

The DAWN

VOLUME No. LXXXVI, Number 3
(USPS 149-380), March 2018

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Published monthly by The Dawn Bible Students Association, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. \$12.00 a year.

ARGENTINA: A. Lupsor, Calle Almirante Brown 684, Monte Grande C.P, 1842 Buenos Aires

AUSTRALIA: Berean Bible Institute, P.O. Box 402, Rosanna, Victoria 3084

BRAZIL: A Aurora, Caixa Postal 50088, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, CEP 20050-971

BRITISH ISLES: Associated Bible Students, 102 Broad Street, Chesham, HP5 3ED, England

CANADA: P.O. Box 1565, Vernon, British Columbia, V1T 8C2

FRANCE: L'Aurore, 45, Avenue de Gouvieux, 60260, Lamorlaye

GERMANY: Tagesanbruch Bibelstudien-Vereinigung, Postfach 11 03, 64368 Ober-Ramstadt

GREECE: He Haravgi (The Dawn), 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073 USA

INDIA: The Dawn, Blessington, #34, Serpentine Street, Richmond Town, Bangalore 560025

SPAIN/ITALY: El Alba/Aurora, Associazione Studenti Biblici, Via Ferrara 42, 59100 Prato—Italia

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Assurance for All People

*“The work of
righteousness shall
be peace; and the
effect of
righteousness
quietness and
assurance for ever.
And my people
shall dwell in a
peaceable
habitation, and in
sure dwellings, and
in quiet resting
places.”*
—Isaiah 32:17,18

MANY WOULD BE INCLINED to conclude that there is very little assurance among mankind of a positive outcome to the myriad problems which plague today's world. In fact, the only assurances that seem to be clear in the minds of the people are along two lines. First, there is the assurance among most that the world's troubles will only continue to worsen. Second, all are assured that their individual lifetime

is limited, and sooner or later, they will die.

We do not deny the reality of the world's worsening conditions, whether they be along the lines of political, social, moral or other aspects of mankind's existence. We also concur that, under the present order of things, death will continue its awful work among earth's billions. If, though, such things constitute our only assurances relative to man's future, there is little

to look forward to with hopeful anticipation. The consistent testimony of the Bible, however, presents a much different outlook for the future of the earth, and man's existence on it.

Our opening text is one such passage of Scripture, in which is promised conditions of righteousness, peace and quietness among people. In addition, it speaks of the "assurance" that these conditions will come to pass. Certainly, to the extent that we claim such promises, and have confidence that they will come to fruition, our outlook for the future of mankind should be much brighter. We should be able to look beyond the present troubles, and be assured as the Psalmist David was, that God's "anger" concerning mankind's present downward course "endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."—Ps. 30:5

ASSURANCE RELATED TO FAITH

The word "assurance" as used in our opening text denotes confidence, security and trust. Assurance, particularly with respect to God's promises for mankind's future blessing, requires faith. This requirement is noted by the Apostle Paul when he defines faith as relating to "things hoped for" and "things not seen." (Heb. 11:1) The promises which Isaiah, David, and the other prophets recorded were of this kind. They were things hoped for and not yet seen—that is, they were promises for the future. By faith, these Old Testament servants of God claimed them, and were assured of their eventual fulfillment. Indeed, Paul says, "these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them."—Heb. 11:13

The faith, and resulting assurance, of those such as Isaiah, David, and others was not based on blind belief, which is credulity. This is also noted by Paul in his definition of faith. Faith can only exist, Paul says, if the things hoped for are based on “substance” and the things not seen are founded on “evidence.” The substance and evidence which were the basis of faith to these faithful ones of old were primarily along two lines. The substance was that which they understood of God’s eternal plans and purposes for mankind. The evidence was the daily guidance and direction which they individually recognized as coming from God in the course of their daily lives.

A prime example of both aspects of faith is found in Abraham. When God asked him to sacrifice his son Isaac, something nearly unthinkable to do from the human standpoint, Abraham did not hesitate. This was because the “substance” of the resurrection hope was firmly established in his mind, so much that Paul said Abraham accounted that God was able to raise Isaac up, “even from the dead.” The “evidence” aspect of Abraham’s faith was shown immediately thereafter, for when he raised his hand to slay his son, an angel of the Lord intervened and miraculously prevented certain death from coming to Isaac. Hence, Paul further says that Abraham received his beloved son back “from the dead ... in a figure.”—Heb. 11:19

Although few have been asked to display their faith to the same degree as Abraham, the same principles apply as to its development. Even today, true faith must be based on the substance of God’s plan and its foundation doctrines, and upon the daily evidences of his providential care and overruling in

the lives of his people. Such faith must develop in us a realization that even adversities which God may permit to come upon us will work in us “patience, experience, ... hope,” and the “peaceable fruit of righteousness,” if we are rightly “exercised thereby.” (Rom. 5:3-5; Heb. 12:6-11) Thus, the promises of God “hoped for” but “not seen” in their completed state are very real and can be claimed in “full assurance of faith.”—Heb. 10:22

GUIDED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

In addition to the great faith displayed by the heroes of old, and as shown in their writings, their record was also guided by God’s Holy Spirit—his power and influence. The Apostle Peter points out this important fact. He states that we have a “sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”—II Pet. 1:19-21

For those today who are striving to do God’s will in their lives, the Holy Spirit is likewise required for their ultimate success in realizing “full assurance of faith” in all of God’s promises. It is through the help and influence of his Spirit by which his people grow in the understanding of God’s plan, and through which they also develop, day by day, into the image of the Heavenly Father’s character attributes—summed up in love.—John 16:13; I John 4:16

LIMITED FAITH—LIMITED ASSURANCE

Most in the professed Christian world would no doubt claim that they have faith and assurance. However, in the majority of cases, it is of a very limited scope. The assurance of God's promises is largely thought of as applying to only a relatively small percentage of the vast billions of mankind who have ever lived. For the rest, their fate is concluded to be eternal destruction of one kind or another. The same holds true with the general outlook for the earth itself, with many holding to the belief that the literal earth is doomed to be destroyed.

Such limited faith in the full testimony of God's Word, of necessity, will result in limited assurance of his promises. If we believe that the God of the universe is unable, or unloving, so as to not provide a full opportunity by which his human creation might be recovered back to harmony with him, our assurance of his noble designs is sorely limited. If, too, we suppose that he will destroy the earth, the beautiful home he created for man, how can we conclude anything except that it was all done in vain. Here again, the "sure word of prophecy" provides assurance, but only to those with sufficient faith. "Thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD." "The earth abideth for ever."—Isa. 45:18; Eccles. 1:4

SIN AND DEATH

To more fully understand and gain assurance concerning God's promises found in the Scriptures, it is necessary that we examine some of the details, the

substance, of his eternal plans and purposes. These also are to be found in his Word. Thus, if the Bible is to mean to us what it should, we must accept it in its entirety as the inspired Word of God. Early in its pages we are informed that our first parents were created in the image of God. This means that they were perfect and endowed with the divine qualities of love, sympathy, and understanding. Surely, if the earth today were filled with such people, there would be none of the ugly evils which presently afflict mankind.—Gen. 1:27,28

These perfect specimens of humanity were instructed to obey God's law and were informed that disobedience would lead to death. (Gen. 2:17) They disobeyed, and the death sentence fell upon them. Soon, more trouble began. Cain murdered his brother Abel, and murder still continues. The downward course of the human race has been constant. The record reveals that less than two thousand years after the fall of man "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."—Gen. 6:5

The Flood destroyed that evil social order, but shortly afterward sin and selfishness again began to increase, and every generation since has experienced its terrible results. There have been wars and a host of other distressing manifestations of the fact that the human race is indeed fallen and incapable of rescuing itself from the downward pull of sin. The Bible attests to this, as do the pages of secular history.—Rom. 3:9-19,23

RELIEF PROMISED

In every generation, however, there were a few who endeavored to maintain their belief in God, and

who tried to stem the tide of human selfishness. Abraham was one of these, as discussed in the foregoing pages. God made a wonderful promise to Abraham, assuring him that through his “seed,” or progeny, all the families of the earth would be blessed. When Abraham demonstrated his complete faith in God by his willingness to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering, God confirmed the promise by his oath.—Gen. 12:3; 22:15-18

This promise was passed on to Isaac and later to Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. (Gen. 26:4; 28:14) When Jacob died, it became the heritage of the nation of Israel as a whole. To the devout of Israel this promise to Abraham was the basis of their hope in a coming Messiah. As they understood it, the Messiah would establish a powerful government in Israel, one which would reach out and bless all the families, or nations, of the earth.

