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Pray without ceasing.- 1 Thessalonians 5:17

There are few subjects closer to the Christian's heart than that of prayer. In times of distress it is his lifeline. In times of joy it enables him to share that joy with his heavenly Father. In times of confusion it opens the way to clarity. In times of sin it is the means to forgiveness. And, in all things, it is the approach to God to thank him for all of life's daily leadings, the sorrowful as well as the joyous.

Nine articles in this issue, plus *The Question Box*, examine various aspects of this topic. Obviously the amount of material on prayer in the Bible, both by example and by exhortation, is far more vast than can be covered in one issue of a magazine. Because of this the articles cover the broad scope of the subject and are not meant to be exhaustive.

Two articles deal with the subject in general. Both *Study and Prayer* and the *Echoes from the Past* feature, *Prayer and Privilege* by the late Bro. Irwin Doran, point to both the privilege and the responsibility of prayer. The relationship between study and prayer is particularly highlighted in the first of these articles. A large collection of Bible texts on the subject are arranged in topical order in a study done in 1916 by the late Daniel Toole.

Prayer was a habit for all of God's holy ones. Daniel prayed three times daily (Dan. 6:10). Many of David's psalms are prayers. These ancients lived close to God and they kept their lines of communication open. Two treatises in this issue deal with specific Old Testament prayers. *The Prayer of Jabez* is one of the shortest recorded in the Bible, and it is offered by a virtually unknown character; yet it contains insights that are still relevant today into God's character and on the subject of prayer. The better known prophet, Jonah, offered his petition in the most unlikely of places, within a great fish. By God's intervention he was transported back to Jewish shores, after being thrown overboard in the Mediterranean. He was then to go and preach repentance to the heathen of Nineveh.

No life of prayer was more exemplary or constant than that of Jesus of Nazareth. The article *Portraits of Jesus Praying* gives a thumbnail sketch of many of these private communications, inspiring us to want to develop the same kind of intimacy with the Father so repetitively illustrated in the life of Christ.

While striving to remain separate from the political processes of the world around us, the Christian is exhorted in the Bible to pray for those in authority. The content of these prayers is treated in the article *Praying for Governments*.

The last two articles in this series deal with specific types of prayer, both intercessory. *Prayer Partners* is a verse by verse study in James 5 and considers the matter of intercessory prayer for our brethren in depression and weakness; *Pray for the Intercession of the Spirit* examines prayers for personal intercession by our Advocate.

A query that often arises on the subject of prayer is what to pray for and how to do so continuously. Jesus gave the parable of the importunate widow (Luke 18:1-8) to illustrate the necessity "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Yet the Apostle Paul, after three petitions for God to remove his "thorn in the flesh," yielded graciously to a "no" answer with the comforting- words from God, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:8, 9). This topic is examined in *The Question Box* feature.

The Holiday Season

We are not unmindful that this issue covers two holidays of great import to the Christian-Thanksgiving and Christmas. In times past considerable space has been devoted to seasonal matters relevant to these two events. This issue is an exception, but space for a special devotional Thanksgiving poem has been made on the back cover.

As Israel of old celebrated the bounties of their harvest time with the feast of Tabernacles, so it is fitting that we take time, not just annually but daily, to reflect upon the Lord's bounties and to show our appreciation, not just by word of mouth but by the fruitage of our lives.

Likewise, as the world around joins in honoring the birth of Jesus, so may we each commemorate that event by yielding ourselves to him and striving to copy his perfect character.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."-2 Corinthians 5:14, 15

STUDY AND PRAYER

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.- James 5:16

By Frances Earl

The purpose of this study is to review some of the promises made by God to his people, to draw to the reader's attention the necessity for a continuing prayer life, and to point out that one must maintain a personal relationship with our heavenly Father if desired results are to be achieved. Promise and prayer are so deeply intertwined in the Christian's walk that attention must always be directed toward a closer walk with God, being devoted to his plans and purposes.

Prayers of Old Testament Servants

First there was Adam; he had a close relationship with his Creator until it was severed by his disobedience (Gen. 3:8). Noah did all that God instructed him to do and was saved from the deluge (Gen. 8:20). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had fellowship with God, in spite of their weaknesses and short-comings. The faithfulness of Joseph and Moses was retold through the centuries (Heb. 11). Even after David's grievous actions, when he repented, he was forgiven.

When Hezekiah was being threatened by the invasion of the Assyrian army, at first he paid the tribute demanded by Sennacherib's messengers; but after Sennacherib sent a message to the people, telling them not to listen to Hezekiah when he told them that the "Lord will deliver us," he went to the LORD in prayer. "O Lord God of Israel . . . thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. Lord, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, Lord, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God ... Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only" (2 Kings 19).

Hezekiah is acknowledging God as being the only one to whom he can turn in his time of need. He remembered that God was the source of power in all the earth, not Sennacherib. God heard Hezekiah's prayer and sent him an answer: "That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard . . . He shall not come into this city . . . By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, . . . For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake" (2 Kings 19:20, 32, 33, 34).

