised kingdom there will be both rulers and the ruled, the kings and their subjects. Jesus will be the "King of kings" (Rev. 17:14) and his faithful

followers of this age will be associated with him. All mankind will be the subjects of the kingdom, and those who obey its laws will live in peace and joy forever.

THE WORLD'S CONVERSION

Another 'key' of knowledge which helps to give a harmonious understanding of God's Word is the fact that the present Gospel Age is not the time in the plan of God for the conversion of the world. True, Jesus commissioned his disciples to go into all the world to preach the Gospel, but he did not encourage them to believe that this would result in the world's conversion. The purpose of this worldwide witness work is explained in Acts 15:14. Here James informs us that Peter, or 'Simeon', "hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name."

This 'people for his name' are the 'sons of God' who are to live and reign with Christ. (I John 3:2) At the beginning of the age, a few of these were selected from among the Israelites, and to these were given the "power [*Margin: 'right', 'privilege'*] to become the sons of God." (John 1:11,12) There were not enough of these to make up God's foreordained number, so the message went to the Gentiles, and throughout the age its power has been drawing from among them 'a people for his name'.

But this is only preparatory to the great objective of the divine plan. "After this," James continues, the LORD will "build again the tabernacle [or house] of David, which is fallen down." (vs. 16) God's kingdom promises were first made to the natural descendants of Abraham. Later, they were narrowed down to the tribe of Judah. (Gen. 49:10) After this, they were still further restricted to the family, or house of David.—II Sam. 7:16

Jesus became the heir of this promise. It is for this reason that the Prophet Isaiah associated the government of the Prince of Peace with the "throne of David, . . . to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever." (Isa. 9:7) It is at his Second Advent that Jesus reestablishes the throne of David, when he and his glorified church will be the spiritual rulers in that new

world government. James refers to this as 'building again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down'.

James explains that following this the "residue of men" will seek after the LORD, and "all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the LORD, who doeth all these things." (Acts 15:17) This will be the work of the Millennial Age. It will be then that the world will be converted—gloriously converted—for "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:9) There has been no lag and no failure in the plan of God. James concluded, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." (vs. 18) What confidence this should give us in the promises of God, and what courage to continue on in our own efforts to know and to do his will!

Today the world's needs are great: Fear fills the hearts of the people. Those who tell them that their fears are unfounded, and offer the people the hope of immediate success and health and happiness, are sure to get a following. But a harmonious understanding of the Word of God offers no such temporal advantages—not yet. The time will come when blind eyes will be opened, deaf ears unstopped, and when the lame shall "leap as an hart." (Isa. 35:6) But that time is not now. The followers of the Master today have the same privilege as did their brethren in the Early Church, which is to proclaim unpopular truth and be looked upon as 'out of step' with the world and the worldly church.

The 'way' of the present Gospel Age is a "narrow way," and "few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:14) Many, even when they 'find it', do not wish to walk therein because it is so narrow, so difficult. But rich and full are the compensating joys of the narrow way, among them being the great privilege of telling the world of the kingdom blessings soon to come, when a "highway" will be opened upon which the world of mankind may return to God, and to health and life everlasting. (Isa. 35:5,6,8,10) To the proclamation of this message, a little company of people the world over is dedicated. We rejoice to know that the kingdom Gospel is even now bringing joy to many, enabling them to pray with understanding, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matt. 6:10 ■

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Drake, Chicago, IL.—May. Age, about 94.

Brother Levi Jacobs, New Haven, CT—June 4. Age, 77.

Brother David Skein, Chicago, IL—June 6. Age, 72.

Sister Margaref Ellen Villasana, St. Louis, MO—June 13. Age, 44

Brother Halsey Carpenter, Brooklyn, NY—June 20. Age, 75.

Sister Lillian Krett, Detroit, MI—June 22. Age, 89.



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JOHN, THE FORERUNNER

THROUGH MALACHI, THE last of the Old Testament prophets, the LORD declared, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." (Mal. 3:1) This prophecy is quoted in Mark 1:2, and applied to John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. In Mark 1:3 John is identified as the one fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3 which speaks of "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." In John 1:23, the Apostle John also applies this latter prophecy to John the Baptist.

The LORD's statement 'Behold, I will send my messenger' is significant, for John's birth was a direct result of the overruling providences of God. The account of this is found in Luke 1:5-25. The circumstances parallel to some extent the experience of Abraham and Sarah in connection with the birth of Isaac, in that Zacharias and Elizabeth, who became the parents of John, "both were now well stricken in years," and Elizabeth was "barren."—Luke 1:7

The miracles associated with the birth of John convinced Zacharias, his father and a priest in Israel, that momentous things in the plan of God were happening. This conclusion was confirmed when his wife's cousin, Mary, visited them and they learned of the angel Gabriel's announcement to her that she was to be the mother of Jesus, who would be the promised King to sit on "the throne of his father, David." (Luke 1:32) He said concerning his son: "Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the

face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”—vss. 76-79

The only information in the Bible furnished concerning John from the time he was a baby until he began his ministry is contained in Luke 1:80. This text reads, “The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.” It is safe to assume that during his maturing years in the desert he prepared himself for his coming ministry by self-discipline and communion with God. Desert life itself would call for courage and strength of character.

