



# The BIBLE STANDARD

and Herald of Christ's Kingdom

*Inside . . .*

*Mountains Levelled, Valleys Raised*

*Making the Vision Plain*

*What is Love?*



# Every Valley Shall Be Exalted

*“Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it”*

— Isaiah 40: 4, 5 —

**THE MESSAGE OF ISAIAH** in his fortieth chapter is addressed to God’s Covenant people, Israel. From earliest times the nation regarded itself as being set apart for a particular purpose in God’s service, having by Divine favor entered into a special relationship with Him, whereby loyalty would assure them of peace, prosperity, and continued privileges. Disloyalty would incur God’s displeasure and the withdrawal of His protection. Though history records their many acts of disobedience and numerous occasions of severe punishment, the underlying sense of destiny remained — an awareness of some God-given mission in the Divine purpose.

That purpose was but dimly understood until the coming of the Messiah. And then, only a few understood, accepted, and gave their lives to the special mission which He unfolded. Among the nation’s leaders the old intransigence persisted. Jesus did not meet their mistaken expectations of a deliverer to restore Israel’s prestige after centuries of subservience to successive imperialisms. The poignancy of His grief at this rejection is heard in Jesus’ passionate denunciation: *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate”* (Matt. 23: 37, 38).

For 1,845 years from the time of Jacob’s death, when their standing as a nation was first recognized, they had enjoyed Divine protection and instruction. Though they often suffered severe punishment and correction for their many sins, God heard their

repentant cries and repeatedly delivered them from their enemies. But their rejection of their Messiah lost for the nation any hope of continued Divine approval, and Jesus’ pronouncement of the desolation of the House of Israel in A.D. 33 marked the beginning of a corresponding 1,845 years of Divine *disfavor*. Soon exiled from their homeland, the people of Israel were indeed in a desolate, cast-off condition — a people scattered throughout all other nations to endure the antagonism and hatred of a hostile world.

## “COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE”

But Israel never lost its identity. *“Beloved for the fathers’ sakes”* (Rom. 11: 28), their period of disfavor expired in the late 19th century, and the scattered people, slowly at first, were regathered to the land called “Holy.” The time had come to speak comfortingly to Jerusalem. The *“voice . . . in the wilderness”* (Isa. 40: 3) was the message of God’s faithful consecrated people who recognized the signs of the times and were privileged to herald the coming Kingdom, the Millennial Reign of Messiah. They proclaimed the unalterable destiny of God’s people Israel as vital in the establishment of that Kingdom on earth — the mission the nation had but vaguely perceived, but which would soon become unmistakable. We have Scriptural assurance that, though returned largely in unbelief, still deaf and blind to the workings of the Divine Plan of Salvation, Israel’s national conversion will be accomplished by the Christ in glory. *“There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob”* (Rom. 11: 26).

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“Lift up a standard for the people” — Isa. 62: 10

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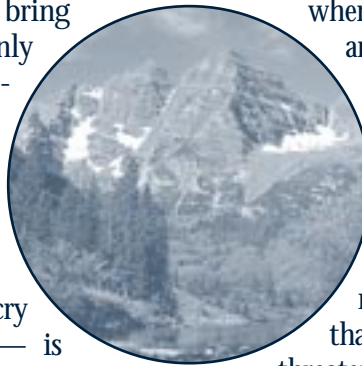
The Bible Standard and Herald of Christ’s Kingdom (ISSN 0006-081X) is published monthly by the Laymen’s Home Missionary Movement, Bernard W. Hedman, General Editor; John Davis, Associate General Editor. Published regularly since December 1951. **Mailing Address:** The Bible Standard, 1156 St. Matthew’s Road, Chester Springs, Pennsylvania 19425-2700, U.S.A. Postage paid at the post office in Chester Springs, Pennsylvania 19425. **Web Site:** [www.biblestandard.com](http://www.biblestandard.com) and [www.biblestandard.co.uk](http://www.biblestandard.co.uk) **Rates:** single issue — \$1.50; by subscription (12 issues annually) — \$7.00.

Generations of Christians have prayed, *“Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,”* mostly with a large element of uncertainty as to the nature of that Kingdom. Some have misinterpreted the Kingdom as being merely a work of grace in the hearts of believers, not appreciating some of the strongest promises of Scripture. Psa. 72: 8 says the Kingdom will reach “from sea to sea,” and Phil. 2: 9-11 tells us that *“every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* Such prophecies are so far unfulfilled. Our continued asking testifies that the Kingdom is not yet here, that it will bring blessings to the world, and that the Heavenly Father’s intention is to establish His dominion among His earthly subjects. We pray *“Thy Kingdom come”* because we look for the Redeemer to appear the second time, bringing salvation to all.

