

# The DAWN

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# You Shall Call His Name Jesus

*“She will bear a  
Son; and you shall  
call his name  
Jesus, for he will  
save his people  
from their sins.”*  
—*Matthew 1:21,*  
*New American  
Standard Bible*

**IN FULFILLMENT OF THIS** long-promised event concerning the birth of our dear Lord Jesus more than two thousand years ago, many Christian people throughout the world will once again celebrate God’s most wonderful gift to mankind on December

25th. Jesus was born into the world to save the human family from the inherited ravages of sin and death. In God’s own time and manner, this true meaning of his Son’s earthly ministry will be made plain to all men.

## **THE HOLIDAY SEASON**

The annual holiday season is a very special and festive time, and for many there is a general feeling of joy and a deep sense of anticipation throughout the weeks leading up to Christmas Day. More than any other time of the year, mankind’s attention is directed, at least in a limited way, toward thoughts of peace, love and good will toward others. It serves

as a time to be reminded of the miraculous birth of our Savior, his earthly ministry, sacrificial death on the cruel cross and his ultimate resurrection as the “firstborn from the dead.” (Col. 1:18) Since Adam’s fall in Eden, his was the only perfect life that had ever been lived, and he remained perfect unto death. —Heb. 7:26

There also may be a sense of nostalgia among some who recall this special season from their childhood, reliving sweet memories of a more secure time now long past. The sobering reality, however, is that the spirit which once marked the Christmas season is now largely ignored, having given way to increased commercialism, stress, and anxiety. The spirit of our Lord that once prevailed is now often replaced by indifference, irreverence and selfishness in our materialistic society.

Our modern world often gives only passing interest and attention to the true meaning of our Lord and Savior’s humble birth. The holiday season has become a hectic time of the year filled with anxious preparations for earthly pursuits and happiness at the cost of observing the season’s intended import. It is a time that is more and more being propelled by a sense of frenzied commotion and fanfare. Holiday shoppers are caught up in the last-minute quest to find the perfect gifts for family and friends, as well as for others they hardly know whose names appear on a list at their workplace.

## **CHRISTMAS DAY**

Various thoughts have been offered by historians as to how a special day now known as Christmas originated. Whatever those origins may have been,

over the centuries they gradually evolved into a celebration of Christmas Day as a remembrance of the birth of Jesus. The result has been that in more recent history, it has become a sacred and festive religious holiday. We learn from an examination of the Scriptures, however, that December 25th is not the day on which Jesus was born. Many Bible scholars agree that this great event occurred during the autumn season of the year, more nearly corresponding to late September or the early part October.

While we rejoice in joining with others in thankful remembrance of the Savior's birth, the Scriptures do not specifically mandate that we should celebrate that event on a specific day. Instead, we are instructed to remember our Savior's death, which accomplished the redemption price for sin, thereby satisfying divine justice. This is shown in the Old Testament Pass-over picture, where we read concerning the sacrificial lamb, "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) At the institution of the last supper, Jesus passed two symbolic emblems to his disciples which, by his own words, clearly represented his sacrificed life. We read, "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." Thus we see that Jesus was the true "Lamb of God."— Luke 22:19,20 John 1:29

## **NO OTHER NAME**

The name Jesus is the Greek rendering of “Joshua,” which means in the Hebrew language “Jehovah-saved.” No other name in the history of the world can claim such depth of meaning. It clearly points to the Master as the only one who could serve as the agent of our Heavenly Father in the ultimate effecting of mankind’s salvation. The Scriptures clearly teach, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”—Acts 4:12

The Apostle Paul later wrote, “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” (Heb. 2:9) Our Lord paid the price for mankind’s sin: “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”—Matt. 20:28

God’s Holy Word teaches us the importance and necessity of believing in the Master Teacher, and in the merit of his ransom sacrifice on behalf of mankind. This point is stressed in John’s epistle, where he writes, “This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.” (I John 3:23) The only foundation for the world’s return to favor with the Heavenly Father is to have a true appreciation and understanding that Jesus alone paid the ransom price for sin. The purpose for which Jesus died was that mankind would be given the opportunity to be recovered from sin and death.

## **CHRIST—THE ANOINTED**

Our Lord is often spoken of as Christ, or Jesus Christ, in the New Testament. Christ means “anointed,” and is the Greek counterpart of the Hebrew word “Messiah” of the Old Testament, which likewise means “anointed.” (Dan. 9:25,26; John 1:41; 4:25) Concerning God’s arrangements in this regard, we read, “Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together.”—Acts 4:25-27; Psalm 2:1,2

The Apostle Paul also wrote, “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil. 2:9-11

## **SON OF THE HIGHEST**

In Luke’s gospel is recorded the words of the angel Gabriel to Mary concerning the promised birth of Jesus, “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.” (Luke 1:32) Mary was a descendant of David through his son Nathan, who was a brother to Solomon. (Luke 3:31; I Chron. 3:1-5) Thus the earthly lineage of Jesus and the reference to the throne of David was through his mother.

Jesus' connection to the severed line of Solomon came through Joseph, his mother's espoused husband, though he was not Jesus' true father. (Matt. 1:16; Luke 2:4,5) We also note our Lord's words as recorded by the revelator with regard to his lineage through David: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."—Rev. 22:16

### **THE "STEM OF JESSE"**

In a further connection made between Jesus and the throne of King David, the Prophet Isaiah says, "A shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit." (Isa. 11:1, *NASB*) Jesse was David's father, and is thus an important link in establishing Jesus earthly lineage as a "shoot" and "branch" from that genealogical tree. (Matt. 1:6) The prophet then says concerning this "shoot" that "the spirit of the LORD will rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD."—Isa. 11:2, *NASB*

Isaiah's prophecy continues by showing that the wonderful work of God's future kingdom of truth and righteousness will be carried out by this one who came from the line of David—Christ Jesus, the Messiah. "With righteousness he will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; and he will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Also righteousness will be the belt about his loins, and faithfulness the belt about his waist." (Isa. 11:4,5, *NASB*) Finally, Isaiah again makes the connection

to the throne of David when he says, “In that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and his resting place will be glorious.”—vs. 10, *NASB*

## **THE BRANCH**

The Prophet Zechariah also identifies the “Branch” and says, “Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.” (Zech. 3:8) Here the prophet describes the role that Christ will assume during the time of his kingdom rulership. Zechariah stresses this point again when he writes, “Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: ... and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”—Zech. 6:12,13

Truly our Lord Jesus is the Son of the Highest, and his faithfulness was demonstrated by laying down his perfect life in sacrifice for the human creation. Having been raised from death by the powerful hand of his loving Heavenly Father, he will exercise his right to bestow the benefits of the kingdom as the greater King David. Then, rather than being a “shoot” or “branch” coming out from David, he will be the “Root of David,” the source through which “everlasting life” will be made available to the entire human family.—Rev. 5:5; John 3:16

## **DAVID’S HEIR**

God made a special promise to David, saying, “Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established

for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.” (II Sam. 7:16) When David died, the promise was passed on to his son Solomon. The Lord then spoke to Solomon and said, “If thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.”—I Kings 9:4,5

Solomon’s obedience was required to fulfill the will of God. “If ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people.”—vss. 6,7

The new king did not obey the commandments of God. “King Solomon loved many strange [foreign] women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.”—I Kings 11:1-3

We are further told of Solomon's disobedient actions in subsequent verses. "The LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded." (vss. 9,10) We learn the consequences of his disobedience to the Heavenly Father when we read, "The LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee."—vs. 11

### **NATHAN FAVORED**

The lineage from King David therefore passed to Mary through Nathan rather than Solomon, whose life was tainted with arrogance and disobedience. Thus we find that our Lord Jesus was born from the more faithful line of Nathan, though he was much less honored in the sight of men than Solomon. Mary had evidently been made aware of this aspect of her choice by God to be Jesus' mother, and she rejoiced at such a great honor. She said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation."—Luke 1:46-50

Mary's statement shows her sense of humility in sharing in God's wonderful works. She continues, "He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath

scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.”—vss. 51-55

## **TIDINGS OF JOY**

At the birth of Jesus, the angel of the Lord made a most wonderful announcement. “There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ... And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”—Luke 2:8-14

The humble surroundings of the infant Jesus, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, was a beautiful, symbolic token of our loving Heavenly Father’s good will toward the sin-sick and dying human creation. Jesus was destined to become mankind’s Savior, and in his coming kingdom he will be a great and righteous ruler, restoring peace on the earth. The angels knew this and praised God!