Matthew 3:1 reads, “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea.” Verse 5 says, “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan.” This indicates that John did not go from place to place in the conduct of his ministry, but that the people went to him. When they did, they found a man with “raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.”—vs. 4

Jesus made a revealing observation concerning John’s desert ministry, and his clothing. After John’s disciples departed from an interview with the Master, “Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet, for this is he, of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.”—Matt. 11:7-10

The miraculous circumstances associated with the birth of this ‘more than a prophet’, his manner of life, and the general expectation that some great one was about to appear, caused many to be attracted to him. He called upon his hearers to repent, and those who did he immersed “in Jordan, confessing their sins.”—Matt. 3:6

John was outspoken in his ministry. Taking note of the Pharisees and Sadducees in his audience, he said to them, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Then he told them the only way they could escape from this wrath, saying, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."—Matt. 3:7,8

The 'wrath to come' mentioned by John was not eternal torture in a fiery hell, but the baptism of fire which was to come upon the nation of Israel because of the national rejection of their Messiah. This wrath fell upon the nation in A.D. 70-73 when Jerusalem was destroyed and the people scattered. Continuing his symbolic prophecy concerning the destruction of the nation, John said, "The ax is laid unto the root of the trees."—vs. 10

WHO WAS JOHN THE BAPTIST?

"The Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem" to ask John, "Who art thou?" (John 1:19) He made it clear to these investigators that he was "not the Christ." (vs. 20) Then they asked, "What then? Art thou Elias?" Again his answer was, "I am not." Their final question was, "Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No."—vs. 21

The question they asked John, "Art thou Elias?" (vs. 21) was based on the prophecy of Malachi 4:5,6, which reads: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." This prophecy describes a work of reformation such as John was conducting in Israel, and it was natural that he should be asked whether or not he considered himself to be this foretold Elijah.

Those who believe the false theory of reincarnation seize upon this prophecy to indicate that the Bible supports their theory, claiming that it suggests the return of Prophet Elijah as another personality. But this is not the correct thought. The Prophet Elijah was a great reformer in Israel, and because of this, his name is used in the prophecy to indicate the nature of the work to be attempted by the one which it foretells.

John denied that he was the foretold Elijah, yet Jesus said to his disciples, referring to John, that "Elias is indeed come." (Mark 9:13) This does not contradict John's statement concerning the matter. The more complete viewpoint is expressed to his disciples in Matthew 11:14, where Jesus is quoted as saying to his disciples, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come." This means, that to those who repented under the ministry of John and were prepared to accept Jesus, he was the promised 'Elijah', for he had accomplished the prophesied work of reformation in their hearts and lives.

The prophecy of the coming Elijah suggests an alternative fulfillment: "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." In other words, if the attempted work of reformation failed, the foretold 'curse' would come upon the nation of Israel. This curse was in reality what John referred to as 'the wrath to come'. (Matt. 3:7,8) John also described it as a baptism "with fire," (vs. 11) which, as we have noted, came upon the Jewish nation in A.D. 70-73. While a few were converted and prepared to accept Jesus by the ministry of John, the nation as a whole was not, so the foretold 'curse' fell, destroying the nation, and scattering the people throughout the earth.

Since John himself denied that he was actually the foretold Elijah, we are warranted in looking for a larger fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy. We believe that the larger fulfillment began with Jesus' ministry, and involved his true followers throughout the entire Gospel Age. Just as John preached repentance, so also did Jesus. Matthew 4:17 reads, "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

When Jesus sent his disciples into the ministry, we read that they "went out, and preached that men should repent." (Mark 6:12) Speaking on Mars' Hill, Paul said that "now [God] commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30) In proclaiming the message of repentance, Jesus and his true followers have continued the Elijah work throughout the entire age.

But general failure also accompanies the effort in this larger application of the prophecy. A few have repented, even as did a handful under the preaching of John, but the

world as a whole has continued on in its sinful, selfish ways. So, again, the alternative fulfillment of the prophecy must come, not upon one nation, this time, but upon all nations. This foretold curse is, as a matter of fact, already upon the world in the form of a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation."—Dan. 12:1

But this does not mean that the foretold Elijah work of repentance and reformation will never be accomplished. It will be performed during the time of Christ's kingdom. Under the typical Elijah, the people of Israel were led to repentance and to a return to the worship of Jehovah, the true and living God. (I Kings 18:36-39) And so it will be under the administration of Christ's kingdom. A "pure language," or message, will be turned to the people; the knowledge of the LORD will fill the earth, and as a result of that enlightenment, the people will "call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent."—Zeph. 3:8,9; Isa. 11:9

"THAT PROPHET"

The priests and the Levites who were sent to interview John inquired of him if he were 'that prophet'. (John 1:21) Again John replied that he was not. This question evidently related to a prophecy of Moses in which he said, "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."—Deut. 18:15