The greatest event ever to take place in the earth up to that time was the birth of Jesus, who had been sent into the world to fulfill the Messianic promises. However, the birth of Jesus received little publicity at the time. The shepherds, to whom the announcement of Jesus’ birth was made by the angels, no doubt did what they could to spread the news, but this was scant publication of an event so important to mankind. The wise men who came later were greatly impressed, and they probably spread the news to some extent. Perhaps the greatest notice the birth of Jesus received was in connection with Herod’s attempt to destroy the child by the slaughter of all the Hebrew children in that area. Thus, as today, the good was temporarily overshadowed by the evil.

Regardless of the amount of attention given to the birth of Jesus at the time, one of the greatest events in history had occurred. It was a ray of light in the nighttime of human experience, for the one whom the Creator had promised to redeem mankind from the forces of sin and death was born. To be sure, he was born in a lowly manger, but his birth was announced by God's holy angels. He was born for the eventual role of being a Wonderful Counselor, a Mighty God, an Everlasting Father, and The Prince of Peace.—Isa. 9:6,7

MESSIAH AND KING

Jesus was also born to be the great Messiah and King of promise. His disciples believed that this was his destiny, and indeed it was. They expected him to set up his kingdom immediately, first to deliver Israel from the Roman yoke of bondage, and then to take over the rulership of the world. However, while Jesus demonstrated by his miracles that he was capable of accomplishing great things, the disciples saw little or no evidence of a new government being formed under his leadership.

What they did see was increasing hostility toward Jesus by the religious rulers. The disciples did not understand Jesus' attitude in the face of the rising tide of opposition. He told them he intended to go to Jerusalem and expected to be arrested and put to death. They could not harmonize this with their expectations concerning their Master. Peter advised Jesus not to go to Jerusalem, and later he tried to prevent his arrest by the use of the sword.—Matt. 16:21-23; 20:18,19; John 18:10,11

However, this was all in vain. Jesus was determined to give himself up to his enemies, although he could have asked his Heavenly Father for the help of the holy angels had he believed it to be the divine will for him. (Matt. 26:53) Though their hearts were anguished, the disciples could do nothing to change this course of events. Their Messiah and King was betrayed and arrested. He was brought before priests and rulers to be tried, spat upon, beaten, to have a crown of thorns placed upon his brow, and to be nailed to a cross, where he was allowed to die.

THE REDEEMER

It was by the sacrifice of his life that Jesus provided redemption from sin and death for all mankind. In addition to being the future King of the world, he was now the Redeemer of the human race. At that time, however, the disciples did not understand this, and they were bewildered by the fact that their Master had allowed his enemies to put him to death. Their great joy over his birth and miraculous ministry had been eclipsed by frustration, sadness and confusion occasioned by his death.

The faith of the disciples was so firmly established in the fact of his Messiahship that they paid little attention to certain of his statements indicating that he expected to die at the hands of his enemies. How could this happen to their Messiah? When he was crucified they recalled vaguely his promise that he would be raised from death on "the third day," and they clung to this as their last hope.—Matt. 16:21; Luke 9:22

Early in the morning of that third day, certain women went to the tomb to complete the embalming

of Jesus' body, and they found it empty. An angel explained that their Master was not there, that he had risen. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene and instructed her to go and tell his disciples that he was no longer dead. (Luke 24:1-10; John 20:11-18) Later that day, Jesus appeared as a stranger to two of his disciples on the way to Emmaus, and upon his asking them the cause of their sadness, they explained what had happened and added, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done."—Luke 24:13-21

From the prophecies of the Old Testament, Jesus pointed out to these two disciples that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and die, and that the promises of his glory as Messiah and King would be fulfilled later. After Jesus disappeared from their sight these disciples said to each other, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"—vss. 26-32

Doubtless the hearts of all the disciples burned within them when they became convinced that their Master had been raised from the dead. However, few aside from Jesus' own dedicated followers believed that this great miracle had occurred. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was the most remarkable and wonderful event in world history, yet little attention was given to it. The good news concerning it as proclaimed by his faithful followers fell mostly upon deaf ears.

COMMEMORATION NOW

On the last Friday in March, and the Sunday following, the death and resurrection of Jesus will

be commemorated by hundreds of millions. There will be much rejoicing, inspirational music, and even parades. Many churches will have their largest attendance of the year, and eloquent sermons will be preached. Yet the real meaning of the death and resurrection of Jesus is still unknown by the majority of people. Indeed, many who preach on these days will themselves be in confusion as to these things, as will most in their congregations.

These two great events—Jesus' death and resurrection—were critical to the success of God's plan. Without the death of Jesus, mankind would continue to remain under condemnation to death, and therefore there could not be a new morning of joy for the human race. However, because Jesus gave his life a "ransom for all," and thus made provision for the setting aside of the death sentence, the joyous morning promised will yet come true. (Ps. 30:5) The great fact of Jesus' death as man's Redeemer will be "testified in due time" to all people.—I Tim. 2:3-6

ASSURANCE THROUGH HIS RESURRECTION

A dead Redeemer could not deliver mankind from death, nor could a dead King rule over and bless all the families of the earth, as God had promised Abraham. Hence, the next great step in the outworking of God's plan for human salvation was the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The Heavenly Father demonstrated his power to fulfill his promises by raising Jesus from the dead. (Acts 2:32; I Cor. 15:3,4) This shows that nothing can successfully interfere with the accomplishment of God's loving design for the uplift of the human race from the degradation caused by disobedience to his law.

Truly, then, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was a shining ray of hope for a distraught and dying world of mankind. In the present dark world of chaos and suffering, the people in general are without a true knowledge of God. He knows this. However, when his “judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” (Isa. 26:9) That day of judgment is still future. Concerning it, the Apostle Paul explains that God has “appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man [Christ Jesus] whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”—Acts 17:31

ASSURANCE ONLY THROUGH GOD’S PLAN

There is no assurance of peace and quietness, spoken of in our opening text, to be found anywhere in the world today. Only when we look to God’s divine plan, as presented to us in his Word, do we have hope. In that plan Jesus is the Prince of Peace, the future teacher and righteous judge of the people, and the one who will enlighten all mankind. In him we see the great Messiah of promise, and the one who will be the new and righteous King of earth.

We have the assurance that the whole plan of the Creator, centered in Jesus, will have a glorious outcome in the earth, because the Father “gave his only begotten Son,” and raised him from the dead. (John 3:16) May our commemoration of Jesus’ death and resurrection in the coming weeks of this year inspire us all with a greater desire than ever before to tell the whole world the blessed tidings and assurance of the kingdom centered in him! ■

The Lord Will Provide

Key Verse: “And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.”
—Genesis 22:8

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 22:1-14

human family through the Heavenly Father gave instructions that would reveal the depth of Abraham’s character under extraordinary circumstances.

“It came to pass after these things that God did tempt [test] Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”
—Gen. 22:1,2

As an immediate response, Abraham arose early the following morning and journeyed with his son, Isaac, and two servants for three days until they had reached the place that God directed him to go. He instructed the young men who accompanied them to remain behind while he went to worship. Abraham,

AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE of faith in God during Old Testament times was portrayed by Abraham, whose love for and obedience to the Heavenly Father were accounted to him for righteousness. (Gal. 3:6) Over a period of many years, Abraham had various experiences which were designed to develop his confidence in God’s promise to bless the entire

his seed. In today’s lesson the

while carrying the knife and the fire, then traveled onward with Isaac, who brought the wood for his own sacrifice.—vss. 3-6

Since he could observe that both the fire and the wood were available, it was very natural for Isaac to inquire of his father, “Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” (vs. 7) Our Key Verse reflects Abraham’s absolute confidence that the entire matter would be overruled by divine providence, as he responded that God would provide the lamb.