## **A DARK WORLD**

The heavenly hosts proclaimed and appreciated the glad tidings given on that special night long ago.

The significance of the great event, Messiah's birth, gradually dimmed in the eyes of a spiritually dark and sin-filled world. The world would soon enough enter its darkest period of history, commonly referred to as the Dark Ages. It has been more than twenty centuries since the "Prince of Peace" was born, yet, the prospect of peace and good will between peoples and nations still seems an improbable, if not impossible, dream.—Isa. 9:6,7

During this long period of time God has been calling a "little flock" of Jesus' footstep followers. (Luke 12:32) These are striving to know and to do the Heavenly Father's will faithfully, even unto death. (Rev. 2:10) When his work of calling, developing, and proving faithful each member of this class has been completed, and all things come to their divinely appointed culmination, they will then share with Christ Jesus in blessing all the families of the earth during the time of his promised kingdom.—Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Acts 3:25

All the peoples of earth will be given opportunity to walk up the "highway" of holiness and return to their Creator's favor. (Isa. 35:8) At that time will the words of the prophet come to pass: "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."—Isa. 9:7

The prophet, using another symbol, points to Christ's role as the "arm" of God in his coming kingdom, ruling over the nations with strength, but also with love and gentleness. "Behold, the

Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”—Isa. 40:10,11

## **LASTING PEACE**

The Christmas season is a time when we may once again reflect upon God’s promise of peace on earth and good will toward men. How the world needs this more than ever—peace and good will, in all the earth and toward all people!

Today we acknowledge the fact that at the present time there is no true, lasting peace anywhere on earth. We are living during a time of increasing lawlessness, and men’s hatred toward many of their fellows is being manifested in many violent and slanderous ways. “Polarized” is the term most often applied to today’s world.

Although many among mankind continue to yearn for the spirit of peace and good will, no nation or group of nations at the present time can establish it. Indeed, this glorious condition cannot be attained without divine intervention in the affairs of men. True peace will only be realized through our Lord Jesus’ kingdom of righteousness, as the true Prince of Peace. Under that administration, mankind shall come to know and obey our loving Heavenly Father and learn of his marvelous plans for blessing all the families of earth. During this holiday season may we continue to pray for that blessed time to come soon. “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”—Matt. 6:10 ■

# The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

**Key Verse:** “Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.”  
—*I Chronicles 15:28*

**Selected Scripture:**  
*I Chronicles 15:1-29*

The ark of the covenant, located in the most holy of the Tabernacle, was where God spoke to Moses during Israel’s wilderness experience. (Exod. 25:10-22) The ark, carried by the priests, preceded the Israelites as they crossed the Jordan River into Canaan. (Josh. 3:14-17) It was also instrumental in the victories at Jericho and the war against Ai. (Josh. 6:1-27; 8:1-35) In these and other ways, the ark of the covenant gave evidence that God’s favor was upon the Israelites.

However, after Israel’s repeated sins against God, in particular those of the sons of Eli the priest, the ark of the covenant was permitted to be captured and taken

## **THE APOSTLE PAUL SPOKE**

of God’s testimony that Israel’s King David was “a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.” (Acts 13:22) Paul was not inferring that David was like God in perfection, but only that he had a sincere heart in harmony with God’s promises and instructions. Today’s lesson centers on David’s desire to serve God by returning the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem after an absence of many years.

The ark of the covenant, located in the most holy of the Tabernacle, was where God spoke to Moses during Israel’s wilderness experience. (Exod. 25:10-22) The ark, carried by the priests, preceded the Israelites as they crossed the Jordan River into Canaan. (Josh. 3:14-17) It was also instrumental in the victories at Jericho and the war against Ai. (Josh. 6:1-27; 8:1-35) In these and other ways, the ark of the covenant gave evidence that God’s favor was upon the Israelites.

away by the Philistines. (I Sam. 2:12,27-36; 5:1) After seven months of continuous plagues, the Philistines put the ark on a cart and sent it back to Bethshemesh along with jewels of gold as a trespass offering. The rejoicing of the Bethshemites turned to despair when more than fifty-thousand men were killed for looking into the ark contrary to God's instructions.—I Sam. 6:1-21

After requesting help, the ark was moved to the house of Abinadab where his son Eleazar was appointed to keep it. The account states, "While the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord." (I Sam. 7:1,2) After this long period, during which David had become Israel's king, he declared, "Let us bring again the ark of our God to us." (I Chron. 13:3) A new cart was built to carry the ark back to Jerusalem. At one point the cart nearly upset, causing one of the drivers, Uzza, to put his hand upon the ark to keep it from falling. He was immediately struck dead by God. Not understanding why God took the life of Uzza, David left the ark at the house of Obededom for three months.—vss. 7-14

Returning to Jerusalem, David subsequently won two battles against Philistine attacks, following God's instructions explicitly. (I Chron. 14:8-17) Upon reflection, David realized that his first attempt to bring back the ark on a cart was not according to God's instructions. Now back in full harmony with the Lord, David prepared a place for the ark in Jerusalem.—I Chron. 15:1

Following God's instructions given to Moses, David said, "No one is to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for the Lord chose them to carry the ark of God and to minister to him forever." (vs. 2, *New American Standard Bible*) Observing how David transported the ark back to Jerusalem according to God's will, rather than his own, is a wonderful example for us. Let us daily seek to be like David, a man after God's heart, who will fulfill all his will. ■

# David's Song of Thanks

**Key Verse:** “Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.”  
—*I Chronicles 16:8*

**Selected Scripture:**  
*I Chronicles 16:1-36*  
the presence of the ark would make Israel repent of their prior sins and praise God once again.

## **DAVID'S DETERMINATION**

to bring the ark of the covenant back to Jerusalem was intended to motivate Israel to a closer relationship with God. Their history of seeking after other gods, and of ignoring the Lord's instructions had caused David great distress on behalf of the nation. He now was hopeful that the presence of the ark would make Israel repent of their prior sins and praise God once again.

After placing the ark in the tent he had prepared for it, and upon offering burnt offerings and peace offerings to God, David blessed the people “in the name of the LORD,” and gave to each one a portion of bread, meat and wine. With their minds thus directed toward God, David appointed Levites to minister before the ark, and musicians and singers to give praise through song. (I Chron. 16:1-7) Our Key Verse begins this beautiful psalm of praise, calling upon Israel to give thanks for the many deeds God had performed for them. In its entirety, this song tells of God's wondrous works among the nations on behalf of Israel.—vss. 8-36

Some might suggest that God has eternally cast off Israel for their iniquities. However, we would direct their attention to this psalm, which comforts Israel and repeats

the Lord's everlasting care for them. Such is summarized in the sentiments of the closing verses, which state, "O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise. Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, for ever and ever."—vss. 34-36

Many of Israel's experiences were for the Christian's admonition, and we see in this account of David's song lessons for those called to be God's people during the present age. (I Cor. 10:11) Israel was called God's chosen people frequently in the Old Testament. (Exod. 19:5,6; Ps. 147:19,20; Amos 3:2) One especially beautiful verse in this regard is found in these words: "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth."—Deut. 7:6

Compare these words with the statement of the Apostle Peter to followers of Christ: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God." (I Pet. 2:9,10) In many respects Peter's words mirror David's psalm included in today's lesson. The Apostle Paul, in fact, declares that Israel's Law Covenant arrangement was intended to lead them to Christ, who became the seed of Abraham. (Gal. 3:15-24) Then the invitation to be "in Christ," and become part of the seed class, was opened to Jews and Gentiles alike.—vss. 25-29

Let us be determined, as David was, to encourage each other as fellow spiritual Israelites to praise our loving Heavenly Father and his Son, Christ Jesus. Let us likewise give thanks continually for the wondrous works of our God. "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."—I Thess. 5:18 ■

# God's Promise to David

**Key Verses:** *"It shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever."*

—*I Chronicles 17:11,12*

**Selected Scripture:**  
*I Chronicles 17:1-15*

erential to Nathan, so he endorsed it.—vs. 2

That same night, however, the word of the Lord came to Nathan and explained that God had never asked for a house to be built for his dwelling place since he brought Israel out of Egypt. He instructed Nathan to remind David how he had led him from being a young shepherd

## **AS THE NATION OF ISRAEL**

prospered under the Lord's blessing and was established as a mighty nation under King David, he believed that the tent in which the ark of the covenant had been housed was inferior to its proper place in Jerusalem. Doubtless the lesson of Uzzah made David more careful respecting all things done in connection with the Tabernacle and its services, so he sought out the advice of his friend and counselor, the Prophet Nathan. David said to him, "Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD remaineth under curtains."