The Apostle Peter quoted this prophecy and applied it to the kingdom work of Christ to be accomplished during the "times of restitution of all things." (Acts 3:19-21) John knew that he was not this great Prophet which Moses had promised, and in response to the question, "What sayest thou of thyself?" he replied, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the LORD, as said the Prophet Esaias."—John 1:22,23

John had a humble opinion of himself and of his place in the divine plan. Asked why, since he was "not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet" (John 1:25), he was doing a baptismal work. He replied, "I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who

coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."—vss. 26,27

We read that "the next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (vs. 29) John explained further that the one who had instructed him to baptize with water, who, of course, was God—had told him, "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy [Spirit]."—vs. 33

John did not understand the full implications of this, but he did take it to mean that the one upon whom he saw the Spirit descend would be the promised Messiah, and "the Son of God." (vs. 34) Later there arose a discussion between some of John's disciples and the Jews, "and they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him."—John 3:26

This was a statement more than a question—a statement implying that Jesus was attracting more followers than John. John was quick to catch the implication, and replied, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."—vss. 27-30

If those questioning John thought that he would be disturbed or discouraged over the fact that Jesus was securing a larger following than he, they were wrong; for John was willing, and glad, to have it this way. It was just what he expected, for, as he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." He knew that having announced the presence of the Messiah, his own mission was now practically fulfilled. Since the one for whom he had been commissioned to prepare the way had come, the work of preparation was over.

We are not to suppose that John understood clearly all the details of the divine plan. Doubtless much that he said was under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This might well be true with respect to his observation concerning the bride-

groom and the bride. In Revelation 19:7 reference is made to the marriage of the "Lamb," to whom John referred as the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) Under this symbolism Jesus would be the Bridegroom, and his 'wife' would be the bride. This bride class is composed of his faithful followers, beginning with the apostles who at Pentecost received from Jesus the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

John did not live until Pentecost, so did not have an opportunity of becoming a part of the bride class. All he claimed was the great joy of being the 'friend' of the Bridegroom—the one who had heard his voice. 'This my joy . . . is fulfilled', John said. He was content with this happy part in the divine arrangement; he did not complain because he could not be part of the 'bride' class.

Jesus, of course, also recognized that John would not be one of the 'called out' ones of the Gospel Age who, if faithful, would live and reign with him in the heavenly phase of the kingdom. Jesus said, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Matt. 11:11) Jesus explained the reason for this. He said that "all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John." (vs. 13) John was the last of the prophets. Beginning with Jesus, a new age in the plan of God began—the age during which the kingdom of heaven class, the 'bride' of the Lamb, has been called from the world through the Gospel, and made ready to live and reign with Christ a thousand years.

JOHN'S FAITH TESTED

John, in his righteousness, reproved Herod the tetrarch for marrying his brother Philip's wife, and because of this was cast into prison. This was a severe test of his faith, for, having announced Jesus as the promised Messiah, he doubtless believed, even as Jesus' disciples later supposed, that the kingdom of Christ would "immediately appear." (Luke 19:11) This being his expectation, he naturally would wonder why he should find himself in prison when he was dedicated to be

one of the faithful subjects of the new kingdom, a 'friend', indeed, of the king.

It would seem that he had begun to wonder if Jesus was the promised Messiah. However, as he remained in prison, word reached him that the 'works' of Christ were continuing, so he sent messengers to inquire of Jesus, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"—Matt. 11:3-6

The Scriptures do not inform us whether or not this reply gave John the reassurance which he sought. Probably it did, for he would know that miraculous works were to be expected of the Messiah. He could not know that the real age of worldwide miracles was nearly two thousand years in the future. Jesus was then performing miracles, even raising the dead, and for all John knew, this work would continue and increase. Had he not said that Jesus would increase?

True, John was without an explanation as to why his miracle-working Christ allowed him to remain in prison. But Jesus had said in his reply, 'Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me'. This suggested the possibility of a test, and probably John determined that he would not be 'offended' even if Jesus did not come to his aid.

Like all the other faithful prophets of God, John died in faith, not having received the promise. (Heb. 11:39) It was on Herod's birthday when the daughter of Herodias danced before him that he was so pleased with her he promised to give her anything she asked. The mother had instructed her daughter to request the head of John the Baptist. This she did. "The king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her." See Matthew 14:1-12.