It is apparent that Isaac acquiesced fully in the matter since Abraham then built an altar, put the wood in place and bound his son upon it as a sacrifice. As Abraham stretched forth his hand to slay Isaac, a voice from heaven declared God’s approval of this obedience and that no harm should come to his son, but a ram caught in a nearby thicket was to be sacrificed instead. With humble gratitude Abraham then named this location Jehovah-jireh, which signifies “In this place it shall be provided.”—vss. 9-14

Of major importance in considering the details of the foregoing is recognition that here Abraham typifies the Heavenly Father, who offered his only begotten Son to be a sacrifice for the human family. (John 3:16) At the time of Christ’s earthly sojourn when he desired to be baptized, John the Baptist made the following declaration, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”—John 1:29

When the conditions outlined in the fulfillment of the Lord’s prayer, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,” come to pass, there will be eternal rejoicing by the human family. (Matt. 6:10) Then the full scope of blessings from the promise made to Abraham will become a reality. Through the spiritual seed of promise, Christ and the church, the entire world will be blessed. (Gal. 3:16,29; Acts 3:25) What a prospect that will be! ■

There Is No God like Thee

Key Verse:
***“O LORD God of
Israel, there is no
God like thee in the
heaven, nor in the
earth; which
keepest covenant,
and shewest mercy
unto thy servants,
that walk before
thee with all their
hearts.”***
—II Chronicles 6:14

Selected Scripture:
II Chronicles 6:12-21

thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.”—I Chron. 22:7,8

After Solomon became king, he acknowledged God’s presence among the nation of Israel as manifested by the Ark of the Covenant which the priests had brought into the newly built Temple. As part of the ceremony of its dedication, Solomon ascended a raised platform in the court of the Temple, and with his palms facing heaven, he bowed his head in prayer.—II Chron. 5:1-6:13

DURING HIS REIGN, SOLO-mon’s father, King David, desired to build a temple to honor God but was denied this privilege. However, he was permitted to assemble the materials for constructing this glorious edifice. He told Solomon, “My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God: But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because

In Our Key Verse, Solomon acknowledges God's supremacy, mercy and faithfulness in keeping his covenant. The balance of this prayer recalls the Heavenly Father's many promises to Israel, and requests forgiveness when the people are defeated by their enemies and repent for their wayward actions.—II Chron. 6:15-42

A proper appreciation of God's dealings with natural Israel should remind us that they were especially favored and called upon to be a nation of kings and priests if they were loyal to the covenant they received at Mount Sinai. On several occasions they were reminded of their blessings for observing God's law or the punishment that would be theirs if they were disobedient.—Lev. 26:3-33

Ultimately when Christ came to the Jews to be their Savior, they rejected him. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."—Matt. 23:37-39

Subsequently, an opportunity was extended for Gentiles to do the will of God as manifested by obedience, cross-bearing and self-denial. Faithfulness in following such a course until the end of life's journey will result in their exaltation as kings and priests to bless the human family in a world marked by righteousness.—Matt. 16:24; Rev. 20:6

How merciful God is that provision has been made for Israel's recovery from blindness. When the body of Christ is completed they will have an opportunity to be fully restored to divine favor. They will then forever receive the Heavenly Father's favor during his soon to be established kingdom on earth.—Rom. 11:25-29 ■

The People Praise the Lord

Key Verse: “When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.”
—II Chronicles 7:3

Selected Scripture:
II Chronicles 7:1-9

The foregoing is one of several Scriptural references reflecting the manifestation of divine acceptance of a burnt offering when the Jews displayed reverence for the Heavenly Father. For example, on one occasion, Israel had again fallen into idol worship. The prophets of Baal called upon their false god to consume a sacrifice at Mount Carmel, but despite their pleadings throughout

AT THE CONCLUSION OF Solomon’s prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and sacrifices offered in connection with the Temple dedication ceremony. This manifested divine approval, and was so magnificent a sight that the priests could not yet enter therein because “the glory of the LORD” filled the Temple.—II Chron. 7:1,2

Our Key Verse illustrates the effect of this vivid portrayal of the divine presence among Israel. All the people responded with reverence and awe, bowing with their faces to the ground in worship and glory to God for his boundless goodness and mercy.

the day, this could not be accomplished. In the evening, Elijah drenched an altar with several barrels of water, upon which a bullock was laid. When he called upon the Lord, fire consumed the burnt sacrifice as well as the wood, stones, dust and even the water in the trench. The people then fell on their faces and worshiped Israel's true God.—I Kings 18:17-39

As appropriate as the praise and worship proved to be in connection with the dedication of Solomon's Temple, the use of thank offerings through blood sacrifices by the king and the people was also an important aspect of demonstrating Israel's special relationship with God. Moreover, Solomon's immense gratitude for this occasion was reflected by his offering of 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. This staggering number seems especially difficult to visualize. The priests were actively involved in administering these sacrifices, and it was necessary for Solomon to consecrate additional space in the court surrounding the Temple because the altar that was used initially could not accommodate all the offerings. Throughout this joyous occasion the Levites also participated by using their musical instruments.—II Chron. 7:4-7

The timing of this celebration occurred when the people from all parts of Israel traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate a special feast. For seven days they lived in booths as a reminder of how God delivered them from Egyptian bondage, and was with them as they wandered in the desert for forty years and lived in tents.—Lev. 23:34-43

Although the week-long feast was an annual requirement, in this special case the Israelites had gathered together to also witness the dedication of the Temple. The activities ended with an extra day of holy convocation. (Lev. 23:36; Num. 29:35) After this Solomon decreed the people should return to their homes. Having completed the dedication of the Temple, Solomon built his palace, and his fame became renowned during a time of Israel's glory.—I Kings 7:1; II Chron. 7:8-11 ■

Pray and Seek God's Face

Key Verse: *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”*
—II Chronicles 7:14

Selected Scripture:
II Chronicles 7:12-22

established if he obeyed God's commands. However, if unfaithful, the nation would go into exile and even the glorious Temple could be destroyed by its enemies.—vss. 17-22

During the early portion of Solomon's reign, he had many impressive achievements which resulted in his personal fame and a relative peace with Israel's neighbors. His immense wealth and great wisdom were legendary, causing other rulers from afar such as the

GOD RESPONDED TO SOLOMON'S prayer of dedication by indicating that he had accepted the Temple by choosing it for worship and to offer sacrifices. He would also hear their prayers for forgiveness made at this place when they repented from wickedness and transgressions.—II Chron. 7:12-16

Our Key Verse emphasizes the necessity for humility and prayer in order for the people of Israel to be restored to God's favor. As part of a stern warning, the Lord informed Solomon that his kingdom would be fully

Queen of Sheba to pay him homage. It might have been supposed that his love for God and faithfulness would cause his kingdom to prosper indefinitely, but such proved not to be the case. During later years, Solomon's loss of reverence for God ultimately led to his monarchy becoming divided after his death.

“For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father.”—I Kings 11:4-6

Many years later, in a vision, the Prophet Ezekiel saw God's glory depart from the Temple when the Babylonians took Judah into captivity. (Ezek. 10:18,19) However, the promise of Israel's future restoration during a time of peace was also prophesied.—Ezek. 43:2-5

Of special significance to us is the fact that Christians are pictured as part of a temple class. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”—I Cor. 3:16,17

Solomon's Temple was established as a place of meeting between God and Israel through its priesthood. The grander application of this illustration will be fulfilled as God will bless the human family through the royal priesthood, consisting of our glorified Lord and his faithful church.—I Pet. 2:9

If we are faithful to our calling we will be empowered to help eradicate death, sorrow, crying and pain. (Rev. 21:3,4) At that time the entire human family will receive God's favor during a kingdom of peace established by the “greater than Solomon,” the Christ, Head and Body. ■

Remembering Christ—Our Passover Lamb

*“Christ our
passover is
sacrificed for us:
Therefore let us
keep the feast.”
—I Corinthians*

5:7,8

ON THAT PORTENTOUS

evening in Jerusalem nearly twenty centuries ago, pious Jews were gathering with their families in preparation for the annual celebration of the feast of the Passover. For one small group, this evening held even greater interest, and premonition. He whom they so dearly loved, and to whom they had been looking for the realization of their long delayed expectations, had been making foreboding statements which both puzzled and troubled them. Only a short time earlier he had told them that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the religious leaders, be killed, and then rise again the third day. On another occasion he had said that he must lay down his life, but would then take it back again.—Matt. 16:21; John 10:15,17

These were strange words from one who had been talking of establishing a kingdom, in which they had been led to believe they would share. When one of his followers objected that Jesus said he would expose himself to suffering and death, the Master used the occasion to invite them, also, to lay down their lives. His words were: "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."—Matt. 16:24,25

Now, having followed his instructions to prepare the Passover, this little band of twelve had gathered with their Master in a private "upper room" to celebrate the feast. (Luke 22:7-13) As they sat together, there came another of those strange statements. "He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."—vss. 15-20

THE BONDAGE IN EGYPT

The Jewish celebration known as the Passover, together with its deep significance, came into being out of the agony and despair of the bondage of the

Israelites in Egypt. They had gone there as a small number at the invitation of Pharaoh, on Joseph's request, in order to escape the famine in the land of Canaan. There they had prospered, and they and their flocks and herds increased mightily.—Gen. 47:1-6; Exod. 1:7