(I Chron. 17:1) The implied suggestion that a "house" be built for the ark seemed proper and rever-

to the leader of Israel, and that he pledges to subdue all their enemies, that the nation may dwell in peace. Then God made this great promise to David: “Furthermore, I tell thee that the Lord will build thee an house.”—vss. 3-10

This was not a promise of a literal house, but was an assurance to David that his family would not be cut off from the throne. The “house” of David was indeed perpetuated through Solomon and continued Israel’s kingly line through the tribe of Judah for several centuries. This, however, would not fulfill the ultimate purpose of the Lord’s promise. Although not understood by David, the promise was meant to refer expressly to a future Messiah and his kingdom.

We note that the words of our Key Verse applied to David’s son, Solomon, in a literal sense, as he indeed built a temple, but the weight of the promise is fulfilled through Christ, the Messiah. Though David was not allowed to build a temple, it was his privilege to gather the materials needed for Solomon to accomplish that work.—I Chron. 28:9-21; 29:1-9

God is currently gathering those who will become symbolic stones of the greater temple of Christ, which is to bless all mankind in God’s kingdom. Of these, the Apostle Peter says that they come to Jesus, “as living stones to the immensely valuable living stone (which men rejected but God chose), to be built up into a spiritual House of God.” (I Pet. 2:4,5, *J. B. Phillips New Testament*) The preparation of these stones will continue until all shall be properly fitted into the spiritual temple.

The blessing of all the families of the earth through that spiritual temple and its great head and cornerstone, Christ Jesus, will begin when all the “living stones” have been prepared and raised from the dead to “glory and honour and immortality.” (Rom. 2:7) Let us be encouraged in the knowledge that all the trials which come to us represent our chiseling and polishing as stones, to be fitted for a place in the temple of God’s everlasting kingdom. ■

# Mary's Praise to God

**Key Verses:** “*Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*”  
—*Luke 1:46,47*

**Selected Scripture:**  
*Luke 1:39-56*

expectation of the promised Messiah when Jesus was born, because of Daniel’s prophecy of the seventy weeks. (Dan. 9:24-27) Some even thought that John the Baptist, whose ministry preceded Jesus by only a few months, was the Messiah. John dispelled this thought in an answer to the crowd which had come to him to be baptized, saying, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but one is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of his sandals; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”—*Luke 3:15,16, New American Standard Bible*

As surely as God read the hearts of young David and his parents when selecting him to be Israel’s future king, he likewise chose a maiden of noble character to bear the nation’s promised Messiah. The testimony respecting Mary and Joseph leaves no doubt that they were both pious people and attentive to the laws of God. Luke writes specifically that Jesus’ “parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.”—*Luke 2:41*

In addition to her faithfulness to Israel’s law, the fact that Mary was honored by God above all other women to be the mother of Jesus, also testified to her nobility of character and purity of heart. The Scriptures record the moment she heard the message: “The angel Gabriel was

sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. ... Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS." (Luke 1:26-28,31) Our Key Verse gives Mary's beautiful response to the angel.

We note here two important corroborating statements regarding Mary. First, she was a virgin, in accordance with the prophetic words: "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:21-23) Second, Mary was of the lineage of David, fulfilling God's promise to him given in I Chronicles 17:11-14.

When Mary asked the angel how it would be possible for her to have this child when she was still a virgin, he answered by saying simply, "With God nothing shall be impossible." Mary responded with the same trust and confidence in God that David had displayed: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."—Luke 1:34-38

Following the words of our Key Verse, Mary continued to speak of God's glorious character: "He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation." (vss. 48-50) What a great lesson we can learn from Mary! Just as God called her for a special purpose, he has called us to the "one hope" of our calling. (Eph. 4:4) Let us, therefore, give praise for the opportunity of becoming a member of the body of Christ with similar words as Mary's: "Be it unto me according to thy word." ■

# David's Prayer

**Key Verse:** “O Lord,  
there is none like  
thee, neither is  
there any God  
beside thee,  
according to all  
that we have heard  
with our ears.”  
—I Chronicles 17:20

**Selected Scripture:**  
I Chronicles 17:16-  
27

done for me are nothing in comparison with what you have promised to do in the future! For now, O LORD God, you are speaking of future generations of my children being kings too!”—I Chron. 17:16,17, *The Living Bible*

This man after God's own heart had come to realize, however, that the promises made to Israel were conditional on their obedience. With their many rebellions against God in the past, it perhaps seemed likely that David's successors to the throne would eventually turn completely away from the God who had delivered them from Egyptian bondage. Indeed, a little more than five hundred years later King Zedekiah was Israel's last king. Jerusalem was besieged and overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar, and the people were taken captive to Babylon.

We understand that the future generations of rulership promised to David were to have their ultimate fulfillment

**WE HAVE NOTED IN PRIOR** lessons the Godlike character of David. In today's Selected Scripture passage we hear David testifying that nothing he had accomplished was of his own doing, but God's alone. He speaks gladly of the blessings promised to Israel being much greater than those for him personally. “Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my family that you have given me all this? For all the great things you have already

in the much greater reign of Christ, the seed of David, in his Messianic kingdom. Part of the angel's message to Mary mentioned in our previous lesson was with regard to this greater kingdom. Speaking of Jesus, the angel said, "The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end."—Luke 1:32,33, *New American Standard Bible*

Messiah's kingdom is styled "the throne of David" for good reason. The name David signifies "beloved." David sat upon the throne of the kingdom of God for a limited time, as did his descendants. The greater David, Christ Jesus, will sit upon the throne of the kingdom of God to establish it forever. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: ... Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."—Isa. 9:6,7

Jesus will become the recognized ruler not only over Israel, as in David's reign, but over all the nations and families of earth. The "increase of his government" shall far exceed that of David. It will not be disturbed by rebellions or conflict of any kind. He shall establish everlasting peace, and his righteous government will not come to an end. When Messiah's reign has fully accomplished all these things, he will deliver up the kingdom to the Heavenly Father, that "God may be all in all."—I Cor. 15:24-28

David realized God's overruling providences in Israel's history. How much greater will his joy be when, upon his resurrection, he fully sees that God's promises for Israel will then be extended to all other nations and kindreds of the earth. With even greater joy David will repeat his praise to God with the words, "All the great things you have already done for me are nothing in comparison to what you have promised to do in the future!" ■

# Seventy Times Seven

*“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.”*

—*Matthew 18:21,22*

**IN THIS FINAL ARTICLE OF** the series, “The Bible Versus Tradition,” we will examine the subject of forgiveness. Christian theology has long emphasized the importance of the godlike quality of forgiveness, as well as its basis of mercy and love. Even among non-Christian religious beliefs, the noble aspects of these qualities of character are often taught.

While the teaching of forgiveness has been part of religious services, sermons, and schooling for centuries, sadly, it has not been put into practice nearly so much. The “traditions” of fallen mankind which have often taken the place of forgiveness are all too common—vindictiveness, character assassination and hatred, to say nothing of outright retribution and “payback.” Such traditions are even defended as being in harmony with the godly principle of justice.

In the pages which follow, we will examine the Bible's testimony on the important subject of forgiveness. As we do so, it will become evident that the qualities of justice, mercy and forgiveness, as taught in the Bible, all work in harmony with each other. Indeed, the misbegotten, man-made traditions of hatred and payback have no place in the divine arrangement, nor should they be found in the life of those striving to emulate the Creator's character.

### **FORGIVENESS—A QUALITY OF GOD**

To study the Scriptures is to find great emphasis placed upon the quality of forgiveness. First and foremost, our Heavenly Father considers it important to point out in his Word that he is a forgiving God, and that his entire plan for the recovery of mankind is a plan involving forgiveness. This facet of God's mind and heart has too often been either overlooked completely or not understood in its fullness by a majority of his intelligent creation.

As the divine principles were set forth throughout the ages by the prophets, it is said that those writers desired to understand the things they wrote. (Dan. 12:8,9; Matt. 13:17; I Pet. 1:10-12) Their limited view of this wonderful aspect of the Creator stimulated in them a keen interest in the outworking of his plan for man. How was it to be accomplished? How could God be "just, and the justifier" of those who were sinners? (Rom. 3:26) They were observers, too, of the fact that there was "no place where earthly failings are more felt than up in heaven," as the poet has so wisely written. We have come to appreciate this fact also, because God so often

expresses in his Word the love he has for his human creation, even though they be sinners.