How did all of those who served God's purposes communicate with him; their contact was through prayer. And so it has been with all those to whom God has spoken. Those who would serve God learned the necessity for keeping a close relationship with God.

They learned through their failures that having the ability to accomplish the tasks given them was completely dependent upon their strength and guidance through prayer. We have the notable prayers of Jacob, Moses, Job, David, Solomon, Elijah, Jeremiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah recorded as examples.

The Pattern of Prayer

A careful study of the scriptures shows that Jesus set the example for his disciples; he was always in communication with his Father immediately before events of major importance occurred. Possibly the disciple who requested our Lord to teach him to pray in Luke 11:1 had made such an observation. But there are requirements; before prayers may be heard and answered, the proper relationship must exist with the Father: "*a righteous*" relationship. And only God may make that determination.

Ingredients of Effectual Prayer

Scriptures teach us that in addition to having a right relationship with the heavenly Father the one offering prayer must believe and have faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please him [God]; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. By faith Noah, . . . prepared an ark to the saving of his house; . . . and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith (Heb. 11:6,7). By faith Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses all prayed to God and received the strength necessary for their tasks.

Faith may be evidenced in tasks, but it may also be expressed in "waiting on the Lord" (Ps. 27:14). If we believe, then we have faith that our prayer will be answered and that gives us the patience to wait; we will be positive that an answer will come according to God's will. ". . . wait, I say, on the Lord."

At times more miracles occur in answer to prayer than at other times. This is because of unbelief. A doubt is evidence of unbelief—a "what if" may be indicative of unbelief. "And all things, whatsoever ye may ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21:22). "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matt. 9:29). The cardinal rules for prayers of request are believing that one will receive an answer and one must know why he believes he will receive an answer.

Texts of Promise

In Proverbs 10 we are told that the "desire of the righteous shall be granted" (v. 24). Even before Jesus came the righteous people of God were given promises that would help them expect answers to their petitions. God wants us to receive all that he has in store for us. Only our lack of belief hinders this. "Ask, and it shall be given you; Seek, and ye shall find; **Knock**, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. 7:7, 8). Remember, the answer is there for the **asking**, but you must first ask believing that whatsoever you ask of the heavenly Father will be granted unto you according to his will. "The Lord is nigh unto all

them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him: he will also hear their cry" (Ps. 145:18, 19).

We have these texts of promise, but do we claim them? Do we believe that these promises were for us as well? Do we think of ourselves as being unworthy and so they must be for someone else who has made a better covenant of sacrifice? "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Ps. 84:11, 12). That could not possibly mean me, one might say to himself. How easily one might believe the subterfuge of the Adversary. But consider these words: "Delight thyself also in the LORD. He shall give the desires of thine heart" (Ps. 37:4).

Praying "Amiss"

"Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, . . . and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:2, 3). Praying amiss is the result of not knowing how to ask and what to ask for. To know how to pray and for what to ask one must study the Word of God. Solomon prayed that he might have wisdom and the Lord granted his plea and said: "Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of throe enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor: And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, . . . then I will lengthen thy days" (I Kings 3:11, 12, 13, 14).

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God . . . and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33) is another scripture that gives a similar lesson. Here we find instruction that will help us to avoid praying amiss. What God is saying is that he will give us every single thing we can find in the Bible. If we can find it and ask for it, he will give it to us. There are so many gifts we could receive if we only knew how to ask.

So the relationship between study and prayer is this: If you find one verse dear to you because it is something you . want, start praying about it. As we find (seek and ye shall find), ask (ask and it shall be given unto you), and receive (knock and it shall be opened unto you), we become much more intense and careful: careful because we realize the power of our prayer and intense because we see the relationship between study and prayer.

Remember Hezekiah; let us do the same. Take the Book, find the promise; show it to the Lord. Hezekiah showed God the letter from Sennacherib. God knew what was in the letter-before it was written he knew-but this act of Hezekiah demonstrated real faith, a real honesty, a real humility before the Lord. He was acknowledging that what God had promised to do, he would do; he was claiming that promise.

Study and prayer enhance each other so much that one would suggest that it be one subject -- study prayer. Prayer brings the soul into the presence of the Lord and prepares the way for divine blessings and superlative joy. May we continue to pray for "thy kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven" with the full assurance that "thy will [will] be done."

The Privilege And Power Of Prayer

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Phil. 4:6

Condensed from a lesson by Irwin Doran

During the Jewish dispensation only the Jews had the privilege of approaching God in prayer. Today, the privilege of approaching God in prayer belongs to the church class, the members of the body of Christ. Because of imperfect minds, understanding the power, as well as the privilege of prayer, may be limited. However, with the blessing of the holy spirit, understanding and appreciating the power and privilege of prayer to some degree is possible.

Trust And Abide

We are trusting in the promises of God. He will accomplish his divine purpose in us and direct our steps. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Psa. 34:7).