In the course of time, however, there arose a new Pharaoh "which knew not Joseph." As he observed the multiplication of the Jews in their midst he began to fear for the safety of his own people. The burdens which Pharaoh then forced upon the Israelites to restrain their increase became intolerable. They cried to God for relief. In answer to their cries, Moses was sent to deliver them from the hand of their oppressors. Under the direction of God, Moses brought various plagues on the land.—Exod. 1:8-14; 2:23-25; chap. 7-10

THE LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH

The last of these plagues, and the most grievous, was the slaying by the destroying angel of all of the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and of animals. However, the firstborn of the children of Israel were spared. God had instructed the Israelites that, in the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, each household was to slay a lamb "without blemish." The blood of this lamb was to be sprinkled on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses in which it was to be eaten. The lamb was to be eaten "in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs ... his head with his legs." Nothing was to be allowed to remain; anything not consumed was to be burned by fire in the morning.—Exod. 11:1-7; 12:1-10

The manner of eating the lamb was also significant. “Thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD’S passover.” God then told them that he would pass through the land of Egypt that night, and would smite all the firstborn, both man and beast, but the blood of the slain lamb on the door posts and lintels of the homes of the Israelites would protect the firstborn within.—vss. 11-13

At midnight all the firstborn of Egypt, including even the firstborn of Pharaoh, were smitten of the Lord, as well as the firstborn of their cattle. There was not a house of the Egyptians in all the land that escaped. Indeed, so great was their consternation and dismay that Pharaoh rose up in the night. He called Moses and Aaron to him and ordered the Israelites, with their flocks and herds, to leave the land immediately. (vss. 29-42) Thus it was that the mighty hand of God accomplished the release of the nation from their bondage in Egypt. It was the terror and discomfiture occasioned by the plagues brought by the Lord, particularly that final, dread affliction involving the slaying of all the firstborn of the Egyptians, that secured their release.

God admonished the Israelites that “this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.” (Exod. 12:14) When they should finally come into the promised land of Canaan, they were to keep the feast, and explain to their children that it was the sacrifice of the Lord’s Passover. It was to be a continual reminder that God had passed over the

houses where the firstborn of the children of Israel in Egypt dwelt, and delivered them from their oppressors. It was “a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.”—Exod. 12:24-27,42

“THE FIRSTBORN ... ARE MINE”

At the time of the Passover experience in Egypt, God gave instructions on another significant point. He said to Moses, “Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.” (Exod. 13:2) On the eve of the deliverance of the Israelites, the lives of the firstborn alone were in danger. These were God’s special concern, and he had prepared a sure refuge for them—the covering blood of the lamb. All of the firstborn who availed themselves of this blessed provision were saved alive during that terrible night. Therefore, God counted these to be his. “All the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.” (Num. 8:17) These were to be sanctified, or set apart, as his own distinct possession, and to perform special service under his direction.

Later, for convenience, these firstborn were exchanged as a group for the Levitical tribe of Israel. The tribe of Levi thus became the Lord’s, and they were appointed “to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation.” (vss. 18,19) Aaron and his sons, themselves

of the tribe of Levi, were consecrated into the priesthood, the Levites having been chosen to be the priestly tribe. (Num. 26:59; Exod. 28:1-4) In the subsequent division of the land of Canaan the tribe of Levi had no inheritance, but were supported by tithes supplied by the remaining tribes. (Num. 18:20,21) The duties of the Levites and priests were many. Perhaps the most important, however, was on the annual “day of atonement,” when the high priest was to sacrifice the bullock and the Lord’s goat as an offering for sin, “to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year.”—Lev. 16:1-34; 23:26-28

“REMEMBER THIS DAY”

After God directed Moses relative to the setting apart to him of all the firstborn, Moses again reminded the people of the importance of the experience through which they had just passed. “Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ... And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, ... that thou shalt keep this service in this month. ... And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. ... And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.”—Exod. 13:1-16

The “frontlets” here mentioned are believed to have been small leather pouches containing strips of parchment on which were written four passages of Scripture. These dealt specifically with God’s deliverance of the nation from bondage, his promise to

bring them into the land of Canaan, and the setting apart of the firstborn as belonging to him. It is also thought that they contained a summary of the Ten Commandments, instructions to memorialize the Passover, and strict admonitions to teach all these things to their children.

God told them that the memory of all his instructions and commands should be in their hearts. (Deut. 6:6) However, to assist them that they might always walk in his ways, they were instructed also to “write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.” (vs. 9) The frontlets, which were to be bound on their arms, or worn on their foreheads, were to serve as additional reminders of these things. In the New Testament these frontlets are called “phylacteries,” from a Greek word meaning a safeguard, or guard case. (Matt. 23:5) By wearing these on their arms and on their foreheads, the Israelites would be reminded of God’s goodness to them, and of his instructions and commandments, so that they might guard themselves from forsaking his paths.

A SHADOW OF THINGS TO COME

That remarkable experience in the life of the nation of Israel is still most dear to the hearts of reverent Jews the world over. However, it is of special interest to the church of the Gospel Age. The Apostle Paul tells us that those things which happened to Israel were “a shadow of good things to come.” (Heb. 10:1) Jesus was a Jew, born under the Law, and subject to all its provisions and ordinances, including the observance year by year of the feast of the Passover. Accordingly, he and his

twelve disciples had come together in the upper room on that fateful evening for this purpose.

By his knowledge of prophecy, Jesus understood that his time had come, for he was destined, as the Jews' Messiah, to be "cut off." (Dan. 9:24-27) He knew also that the Passover lamb that was slain in Egypt on the fourteenth day of the first month in the evening, and whose blood provided protection for the firstborn of Israel, pictured himself. He was that perfect Lamb of God who would give his life as a ransom for the whole world. (John 1:29) He was about to fulfill all of these prophetic "shadows" by giving his life on behalf of all mankind.

Knowing these things, Jesus spoke to his beloved disciples in that upper room. We again quote the words of Luke's account: "He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:17-20) Anticipating the events of the morrow, when he would complete his sacrifice on the cross and so fulfill the requirements of the Law, we find Jesus initiating a new remembrance, or Memorial, of his impending death as the greater Passover Lamb.

On an earlier occasion the Jews had asked Jesus for a sign that they might believe in him, although just the day before he had fed five thousand from a few loaves and fishes. They reminded him that their

fathers had eaten manna in the desert. Jesus replied: "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The account then tells us that "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."—John 6:48-53

In one sense the Jews were right. How could they eat his flesh, or drink his blood, a practice specifically forbidden under the Law? (Deut. 12:23) This was a "hard saying" to them, and we read from that time many of his followers left, and walked no more with him. (John 6:60,66) We need not think, however, that they fell into the error of some who believe that they actually partake of the literal flesh and blood of the Master. Jesus makes it clear in this passage that he was not speaking literally: "It is the spirit which gives Life. The flesh confers no benefit whatever. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and are Life."—vs. 63, *Weymouth New Testament*

The "bread" and "cup" that Jesus offered to his disciples in the upper room were merely symbols. The bread symbolizes his broken body, and the fruit of the vine his shed blood. (Luke 22:19,20; I Cor. 11:24-26) These together represent the sacrifice of his perfect human life on behalf of mankind. Our partaking of the bread and cup symbolizes our receiving the value, or merit, of Jesus' sacrifice,

and manifests our faith in him as our Redeemer. The faith thus manifested is the basis of our justification, or righteousness, accounted to us by God. "Therefore," Paul states, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1) How glad we are for this loving provision of the Heavenly Father on behalf of his "firstborn" of the present Gospel Age.

