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Harvest Home

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Harvest Home

*“While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat,
and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”*

— Genesis 8: 22 —

*COME, ye thankful people, come,
Raise the song of harvest home:*

All is safely gathered in,

Ere the winter storms begin;

God our Maker doth provide

For our wants to be supplied:

Come to God’s own temple, come,

Raise the song of harvest home!

All the world is God’s own field,

Fruit unto His praise to yield;

Wheat and tares together sown,

Unto joy or sorrow grown;

First the blade, and then the ear,

Then the full corn shall appear:

Grant, O Harvest Lord, that we

Wholesome grain and pure may be.

For the Lord our God shall come,

And shall take His harvest home;

From His field shall in that day

All offenses purge away;

Give His angels charge at last

In the fire the tares to cast;

But the fruitful ears to store

In His garner evermore.

Even so, Lord, quickly come;

Bring Thy final harvest home:

Gather thou Thy people in,

Free from sorrow, free from sin;

There, for ever purified,

In Thy garner to abide:

Come, with all Thine angels, come,

Raise the glorious harvest-home!

— G. J. Elvey, 1816–1893

THIS OLD HYMN OF THANKSGIVING recalls bygone days when, for the vast majority of people, the world moved on at a steady pace and the reasonably comfortable routine of life seemed unchangeable. The enduring rural pattern of seedtime and harvest influenced the lives of urban communities also, who shared the same cold and heat, the same summer and winter, and suffered or abounded according to the yield of successive harvests. Troubles were borne stoically and the practice of simple faith and worship underpinned the fabric of society.

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

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Until a century or so ago, communications were limited and ordinary men and women knew little of world events. Newspaper accounts of distant natural disasters and reports of wars and tribal conflicts were of passing interest to some. Intimations of approaching political and social upheaval, and the increasing flurries of restlessness preceding the winds of change, were recognized by a few, but were not yet of global concern and did little to disturb the general acceptance of life as it was, or to stir any feelings of vague dissatisfaction into taking active measures to challenge the status quo. Christian worshippers were still content to sing:

The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them, high or lowly,
And ordered their estate.

— *C.F. Alexander, 1818–95*

After the winds of war were unleashed in 1914, the world changed. Rich and poor alike were drawn into the great conflagration, and many recognized that the unprecedented time of trouble spoken of by the prophet Daniel, and by our Lord Jesus, was upon the world (Dan. 12: 1-4; Matt. 24: 21).

Expressed in terms of the harvest process, the plowman had overtaken the reaper (Amos 9: 13). The earth was overturned. The plowman of trouble cut his furrows deep into a world order that on the surface had appeared tolerably settled and stable, but which held within itself the seeds of discontent, soon to germinate and proliferate — a harvest of bitterness which caused nation to rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and as iniquity abounded, the love of many waxed cold (Matt. 24: 7, 12).

Literal and Symbolic Harvests

Jesus on several occasions spoke in parabolic fashion of the harvesting of truth seekers into the kingdom. He viewed God's faithful people of the Jewish nation as ripe grain, sending out first the 12 apostles, and later a further 70, as laborers in the reaping work (Matt. 9: 37, 38; 10: 1, 2; Luke 10: 1, 2; John 4: 35-38).

The symbolism would be readily apparent to the willing disciples, accustomed to the structure of the seasons within a largely agricultural economy:

Plowing would begin at the time of the first rains in Tishri, or Ethanim (September/October), followed by seed-sowing for various crops into Kislev (November/December), while the winter rains fell. The flax harvest was gathered in Abib/Nisan (March/April), the barley harvest began in Abib and was completed a month later. Sivan and Tammuz (May–July) brought the dry season and the wheat



harvest, followed in Ab and Elul (July–September) by the gathering of grapes, dates, and figs.

Some of the Jewish religious festivals reflected the progress of the farming year. On the evening of the 14th day of Nisan (Abib), Israel kept the Passover. The 15th was a Sabbath and marked the beginning of the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread. On the 16th day of Nisan the priest waved a sheaf of the firstfruits of the harvest before the Lord (Lev. 23: 5-12). This foreshadowed the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ on the third day after His crucifixion — “the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15: 20).

