

# The DAWN

VOLUME No. LXXXVIII, Number 10  
(USPS 149-380), October 2020

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

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# No More Death

*“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”*  
—*Revelation 21:4*

**THE VAST MAJORITY OF** mankind desires to live as long as possible, not to have life cut off by disease, accident, war, murder, or old age. Medical science tells us that the average life span in the United States is now 80 years, up substantially from the average of just a few decades ago. Scientists tell us further that medical

breakthroughs in coming decades may make it possible for man to live as long as 150 years. As promising as that may sound, however, all of this pales in comparison to what the Bible teaches was God’s intent for man. The Creator’s purpose concerning man was for him to live forever. It is true that Christians have hoped for everlasting life in heaven for centuries, and certainly the Scriptures contain many promises to that end. However, the Bible also holds out a hope of life, perfect and everlasting, right here on earth. This was God’s design and purpose in creating the first human beings, Adam and Eve.

After the creation of our first parents, God told them to “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish

[fill] the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” The Bible account further states, “The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food.” (Gen. 1:28; 2:8,9) Eden was to be a model for the whole earth, a dominion for its king—man. God’s intent was not for life to be cut short, nor for man to live merely seventy, eighty, or even one-hundred and fifty years, but for life to continue forever.—Ps. 90:10, *English Standard Version*

## **DEATH THE RESULT OF DISOBEDIENCE**

The only reason God’s intent to bestow everlasting life was not realized is that our first parents transgressed the divine law. The promise of everlasting life depended on obedience. This was an absolute requirement from God and was evidenced by his command concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; that the fruit of it not be eaten, else “thou shalt surely die.” (Gen. 2:17) When man disobeyed this command, the sentence was pronounced, and the dying process began to be carried out. God said, “For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”—Gen. 3:19

When God drove man out of the Garden of Eden, he made special provision so that he could not return. The Bible says this provision was specifically to keep man out of the garden; but why? “Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat,

and live for ever.” (Gen. 3:22) That was God’s purpose for man—to live forever. The only reason this purpose was not attained was that man sinned. Having sinned, man was taken out of the garden condition which would have otherwise continued his life everlastingly.

Man fights the idea of death. In spite of illness, injury and disease, his determination to live is steadfast. Even among Christians, heaven is many times thought of as merely an alternative place to go when they cannot live here on earth any longer. The Scriptures tell us that God “has put eternity into man’s heart.” (Eccles. 3:11, *ESV*) Indeed, man wants to live, still having this inborn desire with which he was created by God.

## **SATAN’S LIE**

Because of his strong desire to live, man has fallen easy prey to Satan’s deceptions. Satan asked Eve about God’s command that they would die if they ate of the forbidden fruit. She said that was true, confirming what God had spoken. Satan, though, said through the serpent, “Ye shall not surely die.” (Gen. 3:1-4) I Timothy 2:14 states that Eve was deceived, and so also much of the human race has succumbed to the same deception. Eve wanted to believe she would not die, so much so that she believed Satan’s lie, “Ye shall not surely die,” rather than God’s command.

As the reality of death eventually made itself evident to our first parents, and as death actually began to take place among man, Satan expanded upon his lie. He thrust upon man the idea that what he was seeing and experiencing was only the

appearance of death. He put forth the notion that man does not really die at all, that death is not what it seems to be, but it is merely a door into another part of an immortal existence. This erroneous thought is the basis of most of the religions of the world. It is the foundation upon which the teaching of reincarnation, and the many other “no death” theories and religious doctrines are built. Even many professed Christians who claim the Bible as their standard, believe, and teach, that there is a part of man that does not die—an immortal soul—when by all other appearances death has claimed another victim. Thus it is that, even here in the twenty-first century, a majority of people of all religious faiths claim that really there is no death, unwittingly giving silent assent to the statement made so long ago by Satan, “Thou shalt not surely die.” The reason for this belief, simply stated, is that no one wants to die!

The Bible, though, says death is a reality. In Romans 6:23, the Apostle Paul states, “The wages of sin is death.” The prophet, in Ezekiel 18:4, says emphatically, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Notice that this verse makes no reference to the soul being immortal at all, but that it is subject to death if found guilty of sin. The condition of death can simply be described as the absence of life, that is, complete nonexistence, or oblivion. Ecclesiastes 9:5 states, “The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing.” Here no distinction is made between the wicked dead and righteous dead, just that the dead—all of them—“know not anything.”

## **A HOPE FOR LIFE**

Man's hope for everlasting life, based on God's promises, lies in a restoring of life by God through the resurrection of the dead. In I Corinthians 15:13-18, the Apostle Paul states, "If there be no resurrection of the dead, ... your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." Paul is talking about Christians here. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then even Christians "are perished" when they die, to say nothing of the remainder of mankind. Paul, however, assures us in this same chapter that there is to be a resurrection. "Since it was through a man that death resulted, it was also through a man that the resurrection of the dead resulted. For just as all men die by virtue of their descent from Adam, so all such as are in union with Christ will be made to live again." (vss. 21,22, *Williams New Testament*) This resurrection hope is for all, and it is based on the redemptive work of Jesus, which will make it a reality. Sincere students of the Bible should rejoice to believe and claim this as the basis of their hope.

## **THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST**

Speaking of Jesus as our Savior, the Apostle Paul said that he "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (II Tim. 1:10) Why does Paul use the two words "life" and "immortality?" He does so because there is a difference. Adam and his race were given life, and every provision for its continuance, if obedient, forever. Adam, though, did not have, nor was ever promised, immortality.

To understand what is meant by the statement that Jesus "brought life and immortality to light

through the gospel,” we must first know what the Gospel is that is mentioned in this verse. This seems like a simple question, but it is surprising how few really understand the full import of this term. Briefly stated, Gospel means good news, or glad tidings. The Greek word translated Gospel in this verse is the same as is used in the familiar words recorded in Luke 2:10,11, “The angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings [good news, especially the Gospel] 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.” Those were indeed good tidings—a Gospel of great joy. However, this was not the first time the Gospel had been preached. The Apostle Paul wrote, “The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, In you shall all the nations be blessed.” (Gal. 3:8, *ESV*) Paul here refers to the statement made over 2,000 years earlier by God to Abraham, and repeated to Isaac and Jacob, “In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 28:14) This was the “Gospel” preached in advance to Abraham. We notice God did not say, “In thee and in thy seed shall all families of the earth be taken to heaven.” No, he said that all the families “of the earth” would be blessed. This, so many centuries before the angels’ announcement, was the original full statement of the Gospel of Christ.

This Gospel theme is developed throughout the Old Testament by the prophets and is associated with the thought of a kingdom. Speaking of a future kingdom through a promised “seed”—Christ—which would bless all mankind, Isaiah 9:7 states, “Of the

increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.” We notice the phrase, “Of the increase,” thus indicating that this kingdom will expand, or increase, to include all nations—all the families of the earth. This progression of prophetic testimony continues until the birth of Jesus, culminating in the words quoted earlier as recorded in Luke 2:10. In short, the Old Testament promised that the seed would come. The angels said the seed is born! Truly this was glad tidings to all people—all the families of the earth—spoken of in both the Old and New Testaments.

### **THE PROMISED SEED**

That Jesus was the promised seed spoken of by God to Abraham, and to which Paul referred in Galatians 3:8, is confirmed by the apostle in this same chapter, just a few verses later. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (vs. 16) In verse 29, Paul adds further, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” In other words, if you belong to Christ—the seed—if you are true Christians, then you are also counted as additional members of “Abraham’s seed” and inheritors of the same promise, “In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

Why did Paul in Galatians 3:16 say there was but one seed, Christ, but in verse 29 state that all true Christians are part of Abraham’s seed? The apostle in another place uses the illustration of a human body to help answer this question. “As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members

of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.” (I Cor. 12:12) Here Christ is likened to the human body, with Jesus as its “head,” and the church, all true Christians, as the other “body” members. (Col. 1:18) The “one body,” in total, constitutes the Christ. This Christ class, head and body together, is the one seed which Paul speaks of and which the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, states will eventually bless all people. These statements of Scripture help to explain why the work of restoring mankind from his “death” condition could not start immediately after Jesus’ death and resurrection, and why his kingdom could not then be established. The intervening work of this present Gospel Age has been to select and develop the body—the seed class, the members of the Christ—as they are to be the ones to share in the future work of blessing mankind with their head, Jesus. The prospective members of this special class must be “transformed by the renewing” of their minds and be proven; they must take up their cross; they must be baptized into Jesus’ death. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Rom. 6:3; 12:1,2) These must, figuratively speaking, have only Jesus as their head, and must follow him, “whithersoever he goeth.” (Rev. 14:4) As Paul said, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”—II Tim. 2:12