This may seem an inglorious end to a faithful career in service to the LORD, but not so. John was loyal to God and his divine principles. Being put to death gave him a further opportunity to prove his faithfulness. When, in that "better resurrection" (Heb. 11:35) promised for all the ancient prophets, he is brought forth to be one of the "princes in all the earth" (Ps. 45:16), he will rejoice, and continue his faithful service, not as the forerunner of Christ, but as one of the human representatives of Christ's kingdom. ■

JESUS SAID: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

JESUS SAID: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

Matthew 5:14-16; 7:9



WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

AUGUST 3—"Separate yourselves from the people of the land."—Ezra 10:11 (Z. '99-203 Hymn 4)

AUGUST 10—"If there be any consolation [comfort] in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."—Philippians 2:1,2 (Z. '04-296 Hymn 240)

AUGUST 17—"Quench not the Spirit."—I Thessalonians 5:19 (Z. '03-25 Hymn 91)

AUGUST 24—"Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."—John 17:11 (Z. '03-77 Hymn 21)

AUGUST 31—"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king; but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."—Daniel 3:17,18 (Z. '99-172 Hymn 221)

THE CHANGED HEAVENS AND EARTH

“Thou, LORD, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”
—Hebrews 1:10-12

THESE WORDS ARE a quotation by the Apostle Paul from Psalm 102:25,26. They are used to attest the fact that God had foreordained that our Lord Jesus would be very great—superior to all change. However, a question arises in the minds of some as to how this declaration agrees with some Scriptural statements to the effect that the earth abideth forever.

The words ‘heavens’ and ‘earth’ are used in a figurative and symbolic sense in the Scriptures, as well as a literal sense. As symbols they represent the present order of things which is to pass away and give place to a new order of things. This is also the import of the Apostle Peter’s argument when he spoke of the ‘world that now is’, and the present ‘heavens and earth’ which are to pass away with a great noise (II Pet. 3:7, 10), and to be supplanted by the new ‘heavens’ and ‘new earth’.

Our physical earth has been the basis for the expression 'the world' that then 'was', this 'present evil world', and 'the world to come'. The word 'world' even in each of these instances signifies the order of things that *was*, the order of things that *is*, and the order of things *to come*.

The figure is carried out in detail by speaking of it as a heavens and earth, because the word 'earth' is used to represent the earthly systems—social and political—while the word 'heavens' is used to represent the ecclesiastical and the spiritual things connected therewith. Thus, the heavens and earth which were before the Flood perished or disappeared, not the literal heavens nor the literal earth, but the symbolic or figurative.

It was the social order—or earth—which prevailed before the Flood that passed away. At the same time the spiritual rule of those angels connected with the heavenly epoch which preceded the Flood, also passed away. After the Flood, the present order was instituted; earthly society was reorganized under new conditions, but on the same physical earth; and a new spiritual government, rule, or order was introduced also.

It is this present symbolic heavens and earth that was organized after the Flood which is to pass away with a great noise at the Second Presence of our Lord—not the physical earth, nor the physical heavens. Similarly, the apostle, when he says, "We look for a new heavens and a new earth" (II Pet. 3:13), refers not to some other planet, but to this same one, and implies a new social order of things, and a new ecclesiastical rule.

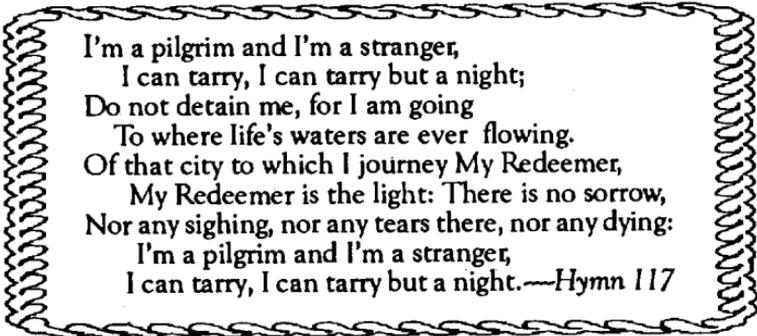
In view of these things, we feel justified in interpreting the words of our text in harmony with other Scriptures referring to the change of dispensation which are foretold to be coming to the world.

While agreeing with the apostle's statement that our Lord Jesus was the Father's active agent in the Creation of the physical earth and physical heavens, we understand the real thought to be that with him there will be no change, but with his Creation, there will be change—not as it respects the matter and form of the earth, but in respect to the cloak it wears—its social and religious order.

To elaborate further: The order which our LORD originally established in the world was right and proper—the divine order. As for the earth, Adam was its king, created in the image and likeness of his Creator, and given dominion over the beast of the field, the fowl of the heavens, and the fish of the sea. As for the spiritual heavens, they recognized the supremacy of the Almighty, and that his will must be law to mankind.

This beautiful arrangement, originally established by the LORD, was changed twice by sin, until today we have what is known as “this present evil world” (Gal. 1:4), in which neither the heavenly nor the earthly ideals, regulations and arrangements are in harmony with the original, but on the contrary, are quite unfit and ready for dissolution.

