

# The Bible Standard

*“Send out your light and truth! Let them lead me;...”*

*Psalm 43:3*

## **“LIFT UP A STANDARD FOR THE PEOPLE”**

**Isaiah 62: 10**

### **INSIDE**

THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN .....	82
TWO DISTINCT SALVATIONS .....	85
THANKSGIVING.....	88
JESUS’ ACTUAL BIRTH DATE.....	92
JERUSALEM DESOLATED 70 YEARS.....	95
THE LORD’S LIGHT WITHIN .....	96

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

BACK PAGE



Every Eye Shall See—  
Shall Understand!

## THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN

*“Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see (recognize) the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven (symbolic) with power and great glory”—Matt. 24: 30.*

Various suggestions have been made by scholars respecting the import of this prophecy by the Master. Some guessed that the sign would be a cross in the sky. Others thought that it would be Christ Himself, who would appear in some wrathful form to humanity, causing fear and dismay. We cannot say that the sign of the Son of Man in heaven will be His Parousia. On the contrary, the Parousia of Christ will not be known to the tribes, or families, of the earth in general, but will be known only to the most saintly ones of the LORD’S People in Christ. Consequently, the sign of the Son of Man must in some sense stand related to His Epiphania, or shining forth in the “flaming fire” of judgment, which the whole world of mankind, will recognize (2 Thes. 1: 7-9). The word “sign” is of broad meaning; for instance, crepe is a sign of mourning; the cross represents Christianity; the crescent, Mohammedanism. In other words, a sign is merely an indication. So when we read of the “sign of the Son of Man in heaven,” the thought might properly be that something will occur indicative of the presence of the Son of Man—that He has taken to Himself His great power and has begun His reign. Since the Son of Man is to be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance, it follows that this sign must be some sign of vengeance, some indication of righteous indignation against wrong (Isa. 59: 17, 18).

The question, then arises, how would such a sign, or indication, appear in the sky, in the heavens? We reply that this is not the thought. On the contrary, let us remember that the Bible repeatedly uses the words earth, heaven, mountain, sea, in a symbolical manner—the earth representing organized society; the mountains representing kingdoms, as the backbone of this organized society; the seas representing the restless masses of humanity, continually seeking to swallow

up the social “earth.” In the same symbolic terms the heavens represent the ecclesiastical powers of the world—churchianity. The sign appearing in the heavens signifies that the beginning of Christ’s judgments will fall upon the ecclesiastical systems of our day. The flaming fire of judgments will first manifest itself in ecclesiastical affairs and circles. Mankind will gradually become awakened to the thought that a new government is in control, and that its policy will be the law of “judgment to the line



*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*  
James 1: 17

and righteousness to the plummet.” Since unrighteousness is prevalent as a result of man’s fallen condition, the conscience of the whole world will be awakened, quickened; and fear, dread, will come upon all classes everywhere. This will be not only because they will see the primary sign of Christ’s righteous judgments in religious circles, but because they will recognize Him coming—drawing nearer and nearer in judgment; and they will recognize that they, too,

must shortly be involved. There will be mourning because of Him (Rev. 1: 7).

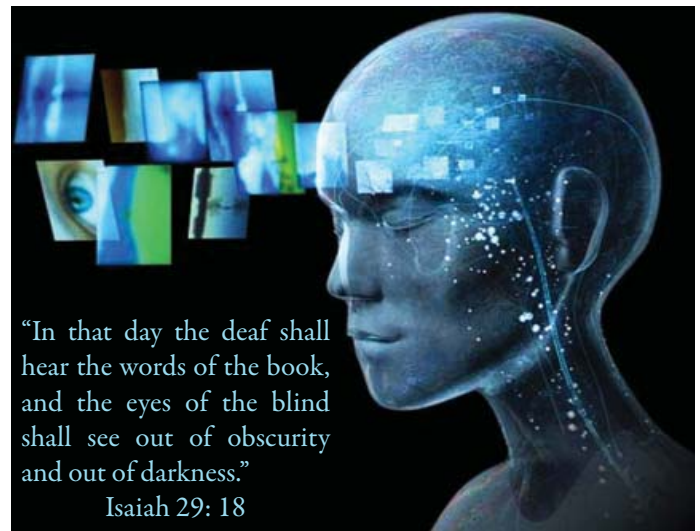
Furthermore, it will be remembered that all the families of the earth have very crude and incorrect views of Messiah and of the object of His Second Coming and Kingdom. The “doctrines of devils,” brought into the church creeds during the Dark Ages, have so made void the Word of God that the majority of mankind fear the Almighty, dread Him as their Almighty foe, instead of realizing Him to be the God of all grace and the Father of all mercies, “from whom comes every good and perfect gift” (1 Tim. 4: 1; Jas. 1: 17). The eyes of the world have been blinded to the goodness of God. Terrible dread in the hearts of humanity will lead to the wail of fear as they perceive Christ’s righteous judgments encircling all the earth—“The signs and groaning promise to precede a second birth.”

Not knowing of a “second birth” and all the glorious blessings which Messiah’s Kingdom is designed to bring to mankind, human hearts will be filled with dread and apprehension. Only those who are truly the LORD’s and are rightly informed respecting the Divine Plan of the Ages will be able to lift up their heads and rejoice, knowing that their “deliverance draws nigh” (Luke 21: 28).

St. Peter apparently described this sign of the Son of Man in the heavens, revealed in flaming fire. His words are, “The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved,” and “the earth also [shall take fire] and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3: 10-12). Let us not make the mistake of our forefathers in supposing that these descriptions mean a literal burning of the literal earth. Let us, on the contrary, realize that the symbolic earth and the symbolic heavens are to catch fire and pass away with a great commotion, while the physical earth will remain practically as it is, and will begin to undergo the transforming influences of Restitution under the new King, the Restorer of all things—The Christ. It will be noticed that St. Peter mentions the fire as coming to the heavens before it reaches the earth, in just the same order that Jesus stated the matter. The sign, manifestation, of the flaming fire of judgments will appear in the heavens; and subsequently the sign of the Son of Man in judgment will be seen coming nearer and nearer to earth’s affairs, with a view to purging them absolutely from everything sinful, selfish, and unjust. We are told that the elements will melt with fervent heat. We see the Capitalistic element and the Labor element separating, the one from the other. We see the preparations for the great conflagration, the great Time of Trouble. We sometimes speak of it in this language, saying, “Things are getting very hot.” They will presently be so hot that spontaneous combustion will set in. And the fire of that Day will be so extreme and its results so drastic as to fulfill the Master’s words that unless those days should be shortened no flesh could survive (Matt. 24: 22).