The Feast of Weeks, Pentecost, fell on the 50th day after the offering of the first ripe sheaf. Two wave loaves of fine flour were offered to the Lord, marking the fuller harvesting of the grain crop, but also called “firstfruits” (Lev. 23: 15-17). The spiritual fulfillment of this feast is seen in the events of the Day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2, when the first ripe grains gathered from the Jewish nation, “a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1: 18), received the anointing of the holy spirit, and the foundations of the Christian Church were laid.

The Feast of Tabernacles was an eight-day harvest festival, the people living in temporary “booths” made from tree branches and foliage. Also called the “feast of ingathering,” it was kept in the 7th month, Tishri, when the reaping was finished. Essentially agricultural, it held also an histori-

cal association, being a memorial of the wilderness wanderings of the people, when they dwelt in booths (Lev. 23: 33-43). As the culminating festival of the year, and following the solemn sacrifices of the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles was a most joyful occasion, suggesting the future rejoicing of the world when God's great purpose is accomplished — "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1: 10).

THE JEWISH HARVEST

It could be reasoned that even at the time of our Lord's first advent the reassuring discipline of the ecclesiastical year in Israel, though imperfectly observed, still lent the nation a measure of stability, in spite of their subjection to a succession of alien powers. But their composure was soon to be shattered.

Jesus' prophecy concerning the great time of trouble at the end of the age followed His heavy-hearted denunciation of the nation of Israel: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate . . . ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23: 38, 39).

Conscious that they had been engaged in a harvesting work among the people, and recalling that the Master had spoken of a future harvest at the *end* of the world (*aion* – age), the field then being the whole world, the disciples were naturally anxious to know more. "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming?" (*parousia* – presence) (Matt. 24: 3).

Our Lord's reply relates prophetically to events throughout the entire Christian era, and His words in verses

15-22 have a double application, literally to the close of the Jewish age, and figuratively to the end of the Gospel age. By the year 70, Jerusalem, representing the whole nation, was utterly destroyed by the invading Roman armies. Thereafter, those who had not received their Messiah were scattered throughout the world, homeless, fugitive, persecuted, until such time as God's purpose to gather out a people for His name had found its fulfillment through a world witness among the Gentiles.

THE GOSPEL HARVEST

The great Time of Trouble at this end of the age is too widely apparent to need description. The first world-wide war saw nation striving against nation, thrones toppling and the balance of power repeatedly overturning. As our Lord had warned: "All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24: 8), and the bitter experience of mankind has proved the truth of that forecast.

The Gospel of the Kingdom has been preached in all the world for a witness and disciples have been gathered from all nations (Matt. 24: 14; 28: 19). The fruitage of ripe symbolic grain has been gathered, here and there, beginning at Pentecost in Jerusalem, proceeding throughout the Gospel Age, with the bulk of the harvest coming at the end of the end of the dispensation (see the following article).

PRESENT CONDITIONS

Our Lord spoke not only of international conflict, but also of famines, pestilences, and earthquakes (Matt. 24: 7). While such scourges have always given evidence that not mankind alone, but his home, the earth, is under the curse,

GM Crops

With the population expected to rise to 9,000,000,000 within 50 years, feeding the world seems to be a daunting task. GM (Genetic Modification) technology has raised the hopes of developing countries, and many African scientists regard GM crops as the only way to avoid mass starvation on the continent, as this technology can increase yields substantially. South African scientists have even used genetic modification to insert the vaccine for cholera into bananas, this disease being endemic.

But there are still some barriers that hinder the growing of GM crops on a large scale. Private enterprise is reluctant to invest in GM products that would benefit developing countries, as strict regulatory control is costly. Furthermore, seed is normally saved from each harvest for the following year, but some biotech companies, always seeking the largest return on their investment, employ restrictive practices which force farmers to buy new seed every harvest, thereby imposing limits on the beneficial possibilities of the new technology.

Is GM Food Safe to Eat?

There is no positive answer so far. Strenuously opposed to genetic modification in any form, activists have spread serious doubts among the populations of the western world as to its value and safety. As a result, consumers have boycotted GM foods and forced manufacturers to remove them from their products. The fears have spread to the Third World, and farmers have organized protests, banned GM crops and refused to import genetically treated seed.