### **THE REWARD OF THE CHURCH—IMMORTALITY**

Jesus, the night before his crucifixion, made a wonderful promise to his disciples, those who would be true Christians. “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare

a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:2,3) There are many spheres of life which exist in God’s universe: the lower animals, humans, angels, principalities, many “mansions” and planes of existence. However, Jesus here is saying that none of these will be the dwelling place of his church, his bride. Notice, he says, “I go to prepare a place for you,” a new place that never existed before. Apostle John states further, “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (I John 3:2) Jesus, when he was resurrected, was highly exalted. “God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.” (Phil. 2:9) The church, his body members, will also receive a similar glorious resurrection, and be with him. They are spoken of by the Apostle Paul as those who “seek for glory and honour and immortality.”—Rom. 2:7

Recalling the verse quoted earlier that Jesus brought “life and immortality to light through the gospel,” we now can see that the “life” herein mentioned is the future hope of the world here on earth, restored to human perfection. “Immortality,” on the other hand, is the reward of faithfulness for those who truly follow Jesus even unto death. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” “On such the second death hath no power.” (Rev. 2:10; 3:21; 20:6) The difference between life and immortality is that life is dependent on outside sustenance for

its continuance, but immortality has no such requirement. Immortality was first possessed only by God. He exalted his son Jesus to this high position upon his faithfulness as man's Redeemer. The faithful church, Jesus' body members, the remainder of the seed class, will also be exalted to this same divine, immortal nature possessed by God and Jesus. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature."—II Pet. 1:4

The purpose of the present Gospel Age has been to search out those truly willing to follow in Jesus' footsteps, to lay down their lives in sacrifice as he did. (Rom. 12:1; Ps. 50:5) Even among professed Christians, relatively few have been willing to live a life of complete dedication to God. "Narrow is the way," Jesus said, which leads to this high heavenly reward, and "few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:14) The Master further said that it would be only a "little flock" to whom would be given the kingdom of heaven. (Luke 12:32) Nearly twenty centuries have passed and the selection of this faithful class is not yet complete, but soon it shall be finished. Then the blessings of life and restoration will flow to "all the families of the earth" through the promised kingdom of the Christ, the promised seed.—Rom. 8:19, *ESV*

## **DEATH TO BE SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY**

The Apostle Paul speaks concerning the kingdom over which Christ will rule, saying, "He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (I Cor. 15:25,26) Later, in this chapter, a sequential order

is given to the entire matter. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (vs. 49) That is, there is to be a change of nature for the church, from the earthly to the heavenly. In verse 54, Paul continues, "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." This verse reminds us that humans are not immortal, because one cannot have immortality "put on" if they already possess it. The faithful church will have immortality put on by the power of God! The final phrase, "Death is swallowed up in victory," follows the sequence of events talked about earlier in the verse. In other words, once the faithful church is complete and receives its reward, "then shall be brought to pass" the sum total of all the other promises of the Bible concerning the earthly kingdom. Mankind's restoration, and the blessing of all the families of the earth, will be thus found to fulfill the statement, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

This statement by Paul is a quotation from Isaiah 25. In that prophecy, Christ's kingdom is pictured as a mountain. The Israelites could relate to this, because God ruled over them as their King. Their seat of religious authority was in the city of Jerusalem, specifically the Temple, which was located on Mount Zion, picturing God's divine authority over them. "In this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. ... He will swallow

up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; ... And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” (Isa. 25:6,8,9) Paul says that as soon as the work of gathering the true church is complete, when they have put on immortality, it will then be time for this prophecy of Isaiah, and so many others like it, to be fulfilled here upon the earth.

### **CHRIST’S EARTHLY KINGDOM**

Christ’s kingdom will be a time of peace, not war. Notice the words of the prophets concerning this time. “I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.” (Hos. 2:18) “I will cut off the chariot, ... and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.” (Zech. 9:10) “The desire of all nations shall come. ... And in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Hag. 2:7,9) “My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.” (Isa. 32:18) Will there always be war and unrest? No, not according to the Bible. It was the psalmist who wrote, “He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” (Ps. 46:9,10) These are staggering promises!

Many things will change in Christ's kingdom on earth. Today we often ask others, "How are you?" The response is many times, "Oh, so-so. I have this or that ache or pain." These are common topics of conversation in today's world. Notice, though, what the prophet says concerning the coming kingdom, "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." (Isa. 33:24) Man will no longer need to ask "how are you," because all will be well, and none will be sick. This is what the coming kingdom will bring. Everyone will have the opportunity to live, not having their life cut off by war, killing, disease, or any other malady, for these will be things of the past. Life will not be to merely the age of 70, 80, or 150 years as the scientists predict, but forever, to all who obey the kingdom's righteous laws.

### **GOD'S WORD IS SURE**

The Apostle John, in Revelation chapters 20-22, gives many beautiful pictures of the coming kingdom. Among these are the words which include our opening text, "I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21:3,4) If, as these verses say, there shall be no more death, it means that the people will be living forever. Thus, indeed, they "shall not say, I am sick."

Many of the statements given to John the Revelator were provided through various angels, or messengers.

However, the message of Revelation 21:5 is so important, so awesome and colossal, that God did not even allow an angel to deliver it. He says, as it were, “Step aside, I want to tell this to John myself, it is so important!” This verse says, “He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.” What words are “true and faithful?” Those of the previous verse, “There shall be no more death.” We have the guarantee of this by no less than God’s own sure word. Let us echo these words of the psalmist: “My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.”—Ps. 145:21 ■

## WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

**OCTOBER 1**—“I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me.”—Psalm 39:1 (Z. ’97-156 Hymn 65)

**OCTOBER 8**—“Be not deceived, ... he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”—Galatians 6:7,8 (Z.’04-57 Hymn 4)

**OCTOBER 15**—“Have faith in God.”—Mark 11:22 (Z.’04-59 Hymn 174)

**OCTOBER 22**—“Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?”—Matthew 20:22 (Z. ’04-138,139 Hymn 106)

**OCTOBER 29**—“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.”—II Corinthians 4:8-10 (Z ’01-55 Hymn 348)

# Love That Intercedes

**Key Verse:**  
*“Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good.”*  
—I Samuel 19:4

**Selected Scripture:**  
*I Samuel 19:1-7*

friendships recorded in the Bible is that which existed between David and Jonathan. Today’s lesson illustrates the importance of giving evidence of our love toward God by exemplifying it in our relationships with fellow human beings.

After being governed for several centuries by judges, Israel desired a king so that they could be like all the other nations around them. God had told Moses this day would come and set forth the requirements of such a king. (Deut. 17:14-20) Samuel was a key figure in the institution of a kingdom under Saul, then later in the transition from the kingship of Saul to David. It was Samuel who told Saul that his kingdom was to be taken from him because of disobedience to God, and that he would be succeeded by a man after God’s own heart. (I Sam. 13:13,14) It was also Samuel who anointed David, the youngest son of Jesse, when God commanded him, “Arise, anoint him: for this is he.”—I Sam. 16:12,13

As a result of this anointing, the spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David while at the same time departing from Saul. Noticing the king’s melancholy, his

servants sent for David to play his lyre and bring musical relief to the ailing king. Saul came to value David's service and made him his armor bearer.—vss. 14-23

A significant result of these events was the reaction of Saul's son, Jonathan, to the great service David was rendering to his father and to the nation of Israel. "Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. ... Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul." (I Sam. 18:1,3) Thus we see the formulation of a friendship which was based upon a mutual love of the service of God.

This friendship would soon be put to the test. After David's defeat of the Philistine army, the people proclaimed, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." (vs. 7) Saul was furious, and thought to conspire against David. However, as David won battle after battle against Israel's enemies, Saul settled on a more direct way to remove him. He instructed his son Jonathan and his servants to kill David.—I Sam. 19:1

Jonathan loved his father, and as the eldest of four sons stood to be the next king of Israel. His highest allegiance, however, was to the God of Israel. In today's Key Verse Jonathan tells Saul he was committing a great sin to plot against the life of a man who had rendered invaluable services to his country, and whose loyalty had been uniformly steady and devoted. Jonathan's strong pleadings of protest produced a positive effect on the impulsive mind of his father. As he was still disposed to good and honest impressions, Saul bound himself by an oath to relinquish his hostile purpose. (vss. 6,7) Thus, through the intervention of Jonathan, a temporary reconciliation was effected and David returned to service of the king and the people of Israel.