But because of the Elect, because of the Kingdom which will then be set up, those days will be shortened—brought to an end. Nothing will be destroyed except that which is injurious. The worldwide results of that flaming fire of Divine judgments will be corrective, preparing men’s hearts for the blessings which the LORD is prepared then to give. It is written, “When the judgments of the LORD are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isa. 26: 9). It will be noted that St. Peter, in speaking of that Time of Trouble, mentions that the heavens—ecclesiasticism—will be on fire

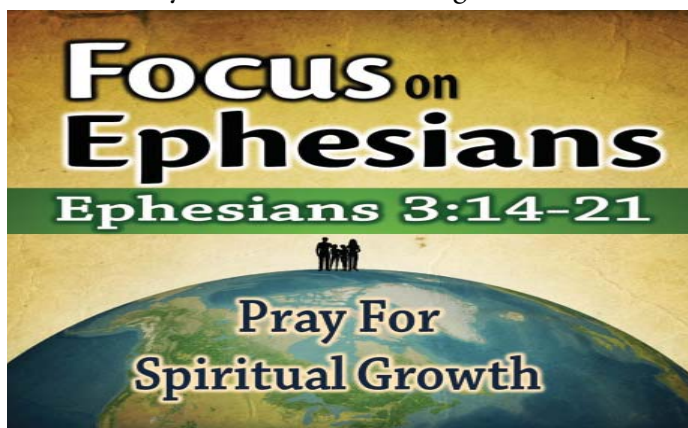
first; and that later, the earth—society and its political, financial and social organizations—will be involved also. In harmony with this, our text tells that this sign, or indication, for the revealing of Messiah in flaming fire, will first be in the heaven—symbolizing churchianity. Furthermore, according to St. Peter’s statement, we are to expect that the ecclesiastical heavens will pass away with a great noise—a great commotion—before the social order is fully destroyed by the consuming fire (2 Pet. 3: 10). The same thought is brought to our attention in Revelation, where a wide distinction is made between the nominal church systems, called Babylon, and the true Church, which was admonished in advance to come out of Babylon and to stand in personal relationship to God through Christ. This general call, which belongs to the end of the Age, before the judgments come upon Babylon, reads, “Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues.” The intimation is that as soon as the loyally obedient have been gathered out of Babylon some drastic trouble will come upon her (Rev. 18: 4, 5).



“In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.”  
Isaiah 29: 18

We should not apply this term “Babylon” to individuals, but to great systems, outwardly having a form of godliness, but really misrepresenting the Divine character, the Divine Plan, the true teachings of the Bible. Of course, the individuals identified with the systems have more or less responsibility, according to their official position and their intelligence. In similar proportion these individuals may have tribulations in conjunction with the fall of Babylon. We do not understand the term “Babylon” to be applied Scripturally to any sect or party, but rather to refer to the general conglomeration of systems and denominations. Likewise, when reading of the utter destruction that is to come upon Babylon, we are to differentiate between the systems and the individuals connected with those systems.

The judgments of the LORD are not designed to crush or destroy humanity, but to destroy utterly the systems of error, bondage and superstition which have fettered humanity and hindered them from fuller progress and development in the knowledge and favor of God. With the fall of the great systems (Babylon, confusion) men's eyes will begin to open; the blind will begin to "see out of obscurity" (Isa. 29: 18). As a result, the high praises of God will arise as a sweet savor. The fall of Babylon is declared to come speedily, suddenly—figuratively, "in an hour." The descriptions of her fall are various. In one place we read that she shall be utterly burned with fire. The same symbol of fire is used by St. Peter in referring to the same trouble and destruction. In another place we read that Babylon shall be cast like a great millstone into



the sea (Jer. 51: 58; Rev. 18: 8, 21).

### EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM

Throughout this Gospel Age, the LORD's people have with the eye of faith recognized Jesus as their Redeemer and Deliverer. But comparatively few have had such eyes of faith and understanding. The majority, as the Apostle declares, are blinded by Satan and by error, and fail to get a proper, true view of Christ. He says that "the god of this world" has blinded the minds of all unbelievers. But the gracious promise of the LORD is that all the blinded eyes shall be opened. The experiences of eighteen centuries have done little toward opening the eyes of the world; but the revelation of Messiah in flaming fire will appeal to them quickly. They will see Him and—"Every eye shall see Him, and those also who pierced Him"—the Jews. Instinctively they will fear. It may require a considerable time for them to become fully persuaded that the One feared is their best Friend, who gave His life as their Redemption-price, and whose judgments in the earth are for the very purpose of breaking the bondage of fear, ignorance, superstition, sin, selfishness and injustice, and of allowing the whole world to go free from a sin-slavery

which has long oppressed them (Rom. 11: 25-27). In due time they will learn that the fire of God's anger does not burn against the sinners for whom Christ died, but merely against their sins. The learning of this lesson will open their eyes still more widely and enable them to see something of the length, the breadth, the height and the depth of God's love (Eph. 3: 14-19; Rom. 5: 6-8).

That the Jews will be in that trouble, the Bible distinctly marks out. It will be "the time of Jacob's Trouble, but he shall be saved out of it" (Jer. 30: 7). The Gospel Church having been completed by that time and having passed beyond the veil, God's favor will be restored to Natural Israel; and the time for the special manifestation of that favor will be in the dark hour of Jacob's trouble, when the Jews are surrounded by enemies. In and through that trouble the LORD will pour upon them the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they will look upon Him whom they pierced (Zech. 12: 10). They will discern that they made a great and horrible mistake in crucifying the Friend of Sinners, their long-promised Messiah. We are told that they shall mourn because of Him, and that then the spirit of supplication will come to them and they will see Jesus in His real character. At or about that same time Divine favor will be manifested on Israel's behalf, and the LORD will deliver them, as in olden times. Their eyes of faith and understanding will open more and more widely. Eventually, according to the Bible, they will become the leaders of mankind in returning to God,

who will abundantly pardon their iniquity and grant them a prominent share in the blessings of His Kingdom.

The great Messianic Kingdom will not spare the rod, but will inflict punishments for the world's



**Where there is no vision the people perish—Prov. 29: 18.**

correction in righteousness. Some will suffer more and

some less, according to the Master's own statements. Those understanding the principles of righteousness and willfully violating them will be beaten heavily, "with many stripes"; while others, such as the heathen, for instance, who knew little, will receive fewer stripes, proportionate to their ignorance. All the stripes however, will be reformatory, and with a view to helping and encouraging the transgressors to abandon the ways of iniquity and to walk in the paths of righteousness (Luke 12: 47, 48). That will be a happy day for earth's thousands of millions—a

Day with the LORD, a thousand years. Everywhere there will be evidences of the operation of Divine mercy and justice, and the necessary lessons will be quickly learned by all people. We cannot doubt that even fifty years of Kingdom influence will make a wonderful change in human affairs and conditions. The blessing of the LORD will come to man as God's will shall be done by man.

Finally, with all sin eliminated, all imperfections gone and all the willfully wicked destroyed, every creature on earth, as well as in Heaven, will be heard saying, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sits upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever" (Rev. 5: 13). Then, and not until then, will God's will be done on earth, even as it is done in Heaven; for not until then will there be a perfect race capable of doing God's will, and a tested race, all of whom will delight to do His

will. A special lesson to God's people today is that the Gospel Age was the Church's time of calling, accepting and making their election sure by hearty obedience to the Divine will. Neither shall we be of the world, who will wail because of the sign of the Son of Man in the dissolution of the ecclesiastical heavens, nor shall we be identified with the ecclesiastical heavens, which are to be dissolved. Rather, it is our privilege, as followers of Jesus, to walk in His steps, to stand for the right, to be guided of the Holy Spirit, to "come out of Babylon," to "touch not the unholy thing," that we may have relationship and fellowship with the LORD, with the Savior, with the holy Apostles and with all the faithful martyrs and footstep followers of our Master.