The protests culminated in the historic meeting of the World Trade Organization at Seattle in 1999, when 100,000 demonstrators united to resist the global spread of corporate power, including the commercial exploitation of genetic engineering which sought to profit by forcing GM crops on an unwilling world.

their special association with the Time of Trouble must be significant. It cannot be doubted that many of the disasters afflicting the world today are magnified in their effect because of the ever-increasing selfishness of those who hold the reins of power.

Who are they? These are not necessarily the elected — or unelected — rulers, though many are not innocent. Hard to identify, unwilling to concede any personal responsibility, they hide within multi-national corporations and influence national and international politics and finance. Their activities can direct the destiny of peoples, and the issues of life or death are largely in their power.

Running parallel with the great increase of knowledge in our times, foretold by the prophet Daniel (12: 4), is an unprincipled and corrupt abuse of that knowledge. Thus, in the midst of undreamed-of abundance in earth's produce, available to the favored, others hunger and thirst, suffer and die for want of the grace of common humanity on the part of those faceless ones whose consciences sleep and in whom Christian love has grown cold. Neither is the world outside the confines of Christendom guiltless in this neglect of the needs of the world's underprivileged.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY NOW

There are many inter-related issues causing hunger: economic factors, land rights and ownership, diversion of land to non-productive use, emphasis on exporting of crops, inefficient agricultural practices, war, and displacement of communities. Providing more food will not alone solve the underlying problems, and though feeding the starving peoples of the earth seems altruistic in motive, there is a risk of creating a continuing dependency. It is the grinding poverty that must be alleviated.

Traditionally villages were self-reliant, grew a diversity of foods, and survived periodic lean periods. In colonial times such small economies were destroyed, and the people were employed to produce goods primarily for export. Privately owned farms were replaced by large plantations growing a single crop, and the workers were at the mercy of unpredictable overseas markets. Even after independence, nations in the developing world were unable to escape from the export-based system, and were dependent on selective crops needing high inputs of fertilizers and pesticides, provided mainly by Western based chemical industries. The stability they once had was now destroyed.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY IN GOD'S KINGDOM

Under the righteous rule of Christ such conditions will not prevail. "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26: 9). Jesus underlined this principle in the parable of the sheep and the goats, showing how the conduct of each member of the human family to his fellow men will be a factor vital to

*In the parable of the sheep and goats,
Jesus showed how the conduct of each
member of the human family to his fellow
men will be a factor vital to his own
eternal inheritance.*

his own eternal inheritance. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in" (Matt. 25: 34, 35). The practical application of the second great commandment is here seen: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," otherwise expressed by our Lord thus: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matt. 22: 39; 7: 12).

GIVING THANKS

The annual Thanksgiving holiday (literally *holy day*) observed in the United States has no exact counterpart elsewhere, as its origins relate particularly to the Puritan thanksgivings of New England in colonial times. It is heartening to realize that, despite the history of violent confrontation between colonists and the native population, the well-documented kindness of the native American Indians to the new settlers demonstrated the inherent disposition of man to live at peace and to practice the "golden rule" of love, even toward strangers.

Discarding the traditional church celebrations at Christmas and Easter as unscriptural, and abhorring the keeping of "Saints' Days," the Puritans observed only three kinds of religious holy days: the Sunday Sabbath, Days of Fasting and Days of Thanksgiving. The association of the Pilgrim Fathers with the Thanksgiving holiday of the present time is somewhat complex. No regular Day of Thanksgiving was established until the 19th century, though such holy days had been declared from time to time to give special thanks for God's kindly providences. The occasion is no longer a uniquely sacred one. Celebrated now by believers and unbelievers alike, it is traditionally a time for feasting and family reunions. Yet the thought is not absent that the occasion is a time of thankfulness for harvest bounties and the blessings of the year past.

For those whose hearts have not been overcome by the tidal waves of unbelief sweeping over the world, it is fitting that a special day should be set aside to give testimony to

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the deep gratitude that recognizes the amazing grace of a loving Heavenly Father. His mercies fail not, and His daily provision of the natural and the spiritual bread of life should make our expression of thanks the chief feature of our public and our personal prayers.

ANOTHER HARVEST FESTIVAL

In Britain also, the harvest service in its modern form is not a long-standing tradition, dating back to 1843, when the vicar of a small, windswept Cornish parish wrote to his congregation:

Brethren, God has been very merciful to us. He hath filled our garner with increase and hath satisfied our poor with bread. He hath opened His hand and filled all things living with plenteousness. Let us offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving among such as keep holy day. Let us gather together in the chancel of our church . . . and there receive in the bread of the new corn that blessed sacrament which was ordained to strengthen and refresh our souls.