In the foregoing experiences we find an invaluable lesson in laying a foundation of love for our brethren. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—John 15:13 ■

# Love Your Enemies

**Key Verses:** *“I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.”*  
—*Luke 6:27,28*

**Selected Scripture:**  
*Luke 6:27-36*

**TODAY’S LESSON COMES** from Luke’s account of Jesus’ sermon on the mount. It is important to remember that these words were addressed only to our Lord’s footstep followers: “But I say unto you.” While it is not possible for Christians to perfectly live up to every feature of the Master’s instructions, all need to understand and acknowledge this supreme standard. Each should examine his consecrated walk closely so as to attain as

much as possible the divine requirements of character.

In our Key Verse Jesus says to do good, bless and pray for those who might do evil against us. The fulfilling of this commandment is difficult because we have waived what might previously have been our personal rights, and have vowed to sacrifice all earthly aims and ambitions. Our life’s mission is to suffer with Christ so that we might reign with him in his promised kingdom.—II Tim. 2:11,12

Our Selected Scripture verses give us three examples of how to love our enemies. The first is stated as follows: “Unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other.” (Luke 6:29) When our Lord was smitten by one of the Jewish officers as he stood trial before the high priest, he did not invite the smiting of the other cheek, but rather questioned the reason for being struck. (John

18:22,23) His enemies continued to smite him, however, to which he subsequently remained silent. (Matt. 26:67,68; 27:27-31) Let us give a similar witness of love and forbearance when we find ourselves being unjustly attacked for righteousness' sake. As the Apostle Peter wrote, we are never to render "evil for evil."—I Pet. 3:9

The second example is provided in Matthew's account. "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also." (Matt. 5:40) The follower of Jesus may properly resist such an action based upon an honest defense. Both Jesus and the Apostle Paul, under certain circumstances, turned to the laws of the governments which had jurisdiction over them. However, if the court were to rule against them, if even unjustly, they knew to submit without murmuring. Thus, while Jesus and Paul used honest argument in their defense against mobs and judges, they never resisted the decisions made. This is a great lesson for us.

The third example may be the most difficult to follow: "Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back." (Luke 6:30, *New International Version*) The broadest interpretation of this command is that we should err on the side of generosity instead of selfishness. We should not take these words so literally, however, to give something that may cause injury to him that asks. Spiritually-guided wisdom should always regulate our actions in these matters.

Let us remember that the majority of those who may perpetrate evil against us do so because they do not appreciate godly principles in the matter. Their appointed day to learn these is in the coming kingdom under favorable conditions. For the faithful Christian, however, now is the time when we should be exemplifying divine love in our dealings with others. Let us, therefore, manifest this eminent quality of character to all those around us by loving not only our friends and family, but let us even love our enemies!



# Love for Neighbors

**Key Verses:** *“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.”*  
—*Luke 10:36,37*

**Selected Scripture:**  
*Luke 10:25-37*

## **THE EVIL DISPOSITION**

toward Jesus on the part of the Jewish teachers was often manifest in the questions they asked him in public. Their evident purpose was to entrap him in his words and hinder his influence among the people. It was for this purpose that they mingled with the multitudes who witnessed his miracles and attended his preaching. However, Jesus was more than a match for their cunning craftiness to the point of thwarting their evil purposes.

In today's lesson, a Jewish lawyer asked Jesus, tempting him, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 10:25) The lawyer may have expected Jesus to say, “You must believe that I am the Son of God, the promised Messiah.” While this would have been true, the people were not yet prepared to understand and receive it. For example, such an answer might have caused the multitudes to say that Jesus was exalting himself to a position of near equality with God, in violation of the Mosaic Law. Jesus knew that the people needed continued and repeated evidences to convince them of his true position as God's representative. Thus the Master wisely gave them what he knew they needed, and with skill avoided the sinister purposes on the part of his enemies.

Showing great wisdom, Jesus referred the questioner

to the Law, saying, “What is written in the law? how readeſt thou?” The lawyer properly reſponded that man ſhould love God with all his heart, ſoul, ſtrength and mind, and his neighbor as himſelf. Jeſus ſaid he had answered correctly, and inſtructed him, “this do, and thou ſhalt live.”—vſs. 26-28

The thoughts of the crowd were likely puzzled by Jeſus’ ſtatement. Though many Jews had endeavored to merit life through the keeping of the Law, not one had ever yet ſucceeded. They perhaps interpreted the Lord’s words to mean that they muſt keep the Law perfectly in order to receive life. They knew, of course, that they could not fully keep the Law, and therefore may have concluded that they had no realistic hope of inheriting eternal life.

The lawyer, on the other hand, deſired to juſtify himſelf and replied to Jeſus, “And who is my neighbour?” (vs. 29) He evidently was hoping that the word “neighbor” had a reſtricted meaning which would allow for the exerciſe of a good deal of ſelfiſhneſs, which had no doubt been a common practice in his life.

Jeſus took advantage of the ſituation to give the well-known parable of the good ſamaritan. (vſs. 30-37) In the parable, neither a paſſing prieſt nor a Levite came to the aid of a man who had been robbed, beaten, and left for dead. Only a lowly Samaritan, hated by moſt Jews, came to the aid of the injured man. Although probably aſhamed, the lawyer answered in reſponſe to the parable that it was only the Samaritan who was truly a neighbor to the man who had fallen among thieves. In the words of our Key Verſes, Jeſus then told the lawyer, “Go, and do thou likewiſe.”

The leſſon of the Samaritan is not that eternal life can be attained ſimply on account of an isolated act of neighborly love. Rather, ſuch a ſpirit of ſympathy and love toward all our fellow men, developed over the course of a lifetime, will demonſtrate to God that his divine love is ruling in our hearts and minds, and to the greateſt extent poſſible, in our actions. ■

# Love Continues Forever

**Key Verse:** “*Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.*”  
—*I Corinthians 13:13, Revised Version*

**Selected Scripture:**  
*I Corinthians 13:1-13*

## **OUR LESSONS THIS MONTH**

on the topic of love have instructed us concerning love of our brethren, love for our enemies, and love towards our neighbors—in other words, love for all of mankind. Today’s lesson points out to us that divine love, and the manifestation of it by all of God’s intelligent creation, will continue forever.

Our prior consideration of the love David and Jonathan shared as brethren showed it to be a “brotherly love” of trust and friendship which they reciprocated each to the other. When Jesus spoke of loving our enemies and our neighbors, he expressed an even higher form of love, one that is completely selfless, and is given with no thought of receiving something in return. It is this type of unselfish and unreserved love which is the basis of God’s dealings toward the human family, and which is the kind of love spoken of in our lesson. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son” to be man’s Redeemer.—John 3:16,17; I Cor. 15:21,22; I Tim. 2:3-6; I John 2:1,2

Jesus, during his earthly ministry, had preached a coming kingdom, and he performed miracles as a foregleam of that wonderful time. These were also evidences of the great love which he and the Heavenly Father had, and which were embodied in their plan for the recovery of the groaning human creation. Later, various ones in the Early Church

were given miraculous powers to accompany the Apostles' preaching of Jesus Christ showing evidence of God's authority in the spreading of the Gospel message. Paul's discussion of these gifts is found in I Corinthians 12:1-11. The apostle stressed that these gifts of the spirit were given to certain individuals for the edifying of the entire church. He further pointed out that, regardless of the possession of gifts by some, each member of the "body of Christ" is of equal importance in God's sight.—vss. 12-27

While these spiritual gifts conferred upon some in the Early Church were important relative to its establishment, Paul makes it clear in today's lesson that they would expire once their purpose had been fulfilled. (I Cor. 13:8) They would be superseded by "a more excellent way." (I Cor. 12:31) The "more excellent way" is the pathway in which the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit are developed by each footstep follower of Christ. The apostle mentions three of these qualities in our Key Verse—faith, hope, and love. During this Gospel Age "these three" are to be cultivated as the fruitage of a character which has been guided and developed by God's Holy Spirit.