He will accomplish his divine purpose in us, if we abide in Him and His word abides in us and we are faithful and obedient. As new creatures: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not us (2 Cor. 4:7).

We are instructed to pray without ceasing, or be in a prayerful attitude at all times. We look to God in every perplexity and experience.

A Consideration Of God

The audience of God and communion with him is a great and awesome privilege. This is a wonderful condescension that he regards our low estate. We might more fully understand how great this condescension is by considering the greatness of our heavenly Father.

For example, God's glory covers the heavens and his kingdom rules the universe. He is without beginning and without end. God is immortal and self existing. He dwells in the light that no man can approach. No man has seen nor can see God. The heavens declare God's glory and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Nothing can be hid from him because he never slumbers or sleeps. No one can fathom His wisdom or understand his ways. God's mighty intellect grasps with ease the immensity and the minutiae of all the interests of his great domain.

God Loves Us

We are the creatures of his hand—fearfully and wonderfully made. We are the subjects of God's love and care. He loved us while we were yet sinners and he made provision at

great cost for our redemption, restitution and subsequent eternal glory. Because he loves us, he extends to us the favor of coming to him as children as to a father. Our invitation to commune with such a great and powerful god is a wonderful privilege, and certainly an act of condescension of our loving and Almighty Heavenly Father.

Reverence

While he is a loving God, he is to be feared (reverenced) and awed. We are never to assume an equality to Him in our prayer relationship. We are to come into God's presence with decorum and ceremony commanded by His glorious person and office. "For He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgement".(Job. 9:32).

Approaching God

In our present society we would not walk into the office of a doctor or dentist without an appointment. Nor would we walk into the office of a city mayor, a senator, or the President of the United States without following proper regulations.

Jesus offered some wise instruction regarding the proper way to approach our Heavenly Father. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Rules And Regulations

Jesus gave us an illustration of "properness" in what is referred to as the Lord's prayer. Please review Matt. 6:9-13. Jesus is laying down the rules and regulations for the attitude we should have when we approach God who has given us such a great privilege.

Believers are reinstated to the original position as sons of God. We may confidently address God as our Father. When we hallow his name we show our adoration and reverence for his glorious character and attributes. We sympathize with God's revealed plan for a coming kingdom of righteousness as we acknowledge his kingdom to come, His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In simple language, we show our dependence upon God for our daily needs and we show our childlike confidence in the Father. We trust that he will supply our needs. We express our desire to be protected by God against the wily adversary when we pray to not be led into temptation.

This prayer, provided by Jesus, gives us the principles of mind and heart required to properly address the throne of heavenly grace. An acceptable prayer must show faith, reverence, esteem and sympathy for the divine plan, submission and childlike dependence, acknowledgement of sins, desire for forgiveness, and a forgiving disposition which craves divine guidance and protection.

Instant In Prayer

God knows the necessity of communion for a healthy spiritual life. He knows that in sincerity of consecration, we will experience "tempest tossed trials" and need his comfort and care. According to the scriptures we are assured of an open invitation to prayer to our Heavenly Father.

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers" (1 Peter 3:12).

"That men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).

Lack Of Reverence

As we consider these encouragements to pray to our Father in heaven, we are again reminded of the reverential fear required. Possibly, this essential element lacked, causing Adam and Eve to be distracted by Satan. Also, calamities fell upon Lot, Ishmael, and Esau. However, a sincere reverential attitude brought blessings to Noah, Abraham, and Isaac. In view of these examples, let us frequently and with the "fear" of God, approach His merciful throne.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him" (Psa. 103:13, 17).

Intimate Prayer

With these loving encouragements to approach our heavenly Father, we can pray to him in the midst of our cares and perplexities of the day. He is available instantly for us. We are also instructed to take time for intimate fellowship with him. The scriptures assure us that we can ask for wisdom, strength, fortitude, comfort, etc. not only for ourselves, but for others, also.

"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:6).

Answer To Prayer

We have a responsibility to watch for the answers to our prayers. We will begin to see the course of his providences shaping events and circumstances for our good or the good of others. We know that he will direct our paths for the spiritual good of the new creature.

Persistency In Prayer

Jesus gave us the parable of the importune widow (Luke 18:1-5) to assure us of always approaching the throne of grace, even with the smaller matters of life. Importunity conveys the thought of asking for a thing urgently and persistently. Like the widow, in determination we can show our earnest desires in prayer. We should not faint from lack of faith or zeal if the answer is delayed.

"And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily" (Luke 18:7,8).

"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Gen. 32:24, 26).

Paul shows an example of importunity when he besought the Lord in prayer three times to take away the thorn in his flesh. He continued until he received assurance that God's grace was sufficient for him (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

Jesus' Example

The scriptures reveal Jesus' prayer habits and give us a marvelous example to follow.

'And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12).

"And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone" (Matt. 14:23).

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35).

"And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed" (Luke 5:16).