FIRSTFRUITS, AND AFTERFRUITS

Only the "church of the firstborn" have so far received the merit of Christ's sacrifice. (Heb. 12:23) These firstborn are also referred to in the Scriptures as "firstfruits." (James 1:18; Rev. 14:4) This implies that there will also be "afterfruits." Indeed, just as it was God's purpose that not only should the firstborn of Israel be delivered, but that the entire nation should be released from bondage, so also will it be in due time with the whole world of mankind. Jesus died, not for a few, but for all mankind. He "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." He said that "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth." Herein is God's great love for his fallen, human creation manifested. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—I Tim. 2:5,6; John 5:28,29; John 3:16

There is a "due time" and order for these blessings to be bestowed upon mankind. The Apostle Paul makes this clear in his treatise about the resurrection. He tells us that "as in Adam all die," all who come into Christ "shall all" (Continued on page 36)

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(Continued from page 31) be made alive.” Then he explains, “But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits.” This is Christ and the church—the “first-born” class. Then, Paul continues, “afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming [Greek: presence].” These are the remainder of mankind, prefigured by the entire nation of Israel, all of whom were released from Egyptian bondage following the Passover night and deliverance of the firstborn.—I Cor. 15:22,23

Jesus died on the cross nearly 2,000 years ago, and mankind is still going down into the grave. This is so because “Christ the firstfruits” is not yet complete. In another place the Apostle Paul tells us that Christ is not one, but many: “As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. ... Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” (I Cor. 12:12,27) During this Gospel Age, God has been selecting and testing those who shall make up this “body of Christ.” He has been taking out of the world a “little flock,” “a people for his name.”—Luke 12:32; Acts 15:14

These have accepted Jesus’ invitation to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. Having faith in his shed blood, they have presented themselves “a living sacrifice.” (Matt. 16:24; Rom. 12:1) Like the Levitical tribe, they have no inheritance in the land, for their treasure is in heaven. (Matt. 6:20) These, “by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.” (Rom. 2:7) They desire to be of a royal priesthood, and to live and reign with Christ in God’s kingdom, for the purpose of blessing all the families of the earth.—I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 20:6; Gen. 22:18

OUR PRESENT RESPONSIBILITY

As we partake of the symbols of Jesus' sacrifice we appropriate to ourselves, by faith, the benefits of that sacrifice. However, we do more than this. We consecrate our lives to the doing of the Heavenly Father's will, and to the transforming of our characters into the image of his dear Son. (Rom. 12:1,2; 8:29) We also, having by faith partaken of the justifying merit of Christ's sacrifice, are given the privilege of laying down our lives in sacrifice, filling up "that which is behind" of the sufferings of Christ. (Col. 1:24) This is not with reference to his role as the Passover Lamb. Only Christ Jesus could take away the sin of the world and guarantee its eventual release from bondage to sin and death. Rather, our sacrifice is for the purpose of developing us as sympathetic priests for the great future work of reconciling the redeemed world to God.—II Cor. 5:18-20

The selection and proving of this firstfruits—firstborn—class is the glorious work of the present age. This explains the seeming delay in the fruition of God's plan of salvation for mankind. When this firstfruits class is complete, the church joined to her Head, then will the kingdom of God be set up in power and glory. Then will the merit of Christ's redeeming blood be applied on behalf of the whole world of mankind. Then will begin the work of restitution of mankind back to the glory and beauty and perfection that had been father Adam's in the Garden of Eden. Then will have come the due time for the afterfruits, when God's law will be written, not on frontlets, nor on tables of stone, but in the grateful, loving hearts of all men.—Matt. 6:10; Acts 3:21; Heb. 10:16

The development of the Lord's special people continues. As spiritual firstborns, whose deliverance must precede that of the world, we are still under the protection of the covering blood of the Lamb, "Christ our passover." Our sacrificial work is nearing completion, and we look forward, longingly, to the consummation of our hope of being with our Lord, and of blessing all the families of the earth. Until then, however, we are ever mindful of the sacrifice of our Lord and Master, and we reverently keep the Memorial of his death on Calvary's cross. Humbly, we partake once again of the symbolic "bread" and "cup," doing so in grateful and loving remembrance of him. ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

MARCH 1—"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—Philippians 4:7 (Z. '03-8 Hymn 233)

MARCH 8—"God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."—I Corinthians 12:18 (Z. '03-59 Hymn 154)

MARCH 15—"The just shall live by faith."—Hebrews 10:38 (Z. '95-92,93 Hymn 263)

MARCH 22—"If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."—I Corinthians 11:31,32 (Z. '03-3,4 Hymn 161A)

MARCH 29—"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."—Ephesians 2:8 (Z. '03-90 Hymn 191)

“These Sayings of Mine”

“Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.”

—*Matthew 7:24,25*

OUR OPENING TEXT IS part of the concluding words of Jesus to his Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew chapters 5-7. In ending his sermon, the Master compares hearing his sayings, and zealously obeying them, to the work of building upon a rock. Let us examine some of the “sayings,” and the work they should stimulate in us, which we find in this most notable sermon.

At the beginning of Jesus’ sermon we find what has come to be known as the Beatitudes.

(Matt. 5:2-12) Though the word Beatitude is not found in the Scriptures, its meaning, which is “blessedness,” is central to the nine virtues listed by our Lord in these verses. Blessed, the Master says, are the “poor in spirit,” the humble ones, and those who “mourn”

in heartfelt sympathy for the groaning creation. Blessed are the “meek,” who are teachable, and they that “hunger and thirst after righteousness,” whom he will fill with understanding. Blessed are the “merciful,” an expression of the divine quality of love. Blessed are the “pure in heart” and the “peacemakers,” requirements to be God’s children and to see him. Finally, blessed are those who are “persecuted for righteousness’ sake” and whom “men shall revile,” for they will receive a “reward in heaven.”

In verse 13, Jesus’ sayings continue. “Ye are the salt of the earth.” He then warns us against losing our savor, which would make us unprofitable, just as salt would serve no purpose without its distinctive flavor. The savor we possess is not of ourselves, rather it is the truth and its spirit, which come from God. To be the “salt of the earth,” we must be zealous in our study of the truth and in the application of its spirit in our lives. Otherwise, like salt with no flavor, we will be “good for nothing, but to be cast out.”

REFLECTING THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

“Ye are the light of the world,” not to be hidden, but to “shine before men,” that they may see your “good works, and glorify” the Heavenly Father. (vss. 14-16) In this saying of Jesus, we again understand that the light which is to shine from us in the form of good works is not our own. Our righteousness is “as filthy rags,” and could not cause men to glorify God. (Isa. 64:6) The good works which result from letting our light shine are possible because the source of that light is the Heavenly Father. It is the light of divine truth which the Lord has caused to shine into our hearts, and which he bids us to

reflect, through our words and actions, to others.—
II Cor. 4:6; I Pet. 2:9

How wonderfully does this light glorify God. It is the truth of his plan, in which is revealed his infinite wisdom, his almighty power, his righteous justice, and his boundless love. These attributes of the divine character, harmoniously working together, reveal God's glory, and those who see the light of truth behold this glory. "Holding forth the word of life," as Paul states the matter, is one of the divine instructions which we are privileged to follow.—Phil. 2:16

The Lord's sayings concerning the light which we are to reflect present a double lesson to us. We are to render obedience unto them to be both doctrinally informed, but to also be instructed concerning such character qualities as will bring us into full heart harmony with his teachings and example. These are all part of the light of truth, and they all have a bearing on how we serve God and shine as lights to others.

THE LAW MAGNIFIED

In his sayings on the mount, Jesus explained that he did not come to "destroy the law, ... but to fulfil." (Matt. 5:17) He fulfilled it by keeping it perfectly. More importantly, however, he magnified the Law and made it honorable by displaying its righteous principles, summed up in love, in all his words and actions. (Matt. 22:37-40) This "righteousness," Jesus said, must be in us, and unless it exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, he adds, "ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." —Matt. 5:20

The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was largely that of outward show. They made a great

display of piety to be seen of men, but inwardly they were “full of dead men’s bones.” (Matt. 23:27,28) The righteousness which exceeds this is heart purity and a zeal for God and for his work which does not seek the honor of men. Such righteousness is attained, as Paul states in several places, by keeping the “spirit” of the Law, not the “letter.”—Rom. 2:29; 7:6; II Cor. 3:6

Jesus illustrates the true righteousness of God’s law in his sayings by discussing various circumstances which may come into our lives, and the contrasting methods of properly dealing with them under the old “letter” of the Law versus the “spirit” of the Law. Anger towards our brethren, disagreements, improper desires, marital responsibilities, the making of oaths, and retaliation towards those who wrong us, are matters in which the Master points out how the spirit of the Law far exceeds the mere letter in dealing with such issues.—Matt. 5:21-42

In the foregoing verses the Master also tells us that if our “right eye” offends, “pluck it out,” and if our “right hand” offends, “cut it off.” (vss. 29,30) He does not here speak literally, but figuratively, admonishing us to sacrifice every precious earthly thing which might hinder us from serving righteousness, even things that might seem as important to us as our right eye or right hand is to the natural body. It takes those who are truly dedicated to Christ-like character building to obey injunctions of this kind. The flesh urges moderation, rationalizing that Jesus did not mean we should be as radical as his words appear to state. However, we should not listen to such reasoning of the flesh, which “exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.”—II Cor. 10:5

A most challenging saying of Jesus in which he contrasts the old law with the new, is that pertaining to our enemies. He says, “love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.” In doing so, he continues, we will be like our Heavenly Father, for he causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall upon the just and upon the unjust. If we love only those who love us, Jesus further adds, we are no better than sinful “publicans.” However, if we display that comprehensive love, which reaches out to bless all mankind, we will be “perfect,” or complete, even as our “Father which is in heaven is perfect.”—Matt. 5:43-48

THE MODEL PRAYER

One of the most important sayings of the Master on the mount is the model prayer which he provided as a pattern for his followers to use throughout the Gospel Age. (Matt 6:9-13) If we have a desire to serve God in an acceptable manner we will joyfully commune with him daily and seek to be guided by this outline of the fundamental principles of Christian prayer. We will delight to address God as “Our Father,” and will recognize the hallowedness of his name. Prominent in our prayers will be the desire to see the world blessed by the setting up of God’s kingdom—“Thy kingdom come”—on earth as it is in heaven. We will not make elaborate requests for ourselves, but ask only for the needful things, both temporal and spiritual—“Give us this day our daily bread.”