### Israel to Bless the World

When this prayer — which becomes a cry from the heart as the trouble increases — is answered, what is to be Israel’s part in the scheme of things? Through Isaiah we have the sure word of prophecy: *“In the last days Jerusalem and the Temple [House — KJV] of the Lord will become the world’s greatest attraction, and people from many lands will flow there to worship the Lord. ‘Come,’ everyone will say, ‘let us go up the mountain [kingdom] of the Lord, to the Temple of the God of Israel; there he will teach us his laws, and we will obey them.’ For in those days the world will be ruled from Jerusalem. The Lord will settle international disputes; all the nations will convert their weapons of war into implements of peace. . . and all military training will end. O Israel, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord, and be obedient to his laws!”* (Isa. 2: 2-5, *Living Bible*). The plain speaking of this passage leaves us in no doubt that it is to be taken literally (though the Temple is figurative).

While undoubtedly the Church was called to a heavenly inheritance, to share the throne of Christ’s Kingdom in due time (2 Tim. 2: 12), in no way do the Scriptures teach that Israel, or the rest of mankind in general, will live eternally anywhere but on earth. *“The meek . . . shall inherit the earth”* (Matt. 5: 5); *“The earth hath he given to the children of men”* (Psa. 115: 16). However, Jesus confirmed that the Kingdom, though administered from heaven, would have its earthly representatives, and men would see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets — the faithful of pre-Christian times — having honored positions therein. But first must come the “making low” of the mountains and hills of the present evil world, controlled by Satan, its prince.



### MOUNTAINS

The mountains, the former kingdoms and the various higher powers in society, are being brought down to a democratic level as their inherent weaknesses have been uncovered and their claims to superiority squashed. This is a feature of the great increase of knowledge at the “Time of the End,” foretold through Daniel (12: 4). On every hand we see the searchlight of general intelligence and investigation exposing the secret springs of political intrigue, underhanded financial tactics, and religious hypocrisy. All are being brought to the bar of judgment, where, by upright people as well as by God, they are being judged according to the principles of truth and righteousness.

In the upheaval of this time of transition we see new taskmasters rise to great pinnacles of power — the drug barons, the oil sheiks, the “godfathers” of the underworld, the clever manipulators of vast monetary intrigues. This is only an evidence that Satan still strives to maintain control of his threatened empire. His former servants having been overthrown, and well knowing the greed and lust for power of fallen human nature, he is quick to promote others to high rank in his organization. They have their little day, and are soon toppled.

Then, changing his tactics, in his guise as an angel of light, Satan adopts the slogan, “if you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em,” and appears to espouse the cause of the oppressed, inciting them to take extremist action to achieve their aims. It is not enough that their human rights are restored. They are prompted by the great Adversary to demand *more* than their rights, and are never satisfied. Unjust and immoral causes are championed by strident minorities, the silent majority fearing to intervene, as so-called “politically correct” constraints silence the voice of reason and inhibit righteous protest based on the Word of God. Thus, even the levelling of society has its Satanic counterfeit, and we see the rise and fall of many pressure groups — the success of one cause, the loss of another. Little “hills” rise and fall again in the major and minor earthquakes that afflict today’s society, but in God’s due time, *“every mountain and hill shall be made low.”*

### VALLEYS

Among the millions of trees planted in Israel soon after the establishment of their State in 1948, were six million in the Valley of the Martyrs. They are found on either side of the Jerusalem Corridor (the main highway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv), each tree being planted in memory of one of the victims of Nazi persecution.

Not all the many references to valleys in our English Bible are translated from the same Hebrew word. One word, *'aimek*, signifies a broad plain among surrounding mountains; another, *bik'ah*, indicates a long deep plain or cleavage between two parallel lines of mountainous territory; *nahhal* describes a wady, a winding depression that carries a watercourse in winter. These various terms, all translated "valley" in our version, are used in the Old Testament with the greatest precision, indicating the power and accuracy of the Hebrew language.

The word translated "valley" in our text is from the Hebrew *gay*, and as distinguished from the other words for valley, signifies a narrow, lofty-sided gorge or ravine. These deep, narrow gorges abound in the central districts of Israel and are a prominent feature of the highland scenery of the region. The oppressive ravine described by the Psalmist as "the valley of the shadow of death" (Psa. 23: 4) is a *gay*. The Valley of Hinnom, where Israel, shortly before their captivity in Babylon, practiced their Baal and Moloch worship, is also a *gay*, and corresponds to the Greek *Gehenna* of the New Testament, translated into English as "hell." The Valley of Hinnom, or *Gehenna*, was near to Jerusalem, and was used eventually as a refuse dump, where fires burned continually to consume all kinds of filth, the carcasses of beasts, and even the bodies of executed criminals not deemed worthy of burial. It was a place of utter destruction.