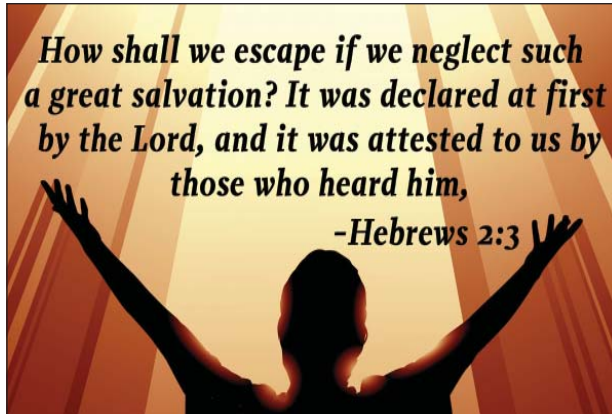
**"Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sits upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever."—Rev. 5: 13**

## TWO DISTINCT SALVATIONS

In the past a few of us have misunderstood these words — "*so great salvation*," by thinking them to apply to an "elect" a few of the saintly followers of our great Redeemer, *and to exclude all others from any salvation*. Surely it should not be thought strange, if a closer examination of God's Word would demonstrate to us that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways and plans higher than ours (Isa. 55: 9). It should not surprise us to find that our forefathers were generally in considerable darkness in respect to "the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of God, which passes all understanding" (Eph. 3: 18, 19). It should not surprise us to find that our Savior will yet see the fruitage of the travail of His soul and be satisfied (Isa. 53: 11), and that this satisfaction will result from the salvation of more than the "Little Flock," who walked in His steps and who, like Him, "presented their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God," in the service of Truth and righteousness. There are several ways of treating this view that more than an "elect" few are eventually to reach eternal life through the Redeemer of mankind. One way, which many adopt, is to claim that our Lord and the Apostles did not really mean to establish so high a standard of saintship as their words imply, and then to conclude that the

***How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him,***

***-Hebrews 2:3***



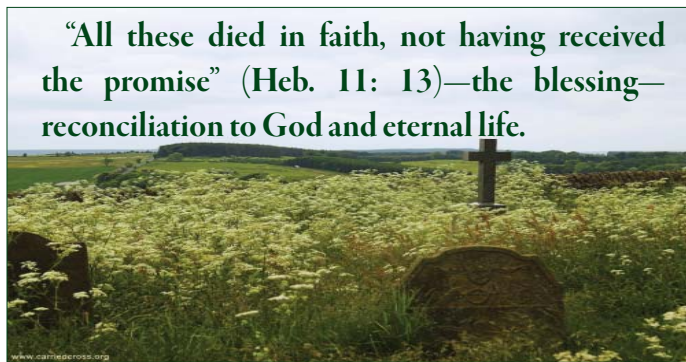
unsaintly will gain eternal life as well as the saintly—all except the degenerately wicked. This view of matters, which is the common one, is undoubtedly prompted by sympathy for friends, relatives, neighbors and the heathen; but it is wholly contrary to God's Word. Another view still held by some is that everybody but the saintly will suffer torture eternally and hopelessly. The third theory

which we desire to present here is the one we believe to be in accord with every text of Scripture, and in accord with Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power Divine, and in accord with sanctified common sense. We have time for only an outline of this most comprehensive Plan as follows:

### WHEN SALVATION BEGINS

Salvation in no sense actually began before the Redeemer's birth, forty-one hundred and twenty-seven years after the fall of our first parents. In all that long period nobody was actually saved. The Apostle declares in our text that salvation began to be preached by Jesus. Again, we read that Jesus brought life and immortality to light through His Gospel (2 Tim. 1: 10). So, then, life and immortality and the Gospel Message began to be preached by our Lord and was not preached before His day. Indeed we can see that if there is "no other name given under heaven or among men whereby we must be

saved,” than the name of Jesus, then it could not have been preached; nothing could be preached previously except the Divine declaration that God purposed in due time to redeem mankind from sin and death through a Savior. This reasoning is surely true to the facts. Search all through the Old Testament and there is found no promise of eternal life set forth except by the Law given to the one little nation of Israel. That Law declared that he that does these things shall live by his obedience (Rom. 10: 5), and the Apostle assures us that Jews died because none of them kept the Law—because no imperfect human being could possibly meet the requirements of God’s perfect Law. “By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified in his sight” (Rom. 3: 20). The Apostle, further explaining the matter, says, “What purpose then does the law serve?” He replies to his question, “It was added because of transgression until the promised Seed should come” (Gal. 3: 19).



### LIFE AND IMMORTALITY

The Apostle’s words direct our thoughts back to Eden, when God declared that the Seed of the woman would at some future time bruise the Serpent’s head. But that Seed did not exist for over four thousand years after, and has not yet crushed the Serpent’s head—destroyed Satan and the works of Satan. The Apostle’s words again remind us of God’s promise to Abraham, “In your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 28: 14). Abraham was not blessed, nor were any others blessed, however faithful they were. All the blessing was to come through Abraham’s Seed and could not be dispensed before His coming. The Apostle, referring to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the faithful of past time, declared, “All these died in faith, not having received the promise” (Heb. 11: 13)—the blessing—reconciliation to God and eternal life. And when Jesus came He did not attempt to bless the world, but, on the contrary, in His prayer, declared, “I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me” out of the world (John 17: 9) the saintly, the “very elect” (Matt. 24: 24). These He called; these He taught—“Israelites indeed.” These He

directed to give the same message to others, not for the conversion of the world, but for the calling, instruction and edification of “the Church.”

### THE BODY MEMBERS

In the past many of us have overlooked the fact that the Church is figuratively, “the Body of Christ.” And again, they are members in particular of the Body of Christ, which is the Church (1 Cor. 12: 27). In a word, then, the entire Christ includes the members of the Body with the glorious Head of the Body. This glorious Christ, was completed by the close of the Gospel Age, and, as a whole, is the promised Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3: 16, 29). From this viewpoint we can see why God’s long-promised blessing has not yet reached the world; we can see that He was merely selecting or electing the Church, the Seed of Abraham. The promise to Abraham is, “In your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed,” and, as we have seen, the Seed of Abraham is “Jesus the Head and the Church His Body.” In a word, our previous view of the Divine Plan was too narrow. We saw the election of the Church, but did not see God’s gracious purposes for “all the families of the earth.” The Church, as the Scriptures declare, is merely a “first-fruit” unto God of His creatures, and is not, by any means, the entire harvest. Let us here remember St. Paul’s explanation of this matter. He declares, “We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise” (Gal. 4: 28)—the heirs of the promise that in these all of the earth’s families are to be blessed.

**“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of the promise.”—Galatians 4: 28**

### A SECOND CHANCE

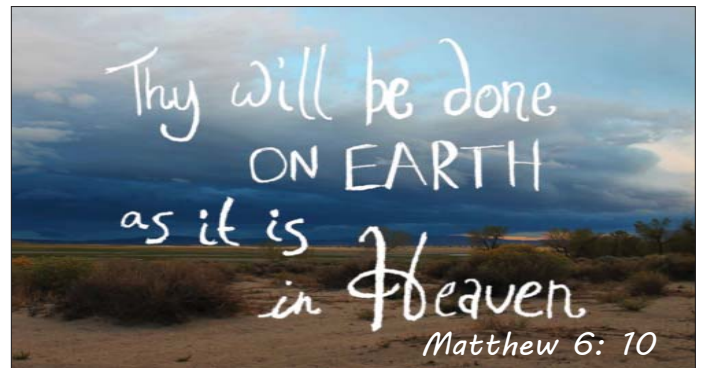
It might indeed be said in *one sense* of the word that since father Adam was placed on trial in Eden with a reward of eternal life before him or a penalty of death, and that since he lost his chance of eternal life by disobedience, therefore any chance of eternal life coming to him or to any member of his race would, of necessity, be a second chance. This is undoubtedly true. From this standpoint every member of the human family must eventually have a second chance for eternal life, because it was for this very purpose that our Redeemer left the heavenly glory, was made flesh, dwelt among us and “died, the just for the unjust.” Whoever enjoys this second chance must expect no more, because “Christ dies no more.” But, as we have already seen, nobody had a second chance for eternal life prior to the coming of our Redeemer into the world. “He brought life and immortality to light.” He died, the just