The people's dependency on a good harvest gave real meaning to their response, and the custom of holding a special thanksgiving in the autumn of the year spread from parish to parish, until every church held its own festival. Sheaves of barley, oats, and wheat, vegetable produce of every kind, fruit and flowers, berries and grasses, often five barley loaves and two small fishes, adorned each church and chapel on their chosen day. A special harvest loaf became the traditional centerpiece, usually shaped in the form of a wheatsheaf, and pieces were afterward shared among the poor of the community, along with a portion of the produce. No date was fixed, no national holiday declared, and the festival remained exclusively a religious occasion.

It is still celebrated today, perhaps with less emphasis on earth's natural produce, and often for practical purposes congregations bring along tinned and prepacked goods which are afterwards donated to organizations caring for the hungry and homeless. Some churches hold Harvest Suppers, usually of a simple nature, the purpose often being to raise funds for the world's starving. The old harvest hymns are still sung and the atmosphere of rejoicing can still be experienced wherever the love of God and the spirit of thankfulness survives.

INGRATITUDE

Ingratitude is one of the least excusable sins, but it is everywhere manifested. Rich and poor, learned and unlearned — all, generally speaking, appear to be growing in the spirit of ingratitude, unthankfulness, discontent, even in the face of the greatest benefits the world has ever known.

With the dawning of a New Era, the Millennial Reign of Christ, God seems to be showering His blessings everywhere. "He openeth His hand and satisfieth every living thing" — except rebellious man. The more bounties that come to mankind in general, the more intelligence they attain, the less they seem to recognize the Fountain of life, the Source of all favors. It seems paradoxical, but yet it is true, that the time of these unprecedented blessings is also the day of the greatest ingratitude and discontent.

COME, YE THANKFUL PEOPLE, COME

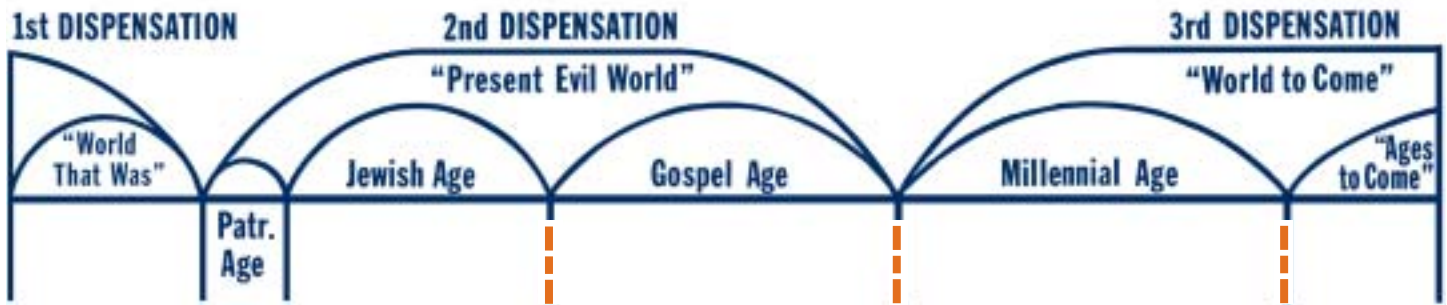
"Love ye your enemies, and do good . . . and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6: 35). God knows that the vast majority will gladly come into harmony with Kingdom conditions when His righteous judgments are in the earth, and will say "This is our God; we have waited for him . . . we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa. 25: 9; 26: 9).

Praise God that on the basis of receiving true knowledge of His goodness, and of understanding why sorrow and death have prevailed for so long, the world in the times of restitution will be ready to acknowledge His boundless mercy and be better prepared to give thanks to Him (Acts 3: 19-21). And as the people of Israel on the Great Day of Atonement shouted and fell on their faces in wonder when the glory of the Lord appeared to them, so will the world's multitudes lift up their voices in heartfelt recognition of the Giver of all good things.

"Everyone throughout the earth will praise the Lord! How glad the nations will be, singing for joy because you are their King and will give true justice to their people! Praise God, O world! May all the peoples of the earth give thanks to you. For the earth has yielded abundant harvests. God, even our own God, will bless us. And peoples from remotest lands will worship him" (Psa. 67: 3-7, *Living Bible*).