But the prophet's language in v. 4 is symbolic. It speaks of the general levelling of earth's society in all its aspects — political, financial, religious, cultural — and many elements have been working to this end, particularly among those nations once regarded as "Christendom." The valleys, picturing those who were once poor, oppressed, and subservient, are to a considerable extent already elevated, as the various rights of the individual have been asserted and won. Though the process is painful, the crooked and perverse ways of the world are by the Lord's many agencies gradually being made straight. The errors and inconsistencies are being rooted out, making the "rough places" plain and free of stumbling stones. The human family is in many ways climbing out of the depressing "Slough of Despond" through which they have trudged for more than 6,000 years of Satan's dominion.

The ominous "shadow of death" still stalks its prey, but the lifting of the death sentence awaits only the application of the blood of Christ for the world. The resurrection process will then begin — the lifting up of mankind to the perfection of everlasting life, the exalting of the last oppressive valley.

## THE GLORY OF THE LORD

Of course we do not yet see the glory of Jehovah fully revealed. What is that glory, and how can it be defined? One might say it is the display of the excellence of God, the manifestation of His Divine attributes and perfections. It is the majesty of the great Creator's character in its perfect balance of all the graces. It is His pure, unchanging righteousness. It is the *essence* of that

*Immortal, invisible, God only wise,  
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
Almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.\**

Sometimes by human perception, God's glory is seen as a visible effulgence, indicating the presence and possession of His Divine qualities. Moses pleaded to be shown the glory of the Lord, and though permitted to see briefly God's shining goodness, was protected from its full impact (Ex. 33: 18-22). Then in some remarkable way, the light of the glory of God was reflected in the face of Moses when he returned with the tables of the Law, after spending 40 days on Mount Sinai. For their comfort, he put a veil on his face until he had finished speaking to the people (Ex. 34: 29, 33). God's presence in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness was manifested as a supernatural light in the Most Holy (Psa. 80: 1), and during the first Atonement Day service, when Moses and Aaron came out to bless the people, the children of Israel witnessed an awe-inspiring manifestation of God's glory: ". . . which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces" (Lev. 9: 23, 24).

In New Testament times, Stephen, facing certain death for his Christian witness, ". . . looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God" (Acts 7: 55). The shepherds watching their flock by night trembled when "the glory of the Lord shone round about them" as they were granted a Divine revelation (Luke 2: 8-14).

What these and others saw of God's glory was adapted to their abilities to comprehend it, yet must have been to each one a soul-stirring experience never to be forgotten. Thus, a few have been permitted a glimpse of that glory, but the full brilliance of God's righteous character is at present beyond the ability of fallen mankind to appreciate to the full.

The closest likeness we have to the "*Majesty on high*" is seen in His Son, described by the Apostle as ". . . the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person" (Heb. 1: 3). Even when made "a little lower than the angels" as a man, the glory and honor of perfect

\* Words by W. Chalmers Smith



manhood as it reflected the image and likeness of the Creator was manifest to all (Psa. 8: 4, 5). The Apostle John with a sense of wonder records how *“the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth”* (John 1: 14). Yet this “fleshly” (human) glory was not to be compared with that of his former office as the *Logos* (the Word), and rather than ask for a higher reward for His faithfulness in laying down His life as a ransom for all, He humbly asked only to be returned to that former state: *“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was”* (John 17: 5). Yet it pleased the Father to exalt His beloved and faithful Son to the highest nature of all — the Divine nature, the Father’s own nature (John 5: 26).

### THE REVEALING

*“As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord”* (Num. 14: 21). Scriptures abound which speak of God’s intention that the whole world shall see the salvation of the Lord, and be blessed. Habakkuk tells us that *“the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea”* (2: 14). This implies the inauguration of a vast educational program, designed to bring each individual of the human race to a full knowledge of the only means of salvation to eternal life. Concerning Jesus, the Apostle Peter declared to the rulers of Israel, *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”* (Acts 4: 12).

There is no place for doubt that only through Jesus can man’s communion with God be restored. If God desires the reconciliation of the sinner to Himself, with no coercion, but with full regard to man’s inherent free will, then logically all must understand the eternal issues at stake and be equipped to make an informed

decision. More will be required than a mere intellectual acceptance of Jesus’ power and authority; complete and heartfelt surrender of self to the Godly principles of truth and righteousness will be the only path to life everlasting. The repudiation of all that is not in heart-harmony with the Divine will, and the cultivation of all that is good in the human psyche — “built in” one might say, at the time of man’s creation — will uplift the human race to its destined place in God’s wider plans and purposes, as yet unrevealed.

The change will not be instantaneous. There must be a process of development and experience under the Kingdom arrangements. From the crooked and bowed condition under the curse of death, mankind will experience a resurrection, literally a “standing up again,” to the full glory of human nature. Restored in due time to the image and likeness of their Creator, in the words of the Psalmist all will be crowned with glory and honor (Psa. 8: 4-6). They will resume their lordship of earth, consult together on every aspect of human welfare — social, philanthropic, artistic, agricultural, scientific, and enjoy the fruits of knowledge for its own sake.