In the Book of Exodus, we are told that Moses wanted to know more about God. This is to be expected of all those who have come into relationship with God to any degree. Their search invariably leads them to conclude that the beauty of God and his character is immeasurable. Moses actually asked to see God, but the Lord told him that would be impossible. He said, “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.” (Exod. 33:20) God did, however, show himself to Moses in the only way he can be revealed to mankind, and that is through a description of his character. He declared himself with these words: “The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” (Exod. 34:6) These words are the epitome of the united testimony of the Bible. Everything we read in the Scriptures confirms that this is indeed an accurate characterization of our God.

### **FORGIVENESS, MERCY AND JUSTICE**

In his statement to Moses, the Heavenly Father emphasized another significant point about himself—that he is a merciful God, “Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” (vs. 7) The point is made that the forgiving quality of our Creator is not only a manifestation of his loving desire to favor his faithful people, but that he loves even those who are out of harmony with him. His method of dealing with them is expressed in three harmoniously combined attributes, as pointed out

in the foregoing verse—“keeping mercy,” “forgiving iniquity,” and the exercise of justice as shown in the words, “by no means clear the guilty.”

We can readily see the importance of the principle of justice coming into play in the matter of salvation. If God simply forgave those who sinned out of the goodness of his heart, and said, “I forgive you; do not sin anymore,” it is clear that a door would be open for great laxness, and lowered appreciation for his high standards of righteousness. If God so dealt with one sin, to be consistent he would have to with all others alike, and the lofty principles of life which he has set for his people would tend to be degraded. It would no doubt be said by those who erred, “Sure, I made a mistake, but God will forgive me,” and such a sentiment would likely be expressed again subsequent to future errors. Thus, the principle of justice, which is so vital even in human relationships, but especially so with God, would lose its essence.

Justice is so fundamental with God that the psalmist says it is the very foundation of his throne: “Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.” (Ps. 89:14) The Hebrew word in this verse translated “habitation” means “fixture or established place, foundation.” The Bible stresses the fact that while God is a God of mercy and forgiveness, having a great desire to recover all sinners, he will not “clear the guilty” by any means that violates his foundation attribute of justice.

In the verse partially quoted earlier from Exodus 34:7, God continues by reminding us how justice worked after the fall in Eden with regard to

the human family. The Lord said he visited “the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” In other words, the sins of “father” Adam, of which Eve was counted as a part, together with the accompanying sentence of death, have been passed on to all of his “children” through inheritance from one generation to the next, all the way down to our time.—Gen. 2:24; Rom. 5:12; I Cor. 15:22

Notwithstanding his foundation quality of justice, the clear message of the Bible is that the Creator is also a God of great mercy, and his plan of salvation for man’s recovery from sin is based on forgiveness. Still, it has been said by some that forgiveness was but little demonstrated in God’s past dealings with men. In the beginning he surely did not forgive Adam but administered a severe sentence for his transgression. However, the Bible makes manifest that, in the end, God intends to forgive Adam. In fact, all that yield themselves to the righteous principles of Christ’s coming kingdom will be forgiven. The Prophet Jeremiah wrote concerning this glorious “new covenant” arrangement, and of God’s statement: “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jer. 31:31-34) God’s plan for the future age is built upon his merciful forgiveness and is designed to bring into his favor all who have repentant hearts for having transgressed his law.

## **OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES**

We generally view God’s actions during Old Testament times as being very exacting and, perhaps,

harsh applications of justice: “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.” (Exod. 21:24) However, when we study more deeply, we are impressed by the elaborate arrangements God had made for the remission of sins under Israel’s Law Covenant. We have come to recognize these as pictures, or prototypes, of the much greater redemptive work to be accomplished through Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul makes this connection and comparison repeatedly in his writings, particularly in the Books of Romans, Galatians and Hebrews.

In the fourth and fifth chapters of Leviticus are found descriptions of various ways in which sins could be remitted. The first of these is in chapter four, verses 16-20, which describe the specific means by which a sin would be “forgiven” by the offering of a sacrifice by the priest on behalf of the sinner. It was a forgiving arrangement, and not necessarily an “eye for eye, tooth for tooth.” However, it was requisite that first the sinner acknowledge his trespasses against God’s law and admit that he was a sinner. Remission was accomplished by going to God through the priest in the ordained way, with an appropriate “sin” offering. By both acknowledging the sin, as well as by following the prescribed actions for its expiation, God’s justice would be satisfied, his mercy and forgiveness could be exercised, and the sin remitted.

God honored this arrangement which he had instituted with the nation of Israel throughout his dealings with them under the Law Covenant. Paul later stated that these sin offerings did not make the “comers thereunto perfect,” and therefore they must necessarily be repeated over and over again.

(Heb. 10:1) However, the Lord did accept them when made in accordance with the Law's instructions. On a national level, during the Day of Atonement, the sins of the entire nation of Israel were forgiven for the ensuing year. There again, though, it was necessary to repeat these sin offerings every year.—Lev. 23:26-28; 16:1-34; Heb. 9:6,7; 10:3

The Law Covenant also provided for sacrifices other than sin offerings. There were peace offerings, thank offerings, offerings for trespasses which occurred through ignorance, and gift or "heave" offerings to the Lord. (Lev. 7:1-5,11-13; Num. 18:29) All of these sacrifices of the Law we can well understand as appropriate pictures when we project them into Christ's kingdom and view them as applying to the people of earth offering themselves in dedication to do the will of God. How thankful they will be that their loving and merciful Creator has made an arrangement of better sacrifices whereby they can receive everlasting forgiveness. (Heb. 9:23,24) Mankind then will not bring offerings of animals or meal cakes, but of their own hearts, desiring to do perfectly the will of God.

Though a picture of better things to come, the Law did express God's forgiveness of sin. In Leviticus 4:26, we read concerning the one bringing an acceptable sacrifice for a sin-offering, "It shall be forgiven him." The same statement is repeated in verses 31 and 35. In chapters 5 and 6, these words again appear five more times with regard to various offerings and sacrifices for sins. Thus, it is clear that once an acceptable offering was made, forgiveness would come to the bearer. Undeniably, forgiveness is the underlying principle behind God's method

of salvation, as shown in these and other Old Testament examples.

### **GOD GAVE HIS SON**

The Heavenly Father is truly a God of forgiveness. He prepared the way for man's salvation at great cost to himself. While his mercy would be freely expressed, yet he could "by no means clear the guilty," and violate his foundation attribute of justice. God made the greatest sacrifice possible, the offering of the life of his own Son to take Adam's place, and thus take "away the sin of the world." (John 1:29; Rom. 5:18) Jesus, in recognition of this fact, made this powerful and much venerated statement: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."—John 3:16

Jesus throughout his ministry continually emphasized the great importance of forgiveness, and the need for recognizing it as a fundamental quality of God's character. In his sermon on the mount, Jesus gave his disciples a new concept of God's law. He drew a contrast between Israel's view which dominated Old Testament times, and the high appreciation which his disciples must learn to observe as Christians. He stated, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."—Matt. 5:43-45

These words reveal that in order for us to look at our enemies as does God, we will have to transform

our point of view to conform to his. God so loved his enemies, those who were estranged from him and his laws, that he sacrificed the dearest treasure of his heart, his only Son, on their behalf. This higher concept of God's law must be recognized and appreciated by his children who are striving to be made worthy to fill the position of those selected to express God's forgiveness to the world during Christ's coming kingdom.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul indicates that the "tables of stone," which principally expressed the "letter" of the law, are not adequate to teach God's righteous principles to the followers of Christ. (II Cor. 3:3) He is now, as it were, rewriting his law, not in stone, but in the hearts of his people by means of the power and influence of the Holy Spirit. Heart appreciation is required to express God's law in the same way that Jesus did. Summarizing God's law, he said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. 22:37-39) Love, which is given expression through mercy and forgiveness, is thus the real essence of God's law.

## **CHRISTIANS MUST BE FORGIVING**

The Lord is in the process of developing new teachers and instructors for the coming kingdom. These will have that understanding of God's law which, when passed on to the world of mankind, will cause it to be written in their "hearts" and in their "inward parts," drawing them back to God. (Jer. 31:33) To be prepared to function for this great work of the next age, we must become like him.