Like old garments that are worn out, they are about to be folded up for discard, and to be changed. They need to be changed, not because of any imperfection in the original arrangement, but because they departed from it through sin, disobedience, and the penalty of death. The new heavens and earth which the LORD will establish by the Millennial Kingdom reign will be the original restored. The law of love will then prevail among perfect men, and a full responsibility to God, the giver of every good and perfect gift, and to the Lord Jesus, will be realized. Jesus was the Father’s Prime Minister and agent in Creation, and during the next age will be the Father’s Prime Minister and agent in bringing all things back to their primeval condition with added splendors. ■



I'm a pilgrim and I'm a stranger,
I can tarry, I can tarry but a night;
Do not detain me, for I am going
To where life's waters are ever flowing.
Of that city to which I journey My Redeemer,
My Redeemer is the light: There is no sorrow,
Nor any sighing, nor any tears there, nor any dying:
I'm a pilgrim and I'm a stranger,
I can tarry, I can tarry but a night.—Hymn 117

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF SOLOMON

DURING THE REIGNS of Kings David and Solomon, the nation of Israel changed abruptly from a loose confederation of tribes that had existed earlier in its history, to the attainment of its highest level of glory and prominence among the nations of the world. This is noted in their military, political, and economic achievements. David's various military conquests had made him a most popular king, as well as Israel's national hero. Solomon's regime, on the other hand, is best remembered because of his immense wealth, power, and exceptional wisdom, leading to the international prestige and dominance of the Jewish nation.

David's reign as king had come to a rather sorry ending, involving a number of family tragedies, and other unfortunate events that marred this period of his life. The closing scenes became even more complicated, as civil war erupted among his people. Rivals attempted to overthrow the government, and matters became increasingly serious—to the point that David and his court had to flee Jerusalem in fear of their lives.

To make matters worse, Israel was also engaged in war with the Philistines. To try to resolve the worsening situation, David's wife, Bathsheba, and the Prophet Nathan, sought to use their influence over the king to allow his son, Solomon, to assume leadership over the people of Israel. David agreed, and Solomon became king.

In an effort to consolidate his power it was necessary that Solomon remove his challengers. But, later on, Solomon's policies became so unpopular that they led to the division of the nation into two major rival factions.

GOD APPEARED TWICE TO SOLOMON

God appeared to Solomon on two occasions. The first time was in a dream at Gibeon. (I Kings 3:5-15) There God asked him what he could give him as a blessing. Solomon replied that he wanted to judge his people in an equitable manner, and needed understanding of heart to do so. God was pleased that he had not asked for personal advantage, and agreed to give him not only the wisdom to govern the nation of Israel, but also riches and honor. In return, God expected Solomon to keep his statutes and commandments, and to walk faithfully, even as his father, David, had walked.

The second time God appeared to Solomon was after the completion of the building of the Temple and the king's palace. On this occasion, God reassured Solomon that as long as he remained obedient to the laws of truth and righteousness, and walked as David had walked, he would prosper immeasurably, and that the throne of his kingdom would be established over Israel forever. Then God added the warning that disobedience would result in chaos and ruin.

At first Solomon was indeed a wise king, ruling with equity and wisdom. He built the Temple, which replaced the Tabernacle as a place for worshipping God. It was a very beautiful structure, sixty cubits long (90 ft.), twenty cubits wide (30 ft.), and thirty cubits high (45 ft).

It was during the second appearance of God to Solomon after the Temple was completed, that God said to Solomon: "I have consecrated this Temple, which you have built, by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there."—I Kings 9:3, *New International Version*

These experiences during Solomon's reign were to typify the greater work of Christ's future kingdom. Even as Solomon became famous for the Temple which he had built, so the greater temple will be still more grand when all the world will be blessed by the 'greater than Solomon', the Christ of promise!

'THE HALF WAS NOT TOLD'

The Queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame, and made the long journey to meet and converse with the king. She herself was a monarch of great wealth, and arrived bearing many rich gifts for Solomon. We are told that the grandeur of his court greatly impressed her. (I Kings 10:1-5) Being a witness to the surrounding splendor, she said, "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts [*Margin, "sayings"*] and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard."—vss. 6,7

The Queen of Sheba received gifts from Solomon: "King Solomon gave unto the Queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants."—vs. 13

Solomon's wisdom, prosperity, and greatness are but typical of the greater work to be accomplished under the Christ in his kingdom. When Jesus walked upon earth, the people who heard him speak also marvelled at Jesus' words of wisdom, but even this will see a much greater fulfillment when Christ rules in glory and splendor during his kingdom. So we can understand how God used Solomon's glory, and his Temple, as an illustration of the glorious reign of Christ. It, too, will be said of that kingdom, "The half was never told"!

THE WISEST, AND THE MOST FOOLISH

There is a saying that King Solomon was the wisest among men, but also the most foolish. He was wise because God had blessed him abundantly with understanding. Solomon also had riches and honor, and the privilege of leading his people. But he was foolish because he did not continue to heed God's instructions, nor seek his counsel, and therefore he had to suffer the foretold consequences of his disobedient actions.