While human eyes are not adapted to behold the world of spirit and cannot see God and the risen Christ in the literal sense, the “glory of the Lord” shall be revealed in restored humanity, as they look in wonder and joy at themselves and at one another, and in their own flesh “see God” (Job 19: 26). The evidence is compelling that when it is revealed to the world, the glory of the Lord will so enkindle their reverence and adoration for their Maker that the great majority will respond gladly to the invitation to enter into the never-ending “ages of glory” which will follow the Millennial Kingdom — of the *“increase of His government”* there will be no end (Isa. 9: 7).

\* \* \*

## Make It Plain Upon Tables

*“Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it”*

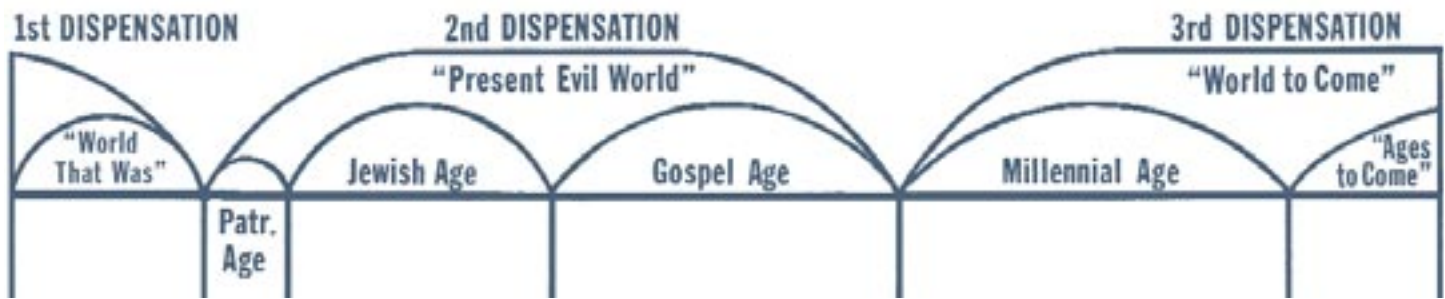
— Habakkuk 2: 2 —

**OUR TEXT FOR 2002** is both instructive and exhortational. As a teacher to his people Israel, the Prophet Habakkuk was directed by Jehovah God to inscribe the prophecies so that others could read, learn, and act accordingly.

We live in a graphic-rich world, a scene of color and motion, and tend to take such things for granted. The field of education has been transformed by the revolution in information technology. Astonishingly large

amounts of data are available in electronic form as well as in print. By means of computers, and especially the World Wide Web, the ordinary man or woman has access to an astonishing scope of learning which was once the province of the elite scholar.

However, as the Apostle Paul in his world of low technology emphasized, none can learn unless a preacher be sent to teach them — the most basic form of evangelism. Habakkuk, a teacher, lived in such a



world and he was obliged to present his message so that others could understand. The two-by-two ministry initiated by Jesus with His disciples was a remarkably effective means of spreading the saving news of the Gospel. By means of oral picture stories — the parables — the Lord Jesus fixed on the minds of His entranced hearers the principles and precepts of the Divine mind. Not for information only, but as a spur to action were these stories and lessons given.

So it is even today. While making use of all resources of information, each of us must preach the Word of God in the clearest way we can in order to bless a dead and dying world. Additionally, we must inscribe the Christian character and conduct plainly in our own lives for all to see, so that we may help others who need encouragement.

#### SCOPE OF THIS PRESENTATION

This article introduces a year-long series on the Divine Plan of the Ages. In succeeding articles we will enlarge on the basic themes of the Divine Plan and attempt to show how God has been working throughout history, and still works in the seemingly chaotic world of today.

The Plan of the Ages is nicely illustrated by the diagram reproduced above. This chart has had a long history as a visual aid. We have reprinted it in this issue in outline form, but will add details as our series progresses. This first article will focus on the upper portion, the top row of arcs.

\* \* \*

JUST AS SOME ignorantly misjudge the skill and wisdom of a great architect and builder by his unfinished work, so also many in their ignorance now misjudge God by His unfinished work. But by and by, when the rough scaffolding of evil, which has been permitted for man's discipline and which shall finally be overruled for his good, has been removed and the rubbish cleared away, God's finished work will universally declare His infinite wisdom and power, and His plans will be seen to be in harmony with His glorious character.

Since God tells us that He has a definitely fixed purpose, and that all His purposes shall be accomplished, it befits those who are interested in them to search the Scriptures. However haphazard or mysterious God's dealings with men may *appear* to be, those who believe and understand the testimony of His Word will acknowledge that His original and unalterable plan has been progressing systematically to completion.