Realizing how far short we come in thought, word and deed, and our great need for divine mercy, we will also petition God for his forgiveness. Meanwhile,

we must forgive those who trespass against us, else we cannot expect his compassion toward us. “Lead us not”—that is, abandon us not—in temptation, the Lord teaches us to pray. God does not tempt his people, and will not abandon us when we are tempted of the Adversary. (James 1:13) Rather, he will “deliver us from evil,” and desires that we seek his delivering power and providences through prayer.

HEAVENLY TREASURES

We are not to lay up treasures on earth, but in heaven. (Matt. 6:19-21) This saying of the Master is one of the most exacting and challenging. Earthly treasures are often the source of man’s security, and it requires great faith to realize that our eternal security is to be found in the promises of God. Other scriptures indicate, appropriately so, that reasonable provision is to be made for our temporal needs, and for those dependent upon us. (I Tim. 5:8) However, our interpretation of what is reasonable must be soberly considered, since it might ultimately make a difference between our faithfulness or unfaithfulness in God’s sight.

The “light of the body,” Jesus explained, “is the eye,” and if our eye looks in a singular direction, our entire being “shall be full of light.” (Matt. 6:22) This statement immediately follows the Lord’s admonition to lay up treasure in heaven, and that wherever our treasure is, there will our hearts be also. The “single” eye, therefore, well represents a whole-hearted setting of our affections on things above. This is in contrast to a compromising attitude, an “eye” which tries to focus doubly on heavenly and earthly treasures. A single eye suggests seeking

“first the kingdom of God,” in the assurance that if we do so, all our temporal needs will be “added unto” us. (vss. 31-34) The clearness of our spiritual vision depends upon having this mindset. We cannot “serve two masters,” nor can we serve God and the “mammon” of earthly treasures.—vs. 24

“ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS”

In our opening text, Jesus not only admonishes us to hear his sayings, but he also says we must “do them.” This implies works which will put into practice the words and instructions we have heard from him. The Apostle Paul, writing about Jesus Christ and his true followers, said, “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Titus 2:14) The faithful people of God in every age have been zealous of good works. Those who have professed to be his people, but have been lukewarm toward the things he has asked them to do, are likened to those whom the Lord addressed, saying, “I will spue thee out of my mouth.”—Rev. 3:16

The work of God’s people, which is also his work, during the present age has been the building up of themselves in their “most holy faith,” and their spiritual development as “new creatures” in Christ Jesus. (Jude 1:20; II Cor. 5:17) Paul shows that it is important to build with good materials, and upon a proper foundation. The foundation upon which we build, the apostle explains, is Christ, and we are encouraged to erect an enduring character structure using “gold, silver, precious stones,” which will endure the fiery trials and tests sure to come to us. To build with perishable materials such as “wood,

hay, stubble,” which will be consumed by the trials of life, will cause great loss to us as new creatures. —I Cor. 3:11-15

The Bible provides many illustrations in order that we may comprehend all that is involved in the work we are divinely commissioned to do. One of these is that of a bride making herself ready for marriage. In this picture, the church is the prospective bride, and is preparing herself to be united with the “bridegroom,” who is Christ. (Matt. 25:1-10; II Cor. 11:2) While each individual member of the prospective bride class has a work to do, it is the collective work of all the members that makes the bride complete and ready for the marriage. As each one works, they help, support and encourage the other members of the bride. Thus, they are presented to the bridegroom as “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: ... holy and without blemish.”—Eph. 5:27

Those who are zealous of good works will understand that they are not taking an easy path in order to serve the Lord, but have entered in “at the strait gate,” and are walking in a “narrow” way. (Luke 13:24; Matt. 7:14) Much effort is required, because it is a way of humility, sacrifice and suffering. It is found only by those who have fully vowed to seek the Lord at the cost of weariness, ridicule, and finally of life itself. “Few there be that find” this way, Jesus says.

MORE SAYINGS OF THE MASTER

In Matthew chapter 7 we find several more important sayings of the Master. He begins, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” (vs. 1) To do so might well represent a hypocritical attitude on our part. We will likely feel, mistakenly so, that others’

faults loom large, while ours are only minor. On the contrary, Jesus says we are not to “cast out the mote,” or small speck, from our brother’s eye, but to “cast out the beam,” or large log, from our own eye. (vss. 3-5) Paul said we should do nothing whereby our “brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.”—Rom. 14:21

Jesus also provides this encouraging saying: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” (Matt. 7:7,8) We, as fallen human beings, know how important it is to give good gifts to our children. How much more, the Lord says, will our loving Heavenly Father “give good things to them that ask him.”—vs. 11

We are to “beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing.” However, the Master adds, “ye shall know them by their fruits,” that is, their actions. (vss. 16,20) Jesus adds a final warning in his sayings on the mount, saying that a mere profession of love for him, or of works done in his name, is not sufficient. Some may do this, and receive the reply, “I never knew you.” This is a heart-searching saying for all of us. Only those who “doeth the will of my Father,” Jesus says, “shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (vss. 21-23) Indeed, throughout the entire Sermon on the Mount, Jesus outlines one detail after another of the divine will, and finishes the sermon by saying that only those who keep “these sayings” will enter the kingdom. Their spiritual house will stand because they have built upon a rock.—vss. 24-27

SAYINGS OF THE APOSTLES

After Pentecost, the apostles added more details of the divine will. Their sayings are in full harmony with the words of Jesus. The Apostle Paul encourages us to engage in the work of transformation, by the “renewing” of our minds, and to “work out” our “salvation.” (Rom. 12:2; Phil. 2:12) In doing this, however, Paul assures us that God is also working in us “to will and do of his good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:13) The task is too great for us to accomplish alone, so we are glad to be assured that God supervises this work. He also provides the indwelling of his Spirit, which gives us zeal, courage, and guidance needed to carry out our part.

The Apostle Peter says, “gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end,” words which suggest a long and arduous undertaking. (I Pet. 1:13) When Nehemiah and his co-laborers were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, they did not so much as take off their clothes at night. They had to be continually ready to meet the enemy, and at the same time carry on with the work. (Neh. 4:15-23) Such is our position today. Our adversary, the devil, is seeking to devour us, and while we resist him by being “steadfast in the faith,” we must continue the work of building the walls of our salvation.—I Pet. 5:8,9

Moreover, the sayings which we are to keep also include the privileges of being “ambassadors for Christ” and proclaiming the “gospel of the kingdom.” (II Cor. 5:20; Matt. 24:14) Faithfulness in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ does not interfere with the work of applying the other sayings of Jesus. Rather, it augments that work, for the more we tell the Truth to others, the greater will be its power in our own lives.

THE GREAT OBJECTIVE

The work of God in us now is in preparation for what he has promised to do in the next age, namely, the blessing of all the families of the earth. (Gen. 22:18) We are being trained to be part of that “seed” which will administer these blessings. (Gal. 3:29) What greater future purpose can such training have than to be fitted to administer God’s law to the poor groaning creation in their “day of visitation.” (I Pet. 2:12) How wonderfully divine wisdom is displayed in the arrangements he has made for our preparations to be “kings and priests unto God.”—Rev. 1:6

While the Gospel Age work of preparing the church to live and reign with Christ a thousand years is nearing completion, we are highly honored with the privilege of still being engaged, even at this hour, in building upon the rock of Christ and heeding his sayings. Yet, more than ever before, the enemies of the Lord, the Truth, and his people, are endeavoring to attract us away from our spiritual vocation. All sorts of temptations—to rest from our work, to be misled by erroneous thoughts or speculative interpretations—are being presented.