for the unjust, to make reconciliation for iniquity—and this message of so great salvation began to be spoken by our Lord. The comparatively few who have heard the Gospel since Jesus' day—"Good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people"—these, the comparatively few, who have heard of "the only name given under heaven or among the men whereby we must be saved" are the only ones who, in any sense of the word, have had their second chance. Indeed, we might, Scripturally, limit the matter much further and say that the Gospel has been hidden from the majority of those who heard it; their mental eyes and ears being deaf and blind, they did not comprehend the message, and therefore could not reject it. The "high calling" and "so great salvation" which so few have really heard and seen is referred to by our great Redeemer saying, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear." "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned . . . But God has revealed them to us by His spirit" (1 Cor. 2: 14). In other words, only the spirit-begotten ones were on trial for life everlasting or death everlasting. And only the faithful footstep followers have gained glory, honor, immortality and joint-heirship with Him in His Kingdom. These are the "very elect." These elect ones experienced a change of nature, are not human beings, but partakers of the Divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 4). They were inducted into the perfection of the Divine nature in the First Resurrection, the chief resurrection, in which they were changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, because flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15: 50-52). The thought that the heathen and everybody except saints, would be assigned to torture, is not reasonable.

#### EARTHLY SALVATION IS RESTITUTION

We were all troubled by the thought that everybody except the saints would be consigned to an eternity of torture, yet we all recognized that heaven is not a place of development, but a condition of perfection. We were perplexed, mystified. We did not follow our Bibles with sufficient care. Many of us twisted the Scriptures, wrested them from their plainly obvious import, and always to our own injury. Some went in the direction of Universalism; others halfway and still others abandoned the Holy Book altogether. Now we see where we went wrong. God has two salvations; one for the Church and a totally different one for the world. The salvation for the Church is to heavenly nature, spirit bodies, and joint-heirship with the Master in His Kingdom, which flesh and blood cannot inherit, as we have already seen. The other salvation,

for mankind, is an earthly one, called in the Scriptures "Restitution." Man was not an angel originally, not a spirit being, but, as the Scriptures declare, "The first man was of the earth, earthy." It was that earthy man, perfect, in the image of his Creator, for whose happiness Eden was specially prepared. By obedience to God he might have continued to enjoy his Eden home everlastingly. By disobedience he first lost his fellowship with God, then his Eden home, and after nine hundred and thirty years of toiling with thorns and thistles in sweat of face, the death penalty upon him reached completion—he died. Adam's race, sharing his weaknesses by laws of heredity, has also shared death with him through heredity in a natural way.



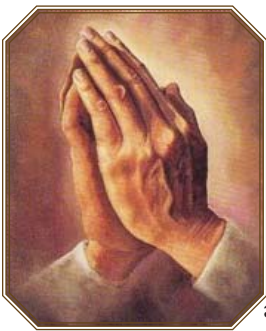
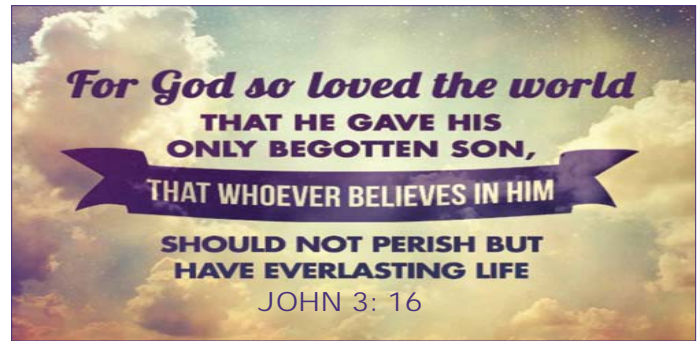
The Scriptures tell us that God's real purpose in sending Jesus into the world was that the "world might through Him be saved"—not the salvation of the Church, that was an incidental feature. The Church is selected that as the Bride or Queen during the Messianic Kingdom she may be associated with her Lord, the King, as the Seed of Abraham in the blessing, the saving, of Adam and his family, or so many of them as shall be willing, from sin and death conditions. We remember the Master's words to the effect that "He came to seek and to save [recover] that which was lost." We have just seen that it was human life, human perfection and an earthly home that were lost. It is these, then, that Jesus proposes in due time to recover for Adam and his family. The Messianic reign of Jesus and His Body—the Anointed, the Christ, the Messiah—will be for the purpose of blessing Adam and his entire race with glorious opportunities of an earthly salvation. The uplifting, restoring influences of Messiah's Kingdom will affect not only Adam and his race, but also the earth itself. Gradually *Paradise Lost*, as a little Garden of Eden, will become *Paradise Regained*, as the world beautiful. Then the wilderness shall blossom as a rose and the solitary place shall be glad. At our Lord's First Advent the "acceptable time" began—the time when God, having accepted the sacrifices of Christ Jesus, became willing through Him to accept the sacrifices of all who desired to become His

disciples—to take up their cross and follow Him through evil report and good report even unto death. The entire Gospel Age and Millennial Age antitype Israel’s Day of Atonement, in its sin offering features, and the sacrifices of our Lord and the Church, His Body, are the “better sacrifices,” foreshadowed by the bullock and the goat offered typically by the Jews. This is the acceptable year of the LORD which Jesus declared (Isa. 61: 2; Luke 4: 19). God’s faithful people of this acceptable day were glad to be invited to “present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God” (Rom. 12: 1).

**HEAVENLY SALVATION PRECEDES  
EARTHLY SALVATION**

Then will be introduced a new period styled, in the Scriptures, “Times of Restitution,” antitypical of the burnt offering and blessing time of the Day of Atonement. The acceptable day for the Church’s sacrifice has lasted for about nineteen centuries. And we know how long the “Times of Restitution” will last—a thousand years. St. Peter tells us just when these “Restitution Times” will begin. They did not begin in his day. They have not begun yet. They will begin as a result of the Second Advent of Jesus the Messiah, and the establishment of His Kingdom and righteousness—“Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the LORD, and He shall send Jesus Christ, as before was preached to you, whom the heavens must

retain until the Times of Restitution of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. For Moses verily said to the fathers, The LORD your God shall raise up to you a Prophet like unto me [of whom I am but a type or figure] from the midst of you of your brethren. Him shall you hear in all things whatever He shall speak to you. And it shall come to pass that the soul that will not obey that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3: 19-23)—in the Second Death. This great Prophet has been raised up. The last member of His Body shall have passed beyond the veil. He will stand forth to complete the secondary classes who will have assignments in both the spiritual and earthly phases of the Kingdom during the Millennial Age. They will rule, judge, instruct, restore and bless all the families of the earth with opportunity for restoration to all that was lost in Eden and redeemed at Calvary, as God’s gift of love.