#### THE THREE WORLDS

The bulk of mankind, lacking faith in God's promises, must await the actual developments of God's plan before they can realize the glorious character of the Divine Architect. But it is the privilege of the child of God to see by faith and the light of His lamp — the Word — the foretold glories of the future. As interested children of God and students of His Word, we search the Bible in order to understand His purposes from the plans and specifications therein given. There we learn that the plan of God, with reference to man, spans three great periods of time, beginning with man's creation and reaching into the illimitable future. Peter and Paul designate these periods "three worlds" (see diagram), each of which represents a distinct manifestation of Divine providence:

1. The World that Was
2. The Present Evil World
3. The World to Come

The first of these periods, or "worlds," under the ministration of angels, was a failure; the second, under the rule of Satan, the usurper, has been indeed an "evil world"; the third will be an era of righteousness and of blessing to all the families of the earth. The last two of these "worlds" are most particularly mentioned, and the statements relative to them are in strong contrast.

The present, or second period, is called "this present evil world," not because there is nothing good in it, but because evil is its predominant feature. "Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered" (Mal. 3: 15).

The third world or epoch is mentioned as “the world to come, wherein dwelleth righteousness,” not because there will be no evil in it, but because evil will not predominate. The blotting out of evil will be gradual, and will take place during Christ’s reign — His Kingdom on earth. Evil will not rule then, nor prosper, but “the righteous [shall] flourish” (Psa. 72: 7), the “obedient . . . shall eat the good of the land” (Isa. 1: 19). In short, the era to come will be the very reverse of the one we are now in because the “prince of this world,” Satan, will have no part in the world to come.

### CHRIST’S KINGDOM YET FUTURE

Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world,” and until the era or “world to come” does arrive, Christ’s Kingdom will not control the earth, hence we pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth” (Matt. 6: 10). There must be some very important part of the great Architect’s plan for man’s salvation not yet fully developed, else the new prince, Christ, and the new dispensation would have been long ago introduced. Why has it not come?

In the book of Revelation, Chapter 11, verse 15, we read: “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” The context shows that the transfer from the kingdoms of this world to the glorious Kingdom of Christ will be accomplished by a general time of trouble (Dan. 12: 1). In reference to it Jesus said, “No man can enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house” (Mark 3: 22-27). The “strong man” is Satan. This binding of Satan is the first work to be accomplished before the Kingdom of Christ can be set up.

### *Heavens and Earth of the World that Was*

Peter designates each of these three periods a distinct “heavens and earth” (2 Pet. 3: 5-13). The symbols represent the higher or spiritual controlling powers (heavens), and human government and social arrangements (earth). So then, the first heavens and earth — the “world that then was” — ended at the Flood, though the literal planet (much altered by the deluge) remained.

### *Heavens and Earth of this Present Evil World*

The present symbolic heavens and earth will pass away with great symbolic noise and fire, and in much confusion and trouble as the strong man, Satan, being bound, struggles to hang on to the vestige of his power.

### *Heavens and Earth of the World to Come*

The successor to this present evil world will be the new heavens and earth, a society under Christ, organized in harmony with Divine principles. Righteousness and peace will be the order of that day. Justice will be the basis of the new rule. The Apostle Paul was given a glimpse of this world to come. He writes that he was “caught up” and saw down the stream of time things as they will be under the spiritual control of Christ (2 Cor. 12: 2-4) The Apostle John was also granted a vision of similar things while in exile on the Isle of Patmos (Rev. 1: 9).

### DISPENSATIONS SUBDIVIDED INTO AGES

God’s method of dealing with mankind during *the first world* seems not to have varied a great deal; at least the Scriptures do not give us much detail. The main subject touched on is, of course, the Fall in the Garden of Eden and, later, the appearance of angels who sought to manipulate mankind’s condition, with disastrous results (Gen. 6: 1, 2). That dispensation ended with the Flood.

*The second world*, the one we are in now, may be divided into three Ages:

- The Patriarchal Age
- The Jewish Age
- The Gospel Age

Each of these Ages represents a step forward in the plan of God toward the overthrow of evil. Each step is built on the preceding one and carries the scheme nearer to completion.

*The third world* includes the 1,000-yearred Millennial Age, or “times of restitution” (Acts 3: 19-21). This Age will be followed by what are indistinctly referred to as “ages to come,” and about which no particulars are revealed (Eph. 2: 7). Present revelations treat of man’s recovery from sin, and not of the eternity of glory to follow.

### *The Patriarchal and Jewish Ages*

The first age in “the world that now is” we call the Patriarchal Age, because during that period God’s dealings and favors were with a few individuals only, the remainder of mankind being almost ignored. Among the favored ones — the friends of God — were the patriarchs Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. At the death of Jacob, that age or order of dealing came to an end.

At Jacob’s death, his descendants were first called the 12 tribes of Israel, and were collectively recognized by Jehovah as His “peculiar people” (Deut. 14: 2; 26: 18). On the basis of their typical sacrifices they were treated as “a holy nation,” separated from other nations for a particular purpose, and therefore enjoyed special



*It is important to note that a statement of the Word which belongs to one epoch, or dispensation, should not be applied to another, as not everything stated of one Age is always true of another.*

favors. The time allotted to this feature of the Divine plan, beginning at the death of Jacob and ending at the death of Christ, we designate the *Jewish Age* or Law dispensation.