"Faith" which Paul mentions is faith in God, faith in the precious blood of Jesus, and faith in the Scriptures as the Word of God, the Creator of all things. Such faith is attained through experience, study, and by "rightly dividing the word of truth."—II Tim. 2:15

"Hope" might be thought of as the result of a strong faith, well anchored in the promises of God. Paul urges us to "lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."—Heb. 6:18,19

"Love" is "the greatest of these," Paul says. While faith and hope are vital in our development as New Creatures, faith will give way to sight, and hope will become reality. Love, however, will continue forever, for "God is love," and abideth "from everlasting to everlasting."—I John 4:8; Ps. 90:2

# The Book of Esther

*“Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour.”*  
—*Esther 8:15,16*

**IN LAST MONTH'S ISSUE** of *The Dawn* we considered the first five chapters of the Book of Esther, in which Haman, the evil enemy of the Jews, had devised a plan by which all the Israelites dwelling in the kingdom of Persia would be destroyed. In the closing verses of chapter five, Haman additionally contrived a plot to kill Mordecai, a trusted servant of King Ahasuerus. Let us now examine the remainder of this interesting and thought-provoking account. Therein we will note the all-seeing eye of the God of Israel, and the power and protection demonstrated over his covenant people.

The first three verses of chapter six recall a certain night when Ahasuerus could not sleep. In his restless state, it was brought to the king's remembrance that he had failed to reward Mordecai for his

earlier warning about the seditious plot of Bigthan and Teresh, two of the palace doorkeepers, recorded in Esther 2:21-23. As Ahasuerus pondered how to reward the faithfulness of Mordecai in saving his life in that earlier experience, he was told by his servants that Haman was in the outer court and desired to speak with him, to which the king assented.

### **PRIDE EXALTED IN HAMAN**

Unknown yet to the king, Haman had come to ask him for permission to hang Mordecai because of his refusal to bow down before him. However, before he could make his sinister request of the king, Ahasuerus asked Haman what should be done to reward the man whom the king delighted to honor. Saturated with pride and vanity, Haman could think of no one but himself that the king would delight to honor. His thoughts showed the deep conceit and arrogance of his nature, and his love of outward honor and glory.—Esther 6:4-6

This was Haman's suggestion: "Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour."—vss. 8,9

Although the account does not specifically state, it may have been that Ahasuerus had been watching Haman ever since he had exalted him so highly. (Esther 3:1) In so doing, the king may have sensed irony in the

scene now unfolding, especially since Mordecai's Jewish nationality was generally known, and Haman's hatred of all Jews was well documented. The king commanded very particularly: "Make haste, and take the apparel and horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken." —Esther 6:10

Ahasuerus' command was that it be done immediately. "Make haste," and the king must be obeyed. Had Haman been of a worthy character he would have been glad thus to honor a faithful servant; and, had he less pride, the honor he suggested would have been deserving to the one receiving it. How he must have choked on the words he was commanded to proclaim while leading Mordecai in princely regalia and mounted on the king's own horse through the streets of the capital city: "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour."—vs. 11

This experience must have been utterly humiliating to Haman, but he had to obey the king's order. Such honors were among the highest that could be bestowed on anyone not of the princely bloodline. In Haman's mind, nothing could have been more crushing. No wonder he hung his head in shame as he went homeward, lest any of his friends should meet and recognize him. What a complete and disastrous reversal this was, yet Haman's own mouth had selected the conditions, and his own hand had to carry them out.

When Haman reached home with his head covered, he told his wife and all his friends what had befallen him. The signs were ominous. His wise men said that if Mordecai was of the seed of the Jews then certainly Haman could not prevail against him, but would

surely fall. (vss. 12,13) What was the source of this seeming certainty? The history of Daniel and the experience of the three young Hebrews in the fiery furnace was no doubt known to them. Other deliverances which God had effected for the Jews at different times were also surely recognized among many nations.—Deut. 11:25; Josh. 2:9-11

### **ESTHER REVEALS HAMAN'S PLOT**

In chapter seven all of the preceding events reach a climax, in which we view the following circumstances play out. First, we see Haman's pride and self-confidence is sorely shattered, and he is greatly perplexed and fearful. Second, Queen Esther is determined at any cost to save her people, yet she is careful and wise before the king. Third, we find that King Ahasuerus accomplishes two things—the rewarding of a faithful servant, while at the same time quelling the grasping ambitions of an officer of the court. What a dramatic scene is thus unfolded!

The banquet requested by the queen, as recorded in Esther 5:8, had now begun. As the king had done at the previous banquet, he again requested her petition. Note the endearing words of Ahasuerus, "What is thy petition, queen Esther?" He then repeats more earnestly his offer of up to half the kingdom. Note the order of Esther's answer. She asks for her life, thus for the first time openly declaring her Jewish nationality, and then asks for the lives of her people. She does not even remotely suggest the king's responsibility for the difficulty, but states the facts of the situation. Calling attention to the thoroughness of the decree previously given to destroy all the Jews, she reiterates it: "We are sold, I and my people, to be

destroyed, to be slain, and to perish.” She says that if it had been only slavery, or bondage, she could have borne it and said nothing.—Esther 7:1-4

What a shock this statement must have been both to Haman and the king! Haman could hardly have suspected that the queen herself was a Jewess, and began to realize into what a dangerous pit his pride and vanity had dragged him. Ahasuerus could not fail to understand for the first time that the queen whom he loved greatly was of Jewish heritage. The king realized what an intolerable situation had been created by the earlier decree to kill all the Jews, and his anger began to rise.

Perhaps beginning to realize the author of the difficulty, Ahasuerus demanded to know who had such a swelling of heart ambitions that he had dared thus to threaten the king’s own household. Calmly, but without mincing words, Esther said that “this wicked Haman” was the author of the plot to destroy all the Jews, including the king’s servant Mordecai. Stunned and speechless, Haman now feared for his life. The king, in his wrath, went out into the palace garden, overwhelmed with the realization of how Haman had used him as a tool to wreak destruction on the Jews and on Mordecai. The king needed to collect his thoughts, and decide what action should be taken. What an astounding revelation it was that one of his closest officers had such a treacherous plan in mind!—vss. 5-7

While the king was outside, Haman, in desperation, begged for his life to Queen Esther, falling to her feet as she reclined on a couch. At this instant the king returned, full of rage at being so duped by Haman. To make matters worse, he now found Haman at the foot of the queen’s couch. His rage

exploded as he accused Haman of not having even decent reverence for the queen's person, "Will he force the queen also before me in the house?" Ahasuerus was convinced that such a man was not worthy to continue to live. The attendants covered Haman's head and took him out for execution.—vss. 7,8

One of the chamberlains who served before the king informed him that gallows were already erected. Ironically, Haman had them made for carrying out his plan for hanging Mordecai. Ahasuerus thought it a most fitting retribution for such conduct that Haman be hanged on the very gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai. "So they hanged Haman. ... Then was the king's wrath pacified."—vss. 9,10

It was no less than the overruling providence of Jehovah, the Almighty Creator, the covenant God of the Jewish people, which had swiftly turned back upon Haman the slaughter he had intended for God's people. Likewise, the same God, the fountain of wisdom, justice, love and power, is now preparing to destroy the great enemy, not only of the Jews, but of all mankind, and to break up his household—that is, Satan and his empire. This will be accomplished in the final destruction of the forces which rise up against Jerusalem, in the last phase of the battle of Armageddon. It will mean the binding of Satan, and the breaking up of his kingdom of darkness, cruelty and selfishness over all mankind. (Zech. 14:1-3; Rev. 16:16,17; 20:1,2) Then a "new heavens and a new earth" will be established, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." Indeed, a glorious deliverance for the whole human race, and a declaration of liberty for all men, is just before us!—II Pet. 3:13; Isa. 25:6-12; 35:1-10; 61:1-11

## THE JEWS ARE SAVED

“On that day” the king gave Mordecai the place of honor, service, and authority which Haman had so misused. The signet ring which the king had given to Haman, but which had now been reclaimed, was given to Mordecai. Ahasuerus recognized his merit, and no doubt was glad to delegate some of his authority, cares and responsibilities to one who had so proved his loyalty. Esther informed the king that Mordecai had been her guardian, and that she was the daughter of Mordecai’s uncle. The king gave all of Haman’s property and household to Esther, and she put Mordecai in charge of it. (Esther 8:1,2) These matters were now under the king’s protection and favor, but the decree against the Jews still remained in force, and needed to be remedied.