Proper Prayers

The times in which we live may sometimes cause complications and circumstances that lead us to the throne of grace. For example, when a mother's counsel and a father's wisdom seem inadequate to guide the wayward course of an impetuous youth, invoking God's wisdom and guidance in prayer is very appropriate.

Maybe the perplexities of the business world are an annoyance or distraction from our spiritual goals. Calling upon the Lord to help us apply the scriptures and not be overcharged with the cares of this life is our prayer privilege.

Both extremes of wealth and poverty can interfere with our peace of mind and communion with God. The scriptures teach us not to be slothful in business and to provide things decent and honest. However, we are encouraged to seek God's wisdom and direction to show us how to manage our temporal affairs.

Sweet Communion

Through all our earthly trials and experiences, let us sweeten our days and comfort our nights through communion with our Father in heaven. He can ease our burdens and lighten our cares. Such is the will of God, that we avail ourselves of the privilege and power of prayer.

Thanksgiving With Prayer And Supplication

The following Scriptures have been compiled by Daniel Toole: R5379

Take Time To Pray

For my love they are my adversaries; but I give myself unto prayer.—Psalm 109:4.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.—Acts 6:4.

He went out into a mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God.—Luke 6:12.

Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven and thou upon earth.—Ecclesiastes 5:2.

Pray In Secret

Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.—Matthew 6:6.

And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when the even was come he was there alone.—Matthew 14:23.

Pray In God's Presence

Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.—James 4:8.

Have faith in God. What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them.—Mark 11:22, 24.

O. Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might so that none is able to withstand thee?—2 Chronicles. 20:6.

As A Child Of A Father

If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?—Luke 11:11-13.

Answer Certain

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.—Matthew 7:7,8.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.—James 1:5.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.—John 14:13.

Pray Having Faith In God

And Jesus answering saith unto them, "Have faith in God."—Mark 11:22.

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.—1 John 5:14,15.

And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that were with them; for they cried to God in the battle and he was entreated of them because they put their trust in him.—1 Chronicles 5:20.

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.—1 John 3:21, 22.

Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.—Hebrews 10:19, 20.

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.—James 1:6, 7.

Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive them, and ye shall have them.—Mark 11:24.

Pray Being Free From Condemnation

Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord. Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud that our prayer should not pass through.—Lamentations 3:40, 44.

Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me.—Psalm 66:16-18.

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.—1 Peter 3:7.

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God, and whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.—1 John 3:20-22.

With The Whole Heart

I cried with my whole heart, hear me, O Lord; I will keep thy statutes.—Psalm 119:145.

Thou hast given him his heart's desire and hast not withholden the request of his lips.—Psalm 21:2.

Trusting God's Faithfulness

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised.—Hebrews 10:23.

Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.—Deuteronomy 7:9.

For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him...God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?—Numbers 23:9,19.

Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.—Hebrews 11:11.

Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it.—Nehemiah 9:23.

Pray Trusting God's Power

Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.—Genesis 18:14.

Ah, Lord God, behold thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.—Jeremiah 32:17.

For with God nothing shall be impossible.—Luke 1:37.

And Asa cried unto the Lord his God and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help whether with many or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.—2 Chronicles 14:11.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.—Ephesians 3:20.

Trusting In God's Love And Mercy

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.—Psalm 51:1.

O my God, incline thine ear and hear; open thine eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name; for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies.—Daniel 9:18.

Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will he teach sinners in the way...Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses, for they have been ever of old.—Psalm 25:8,6.

Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; save me for thy mercies' sake.—Psalm 31:16.

Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.—Psalm 119:76.

And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.—Romans 4:19-21.

Pray Pleading Our Need

Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.—Psalm 22:11.

Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low; deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.—Psalm 142:6.

For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor, also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence; and precious shall their blood be in his sight.—Psalm 72:12-14.

Truly my soul waiteth upon God; from him cometh my salvation...He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved...My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.—Psalm 62:1,2,5.

Pray Pleading God's Glory

And Moses said unto the Lord, "Then the Egyptians shall hear it (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them); and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land; for they have heard that thou, Lord, art among this people, that thou, Lord, art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness."—Numbers 14:13-16.

O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth; and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?—Joshua 7:8,9.

And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice that Elijah the Prophet came near and said: Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant and that I have done all these things at thy word. ...Hear me, O Lord, hear me; that these people may know that thou art the Lord God and that thou hast turned their heart back again.—I Kings 18:36,37.

For thou art my rock and my fortress! Therefore for thy name's sake lead me and guide me.—Psalm 31:3.

Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear and hear; open thine eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name; for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken

and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God; for thy people and thy city are called by thy name.—Daniel. 9:17-19.

Pray Pleading God's Justice

That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee; shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?—Genesis 18:25.

In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed; deliver me in thy righteousness.—Psalm 31:1.

Pray Pleading Our Righteousness

I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.—2 Kings 20:3.

Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.—Nehemiah 5:19.

And before this, Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, was allied unto Tobiah.—Nehemiah 13:4.

Pray Perseveringly

And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? of if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?—Luke 11:5-13.