God specially blessed them during that age, giving them His Law and making a covenant with them. To them He sent the prophets and, finally, His Son. Jesus performed His miracles and taught in their midst, and would neither go to others Himself, nor permit His disciples to go to the surrounding nations. He sent them out, saying, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10: 5, 6).

Jewish national favor ended with their rejection and crucifixion of Christ, as indicated by Jesus' words, when, five days before His death He declared, "Your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23: 38). There, at Jesus' death, began —

### *The Gospel Age*

This period began the preaching of the message of salvation in Christ, of His Kingdom, and the invitation to the Heavenly Calling. The Gospel proclamation went forth so vigorously during the Gospel Age that it has now reached every nation. It has not, of course, *converted* the nations — God did not intend that it should. But it has attracted here and there some, a relative few — in all, a "little flock," as Jesus had foretold (Luke 12: 32). To such it has been the Father's good pleasure to give joint-heirship with Christ and a place in His Throne (Rom. 8: 17).

With the end of the Gospel Age, this "present evil world" — the second dispensation comes to an end. Mark well that while God has permitted the predominance and reign of evil to the seeming detriment of His cause, nonetheless His deep designs have been progressing steadily.

### *The Millennial Age*

*Millennium*, signifying 1,000 years, is by common consent used to denote the period of Rev. 20: 4 — the Reign of Christ over the earth. During this period will occur the restitution of mankind to the original perfect estate lost in Eden (Acts 3: 19-21). And beyond its farther boundary, in the ages of blessedness to follow,

there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain. The former things will have passed away (Rev. 21: 4). Beyond this God's revelations particularize no farther.

\* \* \*

The preceding is the Plan of God in mere outline. In coming issues we expect to deal with salient points in fair detail. Each Age accomplishes the necessary forward movement essential to the development of God's plan as a whole — it is progressive, unfolding beautifully.

It is important to note that a statement of the Word which belongs to one epoch, or dispensation, *should not be applied to another*, as not everything stated of one Age is always true of another (2 Tim. 2: 15). For instance, it would be folly to say of the present time that the knowledge of the Lord fills the whole earth and that His will is done on earth *as in Heaven*. Only as the result of Messiah's reign during the Millennial age will righteousness fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

As disciples of the Lord we are all privileged to minister the words of life in season and out of season (2 Tim. 4: 2). The vision that Habakkuk transcribed has come down to God's people through the ages and should encourage us to pass it on as he did. By so doing, we will not only instruct others but will help to build in them a living faith — one based on sanctified reason — that will enable them to stand in these days of unbelief.

The following poem by William Cowper (1731-1800), expresses for all believers a living faith, which trusts where it cannot trace the Almighty Jehovah:

### He Will Make It Plain

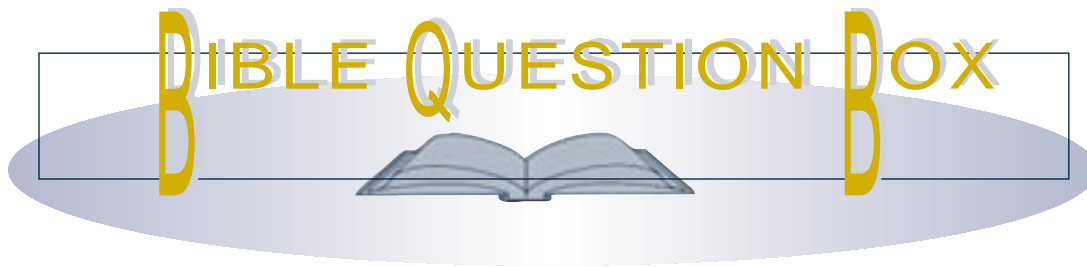
|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>God moves in a mysterious way,</i>         | <i>Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,</i> |
| <i>His wonders to perform:</i>                | <i>But trust him for his grace.</i>        |
| <i>He plants his footsteps in the sea,</i>    | <i>Behind a frowning providence</i>        |
| <i>And rides upon the storm.</i>              | <i>He hides a smiling face.</i>            |
| <i>Deep in unfathomable mines</i>             | <i>His purposes will ripen fast,</i>       |
| <i>Of never-failing skill,</i>                | <i>Unfolding every hour.</i>               |
| <i>He treasures up his bright designs,</i>    | <i>The bud may have a bitter taste,</i>    |
| <i>And works his sovereign will.</i>          | <i>But sweet will be the flower.</i>       |
| <i>Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;</i> | <i>Blind unbelief is sure to err,</i>      |
| <i>The clouds ye so much dread</i>            | <i>And scan his work in vain.</i>          |
| <i>Are big with mercy, and shall break</i>    | <i>God is his own interpreter,</i>         |
| <i>In blessings on your head.</i>             | <i>And he will make it plain.</i>          |
|   | <i>— Hymn for 2002, No. 63,</i>            |
|   | <i>Hymns of Millennial Dawn</i>            |

*This article is based on Chapter 4 of The Divine Plan of the Ages, available from The Bible Standard. For details, see page 11 of this issue.*

\* \* \*



# BIBLE QUESTION BOX



**Q** From the Christian perspective, how should we define love? How does one develop a Christ-like love?

**A** In today's world, love is an overused and misunderstood term, and its meaning has become degraded over the years, especially with reference to sexual love. *Romantic* love as a natural love for the opposite sex is healthy and right, but it is more often than not supplanted by its counterfeit, lust.