In response to such opposition, however, may we always have the courage to be as Nehemiah and his faithful coworkers. They “had a mind to work,” and said to their enemies, “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down ... to you.” Most importantly, they realized that “this work was wrought of our God.” (Neh. 4:6; 6:3,16) Ours is the work of keeping “these sayings” of the Master, and doing them faithfully, even unto death. Thus might we hear the words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”—Matt. 25:21 ■

Taking Heed Lest We Fall

*“Wherefore let him
that thinketh he
standeth take heed
lest he fall.”*

*—II Corinthians
10:12*

THE MEMORIAL SUPPER

which the consecrated followers of Christ will observe this month was not instituted by Jesus to be merely a seasonal reminder of his life of dedication and service to God, and of his death as man's Redeemer. These are, indeed, the all-important basis of our fellowship with him. However, the bread and the cup of our Lord's Memorial are but empty symbols if their meaning does not also have a significant personal impact in our lives. It is our hope that this two-part article will bring to mind, in a very practical way, our continuing responsibilities to God, the Truth and our brethren.

Our opening text is only one of many in the sacred record which reminds us of the possibility of falling away from the position of special favor with God. The apostle's words also indicate clearly that there is a very definite part we must play in maintaining this standing—a part which he describes by the expression, “take heed.” To take heed means to look

at, to behold, to beware, to perceive. Taking heed, to the Christian, means to be continually aware and alert concerning his spiritual affairs, so that he may know of the dangers ahead, and be prepared to deal with them.

The apostle indicates that the importance of our taking heed is in order that we may not fall. That there is danger of the Christian falling is prophetically indicated through the words of the psalmist, saying, “A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.” (Ps. 91:7) A study of these words and their surrounding context indicate that the reason ascribed for some not falling is that they dwell “in the secret place of the most High,” and have made his truth their “shield and buckler.”—vss. 1,4

Obviously no one could fall away from a standing with God unless he had at one time enjoyed such a standing. Therefore, it is important to have clearly in mind just what it means to stand in order that we may intelligently take heed lest we fall. The Scriptures outline our standing from various viewpoints, and as we put together the various testimonies of the Bible bearing on the subject we learn that to stand in God’s sight is a very definite and essential thing. Consequently, the possibility of falling from this standing is a most serious matter to be considered.

STANDING IN THE LORD

The Apostle Paul wrote: “Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.” (Phil. 4:1) To “stand fast in the Lord” means to trust in the merit of Jesus’ shed blood, and, through full consecration

and immersion of our wills into God's will, to be counted as members of the anointed company of which Christ is the head. What a blessed standing this is! It implies and requires humility in recognizing our need of the saving grace of God through the blood. It calls for the full and unqualified devotion of our wills to the doing of the divine will. To take heed in maintaining this standing means a daily searching of our hearts to make sure that we have no will of our own that is in opposition to the will of God as it is expressed through our head, Christ Jesus.

To stand in the Lord also implies a standing along other lines. In another place Paul said, "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong." (I Cor. 16:13, *English Standard Version*) The faith in which we are to stand firm is the "faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3) This faith has been, to a large extent, lost sight of by churchianity in general. This is the same faith which was first of all delivered to Abraham, then to Isaac and Jacob, and to all the prophets. The great central theme of this faith is the Messianic hope of a future kingdom to bless all nations, and God's High Calling to the Christian to be joint-heirs with Christ in that kingdom. Let us be sure we are standing fast in that faith, and that it has not become a mere tale, or old and uninteresting.

Paul indicated that it would require strength to stand in the faith. "Act like men, be strong." It has always required courage to stand in the pure faith of the Gospel. This is manifest by the rapid falling away that occurred after the apostles fell asleep. (II Thess. 2:3) Not long after their death, the pure doctrines of the faith were corrupted, and those

seeking spiritual nourishment were fed with contaminated food. Even today, many feel that these substitutes for the faith once delivered to the saints are the more desirable. However, we should always remember that if we want to dwell close to the Lord in our spirit of fellowship we must be interested in what he is doing, and spend our energy where he is working. That is only possible as we stand fast in the faith of God's plan.

If we are truly standing in the Lord, we will be standing in the liberty of Christ. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Gal. 5:1) To stand in the liberty of Christ means to have liberty to do everything that Christ would have us do. Thus it implies that we cannot be subject to the will of man, nor to man-made institutions. If we find ourselves "entangled again" in bondage to the will of man, and thereby held back from saying and doing the things which we know to be pleasing to God and to Christ, then we are not wholly standing fast in the liberty of Christ. Let us likewise, then, take heed along this line in order that we may not fall.

The apostle mentions still another important phase of our standing in the Lord, namely, that of standing fast "in one spirit." He said, "Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." (Phil. 1:27) There is a remarkable blending of important Christian principles set forth in these words. The apostle urges that we stand fast in one

spirit, not by compromising the faith, but by striving together for the faith centered in the Gospel. How different this is from the modern recipe for unity of the spirit, so prevalent in today's churches, which advocates unity not by striving together for the faith, but by ceasing to strive, contend, or even study the faith once delivered unto the saints.

It is in the spirit of the "truth of the gospel" that we are to stand together. (Col. 1:5) We cannot stand in the spirit unless we strive together for the truths contained in the Gospel message. Standing together in the spirit is very closely associated with striving together for the faith. To continue in such a stand will require courage, strength, fortitude, and the help of God to enable us to strive together, to contend, and to fight the good fight of faith. This means that we must be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."—Eph. 6:10

PRIDE GOETH BEFORE DESTRUCTION

There are various danger signals by which we may be forewarned of an impending fall, and these are readily discernible if we are alertly taking heed. One of these is the spirit of pride. "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." (Prov. 16:18) How easy it is for the spirit of pride to enter into our hearts, causing us to be haughty and self-important. The spirit of humility engenders meekness, gentleness, teachableness, patience, and forbearance. How important, then, that none "think of himself more highly than he ought to think."—Rom. 12:3

Another danger sign is that of indifference toward the truth of God's Word. The Word of God is his

voice speaking to us. If we are to maintain our standing in him, how alert we should be to listen to his voice, and how attentive and obedient we should be to the message. Our standing in the Lord depends upon our obedience to his truth, for it is by the Truth that we are sanctified. (John 17:17) Satan would like to have us believe that to stand in the Lord is one thing, and that to stand in the Truth is something else. He would like to have us believe that it does not make any difference where we stand with respect to the Word of truth as long as we love the Lord. However, this is one of those wiles of the devil by which he is endeavoring to draw us away from God by causing us to lose our appreciation of his glorious message of truth, through which he speaks to us and guides us in the narrow way. Let us continue to cherish the Truth, to feed upon it, that thereby we may grow strong, and remain strong, so that we will not fall, because we have made the truth our buckler and our shield.

Failure to assemble together with the brethren, or indifference to the privilege of fellowship, is another danger signal. God has so arranged the church's affairs as to make fellowship with others of like precious faith one of the important means of grace. If we fail to appreciate this provision of the Lord for our strengthening in the faith and in the spirit, whenever possible, we are neglecting one of the important means by which we are kept from falling.

The spirit of "bitterness, and wrath, and anger" is another danger signal which should be quickly discerned by those who are properly taking heed. (Eph. 4:31) These unholy manifestations of character are the very opposite to the spirit of love, which is

the Spirit of God. To permit their entrance into our hearts, and still worse, to harbor and act upon them, will sooner or later result in great loss as to our standing in Christ Jesus. Let us diligently take heed in this respect, by quickly and effectively rooting out every evidence of these sinful qualities from our hearts through prayer, and instead seek to be filled with, and controlled by, the spirit of love.

We should also not permit the spirit of the world to take control of our hearts and lives. The spirit of the world is one of self-seeking, ambition and vain-glory. In short, it is the spirit of selfishness, which is the spirit of the adversary. If we find the spirit of the world beginning to encroach upon our minds and hearts we should recognize it as a danger sign of pitfalls and snares ahead by which Satan is endeavoring to bring about our fall from steadfastness. Let us seek to be filled with the Spirit of the Lord, and so occupied with the things of the Spirit, that there will be no time or place for the spirit of the world to gain even the slightest entrance into our lives.

HOW WE MAY FALL

There are many ways by which, through failure to take heed, we may fall away from the position of full faithfulness before God, and from our blessed standing in his grace. We may, for example, fall asleep spiritually by permitting a spirit of lethargy to creep over us, dulling our spiritual senses. (Prov. 6:10,11; I Thess. 5:6) This results, gradually, in a lack of appreciation of the Truth, a carelessness in seeking to do God's will, a lack of zeal for his service, and a coldness and indifference toward our brethren in Christ, and the privilege of laying down our lives for them.