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man; and there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not, for awhile; but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge

saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?—Luke 18:1-8.

I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.—Psalm 40:1-3.

And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee; I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shown unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.—Genesis 32:9-12.

And it came to pass when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah, his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and behold, he stood by the camels at the well.—Genesis 24:30.

He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God; yea he had power over the angel and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us; even the Lord God of hosts: the Lord is his memorial, therefore turn thou to thy God; keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.—Hosea 12:3-6.

Pray With Pure Motives

Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.—James 4:3.

Pray With Thanksgiving

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.—Colossians 4:2.

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.—Philippians 4:6.

By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.—Hebrews 13:15.

I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.—Psalm 116:17.

I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.—Psalm 69:30,31.

Stir Yourself To Prayer

And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.—Isaiah 64:7.

Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.—Isaiah 27:5.

Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands.—2 Timothy 1:6.

Let Your Faith Grow Strong By Meditation Upon The Promises

The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation, chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning work to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved. Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown; yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth; and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. To whom, then, would ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.—Isaiah 40:19-31.

And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.—Psalm 50:15.

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.—Psalm 34:15-17.

For Thou, Lord, art good and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.—Psalm 86:5.

The Lord is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works.—Psalm 145:17.

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.—Romans 10:12.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.—James 1:5.

Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.—Hebrews 4:16.

And I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.—Luke 11:9,10.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.—John 14:13.

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.—John 16:24.

Encouraged And Instructed By Prayers Of The Saints

Moses for help to judge Israel.—Numbers 11:11-15.

Moses for Israel's forgiveness.—Exodus 32:11-13.

Moses for Miriam.—Numbers 12:13.

Moses for murmurers.—Numbers 14:13-19.

Moses for Pharaoh.—Exodus 8:12, 13, 30, 31; 9:33.

Moses in the case of fiery serpents.—Numbers 21:7, 8.

Moses for Aaron.—Deuteronomy 9:20.

Samuel for Israel.—1 Sam. 7:5-10.

Elijah for the widow's son.—1 Kings 17:20-23.

Hezekiah against the king of Assyria.—2 Kings 19:15-20,32-37.

Hannah for a son.—1 Samuel 1:9-11, 27.

The prayer of Abraham—Genesis 18:23-33; 20:17.

Lot's prayer.—Genesis 19:17-22, 29.

Isaac's prayer.—Genesis 25:21.

Jehoahaz for Israel.—2 Kings 13:4, 5.

Asa's prayer.—2 Chronicles 14:11,12.

Jehoshaphat's prayer.—2 Chronicles 20:1-24,26.

Manasseh's prayer.—2 Chronicles. 33:1-13.

Job for his friends.—Job 42:7-10.

Ezra's prayer.—Ezra 8:21-13,31. Chaps. 9; 10:1-19.

Nehemiah's prayer.—Nehemiah Chaps. 1; 2:1-8.

David's.—Psalm 18:6; 28:6,7; 31:22; 34:1-10; 118:5; 116:1,2; 138:3.

Paul and Silas.—Acts 16:25,26.

Manoah's.—Judges 13:8,9.

See Psalms 62:1-5; 145:15; James 1:17.

Prayer a necessity.—Luke 21:36; 1 Peter 4:7; Ephesians 6:18.

"Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding."—2 Tim. 2:7.

When prayer delights thee least,

Then learn to say,

Now is the greatest need

That I should pray.

—See Romans 10:12.

The Prayer of Jabez

And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.—1 Chronicles 4:9, 10

By Carl Hagensick

The brief history of Jabez is dropped into the genealogy of Judah by the ancient Hebrew archivist. Frequently these short cameo appearances by seemingly unknowns reveal deeper insights into the word of God. We know virtually nothing about Jabez except what appears in these two verses, yet they reveal aspects of prayer and God's character seldom examined.

The Birth of Jabez

All we know about the birth of Jabez is that he is from the tribe of Judah and that his mother named him because his mother "bare him in [her] sorrow." The Hebrew word here translated "sorrow" is not the usual word for this concept. In fact it is only used three times in the Old Testament, here and in Psa. 139:24 and Isa. 14:3. The Psalm reference reads: "And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Professor James Strong gives as the definition: "an idol (as fashioned); also pain (bodily or mental)." Cognate words are translated "idol" in Isa. 48:5 and Jer. 22:28. The thought therefore seems to be that of wickedness, especially connected with an idol; and, secondarily, the pain or guilt that comes from such an experience. Since the pain, or guilt, is associated with his mother's birthing experience we may reasonably speculate that the pain was caused by the circumstances associated with his birth, perhaps illegitimacy. Analyzing his three requests this seems further borne out.

The first blessing he requests is the enlargement of his coasts. If we were illegitimate he would have no claim to an inheritance but would be dependent on his father's generosity for sustenance. (Note Gen. 25:6 for a parallel example.)

The second request was that the Lord's hand would be with him. If he was not a legal child he had no claims to protection under the law. Therefore this plea is also especially meaningful under such circumstances.