* * *

The Harvests of the Ages



Part 10 in our series on Habakkuk 2: 2

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

This article treats of the Harvests of the Jewish, Gospel, and Millennial Ages.

WE HAVE LEARNED in our Habakkuk series that God has a great Plan for the salvation of, and eternal blessings for, two general classes among mankind — the Church and the world, the elect and the non-elect. We have also learned that in the accomplishing of that great work, He has set aside three great dispensations, or world-ages. The first dispensation began with the creation of man and ended with the Flood. The second dispensation, which began with the ending of the Flood and still continues, consists of three Ages — the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Gospel Ages. The third dispensation will begin with the completion of the Gospel Age and continue forever.

The first Age of the third dispensation is called the Millennium and will be followed by an unknown number of Ages. Each Age of each dispensation has its own distinct purposes and characteristics, in which the Divine Plan continues to unfold.

NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL HARVESTS

Many of the Ages — the Jewish, Gospel, and Millennial Ages — contain a distinct and important feature, which the Scriptures refer to as a *harvest*. One dictionary definition of the word harvest is: “The act or process of gathering a crop.” Another is: “The time or season of such gathering.” These definitions of a natural harvest can help us to understand the time and work of the higher, spiritual Harvests spoken of in the Bible:

- Just as a natural harvest does not take place at the beginning, nor throughout the entire duration of the growing season, but at its end, so the Harvests of each of the Ages in God’s Plan only take place at its end.

- The work of gathering the crops does not take place in an instant, but over a period of time — often weeks.

Likewise, the Harvests of the Ages occupy a proportionately long period of time, several years, in fact.

- A natural harvest consists of many processes — reaping, sheaving, drying, threshing, winnowing, sifting, and garnering. And so in the Harvests of the Ages, there are seven different processes which correspond to these seven processes. In our present study we will consider the Harvests of the Jewish, Gospel, and Millennial Ages.

HARVEST OF THE JEWISH AGE

In agriculture, there is a time for the planting, growing, and reaping of crops (Eccles. 3: 1, 2). For the Jewish Age, the period of time for the planting and growing was between the death of Jacob in the spring of 1813 B.C., and the beginning of Jesus’ ministry in the fall of A.D. 29. In this illustration, the Jewish nation could be likened to a wheat field. The seed that was planted was the Word of God, including the teachings and principles of the Old Testament books available at the time. The ripened wheat was the obedient, whom the Scriptures speak of as *Israelites indeed*, in whom there was no guile (John 1: 47). And the chaff represented the remainder of the Jewish nation.

Just as there is a time for the planting and growing, so there is the time for the harvesting, or gathering of the crops. For the Jewish Age Harvest, that period of time was the 40-year period between the fall of A.D. 29 and the fall of A.D. 69. It was during that time that the “Israelites indeed” were reaped, or gathered, from the Jewish nation and brought into the Christian Church, forming its nucleus.

The Chief Reaper in this work was the Lord Jesus — both while in the flesh and after His glorification — and the under-reapers were the Apostles and other co-workers. This

The Bible refers to the time of the Millennial Harvest as a “little season” (Rev. 20: 3). By the time the Millennial Harvest arrives, the world of mankind will have completed their journey up the Highway of Holiness, and experienced the completion of the restitution process at the hands of Christ and the Church.

harvesting work of winning Israelites for the Lord is spoken of in Matt. 9: 36-38, John 4: 34-38, and Matt. 3: 12.

The sickle that these reapers used was the Word of God, and the main message was the Kingdom of God.

The believing Israelites, having a natural affinity for the Word of Truth, responded. This work began at the baptism of Jesus, in the fall of 29. (Not only was Jesus the Chief Reaper, but from a different standpoint, He was also the first one that was won as the first ripe grain of wheat in Israel.) For the 3½ years that He was in the flesh, Jesus won over 500 grains of wheat (1 Cor. 15: 6). However, on the Day of Pentecost, the reaping work expanded, for thousands were won for the Lord at Jerusalem on that day alone. Persecution only served to extend and expand the work (Acts 8: 1-4).