God set no lesser ones than himself and his beloved Son, Christ Jesus, as examples of how we should view the great principle of forgiveness. In his sermon on the mount, Jesus spoke of this high standard to his disciples: “Be ye therefore perfect [complete], even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”—Matt. 5:48

In this same sermon, Jesus laid great stress on the matter of godlike forgiveness when he taught them to pray. (Matt. 6:9-13) His model prayer incorporated the important theme of forgiveness: “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” Our Master, emphasizing the importance of this thought, explained, “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (vss. 14,15) What a sobering thought is herein presented! We cannot expect to be forgiven of our sins by God unless we first forgive others who may have trespassed against us.

### **HOW MANY TIMES?**

No doubt it was as a result of pondering these words that Peter later came to Jesus with the question posed in our opening text as to how many times he should forgive one who repeatedly sinned against him. The fact that he mentioned “seven times” in his question gives indication that this seemed sufficient, perhaps even generous, to Peter. Jesus answered, however, saying that would not be nearly enough forgiveness. To be like the Heavenly Father would require going far beyond any earthly-minded limits.

Jesus replied to Peter, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." The certainty that no one would tally up 490 offenses against himself evinces the fact that there is no limit on forgiveness. As many times as someone, in sincerity, asks for forgiveness, it should be granted, even as God has set no limit on his forgiveness. We have all enjoyed our Heavenly Father's forgiveness far beyond the 490 offenses which Jesus mentioned.

### **AN IMPORTANT PARABLE**

Jesus followed up his statement to Peter with a parable that expresses the matter well from God's standpoint. (Matt. 18:23-35) It is another parable which Jesus begins with the statement, "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto," indicating that here was a lesson for those who are called to be the children of God.

The parable begins, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants." One servant owed the king a tremendously huge debt, "ten thousand talents." How descriptive this is of the human family and their relationship to God in the present fallen and sinful state. In like condition we come to God, realizing how impossible it is for us to pay our great debt of sin and unworthiness of life.—vss. 23,24

In the parable, the servant was brought before the king to see if some method of working out his debt could be devised, but it was clear the man did not have anything with which to pay. Neither does the human race have anything to offer God as payment for the great debt they owe to their King. Therefore, the king "commanded him to be sold,

and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.” (vs. 25) Likewise the debt of sin under the sentence pronounced upon Adam included his entire family, the whole world of mankind, selling them into a condition of servitude and slavery.

The servant of the parable pleaded for patience, but the king was aware that the servant could never pay the money he owed. However, Jesus explained, “The lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.” (vss. 26,27) By these beautiful words our Master taught us something which he knew about the character of our Heavenly Father. God is merciful toward the human race and has compassion for them because of their inextricable plight of sin and resulting death.

As in the parable, we, too, go before our Almighty King, Jehovah, bowing down before him, realizing our helplessness, and asking for forgiveness. God, in his great mercy, having been moved with compassion, even long before the foundations of the earth were laid, made provision through Christ to remove our great debt. Of this, Paul wrote: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ... According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”—Eph. 1:3,4

There is, however, another powerful lesson to be found in Jesus’ parable. The servant who was forgiven of his great debt also had debtors. He began to press for payment from one of them who, by comparison, owed him a very small amount. His debtor also pleaded for patience, but the servant was too

hard-hearted to listen, and had him thrown into prison.—Matt. 18:28-30

We can well imagine Jesus' showing his displeasure with the servant's ingratitude and lack of mercy. By expressing the king's feelings with the words, "His Lord was wroth," he tells us how God would feel about a circumstance of this sort. The king was justly angry, calling him a "wicked servant," and taking away his favor. Jesus said, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."—vss. 32-35

It has been written, "To err is human; to forgive divine." The Word of God well confirms this as fact. His plan is a plan of forgiveness. Those who aspire to serve in his kingdom must themselves, of necessity, be forgiving. Let us, therefore, not follow the common "tradition" of fallen man, which tends toward vindictiveness and retribution. Rather, let us mark well and emulate the never-changing, merciful character of God and of his Son Christ Jesus. The time is soon to come when these words of our loving Heavenly Father will be manifest to all people: "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."—Isa. 44:22 ■

*Forgiveness ...*

*... "I cannot forget" is but another way of saying "I will not forgive."*

*... "Christian forgiveness is like the sweetness given forth by flowers when they are trampled upon."*

*... "Lord, may I always have eyes that I may see and never pass another's calvary and think it just a common hill!"*  
—Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook

# Heavenly Manna

*“The children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.”  
—Exodus 16:35*

**EVERY MORNING IN MANY** parts of the world, dedicated Christians open a little book called *Daily Heavenly Manna* to read a devotional Scripture text and comments for that day. The selections are very precious, and often have been read so many times over the years that they are familiar to the reader. If you do

not presently have a copy of this wonderful devotional book, please see our offer which appears on the inside front cover of *The Dawn* magazine.

Just as nutritionists tell us that a healthy breakfast is important for beginning each day, so this bread from heaven is intended to give us a good spiritual start each morning. The word “manna” comes to us by way of the experiences of Israel as recorded in the Old Testament. It was an all-important food to the Israelites, being the mainstay of their diet during their forty years in the wilderness.

## **DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT**

Israel had been enslaved by Egypt for hundreds of years. When God’s due time came, he chose Moses

to lead them to freedom, and to establish them as a nation in their own land. Pharaoh, however, would not allow the Israelites to leave. Finally, after a series of dire plagues upon Egypt, climaxing in the death of all the Egyptian firstborn—from Pharaoh's own son to that of the lowliest slave—Pharaoh consented to their departure. Once they were gone, however, he again changed his mind, pursuing them with his army to the brink of the Red Sea. The Israelites were extremely fearful of being captured and taken back into bondage once again. They murmured and complained against Moses, claiming that his poor leadership had brought them to such straits. Yet, with God's miraculous help they crossed the Red Sea on dry ground while Pharaoh and his hosts drowned in the depths of the waters.—Exod. chaps. 1-14

Only about a month's time had elapsed after the excitement of the Israelites' remarkable deliverance. They were now safely on the other side, and Pharaoh and his army were dead. Together, the Israelites sang a song of triumph, the beginning of which says: "I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him." (Exod. 15:1,2) This triumphant joy began to fade, however, when they had time to reflect on where they were, what was happening, and the realization that they were traveling through very desolate country.

## THE PEOPLE MURMUR

All too soon the Israelites once again showed their lack of gratitude to God and his provisions for them. “The whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” (Exod. 16:2,3) Through their murmurings they were rejecting the wonderful provision the Lord had made for their freedom from slavery through the faithful leadership of Moses.

Earlier the Israelites had a life-threatening problem locating water for themselves and their livestock, but the Lord provided water for them. They had come to a place where there were twelve wells, which took care of those problems at the time. (Exod. 15:27) Still there was the matter of finding enough food to satisfy the great multitude of people and their flocks, herds and cattle. In essence they said, “Nobody is here to sell us food; there is no vegetation in this area; how are we going to be able to survive? We will starve to death!”

Again we see the longsuffering of the Heavenly Father—how gracious he was, how patient with this nation who lacked faith. When Moses and Aaron petitioned the Lord for help, he spoke to Moses, saying, “I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.”—Exod. 16:11,12

## **GOD PROVIDES FOOD**

“It came to pass, that ... in the morning the dew lay around about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was.” We note here that the Hebrew word translated “manna” means “what is it?” Hence the foregoing statement that the people knew “not what it was.” Moses answered their question, saying, “This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat”—Exod. 16:13-15

God faithfully provided for Israel, and they should have been satisfied and grateful for his provisions as they journeyed to the land of promise. As noted in our opening text, not a single day passed for forty years that they did not have manna to eat, which would meet their nutritional needs and satisfy their hunger. Without this marvelous, miraculous provision for food they would surely have died in that barren wilderness.

Information is provided to us in the Scriptures concerning what this manna was like. In the verses previously quoted, we are told that it was deposited at night, like the dew. Its color was white, which indicates that it was not a growing tree, plant, grass, grain or herb. (vs. 31) Thus, it was not something that grew out of the earth naturally, as the many green plants God had provided in the beginning for all animals and for man to eat. (Gen. 1:29,30) The fact that the manna was white further illustrates its provision as a direct miracle of God.