Wisely Mordecai left to Queen Esther the interceding for the Jewish people. He could not act without the king’s order, and he would not presume on the king’s favor. Once more Esther risked her life in coming before the king without being invited. As had happened before, however, Ahasuerus held out his golden scepter to her, inviting her to stand before him. Esther tearfully pleaded with the king to reverse the decree against the Jews. She was careful to state that the whole plot was the work of Haman. He had used the king as a tool to get personal vengeance, and to promote his own position in the kingdom. Esther appealed to the king: “How can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or ... to see the destruction of my kindred?”—vss. 3-6

The king told her that his signet ring had signed the decree, and according to the laws of the Medes and Persians it could not be reversed. However, his

sympathy and good will went out to her, for he realized that he had been partly responsible, because he had given Haman the signet ring with full authority to use it as he saw fit. Ahasuerus suggested that Esther and Mordecai get together and draw up a second decree, saying, "Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing ... may no man reverse." This did not nullify the first decree, but it would ingeniously offset it.—vss. 7,8

The king's suggestion quickened the inventive faculties of Esther and Mordecai, and the king's scribes were called, "and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded." The old decree was not revoked, but with this new decree the Jews could now stand to their own defense and slay all that opposed or attacked them, and the king would help them. Ahasuerus realized this might mean civil war in some parts of his empire, but he knew he was doing the right thing by allowing the Jews to defend themselves. Thus, the king's scribes recorded the new decree and sealed it with his ring, proclaiming that it be sent out to all 127 provinces in the Persian empire, "from India to Ethiopia."—vss. 9-11

The date given in the decree for the Jews to defend themselves was the thirteenth day of Adar, the twelfth month. This was the same day that the first decree had set for the destruction and killing of all the Jews in the kingdom. Understandably, great effort was made to hasten the second decree. The empire post roads were used, seeing how much depended upon the mandate, and how necessary that all the provincial governors comprehended the real wishes of the king, which were to save the Jews.

Thus, we need not be surprised that all haste was made.—Esther 8:12-14

What a relief and cause for deep thankfulness and rejoicing that the Jews' fasting and humbling themselves was now to bring a wonderful deliverance in answer. (Esther 4:3,12) Note the expression: "The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour" among the people. Many in the empire became Jews. They reasoned that such royal favor as to have issued such a counter decree, must mean that the Jews were in great esteem. Some may have thought it merely good policy, but a fear and respect fell upon all the people.—Esther 8:16,17

### **VICTORY OVER THEIR ENEMIES**

The record continues: "In the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them," contrariwise the Jews "had rule over them that hated them." Public sympathy, however, was now mostly with the Jews, whose favor a majority of the people sought. From the account it seems that the Jews did not remain on the defensive, but proceeded "to lay hand on such as sought their hurt." Their true enemies were doubtless well known to them, and the Jews were prepared for the struggle.—Esther 9:1,2

The rulers of the provinces, the lieutenants, deputies and officers, all helped the Jews, for the fear of Mordecai fell on them. A change seemed to be taking place. Mordecai, a Jew, became great in the king's household, and his influence increased until his fame went out abroad to all parts of the empire. Evidently the king found him trustworthy, capable and honest, and so delegated more of the authority and business of the empire to him.—vss. 3,4

In Shushan, the royal city of the empire, there fell five hundred of the Jews' enemies. These included the ten sons of Haman. The real Persians, who formed the standing army and kept the empire in order, were at the disposal of the governors of the provinces. These all helped the Jews, in accordance with the decree of Mordecai and Esther. The enemies were almost entirely among the idolatrous people of the various subject nations, for whose lives neither the king nor the Persians cared greatly.—vss. 5-12

In another part of the city, on the next day, the Jews slew three hundred men. The account states, however, that they did not take any spoil. In this they showed great restraint and wisdom, as legally they could have taken it. Throughout the empire the Jews refrained from this, to show to the public and to the king that all they wanted was justice, security, and freedom to pursue their calling in life.—vss. 15,16

Thus, a great deliverance was accomplished. Enemies had plotted to destroy the Jewish people. However, through fasting, self-denial, and obedience to Esther and Mordecai, rescue had come about in such a way as not only to deliver the Jews, but to stamp and publish the occurrence as a testimony to all peoples that their covenant God was a living and powerful deliverer, and to spread respect of him among all people.

The world quickly forgets, however, and new devices and plots against the Jewish people have continued to arise over the centuries. God has permitted some of these as punishments upon the nation for their disobedience, or to teach them certain lessons, but he has seen to it that the Jews as a people have not been destroyed. The covenant-keeping God of Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob has delivered them in the face of every attempt to bring about their destruction.

The Scriptures indicate that there is yet one more great tribulation to be permitted to come upon the nation of Israel. (Jer. 30:4-11) Out of this God has promised to bring about such a complete and emphatic deliverance as shall make all nations realize that only by God's hand could this be brought to pass. This will signal the beginning of the blessing of all nations, Jews and Gentiles alike, until all become the sons of God on the human plane, in loving helpfulness and cooperation with one another.—Rev. 21:3-7

The Jews rejoiced with a great feast on the 14th of the month Adar, and in their rejoicing shared their bounties with one another, especially the poor. They rested on the 15th day. Subsequently, Mordecai sent out word establishing the 14th and 15th days of Adar as feast days to be observed annually in commemoration of their deliverance.—Esther 9:17-21

We note the expression in verse 22: "The month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day." How similar are these words to Psalm 30:5, which state, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." This language calls our attention to the blessed morning of God's kingdom, the time of great deliverance for all mankind from the great enemy, Satan and his evil cohorts. God will wipe away the tears from off all faces, and all evil will be restrained.—Isa. 25:6-10; Rev. 21:4

The Jews named this feast "the days of Purim," after the Hebrew word *Pur*, which means "lot," because Haman had cast lots to destroy the Jewish

people, and the lot fell on this thirteenth day of Adar. (Esther 3:7,13) Esther and Mordecai wrote out the proclamation as a law, and sent it to all the provinces in the king's name, that the Jews shall observe these days unto all generations.— Esther 9:23-32

## **A GREATER DELIVERANCE**

The concluding words of the Book of Esther are a very fitting close to the inspiring record of God's deliverance of his people, the greatness of Mordecai, and the peace of God's people. (Esther 10:1-3) It should increase our faith now, when the enemy seems to be coming in as a flood and overwhelming the hopes for peace and prosperity which for centuries have been the desire of mankind. The restraints of law and order are breaking down under the pressure of evil influences.

However, we know that in this situation also the wisdom of the Almighty will bring order out of the confusion at exactly the proper moment. The prophecies indicate that God will allow Satan and his servants to give such an exhibition of themselves and their ways as to revolt all the decent of mankind, and to teach them the eternal lesson of the danger of admitting even a thought of selfishness and disobedience in any direction, for such will certainly lead to misery and death.

Let us, then, learn the message of the Book of Esther. God will in the proper time and way bring deliverance to all those who trust in him. All evil will be destroyed, and mankind will be delivered from sin's degrading, blinding and destroying influence, into everlasting freedom, happiness and fellowship with their loving Creator. ■

# Divine Standards

*“The law was given  
by Moses, but grace  
and truth came by  
Jesus Christ.”  
—John 1:17*

**IT IS PROBABLY ACKNOWLEDGED** universally that something is wrong in the world today. In reality, however, that observation could have been

made during any period of history since mankind fell from perfection in Eden. Hardly a day goes by without most of humanity witnessing some form of societal dysfunction. The news regularly reports acts of violence, including physical abuse, murder, inter-ethnic as well as international conflict. This list comprises but a few of the many areas which reflect the existence of sin in today’s world.

Examples of such evils go back to Old Testament times. The Biblical narrative of the Genesis account tells us that Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s law by partaking of the forbidden fruit. “Unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground;

for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”—Gen. 3:17-19

The account continues: “The LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”—vss. 22-24

### **SIN AFFECTS ALL**

All mankind has been affected by the disobedience of the first pair because Adam is the father of the human race, and his offspring inherited the sentence of death. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”—Rom. 5:12

Eventually, through Moses, God established a covenant with the nation of Israel. One of its purposes was to illustrate the inability of fallen humanity to keep God’s standards of perfection. The Lord promised that anyone who could keep the laws associated with that covenant would no longer be under condemnation but would have earned the right to everlasting life. The promise given was, “Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.”—Lev. 18:4,5

## **WRITTEN ON TABLETS**

God's requirements were written on tablets at Mount Sinai and represented the righteous standards that were to be followed by his covenant people, the nation of Israel. When Moses descended and observed the Jewish people engaged in lewdness as well as paying homage to a golden calf, his anger was kindled, and he cast the tables out of his hands and broke them in pieces. (Exod. 32:19) This incident is well known by those who have familiarity with this Old Testament narrative. After a subsequent appearance before the Lord, Moses brought the people a second set of tablets on which these standards were re-inscribed.—Exod. 34:1