Although Solomon enjoyed the special favor of God, as pride became an increasing factor in his life—accompanied with the self-gratification of a luxurious life style—God warned him a second time that he must seek divine guidance

and instruction to lead his people properly. Nevertheless, he continued to choose the wrong pathway. The turning point was reached. God said, "If ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people."—I Kings 9:6,7

Again, the story is a sad one, as Israel's king failed to obey God, and the laws of truth and righteousness. "King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites." (I Kings 11:1) His quest for power grew and extended over a greater area, as arrangements were made for him to marry into the various kingdoms of earth. These were largely heathen kingdoms with many evil religious practices. Solomon had "seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart."—vs. 3

As he sought more and more to please his wives, he, in turn, became more displeasing to God. The result of intermarriage among heathen nations was not only injurious to Solomon's personal life, but to the whole nation of Israel, "for Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites." (vs. 5) "Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon, and likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods." (vss. 7,8) These things came about in this manner:

While the Israelites gathered in the newly built Temple where services were held to worship the true God, Solomon's heathen wives, who attended his court, became jealous of Solomon's beliefs and faith, and of the fact that they were not able to serve their various gods or to erect altars to their heathen deities. They desired that their gods be equally represented and worshiped. Under this kind of persuasion and

pressure, Solomon yielded to the demands of his strange wives, and their strange religions. In so doing, he violated his God-given responsibilities to the people of Israel. The nation's most illustrious king fell from the favor and grace of the Most High God. "Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father."—I Kings 11:6

THE "GREATER THAN SOLOMON"

The First Advent of Jesus gave great hope to the world of mankind. After the ransom was provided, the work of selecting and testing the church class began. Then came a great falling away from the truths preached by Jesus and the Early Church, while human weakness played a prominent part in the setting up of the great apostasy. But the work of selecting those whom God called to be members of the true church continued in spite of these obstacles.

The later aspects of Solomon's life are intended to show how Satan uses human weakness in his attempts to interfere with the fulfillment of the promises of God. But despite Satan's best efforts, the "greater than Solomon" (Matt. 12:42; Luke 11:31) will soon become earth's new ruler. The world anxiously, although unknowingly, awaits the fulfillment of the type which those earlier years of Solomon's reign portrayed.—Rom. 8:22

The riches, the glory, and the power which Solomon possessed are representative of the greater glory and power to be manifested in that kingdom for which Jesus taught us to pray: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) God's kingdom under the Christ will have the necessary authority and power to fulfill God's promise to bless all the families of the earth.—Gen. 22:16-18 ■

OLOMON SAID: "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever."—Eccles. 1:2-4

ENCOURAGING LETTERS FROM NIGERIA

THE "FRANK AND Ernest" radio program began to be aired in Nigeria in 1974. Since then it has continued to draw excellent response from many listeners in that country. Some brethren in the U.S.A. were eager to follow up on the responses, and this gave birth to the Bible Students' Africa Committee. Teams of brethren were sent to Nigeria in order to determine the depth of interest. Conventions were arranged, and baptismal services were held. A fairly large nucleus of consecrated brethren was established in Ibadan. In all this activity, free subscriptions to *The Dawn* magazine have been another avenue of supplying

information about God's plan, and the Bible. All of us have rejoiced in the progress made by the brethren in Africa.

In recent times there has been a need to implement economies in our programs for free literature. It was necessary to offer free subscriptions for *The Dawn* to places like Africa because of governmental rulings and problems in monetary exchange. Since many of these subscriptions have been outstanding for years, a notice was sent with the recent issues of *The Dawn* to inquire about continued interest. The response has been overwhelming! A few samples of

the letters received are presented below:

Seizes Opportunity

Dear Friends: I seize this chance to thank you for your laudable efforts in getting copies of *The Dawn* magazine mailed to me over the years. I have found the magazines helpful, and would like to continue to receive same from you.—
Lagos, Nigeria

Received Truth from Parents

Dear Friends: I am so pleased to receive *The Dawn*. I am sorry for not giving you this information earlier about the passing of Mr. Lyd Ndem which took place last October after a long illness. So we, the entire family, are looking forward to God's grace on us left behind. He left eight girls and one son. I'm the last born daughter, and would like to continue receiving *The Dawn*.—
Cross River State, Nigeria

Received Truth through a Friend

Dear Friend: Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. I

have been reading *The Dawn* magazine monthly through a Christian friend. The magazine has been interesting and helpful to me in my daily Christian life. I would be happy and grateful if you will consider sending me the magazine monthly. I also thank you for all the wonderful work of God through this magazine. God bless you all.—
Ibadan-Oyo State, Nigeria

Delighted with *The Dawn*

Dear Friends: Thank you so much for the supply of *The Dawn* magazine throughout the year 1994. Also I am delighted in the tracts, literature, and booklets received in September, 1993. The books are a reservoir of inspiration and spiritual awareness to me. I regret that I did not acknowledge receipt of the gifts in time, due to unforeseen circumstances beyond my control. May I know if you can accept and mark written answers to questions sent to me? I am glad of the new sub-station open in Ibadan. That will certainly facilitate our friendly communications.