**THANKSGIVING**  
*“O give thanks unto the lord, for he is good,  
 for his mercy endureth for ever”—Psalms 107: 1.*

Thanksgiving Day appeals to all of us, and we are glad that the Pilgrim Fathers many years ago started the custom. They placed it at the end of the harvest to celebrate successful crops, and probably the Indians’ generosity. National thankfulness is expressed in the United States in the form of Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday of each November. The harvest period is traditionally a time of giving thanks in other countries. The keeping of such a day appeals to all civilized mankind to a considerable degree. The man or woman, rich or poor, educated or ignorant, bond or free, who has not this quality of veneration [the ability to regard with reverential respect] developed in considerable measure cannot be appreciative and respectful toward his Creator, and would not fully appreciate Thanksgiving Day.

The spirit of today seems generally to ignore God and not to give Him the praise properly due Him. Mankind is so extremely busy with the affairs of life that God is often not mentioned, and there is comparatively little of thanksgiving and praise rendered to Him whose overruling providence and power brought this nation, USA, into being and has given it such freedom and blessings. Our Pastor has brought to our attention that the U. S. Constitution is very close to and in harmony with God’s law. Let us take heed to the reverential words Benjamin Franklin stated in the course of the drafting of the U. S. Constitution: “I have lived, sirs, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God governs in the affairs of men. If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that a nation can rise without His aid? We have been assured, sirs, in the sacred writings, that ‘except the



Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this. And I also believe that, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in our efforts here no better than the builders of Babel." Mr. Franklin concluded by saying that, "if men who govern cannot do so under the guidance of God, obeying His directives, mankind may hereafter despair of establishing governments by human wisdom and leave it to chance, war and conquest." We are living in the great Time of Trouble which includes the boastful acclamations by politicians.

This boasting and self-laudation calls a Bible student's mind to a similar prideful expression by a great Gentile king as he surveyed the building of a mighty empire and the city of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar bragged: "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling-place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Dan. 4: 30, ASV). Note from the context how God punished Nebuchadnezzar with an interval of insanity, because he sinned by not honoring God for giving him prosperity, but proudly attributed all his success to his own doing. Truly, "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5: 5). America, as well as the other countries of the world, would do well to profit by Nebuchadnezzar's experience—as he did after his sanity was restored—and acknowledge "that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will," and also "praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase" (Dan. 4: 32, 37). For the application to mankind in general, see SITS 2, pp. 95-98.

**P** **PRIDE** goes before  
**destruction**, and a  
haughty spirit before a fall.  
Proverbs 16:18

For those who have and continue to live in a country that was founded on Christian principles; many recognize the value of having a personal relationship with Jehovah and even though we have had several encounters with disordered nature, yet we can thank God otherwise for peace and plenty, for bountiful harvests, abundant rains and smiling skies, and for general national health and security. If, however, we yet see ourselves as worse off than others through no fault of our own, we might be led to ask, what have we to be thankful for? And how deep should the spirit of thankfulness penetrate our hearts? Let us use the words of Daniel "And at the end of the days

I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation" (Daniel 4: 34).



*And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation" (Daniel 4: 34).*

As fully consecrated Christians acquainted with the Truth and its understanding we are specially favored; first, in that we have been delivered from the power of darkness; secondly, in that we have been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; and thirdly, in that we are being made fit to be partakers in the joys of Christ's Kingdom. While as aliens and foreigners, as pilgrims and strangers sojourning in the most enlightened and civilized lands of the earth, we are blessed with a large measure of temporal prosperity.

Let us not forget to thank God that the lines of His providence have fallen to us in such pleasant places, that civilized ideas have scattered the dense darkness of the ages past; that we are permitted to live amid liberty, education and general enlightenment. What a blessing it is to be relieved from the superstitions which retard the progress of so many of our fellow human beings from advancement toward liberty, truth, morals, peace and prosperity; and how great are the temporal advantages arising from progressive ideas, general education and personal liberty; advantages of peaceful home and family life, of comfortable dwellings and neat and convenient furnishings, of medical skill, of commercial enterprise, of religious freedom, of a free press and an open Bible. What inestimable privileges are these! And yet we who enjoy them are only a minority of our present world population. The Christian lives each day to the fullest in honor of God's outpouring of love.

The Christian recognizes the privilege of working out

his salvation with joy and rejoicing each day of his life with the hope of being granted life everlasting in God's Kingdom. To increase this privilege the Christian is privileged to pray to a *Living Christ!*

This privilege has not been granted to the non-Christian! What pleasure they have in this life is clouded with the thought that eternal torment is their reward for the pleasures of this life.

Others make prayers to stone statues or travel for days to the site of Muhammad's birth and first revelation in Mecca making offerings to a dead leader.

In most polytheistic religions human sacrifices were made, as burning infants on the red hot hands and arms of Moloch, hurling children into the Ganges River, burning widows alive with their husbands' corpses in the funeral rites of India, all in sacrificing people to appease the gods.

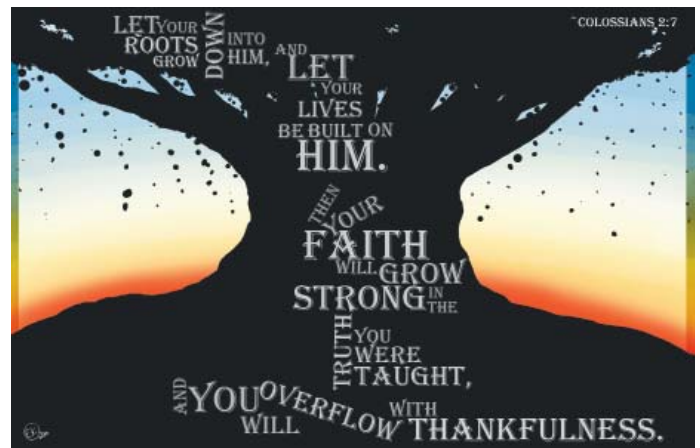
This practice of appeasing the gods continues today. We often see a person strapping a bomb to their body to sacrifice themselves, often killing many others with them, in the hope of receiving a reward.

Let us appreciate the temporal favors more and more, and use them to the greater honor of God. And while we realize the inability of our own efforts to lift the shroud of darkness, ignorance and superstition from the rest of the world, let us rejoice in the coming kingdom of light and peace, and the rising of the Sun of Righteousness—which in due time will scatter all the gloom. And let us further consider that our present vantage point is not ours because God is a respecter of persons, but because He is preparing us to have part in His great plan for blessing all the families of the earth. As He prepared an Eden, an oasis in the great world-desert, to be a suitable place for Adam and Eve, so He has prepared certain places and conditions for the development and discipline of His special people; not an Eden, however, but places and conditions where civilized life can be carried on, and where the general enlightenment may be used for either good or evil.

These temporal advantages are because of God's mercy; but let us consider with thanksgiving the special favors granted us over and above these; first, in being delivered from the power of darkness and translated therefrom into the kingdom of light and Truth.

The "power of darkness" (Col. 1: 13) is the power of ignorance, superstition, sin and death—the power of Satan, "the god of this world," who blinds the minds of them which believe not (2 Cor. 4: 4). From his kingdom of darkness the true followers of Christ have been graciously "translated," lifted over, into the preparatory

stage of the kingdom of our Lord. While yet we sat in darkness the glad tidings came to us that God in His love had graciously provided the price of our redemption in His Son, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2: 4-6), and that, if we desired deliverance and would "only believe" in this Gospel message (Acts 4: 12; 16: 31), we could then be translated from the kingdom of darkness (the kingdom of Satan) into the kingdom of light and peace (the Kingdom of God's dear Son). Gladly we heard this joyful message and gladly we accepted the free favor offered; and, as a reward of our faith, came the sweet assurance of "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" and the "peace of God" ruling in our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Rom. 5: 1; 8: 1; Phil. 4: 7; Col. 3: 15).