It has been expressed by some who appreciate the godly requirements recorded in the Ten Commandments that society would be so much better if these laws were posted in prominent places where they could be easily read as reminders for personal conduct or taught to children in schools for emulation. It would be well to keep in mind, however, that God only dealt with natural Israel during the Jewish Age, so this written law applied to them exclusively. Actually, neither they nor any sinful human being could actually keep it in a flawless manner. Nevertheless, its precepts, even though put into practice imperfectly, served as a "schoolmaster" to lead some of them to Christ when he came to die as man's Redeemer.—Gal. 3:24-26

## **THE DECALOGUE**

The Ten Commandments, sometimes called the Decalogue, may be categorized in the following manner. (Exod. 20:3-17) The first three related to Israel's obligations to God. The fourth may be described as

a connecting link which applied to both God and man. The final six pertained to each Israelite's relationship to one another as well as to all men. These ten specific laws were given as a literal guide as to God's standards of conduct for his covenant people, Israel, who were specially favored above everyone else at that time. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth."—Amos 3:2

For the consecrated followers of Christ during the present Gospel Age, although imperfect according to the flesh, it would be unnecessary to prescribe a set of commands to observe such as those given to Israel. This is because Jesus' sacrifice is the basis for our relationship with God at this time. The Apostle Paul indicates that having received the Holy Spirit, it would be improper to place ourselves under the bondage of the Mosaic Law, which could not offer life to any imperfect being.—Gal. 3:1-3

As the commandments given to Moses pertained to natural Israel, these ten requirements served as a reminder concerning God's expectations for them and may be summarized as follows:

1. Do not have any other gods before me
2. Do not make any idols to represent me
3. Do not take the Lord's name in vain
4. Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy
5. Honor your Father and Mother
6. Do not murder
7. Do not commit adultery
8. Do not steal
9. Do not testify or bear false witness against your neighbor
10. Do not covet

## **GOSPEL AGE TRANSITION**

Christians, like the nation of Israel, are imperfect. However, they appreciate the faithfulness of Jesus Christ in laying down his life to purchase the entire human family from its sinful and dying conditions. Jesus was perfect, and he was able to keep not only the letter of the Law but also its spirit. As his footstep followers we are required to keep the spirit of the Law only, as our imperfections and weaknesses of the flesh are covered by the redemptive merit of the “precious blood of Christ.”—I Pet. 1:18,19

Paul further explains, “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Rom. 8:3,4) In view of this gracious provision, let us consider how the spiritual principles related to each aspect of the Decalogue might be applied in the lives of consecrated Christians today.

## **NO OTHER GODS**

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love: having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved: in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness

of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.”—Eph. 1:3-7, *American Standard Version*

This text affirms that God is worthy of our praise, adoration and worship for all of his many blessings to us. As his obedient children, it behooves us to conduct our lives in accordance with his will as revealed in the Scriptures. Thus, the supremacy of God is not merely something we should appreciate intellectually, but more than that, the spirit of this reality compels us to reverence him by obedience to his Word. “Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.”—Isa. 44:8

## **MAKE NO IDOLS**

Idolatry connotes the worship of something or someone as if it were God. As believers in Christ, it is unlikely that any of us would pay homage to statues or pagan deities as was a failing of the nation of Israel during Old Testament times. It is possible, however, if care is not exercised in our consecrated walk, to erect something of greater importance in our lives ahead of our Heavenly Father. Here is one of many such examples. We might have a desire for wealth or the things which money can buy. The Master speaks about the deceitfulness of riches, and we are told elsewhere that the love of money is the root of all evil. (Matt. 13:22; I Tim. 6:10) The temptation to strive for personal wealth is one which needs to be thwarted if we are truly committed to the service of the Lord. This of course, is not to say that the possession of means would necessarily cause the Lord’s dear ones to stumble.

Nevertheless, if we are motivated by a desire to increase our prosperity for the sake of any form of self-gratification, then surely such should be a red flag signaling danger. We are required to provide things needful and decent for those who are dependent upon us, and are reminded, “If any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.” (I Tim. 5:8, ASV) Passages such as this are absolutely correct, but the spirit of them must be balanced against other texts which stress the importance of not seeking “treasures upon earth” to lavish upon ourselves. (Matt. 6:19-21) We should recognize that we are stewards of all that the Lord has provided for us, and in giving an account at the end of our course, we want to be able to manifest that we were faithful in using everything in the Master’s service to the best of our ability.—I Cor. 4:1,2

### **TAKE NOT GOD’S NAME IN VAIN**

As faithful Christians we strive to follow divine instruction as a daily lifestyle. “What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. ... But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”—Rom. 6:15,22

A Christian who is true to his profession daily strives to attain mastery over sin in himself and is able, over time, to make progress in this direction. He puts on the “fruit of the Spirit,” and lives and walks “in the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:22-25) Thus the example of a righteous life reflects an appreciation for that holy name which is our standard to represent before the world as living epistles, known and read of all

men with whom we come in contact. (II Cor. 3:2) To do anything less, to that extent, may be considered taking God's name in vain as it relates to the daily fulfillment of our consecration vow.

## **SABBATH-KEEPING**

As part of the divine arrangement, observance of the Sabbath was one of God's requirements which Israel failed to keep properly. Through obedience to its demands and the will of God, Jesus sacrificed his life on behalf of Israel as well as all the world and inherited the promises set forth in the Mosaic Law. Consecrated followers of Christ, by faith in his completed atoning work, realize the ultimate purpose of the Sabbath is for the church. To these, each day is a Sabbath of spiritual rest in Jesus.

Paul's admonition to us is to keep a daily rest of faith in God during our earthly sojourn, with the hope of entering into a condition of complete rest beyond the veil. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."—Heb. 4:1-11

## **HONORING PARENTS**

Symbolically, the Sarah feature of the Abrahamic Covenant might be considered as our mother. (Gal. 4:26) Regarding our father, the following excerpt from the pen of a devoted Christian seems especially appropriate. "While fully commending the propriety of honor to earthly parents, and appreciating the Lord's promise of blessing to such as obey it, we have in mind that the Great King Eternal, the Creator,

has adopted us into his family and given us the spirit of sonship whereby we cry, Abba, Father. He has given us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature and sharers with our heavenly brother Jesus in his Messianic kingdom. How we should honor him! How it should be the chief endeavor of life to us to glorify our Father in heaven!”

### **DO NOT MURDER**

As consecrated believers, we do not need the restraints of this commandment to make us know that we should not kill anyone, which even the civilized laws of the nations prohibit. To have evil thoughts or sentiments in our hearts against another of the Lord’s people, or to entertain thoughts of hatred, malice or anger, reflects the spirit of murder in our hearts.

We are forcibly reminded that any desire to do injury to another of God’s anointed is strictly forbidden. “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” (I John 3:15) How high a standard is thus set forth in God’s word for each follower of Christ who is striving to become a member of his Bride.—II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7; 21:2,9

### **DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY**

The influence of the Holy Spirit as well as our conscience would emphasize to us that “if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” (Rom. 8:13) This does not merely refer to immoral acts, but under our covenant of sacrifice, we are called upon to think in terms of how we can glorify

our Heavenly Father by having our minds focus upon the things that are above, as opposed to those which are here on the earth.

The Master said, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” (Matt. 5:27,28) Christians are to espouse the highest and noblest precepts at all times, which go far beyond merely the “letter” of the Law.—Rom. 2:29; 7:6

### **DO NOT STEAL**

This is a direct statement which epitomizes God’s justice. The law of love, by which the Christian is guided, requires that our dealings with one another and with the world should neither directly nor indirectly be involved in any type of theft. For example, stealing the good name of another is but one illustration of a practice that could plague us if we are not vigilant and guided fully by the Holy Spirit.

Since our tongue is an instrument that can be used for good or evil, we must with great care regulate it with our hearts. All of our expressions are to be lovingly applied when making reference to others, whether within the brotherhood or with regard to neighbors and others that we meet in everyday affairs of life. “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”—Eph. 4:21-30

### **DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS**

This exhortation would apply not only in the case of a formal setting wherein it would be necessary

to judge the truth of a matter, but equally it would relate to all the affairs of life. Justice demands the treatment of others in a manner equal to what we ourselves would desire. The sin of bearing false witness could be done not only by the expression of words, but by a look, or a shrug of the shoulders. Such sin might also be committed by keeping quiet, if silence could be understood to mean our consent to what is being stated in a negative manner about someone.

Here is a Scripture that we would do well to take to heart: “As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” (I Pet. 1:14-16) We should daily strive to the utmost of our ability to bring our characters into conformity with God’s standards of holiness.