In Psalm 78:23-25, it is called “angels’ food.” The thought is that the source of this bread was the Almighty, sent by him to earth through his angels. God “opened the doors of heaven, And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels’ food: he sent them meat [food] to the full.” In Exodus 16:31, manna is described as being “like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.” Coriander seed is a globular, white, aromatic fruit about the size of a peppercorn. Manna was “like” it, but it was not the coriander seed itself. In another account we are told, “The manna was as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium.” (Num. 11:7) Bdellium is thought by some to have been a white aromatic gum or resin from certain balsam trees. Others believe bdellium refers to the white pearl found in oysters. Whichever of these may have actually been referred to in the foregoing verse, bdellium was white, which, we are told, was also the color of the manna.

## **GATHERING AND PREPARING**

It took patience and effort to gather this small, seed-like food every day. We are told: “The people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil.” (Num. 11:8) This information indicates to us that manna had all the basic ingredients which could be so prepared as to be a satisfying as well as tasty meal. It undoubtedly had a proper balance of carbohydrates, protein, fats, minerals and other sources of nutrition for a healthy diet.

God's instructions were that manna was to be gathered each day, but it was forbidden for the Israelites to gather enough for two days. (Exod. 16:16-19) "Notwithstanding they hearkened not to Moses; but some of them left of it until the [next] morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them." (vs. 20) The exception to this which the Lord made was, that on the day before the Sabbath, they were to gather twice as much for their families as they usually ate in one day's time. Twice as much manna fell, and it did not spoil overnight. It was perfectly proper for them to hold that supply over to the next day. In fact, if one went out on the Sabbath to gather manna, there would be none on the ground.—vss. 22-30

The foregoing details concerning the provision of manna and God's accompanying instructions as to its gathering and preparation constitute proof that it was not a phenomenon of the region. Further, it was not produced in a natural time cycle, since for six days they would find it, and every seventh day there would be none. Most assuredly, this was a tremendous miracle, and without it, the people of Israel would have died.

The Lord had instructed the Israelites to take only the amount they would eat that day. There were perhaps a million or more households and 2-3 million people traveling through the wilderness. (Exod. 12:37; Num. 1:45-47) Under these circumstances, the daily supply of manna found on the ground would no doubt have covered a large area, and the gathering of it by each household had to be accomplished in some orderly manner, so that every family had a sufficient amount on a daily basis, and double the

amount on the day before the Sabbath. The Scriptures do not provide the details as to how all this was accomplished, but we can be assured it was all under the miraculous divine supervision of God. He faithfully provided the people with sufficient food each day for forty years—more than 14,000 days—without fail!

## **JESUS FEEDS A MULTITUDE**

As time passed, the record of God's manifold provisions for the Israelites during their forty years in the wilderness was handed down from one generation to the next. Old Testament writers also often spoke of these things, calling to remembrance God's mighty acts on their behalf, including the great miracle of the manna which was so vital to their very existence. (Deut. 8:3-5; Neh. 9:19-21; Ps. 78:23-25; 105:39-43) Centuries later the Jews referred to its magnitude in response to the miracle Jesus performed when he fed 5,000 people.

The record of this is found in John chapter 6, verses 1-13 and 22-65. Jesus had come to a desert place. Thousands of people followed him because they wanted to hear him speak. As the day wore on they became faint from hunger, but they did not have any food with them. Jesus provided their meal by finding among those in the crowd a boy who had five loaves and some fish. Performing a miracle, Jesus multiplied this small amount of food until enough was provided to satisfy the entire multitude, with twelve full baskets left over for a future meal.

Some were so impressed by this miracle that they reacted by saying, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." They tried to take

him by force to make him a king, but he quickly escaped and went into a mountain by himself. He skillfully eluded them because he knew that it was not time for him to become a king.—John 6:14,15

Jesus was destined to be Israel's king, but not at that time, because he had come for a different purpose. The multitudes, however, were not to be denied—they sought him and found him the next day. Upon finding him, they said, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" Then Jesus told them, "I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."—vss. 25-27

Jesus' appeal was to those in the multitude who had hearing ears. There were a few there who would ultimately become his faithful footstep followers, but the great majority were only interested in the fishes and loaves he could provide, and he let them know that he was very much aware of this fact. As a consequence of this line of exchange between the people and Jesus, they responded with words implying that, in their view, the provision of the loaves and the fishes on behalf of several thousand was really not that great a miracle. They compared it to how Moses, for forty years, directed the feeding of over two million people in the wilderness. "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat."—vs. 31

## **TRUE BREAD FROM HEAVEN**

To this Jesus replied, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” The people had no comprehension of what the Lord was talking about. When he mentioned the bread from heaven which would bring life, they said, “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” Then Jesus said, “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”—vss. 32-35

Jesus was trying to teach them that the manna in the wilderness was simply a picture, or foregleam, of the true bread of life. He further spoke of this, stating, “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.” (vs. 51) Jesus knew this was not something they could understand at that time. Indeed, to many his words were difficult to believe at all. It was a “hard saying,” and as a result, “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked with him no more.”—vss. 60,66

## **MANNA POINTED FORWARD TO JESUS**

Though for a time confused, those who continued to follow Jesus, and who received the enlightenment provided through God’s Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, gained the blessed understanding of Jesus’ words to the multitude. How wonderful it is, too, that God has similarly opened our eyes and ears,

to see and hear, and that we can have an understanding of what Jesus was talking about. We can see the lesson from the beautiful picture of the manna, and how without it we would die. The manna represented Jesus' flesh, sacrificed for the life of the world—his perfect humanity laid down in death for all mankind. Just as God sent down the manna from heaven every day for Israel, so Jesus left his heavenly home and came down to earth to become the true manna—the bread of life—for all who come to him by faith.—John 1:29; 3:16,17; 6:33; Gal. 4:4-6; I John 4:14

As spiritual Israelites, we need our heavenly manna to sustain us as we travel through the wilderness on our journey toward Canaan. Without it we will not be able to survive. There are many lessons to learn from our study of the manna, but the primary one is to appreciate Jesus as our Redeemer. As such, the manna pictures the ransom first and foremost. (Matt. 20:28; I Tim. 2:3-6) Before we can take even the first step on our wilderness journey, we must have an appreciation of the ransom and what it does for us. Indeed, we cannot appreciate it enough, and are unable to fully comprehend what a sacrifice it was for the Heavenly Father to send his Son to earth to die for Adam and his fallen progeny. We are equally incapable of altogether appreciating what it meant for Jesus to lay down his perfect life in order that we might come out from under Adamic condemnation and have the opportunity to find everlasting life.

## **THE WORD OF GOD**

The manna does not represent only the ransom, however. It also denotes all that is contained in the

Word of God. When Jesus told the multitude that he was the “bread of life,” he further explained that it was not his literal flesh that they were to eat. He said, “The flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63) The words which he spoke and which we are to “eat” are the words of God contained in the Scriptures.

The importance of God’s Word as our spiritual “manna” is further shown in the experience of Jesus when he was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness after his baptism. The adversary’s first temptation consisted of telling Jesus to turn stones into bread. He was hungry and had not eaten for forty days. Our Lord’s reply to the devil was: “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Jesus was quoting Moses, who was reminding Israel how God had provided manna for them to eat for forty years. (Matt. 4:4) In these words we are reminded how dependent we are on the Word of God for spiritual sustenance.

Let us learn well this all-important and vital lesson of the manna, and take to heart the counsel given by Moses to the Israelites: “All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee

with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.”—Deut. 8:1-3

When God instituted the provision of manna for the Israelites, he instructed Moses to put a small portion into a golden pot, which was later placed in the ark of the covenant when the Tabernacle arrangement was established. (Exod. 16:32-34; Heb. 9:4) The manna was miraculously preserved in the golden pot, and never spoiled in all the centuries that the Tabernacle was in use. This is a beautiful representation of immortality—divine life—which would be given to those spiritual Israelites of the present age who are faithful in their sojourn toward heavenly Canaan. As we soon enter upon a new year, let us strive ever more diligently to partake daily of the heavenly manna so bountifully provided for our spiritual sustenance and growth. Thus, may these words be fulfilled in us, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna,” the incorruptible reward of “glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.”—Rev. 2:17; Rom. 2:7 ■

## 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 Wallace Elias, Jackson, MI—November 1.  
Age, 92

# The Great Commission

*“Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.”*  
—*Jeremiah 1:9,10*

## **JEREMIAH THE PROPHET**

was commissioned by God to declare a message of truth pertaining to Israel as well as to other nations. The Lord gave the prophet the message he was to preach. In order that he might be properly equipped to carry out the mission to which he was appointed, God told the prophet, “I have put my words in thy mouth.” Jeremiah was not commissioned to proclaim his own opinions or deductions. If he were to be faithful, the only course open to him was that of being a messenger of the Word of the Lord.