—*Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria*

Enjoys Bible Studies

Dearly Beloved: Calvary Greetings to you in the precious name of our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus! I am very grateful to receive and read *The Dawn*. I have found it interesting, helpful, and inspiring—especially the International Bible Study Lessons, and Christian Life and Doctrine articles. These help me a lot. They help me physically, academically, and spiritually. They help my family as a whole. It is my sincere prayer that the LORD help and provide for your needs. Please read: Genesis 22:8; Philippians 4:19.—*Kwara State, Nigeria*

'Can't Live' without The Dawn Magazine

Dear Sir: I am a reader of *The Dawn* magazine, A Herald of Christ's Presence, since 1983, and I can answer you that I can't live without it because of the truth which always appears in it. But I have some problems. I like to buy many of the books advertised in *The*

Dawn, but I have difficulty ordering them because I cannot obtain foreign coinage. Can you help us obtain these books?—*Marine, Lagos, Nigeria*

Wholehearted Appreciation

Dear Brothers: Holy and Calvary greetings in Jesus' holy and precious name! First and foremost I must use this golden opportunity to express my whole-hearted appreciation to you for your wonderful work in the vineyard of God. Millions of thanks for your food for thought, bread of life, *The Dawn*. Please keep them coming, as they are light to my feet. Meanwhile, I would have written, but high postage rates stopped me. Actually, I love your materials. They have been a great help to my Christian life. God reward you more abundantly.—*Ilorin, Nigeria*

God's Love Understood More Fully

Dear Workers for the LORD: For years back I have been

enjoying *The Dawn* magazine. I want to confess to you that *The Dawn* magazine has been very, very interesting to me. It has helped me to understand more fully God's love, and his plan for mankind, on earth, here and hereafter. Please continue to send the magazine to me.—*Ogun State, West Africa*

Touching and Practical Lessons

Dear Brethren in the Lord: May the grace and the peace of God Almighty continue to abide with you and your ministry. I wish to use this medium to thank the Dawn Bible Students Association for sending me the monthly educative and spiritually inspiring *Dawn* magazine freely. Most of the topics on Christian living are very touching and practical. My prayer for you is that the Holy Spirit will continue to minister unto you, so that you will have a rewardable service that is acceptable to God on the last day.—*Ondo State, Nigeria*

'Rich and Refreshing'

Beloved of the Nigerian Bible Students: Greetings to

you in the most wonderful name of our Lord Jesus Christ! I am really grateful to God for the richness of *The Dawn* magazine. It is not only rich, it is refreshing, and really dawning on all readers. I am really impressed, so I would want to continue to keep getting my copies. I started with them in 1974. So please keep on sending me my copies. Do not, please, allow this to be like any Nigerian affair, where after a time, it will die in your hands. This is entirely an affair of the LORD, and should, therefore, be handled with the care it deserves. May he that has placed these in your hands give you the strength to continue with it. Any time you need my help, please let me know.—*Minna, Niger State*

Request for a Friend

Dear Brethren: Greetings to you in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Yes, for the past months I have been receiving a free copy of *The Dawn* magazine, and I am interested in it. In fact, your magazine is very helpful to me, so I would like to

continue receiving a free subscription for 1995. If you will check the form you sent me, you will find a new name on it. He used to read your magazine very well, and he has an interest in it. Now we are no more together. He is living at Ajagba, Osun State. Before he went there he informed me to find a way to get your magazine for him. I am no more in Oyo, but am living at Eruwa, Oyo State. Please help us through your magazine. May the LORD bless your ministry.—*Oyo State, Nigeria*

Enjoys *The Dawn*

Dear Ones in Christ: I have been enjoying the reading of *The Dawn* magazine.—*Plateau State, Nigeria*

Continue *The Dawn*

Dear Sir: Thanks much for the free copy of *The Dawn* magazine which I have been receiving. I could not extend my gratitude to those overseas due to hard times in Nigeria. Please, therefore, greet them for me, and extend my thanks to them also. I have found this magazine very interesting and helpful, and I would like to continue

receiving it.—*Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria*

Appreciates Monthly Publication

Dear Brothers in Christ: Greetings in the LORD's auspicious grace for such difficult times as these in our country. I pray that he may continue to shower you with his blessings. See Habakkuk 3:17-19. I have received *The Dawn* magazine with the form. I indeed appreciate the monthly publication of *The Dawn*, which is distributed in various villages, towns, and hospitals. This is one of the best-liked items which I have for distribution. The inmates even ask for copies of it. This past year I have shared it with close friends and neighbors, but one copy couldn't be shared with all who need this blessed information. Oh, how you bless us monthly with copies of *The Dawn* magazines. I impose upon you for five or four copies monthly. But the mighty hand that keeps you is my hope. I pledge myself for your advice and guidance. Wishing God's blessing more abundantly on you,

and for your plous work.—
Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Wonderful Work

Dear Friends: Greetings to you all in Jesus' precious name! I would like to thank you for sending me *The Dawn* every month, and for all the wonderful work that you do. Since I started receiving monthly publications of *The Dawn* it has been helping me a lot in my Christian life, and has broadened my mind as well as answered a lot of things I did not understand. *The Dawn* is the finest magazine I have ever read, and I don't anticipate missing a copy of it. How I

wish I could channel it to all my friends at school. It pleased me to know that there is an Associated Ecclesia of Bible Students here in Nigeria. On this note I wish to know if it will be acceptable if I send the answers to questions I was asked when the books, *Studies in the Scriptures*, were sent to me in August 1994. This is because of the high cost of mailing now in my country. Once again, I thank God for the Scripture lessons in your magazine. May God bless your good works. May he continue to bless your efforts.—*Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria* ■

DELIGHT YOURSELVES IN God; yes, find your joy in him at all times. Have a reputation for gentleness, and never forget the nearness of your Lord. Don't worry over anything whatever; tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer, and the peace of God, which transcends human understanding, will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus.