But it is the third request that seems to specially revert back to the circumstances of his birth: "that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!" The word "grieve" here is directly related to the word "pain" in the preceding verse which described the circumstances of his birth. The logical deduction is that he wished to avoid the pain and grief of guilt which his mother experienced over his birth.

More Honorable

Whatever the circumstances that attended his birth, they evidently did not dictate the course of his life. Rising above the past, he gained a reputation for being "more honorable than his brethren." We are not informed as to the acts which demonstrated this honorableness. They may have been acts of courage, or of simple honesty in everyday dealings, but they yield a sweet perfume wherever his name is mentioned.

Only too frequently do the instances of our past lives affect the course of the future. It is frequently said, "nothing can change the past." The Bible paints a different picture. Sincere repentance and conversion if we are the erring one, and forgiveness if we are the one sinned against, both have the power to alter our perception of the past. Thereby they also change the direction of our future.

It was the honorableness, in the case of Jabez, which brought about the favorable answer to his prayer. The same is true with us. Our course of conduct in life has a definite bearing on the answer to our prayers.

Enlargement

While the circumstances of Jabez' birth may have made his inheritance questionable, it was perfectly proper for him to beseech an inheritance. Supported by the body language of a "more honorable" lifestyle than his peers, his request was granted.

So it is with mankind. Because they were born under a death penalty they have no right to claiming sonship with God. Yet those who seek it (Rom. 2:7) and back up their prayer with repentance, conversion and a "more honorable" life may receive "adoption as sons" whereby they may call God "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:5, 6). Now, instead of receiving the opportunity for eternal life in the Millennium as a "gift," they, as sons, may lay claim to an inheritance, "the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12), "joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17).

Prayers for enlargement may include much more than larger borders. As the Christian progresses he needs growth in many lines. ENLARGED HEARTS: "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged."—2 Corinthians 6:11-13

A large heart is an open heart, an honest one. As Paul had opened his heart to the Corinthians and beseeched that they open theirs to him, so every Christian should pray for an enlarged heart, one that communicates freely and honestly with all.

"I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart."—Psalm 119:32

ENLARGED VISION: "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."—Proverbs 29:18

Each of our journeys toward the Lord began with a vision. We saw an ideal in Christ we could find no where else. We saw a beauty to his plan that showed a breadth of love in his character. We desired to become more and more like him. As we progress in the ways of Christ we need to constantly expand that vision. The more we study his word to find the treasures hidden there the more we will react as the poet, "and still new beauties do I see, and still increasing light."

ENLARGED SCOPE OF ACTIVITY: "Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds."—Luke 19:24

As the most industrious servant in the parable of the pounds was given the stewardship of his more idle peer, so each faithful steward of the Lord is rewarded with further responsibilities. To successfully pray for increased service the Christian must accompany that request by zealously fulfilling then privileges he already has. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10).

Divine Guidance

The second request of Jabez was "that thine hand might be with me." As aliens in a strange land, how we need the guiding power of Jehovah in our lives. Knowing not what he expects from us, how earnestly we must pray for a revelation of his will for our lives. The entrance into the Christian walk is with the same commitment made by his Lord and head, "I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Psa. 40:8). It becomes tempting afterwards to spend all our time deciding what the Lord's will should be for us instead of seeking his guidance, "that thine hand might be with me."

That nobility of heart and life which commended Jabez to his God will also secure for the earnest Christian the desired guidance and protection. These go hand in hand. The more we follow his guiding direction the more we are assured of his constant protection. As we grow in the ways of Christ and in the paths of prayer our assurance of his guiding and protecting hand leads to the confidence which says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose". (Rom. 8:28)

Kept from Evil

How reminiscent is the last part of Jabez' prayer, "that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me," to the conclusion of the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matt. 6:13).

The word translated "evil" in the case of Jabez is the Hebrew *ra*, a very general word for bad experiences, whether caused by a moral lapse or not, as in the case of calamities. The

word translated "grieve" is, however, from the same root as "pain" in the previous verse, referring to the trauma his mother went through at his birth. It is unclear whether Jabez is praying to be kept from the guilt and chastisement that his mother went through, or from committing a similar type of sin himself.

The latter thought, especially, holds a strong lesson for the Christian. The Jewish proverb, "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezek. 18:2), is true in more than a theological sense. Children are strongly affected in a practical way by their early environment and tend to copy the behavioral patterns of their parents. Studies have shown that our image of God is influenced greatly by our image of our natural parents. Not only do we need to be free from Adamic sin and condemnation, but to be kept from the wrong things we have learned from having imperfect family environments.

How necessary it is, therefore, to pray, like Jabez, for God to show us a better way and to keep us from duplicating the mistakes that we learned in our youth. The best way to avoid the pain of guilt is to avoid the act that causes the guilt. Seeking to do this without divine help is to attempt the impossible. As the hymn phrases it, "when I think of self I tremble; when I look to thee I am strong." "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

The Final Assurance

If we, then, pray the prayer of Jabez and if we live the nobility of life of Jabez, that we can expect, as with Jabez, "and God granted him all that he requested."