By the fall of 36, the Lord directed that the Word could be preached also to the Gentiles. As the Grecian and Roman world was invaded by the soldiers of the Cross, they first searched out the Jews and then later turned to the Gentiles, for the precedence was to reap the plantings of the Jewish Age *before* sowing the seed for the Gospel Age Harvest. Therefore, by the end of the Jewish Harvest in 69, not only had all the ripe wheat in Palestine been reaped, but also in all other countries of the region as well.

But *reaping* is not the only phase of harvest work — it is only the first of seven (as listed above). And all of these, like the reaping, have their counterparts in the figurative Harvest at the end of the Jewish Age. The *sheaving* corresponds to the gathering of the Jewish converts into fellowship with like believers; the *drying* to their development in grace, knowledge, and service; the *threshing* to their testing for the purpose of strengthening their characters; the *winnowing* to their separation from outsiders; the *sifting* to their separation from the unfaithful and measurably unfaithful;

and the *gathering* to their transfer into the Christian Church at Pentecost and afterwards. These operations were all performed in the Harvest of the Jewish Age and resulted in gathering out of fleshly Israel all “Israelites indeed” as the nucleus of spiritual Israel — the Christian Church.

HARVEST OF THE GOSPEL AGE

Using the same agricultural picture as we did for the Jewish Age, we find that the Gospel Age also had a period of time for the planting and growing of figurative crops. For the Gospel Age, that period of time was the time between the offering at Jordan of Christ as the first grain of wheat in the spring of 29, and the beginning of Jesus’ Second Advent in the autumn of 1874.

In this case, the Christian Church (consisting of both symbolic wheat and tares) could be likened to a wheat field. The seed that was planted is the Word of God, including both the Old and New Testaments. The ripened wheat would be the saints, the fully consecrated and faithful Christians. And the tares would be those who *professed* Christ’s name and doctrines, but whose heart desires were far from the Lord and His service.

The Gospel Age also had a Harvest, a 40-year period like the Jewish Age Harvest — from the fall of 1874 to the fall of 1914. It was during that time that the saints were reaped. As in the Jewish Harvest, Jesus was the Chief Reaper, so in the Gospel Harvest He was the Chief Reaper. In the Jewish Harvest, the Lord’s followers were the under-reapers, so in the Gospel Harvest, the Lord’s followers were the under-reapers. As in the Jewish Harvest, so in the Gospel Harvest, the sickle was the Word of God, and the main message was the Kingdom of God. As in the Jewish Harvest, the ripened wheat, “Israelites indeed,” responded and were brought into the garner of the Christian Church, so in the Gospel Harvest, the ripened wheat, the saints, responded and were gathered into the Heavenly Kingdom.

As in the Jewish Harvest, the processes of the Harvest work were similar, except that the seventh, or final, stage was their change from earth to heaven.

GOSPEL HARVEST WORK

Continuing in the agricultural theme, Jesus in the parable of the sower set forth the Lord’s Gospel-Age work of winning His people (Matt. 13: 3-23). He enlarged on this thought in the parable of the wheat and tares, stressing especially the two kinds of seed sown and the resultant growth and harvest (Matt. 13: 24-30, 36-40). He sets forth a similar line of thought under another figure — the net cast into the sea catching good fish and bad, and the selection of the former and destruction of the latter (Matt. 13: 47-50).

Other Scriptures describe the same general work as a gathering of the saints (Psa. 50: 5), a gathering of the Elect from every quarter of the symbolic heavens (Matt. 24: 31), and as a reaping of the earth by Christ, the Heavenly Reaper (Rev. 14: 14-16).

HARVEST OF THE MILLENNIAL AGE

The Bible refers to the time of the Millennial Harvest as a “little season” (Rev. 20: 3). By the time the Millennial Harvest arrives, the world of mankind will have completed their journey up the Highway of Holiness, and experienced the completion of the restitution process at the hands of Christ and the Church (Isa. 35: 8-10). Those who during the Millennium had refused to obey the external arrangements of the Kingdom will have been destroyed. The restitution class then living will consist of two classes:

- (1) those who were obedient to the Kingdom arrangements externally, and also developed perfect characters, and
- (2) those who were obedient to the Kingdom arrangements externally, but failed to develop perfect characters.