### **DO NOT COVET**

Colossians 3:5 reminds us that covetousness is a form of idolatry. As believers guided by the Holy Spirit of love, we must not covet anything which belongs to another. A Scripture such as “it is more blessed to give than to receive” emphasizes the generous spirit which should continually be welling up in the heart of all God’s people.—Acts 20:35

As we seek to follow in the Master’s footsteps, we will see that the spirit of service is the spirit of discipleship. Therefore, our desires should be to develop the fruits and graces of the spirit, rather than seeking anything that would lead to self-aggrandizement. If envy or jealousy should enter into our hearts because we desire recognition that has been given

to others, we need to have a cleansing of our minds and heart so that the proper spirit of love will be manifested in our being.—II Cor. 7:1

### **THE GREAT COMMANDMENT**

In the 22nd chapter of Matthew is recorded a series of questions posed by the enemies of Christ who tried to entrap him. “Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”—Matt. 22:35-40; Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18

To the Jew, the Mosaic Law was a schoolmaster to bring them to the acceptance of Christ. The Apostle Paul indicates that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Rom. 8:4) Thus, the spirit of the two commandments of the Law cited by Jesus is binding upon every true follower of the Master.

### **A NEW COMMANDMENT**

Every footstep follower of Jesus must of necessity desire to serve his Heavenly Father with all of his power, mind, being and strength, and to love his neighbor. We might thus inquire as to why Christians should have the additional commandment which Jesus set forth. “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” (John 13:34)

The implication of this exhortation implies a still greater devotion to our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus than the keeping of the previously mentioned commandments. "We know ... the love of God for us because Christ expressed it in laying down his life for us. We must in turn express our love by laying down our lives for those who are our brothers." (I John 3:16, *J. B. Phillips New Testament*) Mankind, after being brought to perfection and then living throughout eternity on the earth, will love their fellow man as they love God, with every fiber of their strength and being. This present age, however, for the spirit begotten, is the time when the commandment of loving one another as Jesus loved us is being put to the test.

The commandments relative to God's typical people, the nation of Israel, as well as those which address the spirit of the Law, and which are especially relevant to those who are consecrated believers in Christ, reflect the divine standard of righteousness. May we manifest obedience to the terms of our covenant of sacrifice by demonstrating faithfulness in laying down our lives for the brethren, as well as by serving and likewise encouraging them to rise to the maximum degree of faith possible. Faithfulness in this regard will enable us to assist the world of mankind to progress up the highway of holiness in that blessed kingdom of righteousness when the human family is reconciled to God.—  
Isa. 35:8-10 ■

*Not to know evil is innocence; to know evil and to choose good is virtue.*

—*Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook*

# Healing the Lame Man

*“Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.”*

—Acts 3:6

**IN THE TIME IMMEDIATELY** after Pentecost, the activities of the Early Church are described thus: “They continued stedfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear

came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”—Acts 2:42-47

The prejudice against and persecution of the Early Church made it necessary for them to pool their resources in order to survive. As indicated in

the foregoing passage, the believers sold their possessions, giving to anyone who had need, and began living in a communal arrangement. They understood the concept of divine love for one another, and demonstrated that love in very tangible ways.—I John 3:16

Eventually, the Heavenly Father brought this communal arrangement to an end, and allowed the brethren to be scattered so the Gospel message would spread to all nations. Nevertheless, the zeal and spirit of these believers are great examples for us to follow. The psalmist captures the attitude and spirit of these early Christians when he says, “O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore.”—Ps. 105:1-4

## **OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED**

Peter and John, in their zeal for service, went up to the Temple at the hour of prayer, hoping and expecting to find some opportunity there for testifying to the Gospel message. Likewise, we should have this same zeal for the Lord to spread the Word of Truth. Our responsibility to preach the Gospel at every opportunity is brought to our attention by the Apostle Paul, who states, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season.” (II Tim. 4:2) We should always be ready to give an answer for the hope that is within us. (I Pet. 3:15) In the case of Peter and John, they went to the temple looking for an opportunity. When that privilege appeared, they took advantage of it.

We, too, should be on the lookout for situations to proclaim the message of the Gospel. In our everyday contact with people there are conversations which we can often turn into witnessing opportunities. There are enough troubles and difficulties in the world to enable us to present a gem of truth about Christ's coming kingdom.

Opportunities frequently occur "out of season" for us, at a time when we are trying to get something else accomplished. We might say to ourselves, "This is not really a good time." However, if God chooses that time, we should do our best to take advantage of it. The Heavenly Father arranges these circumstances to see how much we love his Holy Word, and to know if we are willing to put aside our plans and serve him.

### **THE LAME MAN**

As they were about to enter the Temple, Peter and John met a man who had been crippled and unable to walk from birth. Every day he was carried to the gate called "Beautiful," where he begged from those going into the temple courts. (Acts 3:1,2) It is likely that the apostles frequently went to the Temple through the "Beautiful" gate. Since the lame man was laid at that gate every day and asked for alms, he had probably seen Peter and John before.

The Scriptures do not tell us if the lame man had heard of the Pentecostal wonders which had converted several thousand, or if he knew that Peter and John were associated with that movement. If such were the case, it might account for his readiness of faith, by which he accepted the apostle's words, and was healed. However, when they first met, the lame

man was apparently not looking to be made whole. He looked to Peter and John for a few coins to help sustain his meager existence. What he received was so much more!

## **SYMBOLIC OF THE HUMAN FAMILY**

The lame man is a fitting picture of the human family, unable to walk in God's path due to their inheritance of sin and death. The Apostle Paul describes their inability with these words: "There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."—Rom. 3:10-12

The lame man was hoping for an improved life, as the Apostle Paul writes: "The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time."—Rom. 8:19-22, *New International Version*

The whole creation, the entire world of mankind, is waiting for their liberation from the effects of sin and death. Lame and blind, they are without hope and "without God in the world." (Eph. 2:12) They are unhappy and dissatisfied, searching for happiness and peace but not finding them. They are not found in their churches, in their political establishments, in their financial affairs, in their social organizations,

nor in any of the desires that they pursue. The longer such conditions continue, the more unhappy and dissatisfied people are becoming.

### **THE HEALING OF THE LAME MAN**

When Peter and John encountered the lame man, he asked for money. Peter responded to his request in a very unusual way: “Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.”—Acts 3:4-8

When Peter responded, “Look on us,” the lame man gave them his full and undivided attention, because he expected to receive alms. After commanding him to walk, Peter reached down, helped the lame man to his feet, and as he stood his feet and ankles began to strengthen. He jumped up and began to walk, but the formerly lame man did not stop there. He followed the apostles into the Temple, walking, jumping, and praising God. He was no longer interested in collecting alms, for he had received something of much greater value. For the first time in his life, he was able to walk!

### **PICTURE OF THE KINGDOM WORK**

This experience points to the healing that will take place in Christ’s kingdom. The entire human family is “lame,” waiting near the courts of God, and awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God.

The Christ, as represented by Peter and John, will be made manifest, not with material wealth such as gold or silver, but with the power of God secured by the sacrifice of Jesus.

The removal of man's symbolic lameness, and the opening of a path for mankind back into harmony with God is described by the Prophet Isaiah: "Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. ... A highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it. No lion will be there, nor will any ferocious beast get up on it; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."—Isa. 35:5,6,8-10, *NIV*

This prophecy tells of both the physical and spiritual healing of the human family that will take place in Christ's kingdom. Their physical disabilities of blindness, deafness, lameness and an inability to speak will be cured—just as Peter healed the lame man, and as Jesus healed the man born blind. (John 9:7) These physical afflictions are all part of the curse. When the blood of atonement is applied on behalf of the human family and mankind is awakened from the tomb, these vestiges of the curse will be lifted, demonstrating God's power, wisdom and love. It will be this demonstration that will soften man's stony heart so that God's laws can be written therein.—Ezek. 36:26,27

Mankind is also spiritually diseased with regard to the words of God. They are unable to speak of God's Truth to one another, and sin prevents them from following his instructions and walking in the paths of righteousness. In Christ's kingdom, God promises to heal these afflictions so that all may "call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent."—Zeph. 3:9

### **KINGDOM CONDITIONS**

The kingdom arrangement and the new environment for the human family is further described by the prophet: "The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness. Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people."—Isa. 62:8-10

The oppression of the weak will come to an end in Christ's kingdom. Mankind, both individually and as nations, will no longer be trodden down by others. Instead, those who harvest grain and those who gather fruit will eat and drink of their labors and praise the LORD. This statement will have a literal fulfillment: "They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat." (Isa. 65:21-23) Selfishness will come to an end!