*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* offers several definitions for the word love. The first definition is: "A deep, tender, ineffable feeling of affection and solicitude toward a person, such as that arising from kinship, recognition of attractive qualities, or a sense of underlying oneness."

Love, however, is perhaps impossible to describe in words. A definition by example is easier to come by. "God is love," declares 1 John 4: 8. And just as we cannot fully define or describe God, so we cannot describe love. There are, however, elements of love which we can identify.

## Good Will

The heart of love is *good will*. The varied qualities of character, such as gentleness, forgiveness, and longsuffering are all expressions of good will, love. On the other hand, there are manifestations of love that lack gentleness. For example, a father disciplining his son for wrongdoing may not be very gentle, though he has good will toward his child.

We may put love into two major categories: (1) *duty love* and (2) *unselfish love* (sometimes referred to as *disinterested* — lacking self-interest — or *sacrificial* love).

## Duty Love

Basic or fundamental love — justice-based love — we may refer to as duty love, and can be defined as "the thankful good will that by right we owe to others." The New Testament uses the Greek nouns *eusebeia* and *philia* in connection with duty love, depending on who is the object of it. One of the meanings of *eusebeia* is love toward God and Christ. A good example is found in the Apostle Peter's famous addition exercise in 2 Pet. 1: 6: "add . . . to patience *godliness*." Other translations use the terms "piety," "devotion to God," or "the fear of God" in this verse. This super-added love is a reverential love for God and Christ.

*Philia* refers to one's duty love toward one's neighbor, and is encompassed by the Golden Rule of Matthew 7: 12. An example is found in Rom 12: 10: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with *brotherly love*, in honour

preferring one another." In this verse, brotherly love is the translation of the Greek word *philadelphia*. Notice in this example the emphasis on personal *affection*. Despite its name, duty love is not cold or unfeeling.

Additionally, one's neighbor includes not only fellow-Christians, but also a husband or wife, one's children, parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, friends, associates, strangers, and — in some cases — even our enemies.

## Unselfish Love

The second, and higher kind of real love is of the unselfish, altruistic sort, and may be defined as *the good will that, apart from obligation, but based upon a delight in good principles and a sympathetic oneness with all those in harmony with these, exercises appreciation, sympathy or pity, and sacrificial service*.

Unselfish love can be spoken of as love's superstructure. The New Testament uses the noun *agape* in connection with this type of love. The objects of *agape* love are the same as those of duty love — God, Christ, fellow Christians, those in the world having a more or less close relationship to us — even our enemies.

The supreme example of *agape* love is referred to in John 3: 16: "God so *loved* the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." The love prompting man's redemption was not *philia*, or duty love, for God had not wronged His human creatures by placing them under the sentence of death; nor had fallen man ever done anything for the Creator which could put God under obligation or duty love in return. God's love prompting the world's redemption was pure benevolence, a good will based on a delight in good principles.

Romans 13: 10 says: "*Love* worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore *love* is the fulfilling of the law." Here the Apostle Paul is encouraging his fellow Christians to develop this *agape* love. Because it is God's love, *agape* love is the best expression of Godlikeness and Christlikeness and therefore is the fulfilling of the law.

In practice, *defining* love will not *develop* love. Love is the greatest Christian grace (1 Cor. 13: 13). If we are the Lord's and have committed our life to the doing of His will and following in the footsteps of Jesus, He will direct our experiences and help us to cultivate His kind of love. This will be done often by means of trials and tribulations. This was the path our Master trod to the Cross and the laying down of His life in the greatest act of love the world will ever see.

\* \* \*



### MOTTO CARD FOR 2002

The card features a picture of the Divine Plan chart on its front and the motto text for 2002, Hab. 2: 2: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." On the reverse is a calendar for the year and the famous excerpt, "Close your eyes for a moment," from *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, pp. 191, 192. The card is creased for easy folding and may be positioned horizontally or vertically. Each card is 50 cents, postpaid; \$5.00 for 12.