Perhaps the most complete Biblical description of the two classes described in the preceding paragraph is found in Jesus’ parable of the Sheep and Goats (Matt. 25: 31-46). In verses 34-40, Jesus describes how class (1) become symbolic sheep — by unselfishly helping and doing good to their

fellows. In verses 41-46, He goes on to describe how class (2) become symbolic goats — by selfishly neglecting to help and do good to their fellows.

SATAN LOOSED

The Millennial Age as a whole will be a period of testing to reveal who are the sheep, and consequently worthy of gaining eternal life upon the earth. It will also reveal who are the goats — those unworthy of everlasting life — who will consequently go into the obliteration of the Second Death. (See our September *Bible Standard* for more information on the Second Death.)

The testing phase of the Millennial Harvest is described in Rev. 20: 7-9. Satan, who will have been prohibited from contact with the human race during the Millennial Age (Rev. 20: 1-3), will be permitted to test the restored human family. The test will uncover the level of obedience of each individual — whether it is merely external or from the heart. Those who stand fast under this severe testing will be invited into everlasting life, the joy of their Lord.

(This series will conclude in the December issue.)

* * *

of interest . . .

The spare capacity of thousands of computers has helped scientists to find a solution to a complicated problem, one which could someday help them to fight disease. The principle of “distributed computing” relies on the combined processing power of thousands of computers in homes and offices throughout the world. One computer or a small group of even very powerful computers would require *years* of processor time to perform the tests. A single average computer could take all day just to simulate *one nanosecond* of protein folding. However, if the task is divided between many thousands of computers, the time it takes to do the job is reduced substantially. This principle has been used for everything from the design of new drugs to the search for extraterrestrial life.

Recent success has been achieved by the Folding@home project, run by scientists at Stanford University in the United States. The project is examining long proteins. Each long protein molecule is a sequence of amino acids folded into a complex, three-dimensional shape which determines its role. The “misfolding” of the protein is thought to play a part in many diseases, such as Alzheimer’s. The aim of the project was to mimic this folding process, which takes only a few microseconds to happen.

The Folding@home project was begun two years ago and has now recruited 200,000 computer owners. Each volunteer agrees to download analysis software which runs automatically when the computer is idle and transmits the results to a central computer when they are completed. A group of 30,000 computers was able to run 32,500 folding simulations and accumulate 700 microseconds of data between them. The results of the simulations were published in the online version of the science journal *Nature*. — *The British Broadcasting Corporation*

* * *

BIBLE QUESTION BOX



Q 1 John 4: 18 reads: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” What kind of fear is referred to in this verse, and how does perfect love cast it out?

A One dictionary definition of fear is “a feeling of agitation and anxiety caused by the presence or imminence of danger.” A synonym of fear is *dread*, which can be defined as “strong fear, especially of what one is powerless to avoid.”

Fear, one of the most common emotions of mankind, comes in a number of forms, both general and specific. There is the fear of the unknown, of pain, of loss, of failure, and perhaps greatest of all, of death. Some fears are based upon facts and others are groundless, yet all of them cause more or less of torment.

Improper Fear

In the verse under consideration, “fear” comes from the Greek word, *phobos*, which in this context conveys the thought of dread — in fact, *dread* would have been a better translation than *fear*. The context suggests that the dread referred to is *dread of God*. Mankind realize instinctively that they are sinners by nature and that there is a penalty for sin, though they are vague as to what it is. Satan, the great adversary of God and man, has taken advantage of this fear and has instilled in the collective heart of man an unhealthy dread of the Heavenly Father (2 Cor. 4: 4).

The Adversary’s object is to try to get man to avoid God, who in reality is man’s great Benefactor. He pictures before their imperfect minds a God who is unjust and over-severe in His dealings with sin and the sinner. He has even influenced many Christians through the creeds of the Dark Ages to believe and teach that God has prepared a place of everlasting torture (Isa. 29: 13).

There is a second class among mankind — those having a thoughtless and indifferent attitude respecting God and the future. They are spoken of as having “no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom. 3: 18).

Proper Fear

As one, through a study of God’s Word, comes to a clearer knowledge of God and the principles by which He regulates the universe, this improper fear, or lack of fear grad-

ually gives place to a love for Him. This love grows in proportion as one begins to realize that He loves mankind and has made provision for them whereby they may have an opportunity for everlasting life. After one has come to love Him perfectly, all fear in the sense of dread is cast out.