We may fall by continued unfaithfulness along almost any line, and particularly by not seeking the forgiveness of our Heavenly Father when we transgress the divine law. We may fall by doing “despite unto the Spirit of grace.” We may “fall into reproach” by stubbornly endeavoring to carry out our own plans. We may “fall into temptation” by not faithfully taking heed to the danger signals along the way, and thus become enmeshed in one or more of Satan’s snares.—Heb. 10:29; I Tim. 3:7; 6:9

We may fall away from service in the faith. We may fall from our love for the brethren and our love for God. We may fall by willfully going contrary to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We may fall from our steadfastness by “being led away with the error of the wicked.” (II Pet. 3:17) However, Paul writes: “Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.” “Therefore, ... be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”—Heb. 6:9; I Cor. 15:58

“YE SHALL NEVER FALL”

The Apostle Peter gives us a splendid formula by which we may keep from falling. He reminds us of the precious promises upon which our hope for the divine nature is based, and indicates that these promises are also the groundwork of our faith. Then he bids us to add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, and love. “For if these things be in you, and abound,” the apostle says, “they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten

that he was purged from his old sins.” But, “if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:4-11

We should remember that when the Bible speaks of “falling” it means more than mere “stumbling.” In a sense, we stumble every time we make mistakes. Because of fleshly imperfection, we stumble and blunder more or less as we walk the narrow way. However, if our hearts are pure before God, he will watch over us and his everlasting arms will be under us to bear us up and start us out afresh every time we need his grace. Let us then take courage and press along in the blessed task of doing his will, knowing that eventually, if we continue taking heed, we will be “more than conquerors through him that loved us” and died for us.—Rom. 8:37

In Part 2 of this article, to appear in the April issue of *The Dawn*, we will consider further aspects of how we are to “take heed.” These will include taking heed to how we hear the message of truth; taking heed to deceptions which may present themselves to us; taking heed concerning how we are building our characters; taking heed so as not to depart from God; and taking heed to the ministry. In all these ways, let us be ever aware and alert that we might continue to stand strong in the Lord. ■

OBITUARIES

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

**Brother John Baracos, Pittsburgh, PA—January 12.
Age, 85**

General Convention Bulletin

July 14-19, 2018

THE 2018 GENERAL CONVENTION is only a few months away. Now is the time to make your plans to attend and participate in the blessings of this annual gathering of the Lord's people. Once again, the convention returns to the facilities of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Air conditioned hotel-like rooms with private bathrooms in the Living-Learning Center (LLC), family-style apartments (also air conditioned) with private bathrooms (APTS), and housing with two rooms sharing one bathroom (not air conditioned) in other facilities will be available on campus. A child may sleep on a bedroom floor at no charge if both beds are occupied.

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

The convention will provide one shuttle bus leaving the Pittsburgh airport in the early evening for the college in Johnstown on Friday, July 13. There will also be a shuttle bus leaving the college in the early morning hours for the Pittsburgh airport on Friday, July 20. There will be a \$20 charge each way per adult (\$10 per child under 18) for this service.

There will be special programs at the convention for young people of all ages. Six different age groups, beginning at age 3 up to age 25, will have daily studies, fellowship, recreation and other activities designed especially for them. Well qualified brethren have been selected to coordinate each of these groups.

A complete pricing table and registration form is provided for your convenience immediately following this announcement. We encourage you to register early. Advance payment is not required. ■

	Ages	18 & up	***13-17
Breakfast		\$9.00	\$8.00
Lunch		11.00	10.00
Dinner		15.00	14.00
Total, three meals		\$35.00	\$32.00
Lodging (per night)			
**dbl occ (LLC or APTS)		\$44.00	\$39.00
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)		\$39.00	\$37.00
**single occ (LLC)		\$80.00	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)		\$44.00	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals			
**dbl occ (LLC or APTS)		\$425*	\$390*
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)		\$290*	\$255*
**single occ (LLC)		\$646*	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)		\$334*	n/a
*If no breakfasts, deduct—\$45		** Air conditioned	
***100% of these costs will be refunded if the young person attends 75% of the studies for his/her age group.			
NOTE: A flat charge of \$5.00 per person, regardless of age or length of stay, and irrespective of lodging and meal arrangements selected, will be added to your invoice to help offset charges for university facilities which are incurred by the convention.			

General Convention Registration

330 Jasmine Road—Casselberry, FL 32707

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

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 13, 2018				
Saturday, 14th				
Sunday, 15th				
Monday, 16th				
Tuesday, 17th				
Wednesday, 18th				
Thursday, 19th				
Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals <input type="checkbox"/>				
or 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts) <input type="checkbox"/>				
Check: <input type="checkbox"/> private bath or <input type="checkbox"/> shared bath				
<input type="checkbox"/> double occupancy <input type="checkbox"/> single occupancy				
<input type="checkbox"/> interested in APTS				
Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)				
Address:				

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

T. N. Alexander

Orlando, FL March 3-5

Albuquerque, NM 30-April 1

D. Christiansen

Orlando, FL March 3-5

O. B. Elbert

Orlando, FL March 3-5

M. Ensley

Gulfport, MS March 10,11

R. Goodman

Albuquerque, NM
March 30-April 1

L. Griehs

Albuquerque, NM
March 30-April 1

S. Jeuck

Atlanta, GA March 18

H. Montague

Orlando, FL March 3-5
Detroit, MI 24,25

D. Rice

Albuquerque, NM
March 30-April 1

2018 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after sunset on Thursday, March 29, 2018.

A complete Memorial Service is available for any who wish to have it. CD or DVD versions can be purchased for \$6.00. Please send your request to:

Dawn Recorded Lecture Service

199 Railroad Avenue

East Rutherford, NJ 07073

Please place your order by March 21, if possible.

CONVENTIONS

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

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 3-5—Holiday Inn Orlando International, 5750 T. G. Lee Blvd., Orlando, FL 32822. For room reservations, contact Holiday Inn: Phone: (407) 851-6400. Deadline for special rate of \$109 per room, per night is February 23. Other information, contact: R. Goodman. Phone: (407) 695-6815 or Email: goodmanrw@gmail.com

NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION, March 10,11—Holiday Inn Gulfport/Airport, 9515 Highway 49, Gulfport, MS, 39503. Contact M. Costelli. Phone: (228) 861-2822 or Email: michael@simpkins-costelli.com

DETROIT CONVENTION, March 24,25—Quality Inn Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48083. Contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588 or Email: nemeshfp@aol.com

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, March 30-April 1—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Blvd. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Contact S. Thomassen. Phone: (505) 268-8170 or Email: srbt@juno.com

NTAK OBIO AKPA, NIGERIA CONVENTION, March 30-April 1—Ntak Obio Akpa, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Convention Theme: II Timothy 2:21

AGWA, NIGERIA CONVENTION, March 31—Agwa ecclesia place of fellowship, Umuahii Uzi Obudi Agwa Owerri Imo State, Nigeria. Contact V. Ekeh. Phone: +2348080205812 or Email: abiblestudecc@yahoo.com

HIGHLAND PARK CONVENTION, April 7—Double-Tree by Hilton, 789 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06854. Contact S. Koterba. Phone: (917) 554-2348 or Email: sandykoterba@gmail.com

HARTFORD CONVENTION, May 6—West Hartford Senior Center, 15 Starkel Road, West Hartford, CT. Contact J. Slivinsky. Phone: (860) 289-0116 or Email: djslivinsky@sbcglobal.net

WEST NEWTON CONVENTION, May 6—Sewickley Grange Hall, West Newton, PA. Contact L. Mlinek. Email: lmlinek@verizon.net

CHICAGO CONVENTION, May 26,27—Alta Villa Banquet Hall, 430 N Addison Road, Addison, IL 60101. Contact J. Farrell. Phone: 630-469-9511

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, May 26,27—Burbank Auditorium. For room reservations (subsidized rate of \$70/night), contact N. Nekora. Phone: (310) 454-5248 or Email: nprenekora@aol.com. Other information, contact T. Parkinson. Phone: (818) 247-9800 or Email: ti77park@gmail.com. Please place LABible in subject line of the email.

ONITSHA, NIGERIA CONVENTION, June 2—Plaza Guest, #6 Mbaise Street, Owerri Road Onitsha Anambra State, Nigeria. Contact, J. Ogbunike. Phone: +234803532 8245 or Email: newjolac47@gmail.com

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, June 3—Sheraton Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA. Contact R. Griehs. Phone: (267) 456-8889 or Email: rgriehs@gmail.com

VANCOUVER CONVENTION, June 9,10—Aldergrove Kinsmen Community Centre, 26770 29th Avenue, Aldergrove, BC, Canada. Contact B. Smith. Email: bas@telus.net

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 14-19—University of Pittsburgh, 450 Schoolhouse Road, Johnstown, PA. For registration, see pp. 59-61 of this issue.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 8-12—Szczyrk, Poland. ul. Wrzosowa 28 A, 43-370 Szczyrk. Website for complete information: www.biblestudents-conventions.com