There is also a spiritual fulfillment to these prophetic statements. Those who harvest the Word of

the Lord will partake of it and praise their great Creator. Those who gather fruit will drink the doctrine of Truth in the courts of “the house of the LORD.” (Joel 3:18) In the kingdom, as each human being partakes of the knowledge of God, and absorbs the instructions in righteousness received from the kingdom’s divine representatives, they all will be blessed. They will pass through the gates, symbolically speaking, into the Holy City and back into harmony with God.

It will be the responsibility of Christ and the church to prepare a way for the people, or to “cast up the highway.” That way will lead out of the prison house of death and sin, and out of the degradation and darkness of this present world back to righteousness, the perfection of human life, and sonship with God. The “stones” which have stumbled mankind for so long will all be gathered out, and the valleys of despair and discouragement shall be filled up. Indeed, the King’s highway that man will travel on is to be most favorable.

## **HEALING—PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL**

Many Scriptures describe prophetically the healing process of the kingdom, and the relationship between the glorified church and the world of mankind. One such passage states: “Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and

their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.”—Isa. 49:8-11

During the present Gospel Age God has been developing the church, the consecrated footstep followers of Jesus. These faithful ones will be associated with Christ in the heavenly phase of God’s kingdom. Together, as the glorified Christ class, they will be given, as noted in the foregoing verses, as a covenant for the people, with ruling power to restore the earth, recover man’s desolate inheritance, release the captives from the prison house of death, as well as release those formerly in the spiritual darkness of this present evil world.

The lame man healed by Peter and John responded by leaping for joy and praising God in the Temple. His response is indicative of how positively, how joyously, the human family will react to their healing in God’s kingdom, under the ministration of Christ. As it is written, “It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”—Isa. 25:9

## **GOD’S LAW IN THEIR HEARTS**

How does God write his law in people’s hearts, and yet not violate mankind’s free will to choose between right and wrong? This heart transformation will be accomplished through the experiences he brings upon them. The great love of God for his human family, as it is finally revealed through the

establishment and functioning of Christ's kingdom, will stir within the hearts of man a reciprocal love for their Heavenly Father.

This is how it has worked in the lives of those being chosen today. They love God because he first loved them. (I John 4:19) When the world's blindness is removed and they see God's goodness and are the beneficiaries of his great love, it will stimulate their hearts to love him, and become obedient to his laws. They will freely choose to serve him and his precepts of Truth and righteousness.

### **PETER'S SERMON**

When the people in the Temple saw the lame man walking, they were amazed as to what had happened to him. The crowd ran up to Peter and John at the place called Solomon's porch, which gave Peter the opportunity he was waiting for to testify of the Gospel message.—Acts 3:11

Peter began to speak, saying, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."—vss.12-16

Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, Peter stood fearlessly before the men of Israel. He gave the glory to God and his Son, Jesus, for the miracle and then presented the lesson regarding the death and resurrection of Jesus. Peter reminded the Jews of their forefathers, and the promises of God they had inherited through them. He went on to mention how their nation rejected the Messiah, desiring instead that a murderer be released to them. Although the Roman soldiers crucified Jesus, the Jews were actually responsible for his death. God, however, by his mighty power, raised Jesus from the dead and exalted him above every name that is named. (Eph. 1:20-22; Phil. 2:9,10) Thus it was by faith, Peter and John's faith in Jesus' sacrifice and his resurrection, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, that the lame man had been cured.

### **SEASONS OF REFRESHING**

Peter continued with the lesson: "Now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But the things which God foreshadowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and turn around, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the face of the Lord."—Acts 3:17-19, *Revised Version Improved and Corrected*

Peter explained that the death of Christ fulfilled what God had foretold through the prophets, namely that Christ would be rejected, suffer, and die, but through his death we might all gain life. He then offered them the invitation to sonship. This invitation was conditional. They must first repent and turn toward God, so that their sins might be blotted out.

Then they would have the opportunity to enjoy “seasons of refreshing” from the face, or favor, of the Lord. The same invitation has been extended to us. We have repented and turned toward God, and have had our Adamic sins covered by the blood of Jesus our Redeemer. (I Pet. 1:18,19) Moreover, we are endeavoring to walk in Jesus’ footsteps, that we might be faithful until death and receive the crown of life. (Rev. 2:10) Truly, we rejoice in this special season of spiritual refreshing from the favor of the Lord.

In a larger sense, the “seasons of refreshing” refer to the blessings that will be poured upon the human family in Christ’s kingdom. If we trace the Greek word translated “refreshing” back to its original root, it means “recovery of breath”—that is, life. This is exactly what will be accomplished by Christ’s kingdom. Mankind, if obedient, will recover their breath, both literally and symbolically, and regain perfection of human life!

## **RESTITUTION**

Peter then pointed down the stream of time to when our Lord would return and subsequently set up his kingdom. The apostle speaks of this kingdom as a period of time dedicated to the “restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:20,21) The word “restitution” is translated from a Greek word meaning “to restore to a former state.” Indeed, the great objective of the kingdom is to wipe away every vestige of the reign of sin and death, and return the human race to its original position of perfection, dominion, communion with God, and everlasting life here upon the earth.

In that kingdom, the dwelling place of God will be with mankind. “He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”—Rev. 21:3,4

Under the kingdom rulership of Christ, “all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.”—Ps. 72:11-14

How thankful we are that God has revealed these truths to our eyes. Indeed he has opened our hearts and minds to the beauty of his plan of salvation for the entire human family. In God’s kingdom, the Christ will call all mankind from the prison house of death, heal them of all their diseases and open their eyes to the glory of God, and to the beauty and harmony of his character. The human family will be restored to sonship and communion with God. What a great privilege will be ours, if faithful, to participate in this work of healing and restoration.

May the great promise of restitution for the world of mankind and the opportunity to help in its fulfillment stimulate our zeal and faithfulness in serving the Lord. Let us daily seek to be ever diligent, that we might make our calling and election sure.—II Pet. 1:10,11 ■

# SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

## O. B. Elbert

Online Broadcast of Convention  
Agawam, MA      October 11

## L. Griehs

Online Broadcast of Convention  
Golden, CO      October 2-4  
Online Broadcast of Convention  
Orlando, FL      24,25

## D. Rice

Online Broadcast of Convention  
Agawam, MA      October 11

## T. Ruggirello

Online Broadcast of Convention  
Golden, CO      October 2-4

## J. Trzeciak

Online Broadcast of Convention  
Orlando, FL      October 24,25

# 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.*

Sister Joyce Diemer, Bedford, NH—July 19. Age, 91

Sister Ivy Binns, Chesham, England—August 27.  
Age, 83

Sister Mary Lemantovich, New Brunswick, NJ—  
September 11. Age, 96

Sister Barbara Patrick, Miami Valley, OH—September 11. Age, 96

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**East Rutherford, NJ 07073**



# 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.*

**IMPORTANT NOTICE: Numerous conventions in coming months will not be held in-person due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these, however, will have an online broadcast alternative. Listed below are the details which the Dawn has been made aware of concerning upcoming conventions. Please contact the brethren shown in the listings to find out the status of a convention, and also how you can attend an online broadcast if one is planned.**

**COLORADO CONVENTION, October 2-4—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY**—Contact M. Homolka.  
Phone: (307) 267-5853

**AGAWAM CONVENTION, October 11—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY**—Contact F. Sansom.  
Phone: (860) 861-6881 or Email: elshaddai144k@icloud.com

**ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 24,25—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY**—Contact C. Goodman.  
Phone: (407) 695-6815 or Email: clmgoodman@gmail.com

**SAN DIEGO CONVENTION, November 21,22—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY**—Contact R. Brand. Email: blatbrand@aol.com

**NEW ALBANY-LOUISVILLE CONVENTION, November 27,28—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY**  
—Contact M. Moody. Email: jmmem1874@bellsouth.net

**CHICAGO NEW YEAR CONVENTION, January 2,3—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY**—Contact D. Whittaker. Phone: (630) 293-4810 or Email: donnawh@live.com

## ***Christ's Example of Humility***

—*Philippians 2:1-5,7-11, New Living Translation*

*Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from His love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate?*

*Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.*

*Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.*

*Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.*

*You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.*

...

*He gave up His divine privileges; He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.*

*When He appeared in human form, He humbled Himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.*

*Therefore, God elevated Him to the place of highest honor and gave Him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that*

***Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.***