One’s knowledge and love should not, however, cast out the proper fear in the sense of *reverence*, which can be defined as a solemn, awesome, holy feeling and attitude toward God and Christ (Prov. 9: 10). Reverence is the fear of displeasing God. Who would not fear to offend a brother or a neighbor whom he loved and appreciated? Much more should one fear to offend our wise, powerful, just, and loving God.

Jesus’ Proper Fear

A prime example from the Scriptures of one having the proper kind of fear is that of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. It reads that He “offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared” (Heb. 5: 7). The Greek word used here is not *phobos*, as in 1 John 4: 18, but rather *eulabeia*, which means *caution*, *reverence* or *godly fear*; especially *holy fear* as in Heb. 12: 28 (see *Vines Expository Dictionary*, p. 230). Jesus appealed to His Father, Who, He knew, loved Him. He also knew that the Father is absolutely perfect, righteous, and just, and therefore feared lest He might have come short in fulfilling some of the requirements. So the Christian should fear respecting *self*, and should have such a carefulness and desire to please God that he would be apprehensive of falling short (Heb. 4: 1).

Perfect Love

The principle that “perfect love casteth out fear” should operate between husband and wife, and between parents and children, and in all social relationships. Each should be afraid to wound or offend the other, and should endeavor to cultivate that perfect love of which Christ is the model.

Ignorance begets fear (dread), but love for God will enable one to cast out that anxiety, and to approach Him with full confidence knowing that He will abundantly bless (Heb. 10: 22). Nothing is acceptable in the nature of an offering to Him that is not prompted by that love. The Father seeketh such to worship him as “worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4: 23, 24). He who dreads God, even in a measure, “is not made perfect in love.”

* * *

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announcements

MEMORIAL DATE FOR 2003

Monday, April 14, after 6:00 p.m.

Our Lord's Memorial falls on Monday, April 14, after 6:00 p.m. This is calculated as follows (all times Universal Time, or Greenwich Mean Time): The vernal equinox is on March 21, 1:01 a.m.; the new moon nearest this equinox is on April 1, 7:20 p.m.; add to this, 2 hours 21 minutes to get Jerusalem time = 9:41 p.m.; so Nisan 1 is from 6:00 p.m. April 1, to 6:00 p.m. April 2; Nisan 14 begins 13 full days later, on Monday, April 14, 6:00 p.m., ending Tuesday, April 15, 6:00 p.m. May God bless all His consecrated people in this connection. We will be pleased to receive reports of your commemoration.

GENERAL CONVENTIONS FOR 2002

At-a-glance (in alphabetical order)

France: November 2, 3

Nigeria: *Danfodio Road Primary School, Aba, Abia State, November 22-24; Akwa Ibom State, Nduetong Oku, November 22-24*

United States: *Oklahoma, November 8-10*

Details

United States

Tulsa, Oklahoma, November 8-10 site: Tulsa Sheraton Hotel, 10918 E. 41st St., Tulsa Oklahoma 74146; telephone: (918) 627-5000. Rates and Reservations: \$68 (plus tax at 13%). Make enquiries to the class secretary: Mrs. Laverna Shaw, 1221 E. Forest Drive, Sand Springs, OK 74063.

SERVICES BY VISITING MINISTERS

Carl W. Seebald

Tulsa Convention, November 8-10; Grand Rapids, Michigan, December 8

Ralph Herzig

Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

Richard Blaine

Tulsa Convention, November 8-10; Waycross, Georgia, December 15

Robert Herzig

Springfield, Massachusetts, December 1

Jan Wojnar

Auburn, Massachusetts, November 10

John Detzler

Chandler, Arizona, November 3; Independence, Kansas, November 6; Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

Leon Snyder

Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

Tom Cimbura

Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

Don Lewis

Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

James Shaw

Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

Evangelists' Services

Robert Branconnier, Colorado (North), November 23, 24; West Palm Beach, Florida, December 8; New Haven, Connecticut, December 15

Jon Hanning, Beechgrove, Tennessee, November 9, 10

Daniel Herzig, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, December 8

Robert Steenrod, Sand Ridge, W. Virginia, December 14, 15

E. Tomkiewicz, Grand Rapids, Michigan, November 2; Muskegon, Michigan, November 3

Jack Zilch, Derry, Pennsylvania, November 9; New York City, December 15; Minneapolis, December 29

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