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."—John 15:7

THE PRAYER OF JONAH

Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.-Jonah 2:1, 2

Contributed

"From the belly of hell," "from the pit of death," from the depths of despair, Jonah rose in figure from the dead and prayed to God in thanksgiving for his deliverance. And God heard his prayer, just as he has heard the prayers and groanings and travailings of mankind during this dark night of sin and death. Like Jonah, they are kept in remembrance for the Millennial Age, pictured by the three days and nights of his entombment in the fish. Then will come the desire of all peoples and nations. As Jonah was saved by the great fish that the Lord had prepared, so all of mankind will be saved by the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ, prepared by our loving heavenly Father before the foundations of the earth were laid. When mankind is finally delivered to dry land, raised from the dead and rescued forever from the restless billows and waves of the raging sea, what blessings will come to them through the restitution of all things, when they, like Jonah, return to God and are obedient to his law.

Jonah, the obscure prophet of God, is mainly remembered for his disobedience and scoffed at for his foolishness. His experiences, so unbelievable, have been relegated to the position of mere fables. Few bother to understand the reasons behind his actions, his concern for Israel's future, his fierce nationalism. Few see his repentance, his subsequent obedience, and his role as one of the holy prophets by whose mouth God preached restitution. As a pious Israelite he draws from the wellsprings of Jewish expressions and imagery; and his prayer, similar in many respects to the utterances of David, has brought peace, comfort, and understanding to the faithful of all ages (i.e., cf. Jonah 2:8 and Psa. 31:6; Jonah 2:2 and Psa. 18:6; Jonah 2:9 and Psa. 3:8). Few realize the effects of denying the historicity of the Jonah account, and what great spiritual truths and lessons have been obscured and lost. Of those today who comprehend the great plan of God, Jonah's prayer and experiences give deep insights into their Father's loving care and his great plan of salvation for all. Herein are contained lessons for the church, the nation of Israel, the world of mankind, and even those countless beings and universes yet to be created.

Jonah and Israel

Primarily Jonah's prayer depicts the experiences of the nation of Israel. Five days before his crucifixion Jesus declared that their house was left desolate (their 1845 years of national life and favor ended [Matt 23:38]). At this time they, like Jonah, symbolically fled from the presence of God, by the very act of their refusal to accept Jesus as their long prayed for Messiah. The law and the prophets, as intended, did not lead them to accept the exalted office of Christ's spiritual bride (Exod. 19:5, 6). Consequently, they were swallowed up in national death until the time appointed to restore them to divine favor. A

great time of trouble came upon the nation in A.D. 70 and witnessed the destruction of their city and temple and they descended into national death and oblivion (*sheol*). And, for the next 1845 years of disfavor while the Gospel went to the gentiles, what afflictions they have suffered (Amos 3:2)! As a nation they have gone down "to the bottoms [roots] of the mountains" (scattered throughout the nations) and the "earth with her bars was about me [all attempts at reestablishing it as a nation have been useless and futile]." Here they have been shunned by all, herded into ghettos, barred from most trades and professions, blamed for the problems of the world, and treated as outcasts and the offscourings of the earth. Truly they have been "cast . . . into the deep, in the midst of the seas [restless humanity], and the floods [fierce rejection and consequently forced to assimilate into the nations in an attempt by the adversary to destroy their Jewish identity] compassed [them] about, [and almost succeeded in blotting out their identity]; all thy billows and thy waves passed over [them to be a Jew was to suffer the outrages and wrath of humanity]."

Throughout these long centuries, although "cast out of God's sight," "they still had regard for the holy temple." They are united by the strong ties of blood relationship and by common hopes inspired by a common faith in the wonderful promises of God, though they have but dimly comprehended those promises. They are still further bound together by the bond of sympathy growing out of their common sufferings and privations as exiles. To this day they look and long for the hope of Israel. While God has allowed these afflictions and persecutions to come as a penalty for their national crime of rejection of the gospel and crucifixion of the Redeemer, he will nevertheless in due time reward the constancy of their faith in his promises, to which they have so long and so perseveringly held.

In Jonah's prayer, as recorded in Chapter 2, we see the proper spirit finally restored to Jonah and through type. As with Jonah, when on dry land he recorded his prayer, Israel will reflect on their experiences and give thanks to God for their deliverance. They will see that Christ was their means of deliverance "and it shall be said in that day: this is our God, for whom we waited, that He might save us; this is the Lord for whom we waited, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isa. 25:9).

Thank God the gifts and callings of God are without repentance and this cast off, favorless condition will only be "age abiding"-during the Gospel Age. Since the seven times of disfavor have ended, Israel is again being restored to a position of favor and regathered from the four corners of the earth, never again to be scattered and without a homeland (Amos 9:11-15). The Lord is answering their often repeated prayer of "next year in Jerusalem." Ultimately they will, through the resurrection process, be brought out of the pit-the pit of death and national existence-to live again and to become that blessed nation that will constitute the earthly government of the New Jerusalem: "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3).