This principle has held true with respect to all those who have been divinely appointed to represent God among the people. The only true servants of God have been those who faithfully proclaim the

message he has entrusted to them. Their fidelity to the Lord's cause has called for earnestness in their endeavor to ascertain the message he would have them proclaim. As Paul admonished in his letter to Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—II Tim. 2:15

The message Jeremiah was commissioned to proclaim was of a twofold nature. First, he was to call attention to the sins of Israel and the dire consequences of continued disobedience to God's Law. A significant portion of the Book of Jeremiah presents this aspect of the prophet's message from God. Secondly, however, Jeremiah was also to announce the blessings the Lord proposed to bestow upon the nation and upon all the world under the future arrangements of the New Covenant. (Jer. 31:31-34) Included in this feature of God's message given through the prophet was the explanation that these blessings were to be so far-reaching as to include the resurrection of the dead. (vss. 15-17) These two phases of the message are epitomized in our text, for in it, Jeremiah was told that he was "to pull down, and to destroy," and also "to build, and to plant."

Jeremiah himself did not embark upon a work to destroy, and he was powerless to do anything along the line of building or planting. However, from the Lord's standpoint he was reckoned as having a part, both in the work of destruction and in the work of rebuilding, simply by being faithful in declaring to the people what the Lord intended to do along these lines. It is important to recognize this principle in God's dealings with his people, for it will help us to understand more clearly some of the prophecies

pertaining to the position occupied by the people of God at the present time, just prior to the establishment of Christ's kingdom.

In the experience of Jeremiah, while he was commissioned to warn Israel of the impending disaster that was to come upon the nation, the instrumentality actually used by the Lord to overthrow the nation was the king of Babylon and the Babylonian armies. The prophet was given a vision in which he saw outside forces, "a seething pot," that was to come against Jerusalem. (Jer. 1:13-15) Like many other prophecies, while this doubtless had a fulfillment in connection with the overthrow of Israel at that time, it has a larger fulfillment now, as we see all the kingdoms of this world going through a great "time of trouble."—Dan. 12:1

### **ANOINTED TO PREACH GLAD TIDINGS**

In the case of the ancient prophets of Israel, each of them was commissioned by God individually to proclaim a specific message to his people. There was, however, an overall harmony in all these messages, for in a general way they always contained a warning against the results of disobedience, a call to repentance, and promises of blessings which ultimately would come to Israel and the whole world. These promises were later summed up by Peter as pointing forward to "the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:21

When Jesus came at his First Advent, he was also given a special commission. At the time of his baptism he was anointed by the Holy Spirit, and shortly thereafter he explained to a group of Jewish

worshippers at a Nazarene synagogue that this anointing constituted his authority to preach glad tidings to the meek, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:17-21) The scriptural proof which the Master used in this connection were the words of the Prophet Isaiah found in Isaiah 61:1-3.

This foretold commission of the Holy Spirit to preach the glad tidings did not end with the Master. The apostle speaks of the anointing which we have received from him, indicating that those who by one spirit are baptized into his body, are partakers of the same anointing which came upon the Head. (I John 2:27) Jesus explained this matter in non-symbolic language, saying to his disciples that just as he had been sent into the world, so he was sending them. Later he told them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel—the glad tidings.—John 20:21; Matt. 28:19,20

The commission we have received to represent the Lord differs from that which was given to the individual prophets in the sense that we share in the one great anointing, or authorization, which came first upon our Head, Christ Jesus, and is participated in by all the members of his body. All footstep followers of Christ are given the same truth, and all are authorized to lay down their lives in service and sacrifice proclaiming it to others.

The message the church has been authorized to make known to the world has not been unlike that which each of the prophets declared to Israel. First, it has been a message of repentance. Paul explained to the Athenians on Mars' hill that now God "com-

mandeth all men every where to repent.” (Acts 17:30) This call to repentance has been done by God’s faithful servants, the footstep followers of Jesus. The true church in the flesh has been pictured by Elijah, whose efforts were directed to “turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.” (Mal. 4:5,6) Elijah’s efforts met with only limited success, just as have the efforts of Jesus’ faithful followers.

In his prophecy of this symbolic work of Elijah, God warned that if repentance was not forthcoming on the part of the world under the influence of the Gospel message, he would “smite the land, with utter destruction.” (vs. 6, *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*) This is, no doubt, a reference to the unprecedented tribulation that would come upon this present evil world order, ruled by Satan, causing its destruction and preparing the way for God’s new world. (II Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4; II Pet. 3:9-13) We observe this trouble going on in our day. Jesus prophesied that it would be a time of “great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”—Matt. 24:21

It is not, however, the privilege of the church to merely announce to the world the need for repentance, and to explain the meaning of the present trouble. We are also to assure the people—all who have hearing ears—of the wonderful time of blessing which is so near at hand, and which will follow the “great tribulation.” Like the prophets of old, we, too, are to speak of the “times of restitution of all things,” which are to be ushered in as a result of the establishment of Christ’s kingdom. What a joy it is to sing this sweet theme song of God’s love!

## **GLAD TIDINGS TO THE MEEK**

In the great commission of the Holy Spirit as outlined in Isaiah 61:1-3, the thought is stressed that we are to proclaim the glad tidings to the "meek." These, for the most part, are the only ones whose hearts are prepared to benefit from the message. It is quite beyond our powers, however, to seek out the meek of the earth individually so that we can direct the message exclusively to them. Rather, the method the Lord gives us is that of proclaiming the Truth far and wide by every means possible, with the realization that in his providence it will reach the hearing ears of the meek. We are to sow "beside all waters," for we know not what will "prosper, either this or that."—Isa. 32:20; Eccles. 11:6

Our message is to be that of glad tidings. Even when we explain the meaning of the great time of trouble, our message should always be coupled with that of hope for the future. This is the hope that is based upon the promises of God pertaining to the blessings to be showered upon the people through the instrumentalities of the Messianic kingdom. Such a message will surely encourage and bind up the brokenhearted. It will also assure the earnest seekers after truth that those who are held in captivity to sin and superstition, as well as those who are bound in the great prison house of death, are to be given their liberty. (Isa. 61:1) It is a glorious message, which thrills the hearts of those who know and proclaim it, as well as those who hear and respond to its righteous influence.

Jesus was commissioned also to proclaim the "acceptable year of the LORD," and that privilege has likewise come down to us. (vs. 2) This feature

of the message pertains to the opportunity at the present time to follow in the footsteps of Jesus as joint sacrificers with him. It includes the inspiring hope that if we are faithful unto death we will live and reign with Christ in the spiritual phase of the kingdom.—Rom. 8:16,17; Rev. 20:4,6

This portion of God's message includes a call to repentance, and the invitation to present one's self in full consecration to him. It includes also proper emphasis upon all those features of the Scriptures pertaining to our earthly walk. Having escaped the corruption that is in the world, the Apostle Peter states, we are to encourage one another to lay hold more firmly upon the exceeding great and precious promises, by which we might be made partakers of the divine nature. We are also to add to our faith, the apostle says, the qualities of virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. (II Pet. 1:4-7) We are to continually remind ourselves that it is only if we "give diligence" to do these things that an "entrance shall be ministered" unto us "abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—vss. 10,11

## **DAY OF VENGEANCE—ETERNAL BLESSINGS TO FOLLOW**

When Jesus quoted the commission of the Holy Spirit as outlined in Isaiah 61:1-3, he stopped just before the reference to the "day of vengeance of our God." The reason is that it was not then God's due time for his "vengeance" to be upon the world. This phase of the divine commission of service has been at this end of the present age. Now, as the prophecies and conditions in the earth so clearly

indicate, we are living in the foretold “day of vengeance,” or as previously referenced, the time of “great tribulation.”

Declaring the day of God’s vengeance, however, does not imply that we are to pronounce vengeance upon the world. This responsibility belongs only to God. “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” (Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30; Eccl. 12:14) Our declaration, rather, calls only for the explanation of the present trouble, and witnessing to the glorious solution to world distress and perplexity which will be divinely provided through the kingdom of Christ so soon to be established.