Here is a last piece of advice. If you believe in goodness and if you value the approval of God, fix your minds on the things which are holy and right and pure and beautiful and good. Model your conduct on what you have learned from me, on what I have told you and shown you, and you will find that the God of peace will be with you.

—Philippians 4:4-9, *Phillips Translation*

THE BIBLE ANSWERS TV

Thursday Mornings

TENNESSEE

Chattanooga WFLI TV53 8:30 a.m.

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:

M. Balko

Ukraine August 7-14

Romania August 14-20

Listings in this schedule have been arranged by local ecclesias cooperating with the Dawn:

B. Bach

London, Ont. August 13

C. Chandler

Kalispell, MT August 11-13

J. Freer

Kalispell, MT August 11-13

R. Gorecki

Delaware Valley, PA August 27

S. Jones

Kalispell, MT August 11-13

E.F. Lankford

Kalispell, MT August 11-13

J. Panucci

Kalispell, MT August 11-13

J.H. Snyder

Kalispell, MT August 11-13

CONVENTIONS

These conventions are listed at the request of the classes who sponsor them. In order to ensure your convention being accurately placed in these columns, please make your request IN WRITING two or three months before the date of the convention: Convention Listing, Dawn Magazine, 199 Railroad Ave., East Rutherford, NJ 07073

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 29-August 3—Grand Rapids, Mi.
Reservation forms sent to M. Nek-

ora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272 must be received before July 10th. Rooms are available at the Convention

Site without reservations.

Phone: (310)-454-5248

KALISPELL/HAVRE/ SALT LAKE CITY CONVENTION, August 11,12,13—Big Mountain Ski and Summer Resort, Whitefish, MT. For information contact: Mrs. Marie Lewis, P.O. Box 7205, Kallispell, MT 59904.

Phone: (406) 892-4103

BALTIMORE, MD, August 27—The Columbian Club of Parkville, 7910 Harford Rd. 21234. For programs write: Robert Wagner, 2753 Pelham Ave. 21213.

Phone: (410) 483-1394

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 1,2,3—Ramada Inn, Two Bridges Rd. & Exit 52, Route 80, Fairfield, NJ 07006. Phone: (201) 575-1742. For reservations and information, contact Mrs. Ann-Truth Lange, 76 Longview Ave., White Plains, NY 10605. *Reservations should be made by August 15th.*

Phone: (914) 948-5428

JACKSON, MI LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 2,3,4—Holiday Inn, I-94 at 127 North, Jackson. Contact: Mrs. Ray Lumley, 2531 Ashton Road, Jackson MI 49203.

Phone: (517) 782-7252

SEATTLE, WA LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 2,3,4—New Location: Best Western Landmark Inn, 4300-200th Street SW, Lynnwood, WA 98036. Reservations must be made before August 9th to receive group rate. Call 800-528-1234 for reservations. For information, contact: Mrs. Michael Brann, 20B East In-

tercity Ave., Everett, WA 98208.

Phone: (206) 353-8983

HUNTSVILLE, AL, September 15-17—Holiday Inn, Research Park, 5903 University Dr., Huntsville, AL 35806. Second Annual Convention. Contact Sandy Cothren, 1912 Stevens Dr., Huntsville AL 35812 for information and program. Reservations may be made directly with Holiday Inn by calling (800) 845-7275 ask for the "HBS block" of rooms. Or, contact Sandy Cothren as suggested above.

Phone: (205) 852-8505

LOS ANGELES, CA, September 24—Burbank Auditorium, 248 E. Olive Ave. For information contact: Robert Wagoner, 901 N. Westwood, Santa Ana, CA 92703. Phone: (714) 542-8466

WASHINGTON, DC, October 7,8—Holiday Inn, Fredricksburg North, VA. For programs and directions, and (for reservations, contact before Sept. 22): Mrs. H. Earl, 2613 Hughes Rd., Adelphi, MD 20783

Phone: (301) 434-8480

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 14,15—Sewickley Grange Hall, Rte. 136, West Newton, PA. For information, contact: Charles Martig, 94 S. Harrison, Pittsburgh 15202. Phone: (412) 734-9269

ORLANDO, FL, October 28,29—Garden Club of Sanford, 200 Fairmont Drive (Cor. Hwy. 17-92), Sanford, FL. For information and reservations, contact Helen Jeuck, 587 Queens Mirror Circle, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 699-8303