The first new ray of light that we admitted was followed by more and more; and the darkness of ignorance of God and His ways, and of superstition and error, began to flee away, and our souls were flooded with light and joy and a peace that surpassed all understanding. Great was our joy when first we realized this blessed change, when we were told that now we were children of light, and were counseled to walk thereafter as children of light (Eph. 5: 8; 1 Thes. 5: 5; 1 John 1: 7). Yes, Jehovah's Word "is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119: 105).

As children of light and subjects of Christ our Savior and King (1 Tim. 6: 15), we have been walking from day to day and from year to year in the light of His countenance and of His Word, going on from knowledge to knowledge and from grace to grace. The old errors of ignorance and superstition have been gradually displaced with Truth and an intelligent faith in the pure Word of God, as we have learned more and more about His great plan of salvation for the Church and the world. And daily, as we are enlightened more and more by the Truth of God's Word, we endeavor to bring ourselves more fully into subjection to our King; accordingly, having been delivered from the power of darkness, we grow more and more fully into

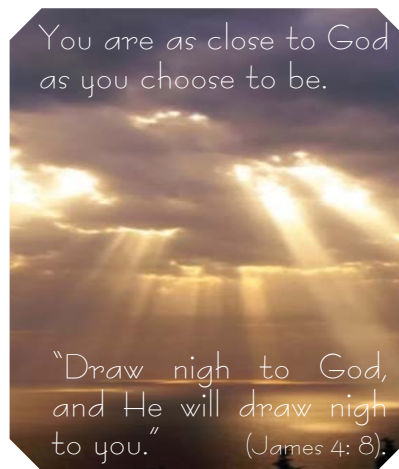
conformity to the Divine likeness and favor in living life to its fullest with thanksgiving.

Spiritually, we have feasted on the bounties of Divine favor. Therefore we can and do most heartily “offer unto God thanksgiving” for past favors (Psa. 50: 14). And we render unto God, not only the praises of our lips, but also the incense of truly dedicated, consecrated lives? Dearly beloved disciples of Christ, let us renew our consecration to God—not that we are to invalidate the consecration (or dedication of our lives) that we originally made once for all (Rom. 12: 1); which with some of us was done many years ago, but rather in the sense of reaffirming and reemphasizing that covenant. Let us assure our dear heavenly Father that we are still entirely His, that we still love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, and that we have the determination to continue to serve Him faithfully—until death, whenever it may come. Let us then proceed with studious care and diligence from day to day to pay our vows of full consecration unto the Most High. Let us again follow the thoughts given in Daniel 4: 37 “Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment. . .” Do we see thanksgiving in these words?

“What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation [the experiences of bliss and woe necessary to obtaining our salvation], and call upon the name of the LORD [for grace to help]. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people” (Psa. 116: 12-14). As we review the past and with sorrow look at the imperfections of even our best efforts, and then look forward and see the lion-like difficulties that seem to obstruct our onward course, we will need greatly to reinforce our courage with the special promises of Divine grace to help in every time of need (Heb. 4: 16). We are now living in the “time of the end” when “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased”; and ever since World War I broke out in 1914 we have been in “That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness” (Zeph. 1: 15). The great Time of Trouble with which the present order of affairs among men—based on selfishness—is to end (Dan. 12: 1, 4; Matt. 24: 21). Conditions in human society have fallen deeper and deeper into degradation, and we see on every hand the fulfilment of prophecy concerning “the last days” (e.g., 1 Tim. 4: 1, 2; Ezek. 7: 19).

While living in this time and within a society that thrives in degradation, the fully consecrated child of God

has much reason to have and to offer thanksgiving to Jehovah! Those justified and consecrated believers have the Word of God explaining the need and purpose of this Time of Trouble and we understand the promise of Matt. 24: 21 just cited. With this knowledge we can embrace the words of Jude 17-19 “But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lust. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.” The world of mankind without knowing Jehovah and not understanding the great ransom price paid by His only begotten son, (1 Tim. 2: 4-6) live each day in fear filled with jealousy toward any who have found their place of rest in the arms of Jesus. The non-Christian world has declared war on Christians throughout the world!



Again Jehovah gives to the Christian believer Scripture that brings comfort and thanksgiving: James 4: 8 “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” and Matthew 11: 28 “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are

heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” How grateful we are for this text; “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isa. 55: 11). Jehovah’s guarantee to the Christian believer that He has a plan for His greatest creation, man. Let us thank Him for this promise to the faithful now and also to the non-believer in the future kingdom blessings yet to come!

THE EXPRESSION OF THANKS has long been valued in societies around the world. It has helped to cement the bonds which hold communities together; conversely, ungrateful behavior is generally deemed shameful and reprobate. Generally speaking, it seems to come naturally to human nature to feel grateful at some level, even if the feeling is not always voiced. For God’s promises we are grateful. But this is not a selfish gratitude. God has promised to bless “all families of earth” (Gen. 12: 3) and for this we are grateful. We are grateful to a

God who has so much good will toward fallen humanity that He gave His Son to rescue them from the curse of death.

What if your **BLESSINGS** come through raindrops? What if your **HEALING** comes through tears? What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near? What if trials of this life are your **MERCIES** in disguise?

One may ask how we can show our thankfulness to God for His many blessings to us. It has been said: service is gratitude in action! We show our thankfulness to God for His many blessings to us by our earnest activity for His cause and His people. This can be expressed in many ways. It may be by tract distribution, opening one's home for

Bible studies, witnessing to the sick or dying in hospitals or prisons, or simply fulfilling one's daily obligations in a pleasant, conscientious manner. Gratitude can be a garment of the Christian's character, thankfulness should be highly prized. Merely being grateful to God will improve our dispositions significantly. Our perspective on difficulties will be altered. We will be less prone to complain, more willing to help others in trouble. We will think less about our own needs and more about those of others. Such, dear faithful ones in Christ, is our occasion for thanksgiving. Shall we set apart only one special day in which to render praise and thanks to God for such unmeasured favor? No, we give of every day our hearty

thanksgiving to God for all His multiplied favors to us. Thanks be to God for preparing the way before us in lands where, though we are merely aliens and foreigners, we have such inestimable privileges and advantages for growing in knowledge and in grace, and for advancing the cause of Truth; and thanks be to Him for delivering us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light and peace, and calling us to be in His Kingdom.

Often hidden from natural sight is a cornucopia of blessings. The natural man, therefore, cannot see them. Nor, perhaps, is it a horn of plenty which he would esteem as worth anything. But the eye of faith discerns it clearly and the heart of faith is moved to respond to the Giver—God Himself. So then, when we say “thank you” to God in our prayers let us mentally enumerate the many things, too many to count: “How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee” (Psa. 139: 17, 18).

Do we find ourselves blessed at this moment in time? Oh greater than food on our table or money in our pocket are the blessings God gives to His own. In mercy and unstinting generosity the Heavenly Father has showered His love upon us. Yes all things are ours, if we are Christ's. And He is able “to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight, if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard . . .” (Col. 1: 22, 23).