A proper testimony concerning the “day of vengeance” implies making known to the people that none of the proposed humanly devised remedies for mankind’s ills now being offered will solve the problems of a dying world. Only Christ’s kingdom will do this. The position of the true Christian in the world is to proclaim boldly and lovingly the glorious fact that soon God will answer the prayer, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,” and that the manifestation of this kingdom will bring about “the desire of all nations.” —Matt. 6:10; Hag. 2:7

## **PROCLAIMING THE KINGDOM**

Guided by the viewpoint of the Lord as expressed by him to Jeremiah, and set forth in our opening text, we are warranted in concluding that faithfulness in announcing the coming kingdom may properly be considered an important part of our commission. Hence, we today rejoice to proclaim that the present evil world—that is, the present world

order—must come to an end and be replaced by God’s wonderful and righteous kingdom.

Surely the followers of the Master today occupy a blessed position in the divine arrangement. “As a season of beauty upon the mountains, as the feet of one preaching glad tidings of peace,” declares the Prophet Isaiah. Then he outlines the message of glad tidings which we are now commissioned to preach, saying, “As one preaching good news: for I will publish thy salvation, saying, O Sion, thy God shall reign.”—Isa. 52:7, *The Septuagint*

Isaiah declares prophetically that in this time his “watchmen shall lift up the voice” together. (vs. 8) This denotes unity and cooperation in bearing witness to the Truth. It is not possible for imperfect human minds to see every detail of Scripture exactly alike, but it is possible for all who recognize the significance of the times in which we are living to unitedly proclaim the “gospel of the kingdom” to the world. (Matt. 24:14) This is essentially what the watchmen are doing. Think of the measure of cooperation represented in the ability of individuals and small groups to broadcast the Gospel message worldwide by radio, television, and the many forms of electronic media available today. This is a wonderful testimony concerning the determination of the Lord’s people to work together, letting their light shine so they might be like a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid.—Matt. 5:14-16

The proclamation of glad tidings today will not convert the world, nor interest a great many people to the point of dedicating their lives to God in full consecration. Yet, there will still be some drawn to the Lord, one here and one there, for it is his method

of calling the remaining members of his church.

Besides these, there are thousands who are learning the comforting message of God's plan, and the glorious hope that it provides for the future. They are discovering through the message of the kingdom that God is love, that he does not intend to torment his enemies, and that his kingdom of blessing is near. To such as receive this message into good and honest hearts, these words of the prophet may properly be addressed: "Seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger."—Zeph. 2:3

The message which God has commissioned us to preach is one which reveals the futility of all human efforts to establish peace, and points to the kingdom of Christ as the world's only hope. As we soon begin another year in the Master's service, let us be loyal and zealous children, gladly laying down our lives as ambassadors of the kingdom. We have a great commission! May we prove to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God.—I Cor. 4:1 ■

## WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

**DECEMBER 5**—"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; ... as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."—Joshua 24:15 (Z. '01-284 Hymn 164)

**DECEMBER 12**—"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."—Proverbs 23:7 (Z. '01-325 Hymn 256)

**DECEMBER 19**—"Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off."—I Kings 20:11 (Z. '94-155 Hymn 266)

**DECEMBER 26**—"Be thou strong and very courageous."—Joshua 1:7 (Z. '02-285 Hymn 197)

# “I Wish I Knew What To Do!”

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# ENCOURAGING LETTERS

## FIRST TIME VISITING

DawnBible: My first time visiting the site while searching for the lexical interpretation of *HOPE* and it has been a blessing. God bless.  
—Netherlands

## TRINIDAD LISTENER

DawnBible: I will like to request a copy of *The Truth about Hell* please. I listen everyday to you guys on my local radio station [Trinidad Inspiration Radio, AM730, Sunday 9:00am]. It's very eye opening.—Trinidad

## HISTORY OF BIBLE STUDENTS

DawnBible: Just found your website. I have been looking at the history of the Jehovah's Witnesses and became interested in your history also. Thanks.—WA

## LED TOWARDS SALVATION

DawnBible: Thank you so much. You have helped to save my life and lead me towards salvation. I love you.—CA

## SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS

DawnBible: God bless you as you continue to spread the good news of the kingdom!  
—MS

## MAKE SENSE

DawnBible: The views you provided make a lot of sense, looking to learn more. Thanks and blessings.—OR

## ARTICLE ON FAITH

DawnBible: Wonderful solid article on the Rewards of Faith, an excitement to read, thank you.—United Kingdom

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# SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

<b>T. N. Alexander</b>		<b>L. Griehs</b>	
Chicago, IL	December 28,29	Ontario, CA	December 1,2
<b>M. Colletti</b>		Chicago, IL	28,29
Ontario, CA	December 1,2	<b>E. Kuenzli</b>	
<b>M. Davis</b>		<u>India:</u>	
Ontario, CA	December 1,2	Coimbatore	December 1
<b>W. Dutka</b>		Erode	2
<u>India:</u>		Salem	3
Coimbatore	December 1	Trichy	4
Erode	2	Dindigul	5
Salem	3	Chennai	7,8
Trichy	4	<b>J. Parkinson</b>	
Dindigul	5	Ontario, CA	December 1,2
Chennai	7,8	<b>D. Rawson</b>	
<b>J. Freer</b>		Ontario, CA	December 1,2
Ontario, CA	December 1,2	<b>D. Rice</b>	
<b>R. Goodman</b>		Ontario, CA	December 1,2
Chicago, IL	December 28,29		

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*"Thou crownest the year with thy goodness."—Psalm 65:11*

*As we review the leadings of divine providence during the year that is past, let God's goodness and mercy stimulate our faith and confidence in him as respects the new incoming year. A proper retrospect on the part of a proper child of God will enable him not only to render thanks for the past, but to look up and lift up his head, realizing that our deliverance is nearer than when we first believed; and that he that began a good work in us is both able and willing to complete it, if we will but continue to submit our wills, our lives, our all, to his wisdom and loving care.*

*—Daily Heavenly Manna, December 30*

# 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.*

**SOUTHWEST CONVENTION, November 29-December 2**—Ontario Gateway Hotel, Ontario, CA. Hotel reservations, phone: (909) 975-5000. Mention Bible Students Convention for special rate available until November 3. Other information, contact D. Rawson. Phone: (408) 644-7668 or Email: rawsondr@yahoo.com

**IDABAN THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, December 7**—Ibadan Ecclesia place of fellowship, #24 Bola Fayemi Street, Coca Cola Mokola Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Contact C. O. Egbu. Phone: +234803339949

**CHICAGO CONVENTION, December 28,29**—Addison Park District, 120 E. Oak Street, Addison, IL. Contact D. Whittaker. Phone: (630) 293-4810 or Email: secretary@chicagobible.org

**PHOENIX CONVENTION, January 18,19**—Drury Inn, Happy Valley, 2335 W. Pinnacle Peak Road, Phoenix, AZ 85027. Hotel reservations, phone: (800) 325-0720. Confirmation #2369019. Reservation deadline, December 16. Other information, contact A. Mengos. Phone: (480) 390-3767 or Email: samengos@yahoo.com

**AUSTRALIA CONVENTION, January 24-27**—Camp Wilkin, Anglesea, Victoria, Australia. Contact R. Charlton. Email:australianbiblestudents@gmail.com

**SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 14-16**—Holiday Inn Express, 2224 Augurn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821. Contact hotel for room reservations. Phone: (916) 923-1100. Specify “Bible Students” to receive special rate. For other information, contact J. Freer. Phone: (916) 879-4655 or Email: shootingln@aol.com

**FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 7-9**—Holiday Inn Orlando International, 5750 T. G. Lee Blvd., Orlando, FL 32822. Phone: (407) 851-6400. Specify “Orlando Bible Students” for special rate by February 22. Online booking code: SBO. Other information, contact S. Jeuck. Phone: (407) 247-4641 or Email: sjeuck@aol.com

**HIGHLAND PARK CONVENTION, March 28**—DoubleTree by Hilton, 789 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06854. Phone: (203) 853-3477. Other information, contact S. Koterba. Phone: (917) 554-2348 or Email: sandykoterba@gmail.com

**ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, April 10-12**—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Boulevard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Send reservations and meal counts to S. Thomassen by April 1. Phone: (505) 268-8170 or Email: srbt@juno.com

**NIGERIA CONVENTION, April 11**—Agwa Ecclesia, Uzi Obudi Agwa, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact V. Ekeh. Phone: 2348080205812 or Email: abiblestudecc@yahoo.com

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