### of interest . . .

**HE WHO CAN LOOK** into the sky with a telescope, or even with his natural eye alone, and see there the immensity of creation, its symmetry, beauty, order, harmony and diversity, and yet doubt that the Creator of these is vastly his superior both in wisdom and power, or who can suppose for a moment that such order came by chance, without a Creator, has so far lost or ignored the faculty of reason as to be properly considered what the Bible terms him, a fool (one who ignores or lacks reason): "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." However it happened, at least that much of the Bible is true, as every reasonable mind must conclude; for it is a self-evident truth that effects must be produced by competent causes. Every plant and every flower, even, speaks volumes of testimony on this subject. Intricate in construction, exquisitely beautiful in form and texture, each speaks of a wisdom and skill above the human. How short-sighted the absurdity which boasts of human skill and ingenuity, and attributes to mere chance the regularity, uniformity and harmony of nature; which acknowledges the laws of nature, while denying that nature has an intelligent Lawgiver. . . .

We claim, then, that the existence of an Intelligent Creator is a clearly demonstrated truth, the proof of which lies all around us: yea, and within us; for we are his workmanship, whose every power of mind and body speaks of a marvelous skill beyond our comprehension. And he is also the Designer and Creator of what we term nature. We claim that he ordered and established the laws of nature, the beauty and harmony of whose operation we see and admire. This one whose wisdom planned and whose power upholds and guides the universe, whose wisdom and power so immeasurably transcend our own, we instinctively worship and adore.

To realize the existence of this mighty God is but to dread his omnipotent strength, unless we can see him possessed of benevolence and goodness corresponding to his power. Of this fact we are also fully assured by the same evidence which proves his existence, power and wisdom. Not only are we forced to the conclusion that there is a God, and that his power and wisdom are immeasurably beyond our own, but we are forced by reason to the conclusion that the grandest thing created is not superior to its Creator; hence we must conclude that the greatest manifestation of benevolence and justice among men is inferior in scope to that of the Creator, even as man's wisdom and power are inferior to his. And thus we have before our mental vision the character and attributes of the great Creator. He is wise, just, loving and powerful; and the scope of his attributes is, of necessity, immeasurably wider than that of his grandest creation. . . .

We may reason that in creating man, had Divine Wisdom decided it inexpedient to grant him a knowledge of his future destiny, and his share in his Creator's plans, then surely Divine Justice, as well as Divine Love, would have insisted that the being should be so limited in his capacity that he would not continually be tormented and perplexed with doubts, and fears, and ignorance; and as a consequence Divine Power would have been used under those limitations. The fact, then, that man has capacity for appreciating a revelation of the Divine plan, taken in connection with the conceded character of his Creator, is an abundant reason for expecting that God would grant such a revelation, in such time and manner as his wisdom approved. So, then, in view of these considerations, even if we were ignorant of the Bible, reason would lead us to expect and to be on the lookout for some such revelation as the Bible claims to be. And furthermore, noting the order and harmony of the general creation, as in grand procession the spheres and systems keep time and place, we cannot but conclude that the minor irregularities, such as earthquakes, cyclones, etc., are but indications that the working together of the various elements in this world is not at present perfect. An assurance that all will ultimately be perfect and harmonious on earth as in the heavens, with some explanation why it is not so at present, are requests which are not unreasonable for reasoning men to ask, nor for the Creator, whose wisdom, power and benevolence are demonstrated, to answer. Hence we should expect the revelation sought to include such an assurance and such an explanation.

— *The Divine Plan Of The Ages*, Study 2, pp. 29-36



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### NEW LOOK FOR *THE BIBLE STANDARD*

This issue of *The Bible Standard* is the first in an expanded format of 12 pages (up from 8). To more accurately reflect our production and mailing costs, the yearly subscription rate has been raised to \$7.00 (up from \$4.00); the price for a single issue (January 2002 and on) has been increased to \$1.50 (from \$1.00). We make no profit on *The Bible Standard*; we have been subsidizing the production of the magazine for decades. We will continue to offer the publication free to any who cannot afford part or all of the subscription cost. Please write an annual letter of request to us in such cases.

### THE MEMORIAL DATE FOR 2002

The Memorial for 2002 falls on Tues., Mar. 26, after 6 p.m.

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*At-a-glance*

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**Nigeria:** *Akwab Ibom State*, Nduetong Oku, November 23-25; *Aba*, Abia State, November 28-30

**United States:** California, February 16-18; Florida, March 15-17 (*details later*)

*Details*

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Grand Rapids, Michigan, March 3

**Ralph Herzig**

Boston, Massachusetts, January 27; New Haven, Connecticut, March 17

**Robert Herzig**

Auburn, Massachusetts, March 10

**Richard Blaine**

Waycross, Georgia, January 21

**Leon Snyder**

Muskegon, Michigan, February 3

**Baron Duncan**

New Haven, Connecticut, January 20

### Evangelists' Services

**Robert Branconnier**, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, February 10; Boston, Massachusetts, March 24

**Jon Hanning**, Akron, Ohio, January 20; Erie, Pennsylvania, March 9, 10

**Harold Solomon**, Springfield, Massachusetts, February 3

**Robert Steenrod**, Louisville, Kentucky, February 16; Cincinnati, Ohio, February 24

**Edward Tomkiewicz**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 23, 24

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