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## JESUS' ACTUAL BIRTH DATE (NOT DECEMBER 25TH)

In order to find out in what year Jesus was crucified, which was 3½ years after He was baptized at Jordan, it is well to remember that at the time of

His baptism He was 30 years of age (Luke 3: 23); and it is important, therefore, to establish the time of His birth. This and related matters are discussed in the book, *The Time is at Hand*, in substance as follows:

Scholars generally concede that our commonly accepted A.D. is incorrect. Many hold that our Lord was born about four years previous to the point of time designated A.D., *i.e.*, in the year B.C. 4; and this theory has been followed by publishers of the King James Version Bible who give dates in the margin. The general reason that most of those who claim that A.D. should have been placed four years

earlier to correctly mark the time of Jesus' birth, is a desire to harmonize it with certain statements of the Jewish historian Josephus, relative to the length of the reign of Herod the Great. According to one of his statements, it would appear that Herod died three years before the point of time designated A.D. If this were true, it would lend weight to the thought that Jesus was born in the year B.C. 4; for it was this Herod, who issued the decree for the slaying of the babes of Bethlehem, from whom the infant Jesus was delivered (Matt. 2: 14-16). But is this statement of Josephus reliable? No. Josephus alone is not sufficient authority for such a decision, as he is known and admitted to be inaccurate in his record of dates.

But this notion has prevailed; the date B.C. 4 has been generally accepted, and historical events and dates have been somewhat bent to fit and support this theory.

Among other supposed proofs that B.C. 4 was the proper date, was an eclipse of the moon said by Josephus to have occurred a short time before Herod's death. All that is known of that eclipse is as follows:

Herod had placed a large golden eagle over the gate of the Temple. Two notable Jews, named Matthias and Judas, persuaded some young men to pull it down. They did so, and were arrested and executed. To make the matter clear, Josephus relates that there was at that time another Matthias, a high-priest, who was not concerned in the sedition. He then adds: "But Herod deprived this Matthias of his high, priesthood, and burnt the other Matthias who had raised the sedition, with his companions, alive, and that very night there was an eclipse of the moon." This is recorded as one of the last prominent acts of Herod, and is given a date which might correspond with B.C. 4 by Josephus, who marks the date by the eclipse mentioned.

Since at times as many as four eclipses of the moon occur in one year, evidently except under very peculiar circumstances the record of such an occurrence proves nothing. Where the time of the night, the time of the year and the amount of obscuration are all given, as has been done in several instances, the record is of great value in fixing dates; but in the case under consideration, there is nothing of the kind; nothing is proved by the record, so far as chronology is concerned. Josephus does mention a fast as having been kept before the event, but what fast, or how long before, is not stated.

As it happens, there was only one eclipse of the moon in B.C. 4, while in B.C. 1 there were three. The eclipse of B.C. 4 was only partial, six digits, or only one-half of the moon being obscured, while all three in B.C. 1 were total eclipses, and of course for a longer time, causing the event to be much more noticeable. Therefore, if the eclipse theory has any weight it certainly is not in favor of the earlier date, B.C. 4.

Unfortunately, the time of Herod's death is not given by a reliable historian. Josephus gives some important periods in his history and the dates of some events, but these dates are not trustworthy. Some of them would teach that Herod died B.C. 4, but others cannot be reconciled with that date. For instance, his death is said to have been at the age of 70. He was made governor of Galilee B.C. 47, at which time Josephus says he was 25 years of age (*Antiquities* 14: 9: 2). This would date his birth at B.C. 72 (47 plus 25). His death at 70 would then be in B.C. 2, instead of B.C. 4. Appleton's Cyclopaedia, under Chronology, says: "Josephus also gives dates, but he is altogether too careless to be taken into account."

### THE BIBLE EVIDENCE EXAMINED

We now proceed to offer the Bible evidence relating to

this subject, which more nearly agrees with the common era, and shows that our Lord's birth occurred in B.C. 2, only one year and three months prior to A.D. 1. It is as follows:

Our Lord's ministry lasted 3½ years. The 69 symbolic weeks of years (Dan. 9: 24-27) reached to His baptism and anointing as Messiah, and there the last or 70th week (7 years) of Israel's favor began. He was cut off (in death) in the *middle* of that 70th week—3½ years after the beginning of His ministry. He was crucified, we know, at the time of the Passover, about April 1, whatever the year. The 3½ years of His ministry, which ended in April, must consequently have begun about October, whatever the year. And October of some year must have been the true month of His birth, because He *delayed not* to begin His ministry as soon as He was 30 years old, and could not, according to the Law (under which He was born and which He obeyed), begin it before He was 30. It started therefore, when He "*began to be* about thirty years of age" (Luke 3: 23).

John the Baptist was 6 months older than our Lord (Luke 1: 26, 36), so he was of age (30 years, according to the Law, Num. 4: 3; 1 Chron. 23: 3) and began to preach 6 months before Jesus became of age and began His ministry. The date of the beginning of John's ministry is clearly stated to have been "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar" (Luke 3: 1). This Scripturally fixed date is also a clearly fixed date in secular history, of which there can be no reasonable doubt. Tiberius became emperor at the death of Augustus Caesar, August 19, in the year of Rome 767, which was the year A.D. 14.

But those who are misled by the inaccurate statements of Josephus relative to Herod, and who place the birth of Jesus at B.C. 4, in order to harmonize with him, run across a difficulty in this clearly stated date given by Luke; and they endeavor to make it also harmonize with their B.C. 4 theory. To accomplish this end they claim that Tiberius began to "reign" some 3 or 4 years before Augustus died and before he himself was fully constituted emperor, and that his rule should be reckoned from that date.

But the Greek word translated "reign" in Luke 3: 1 is *hegemonia*, which means "chief command, rule, sovereignty" (Thayer); "a leading the way, going first, chief command" (Liddell and Scott). Therefore even though Tiberius was for a time closely associated with Emperor Augustus in his later years as his heir-apparent and colleague, it is obvious that in no true sense of the word did Tiberius have power and authority as *the chief one in command*, or *sovereign*, nor did his official term of office in that capacity, his "reign," begin, before Emperor Augustus' death in A.D. 14; and, accordingly, it is not proper to date Tiberius' reign as beginning any earlier, when Emperor Augustus was still the *chief one in command*, or *sovereign*.

Meyer's Commentary (Luke, p. 292) states respecting Tiberius' reign: "It might appear doubtful whether Luke reckons . . . from the commencement of the *co*-regency, or of the *sole*-government. Since, however, no indication is added which would lead us away from the mode of reckoning the years of the emperors usual among the Romans, and followed even by Josephus, we must abide by the view that the fifteenth year in the passage before us is *the year from the 19th August 781 to the same date 782.*"

Since Tiberius became emperor at the time of Augustus' death, on Aug. 19, in the year of Rome 767 (A.D. 14), then the first year of his reign would be from Aug. 19, 767 to Aug. 19, 768 (Aug. 19, A.D. 14 to Aug. 19, A.D. 15); and, accordingly, the 15th year of his reign, in which Luke states (3: 1-3) John began his ministry, would be 14 years later, *i.e.*, from Aug. 19, in the year of Rome 781 to Aug. 19, 782, or Aug. 19, A.D. 28 to Aug. 19, A.D. 29. Then the date given in Luke 3: 1 is not merely the *only* pertinent one furnished in the New Testament, but it is an *unequivocal* one; it enables us accurately to determine the time when John and Jesus each at 30 years of age began their respective ministry, and so to calculate accurately the date of Jesus' birth.

Since our Lord's 30th birthday anniversary and the beginning of His ministry were in October, and since John's birthday anniversary and the beginning of his ministry were just 6 months earlier, it follows that John began his ministry in the Spring, about April, just as soon as he was of age; for God's plans are always carried out on exact time. So, then, John was 30 years old in A.D. 29, about April 1, which is 28 full years from Jan. 1, A.D. 1 to Jan. 1, A.D. 29, and 3 months beyond it to April 1, A.D. 29. If we subtract these 28¼ years A.D. from his age of 30, we find that he was born 1¾ years prior to the point of time that we commonly designate A.D. This shows He was born 1¾ years B.C., or about April 1, B.C. 2. Therefore, Jesus' birth, 6 months later, must have been about Oct. 1, B.C. 2, or 1¾ years prior to the point of time that we commonly designate A.D.

Again, there is clear, strong evidence that Jesus was crucified on Friday, April 3, A.D. 33. The fact that His crucifixion occurred toward the close of the 14th day of the month Nisan, in the Spring of the year, and that this date rarely falls on Friday, but did so in the year A.D. 33, substantiates that date so thoroughly that even Usher, who adopted B.C. 4 as the date of Jesus' birth, was forced to admit that His crucifixion was A.D. 33. This can easily be verified by looking in the margin of King James Version Bibles giving

chronology, at Luke 2 and Matt. 2, where Jesus' birth is recorded, and compare Usher's incorrect dates there given with the correct date of A.D. 33 given for Jesus' crucifixion in Matt. 27, Mark 15, Luke 23 and John 19. The correct date of the crucifixion being A.D. 33, it follows that if Jesus had been born B.C. 4, He would have been 36 years old when He died; and His ministry from His 30th to His 36th year would have been 6 years. But it is clear that His ministry was for 3½ years only. And this generally conceded fact is proved by Daniel's prophecy concerning Messiah's being cut off in the *middle* of the 70th week of Israel's covenant favor (Dan. 9: 23-27).

**The Bible shows us that Jesus' actual birth is October 1st. "Christmas Day," the celebration of our dear Redeemer's birth, has for many centuries been observed on December 25th, which properly corresponds with the date of the annunciation to Mary, nine months before Jesus' birth.**

The Scriptures give us no instructions whatever about celebrating Jesus' birthday, though they do tell us to commemorate His death (Luke 22: 19; 1 Cor. 11: 24). However, since we have no pertinent Scriptural instruction, and since it is proper to think good thoughts and do good deeds on any day, we do not understand it to be improper, in harmony with general usage, for us to remember in a special way our dear Redeemer's birth at the Dec. 25th season, providing it is done in the proper attitude of appreciation of the Heavenly Father and His only begotten Son.

We do not see anything in the Scriptures that forbids the practice, held for centuries by Christian believers in many lands, of making Christmas Day a joyful one, by the interchange of little tokens of love in the family and among friends, and by giving to the poor, in remembrance of God's great gift of love to all mankind, our beloved Savior Jesus (John 3: 16; 2 Cor. 9: 15). Through Him all of God's gifts are promised and will be bestowed (2 Cor. 1: 19, 20; Eph. 4: 8). The sad part of the Christmas season is to see it so terribly and disgracefully abused and commercialized. Many have more or less taken Christ and His spirit of unselfish giving out of Christmas and have made it a season of selfish gift-trading, worldly pleasure and revelry, and even debauchery. Christmas has lost more or less its true and proper significance. Also, many parents by wrong instruction or lack of proper instruction have, to the detriment of their children, allowed Santa Claus more or less to take the place in their children's minds and hearts that should be occupied only by God and Christ.



May you be filled with  
wonder at God's  
unfathomable love  
this Christmas





## Jerusalem Desolated Seventy Years (Lesson 48)

Nebuchadnezzar, after blinding King Zedekiah, deported him and the people to Babylonia, and utterly destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple with fire. The Bible says that the city lay desolate for seventy years.

Those seventy years of desolation of Jerusalem are Scripturally declared to have been a punishment upon the Israelites for not properly keeping their Jubilee years, which God had appointed them. Every fiftieth year was to be a Jubilee year, when all debts expired and all property was to be returned to its original owner—typifying the coming “Times of Restitution” (Acts 3: 19-21). But the Israelites, like all other peoples, were selfish. They knew that this observance would mean loss. They kept these Jubilee Sabbaths very imperfectly for awhile, and gradually discontinued them.

God explains that the seventy years’ desolation following the taking of the Israelites into captivity was a substitute for the whole number of Jubilee years. This we read was, “to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths; for so long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years” (2 Chronicles 36: 21; Jeremiah 25: 11).

Bible students reason that if the entire number of Jubilees was to be seventy, and if the Jubilee cycles were forty-nine years each, then seventy cycles from the time the Jubilees were instituted would mark the beginning of the Antitypical Jubilee—the “Times of Restitution.” This they reckon somewhere about the year A.D. 1874. Many hold that we are living in the time when the Antitypical Jubilee is being inaugurated; mankind will return gradually to all their rights and privileges for a thousand years. The present social unrest is incidental to the great change. We are living in the beginning of the New Era. Growing intelligence is bringing emancipation, and shortly the Messianic Kingdom will multiply the blessings and wipe out the curse (Revelation 21: 4, 5).

### Questions for Lesson 48

- 1\* Who was Nebuchadnezzar?
- 2\* What did he do to Zedekiah and the Israelites?
- 3\* What did he do to Jerusalem and the Temple?
- 4\* How long did Jerusalem lay desolate? Par. 1
- 5 Why did God permit this desolation?
- 6\* What was the year of Jubilee?
- 7\* What was to be done on that year? Lev. 25: 8-13
- 8 What did the Jubilee typify?
- 9\* Why didn’t the Israelites keep their Jubilees? Par. 2
- 10\* What was the 70 years’ desolation a substitute for?
- 11 How many Jubilees therefore were to be kept? Par. 3
- 12 How many years would the 70 Jubilees cover if properly kept? Studies, Vol. 2, page 193
- 13 As the Jubilees began to count from 1575 B.C. when Israel entered the land of Canaan, when would they have ended if properly kept? Studies, Vol. 2, pages 194, 195
- 14 Where do Bible students reckon that restitution times began?
- 15\* Where did the Gentile times and the reign of Christ begin? Studies, Vol. 2, pages 40, 80 and 87

\* The questions marked with an asterisk are especially for children.



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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**Lawrence Williams**

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**John Wojnar**

New Haven, CT, December 21; Chester Springs, PA,  
December 31, January 1, 2015

**Donald Lewis**

Barlborough, England, October 25, 26; Barlin, France,  
November 1, 2

### EVANGELISTIC SERVICES

**David F. Hanning**

Detroit, MI, November, 15; Grand Rapids, MI,  
November 16; Galloway, OH, December 7

**David Lounsbury**

Springfield, MA, December 7

**Ainsley Maine**

Pittsfield, MA, December 14

**Roger Mullen**

Carlstadt, NJ, December 28

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## *The Lord's Light Within*

*Lord, we reflect with thankful hearts*

*On the wonder of your birth*

*The love you expressed when you left*

*Your glory to come to earth.*

*For your life was like a beacon, Lord*

*Shining brightly in the night*

*Filling the world with the radiance of*

*The Father's glorious light.*

*And we, too, long to have inside*

*Your light for others to see*

*The beautiful reflection of your grace*

*And the wonder of your majesty.*

*For as your life indwells our hearts,*

*We can shine wherever we are*

*And arise to take hold of each new day*

*With your light ablaze in our hearts.*

*So rekindle the flame within us, Lord*

*So it will not flicker nor dim*

*Ignite us with the light of your love,*

*So you will shine brightly within*

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*May  
the peace and hope of  
Christ's birth be with you now  
and in the days ahead. . .*