"When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple" (v. 7). Favor having returned to them in 1878, God has again turned his face to them. The time had come to regather his people. "Fishers" (gentle

methods of persuasion, i.e., Zionist movement) and "hunters" (persecution, such as the Holocaust [Jer. 16:16; Ezek. 20:32-37]) have been the forces used to lead them back to their homeland: "with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out" he pleads with them face to face and causes them to pass under the rod, to bring them into the bond of the covenant." When they are regathered, many will not willingly go up and repossess the land, especially the assimilationist Jew, -and difficult experiences will be necessary to make them ready to assume the role of leading all nations back to God (Zech. 8:23). What started as secular Zionism will develop into religious Zionism and with a changed and cleansed heart, God will make a new covenant with them. They will be the earthly administrators of this new covenant in order to bring all the willing of mankind to eternal life.

"But I with the voice of praise will sacrifice unto thee, what I have vowed I will pay, Salvation belongeth unto Yahweh" (Jonah 2:9). Having passed under the rod, repentant Israel will now be in a position to serve and praise the God of their Salvation: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa. 25:9).

World Of Mankind Portrayed In Jonah's Experiences

In Jonah's experiences we also see portrayed the experiences of the human race in general. They, through Adam's disobedience, fled from the presence of God. Through earth's long night of weeping, because of sin, they have chosen to "forget God" and "not hold the truth in righteousness." As a result mankind was figuratively cast adrift and in time became the raging, angry, restless sea fomented by the uncontrollable and unrestrained passions of human weaknesses. Unable to rescue itself from death and sin's dominion, every attempt to reestablish that which was lost has been thwarted by the billows (floods) and breakers of error and lies which the adversary has foisted upon them, making it impossible for mankind to retrace their steps back to God.

From his position of king of the earth, mankind went down to the bottom (root) of the mountains and there the "bars of earth were above"; the gates of hell closed over him, impeding him from reclaiming his original estate. Mankind went down into death and destruction just as Nebuchadnezzar did (Dan. 4). In the dream that preceded his humiliation, he saw a tree, representing man's original earthly dominion, hewn down and the stump bound with iron. All hope of regaining kingship was lost, but

God had left the "root" of the tree-his purpose and plan of restitution; yet it was bound with strong fetters so that it would not sprout until the divinely appointed time.

Death will have dominion only for the age, until the Millennial morning (Psa. 30:5; 49:15), because the gates of *sheol* are "age abiding" only and against Christ they have not been able to prevail. He has broken their bonds.

Church Portrayed In Jonah's Prayer

And what more fitting and beautiful prayer could be offered by the church than that uttered by Jonah. They too will offer this prayer on the third day when God helps her and "that right early" (Psa. 46:5). As the glorified church stands before the King in the splendor of her bridal robes, glittering white, embroidered with gold, what praises and songs will sound forth from her lips and fill the heavenly courts: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints" (Rev. 15:3). What wonder will fill their souls when they reflect on the way that God

has led them. Will not even the multitude of angelic beings marvel that God could bring these once sinful and ungodly beings from the pit of hell, form and shape them into new creatures in the billows and waves of the sea, and finally lead them to glorious divine splendor? They will tell of the regard the Lord had to the poor and contrite and broken in spirit, those who longed to return to God and his temple. When their soul hungered and thirsted for righteousness he heard their prayers; when they were persecuted and reviled and "suffered without the camp," God heard and deliverance was their final portion. To them was opened a new and living way-immortality.

Their song in the night, like Jonah in the belly of the fish for three days and nights, has been: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling . . . What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord . . . I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving" (Psa. 116:7-17).

Through man's experience with sin and death all will ultimately learn the great lesson and principle of God's universe; a lesson he has been teaching since the creation of Adam: "they that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy." Those who follow their own lusts and desires, who trust in idols powerless to save, forsake or lose the one true source of help. They will come to realize that God is their only help and that "Salvation is of the Lord." All will learn the futility of man's own machinations and inventions, with which men have deceived themselves and thereby lost the true source of all mercy, wisdom, love, and help. When all have finally passed through the fire, tried and tested, all will know that the only real source of happiness and life comes from obeying God and his law. David wisely said in Psa. 144:1, 2: "Blessed be the Lord my strength . . . My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust" (Psa. 144:1, 2).

Portraits of Jesus Praying

Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened.—Luke 3:21

Richard Suraci

Being in tune with his Father is how Jesus starts his earthly ministry.

He teaches that prayer is claiming God's promises. God has made many promises, but to appreciate them, we must "Ask, and ye shall receive" (John 16:24). The greatest gift is God's holy spirit (Luke 11:13).

Jesus teaches that prayer is power. Prayer tightens connection with the divine mind that wisdom and strength may flow without interruption.

In a Solitary Place - Mark 1:35

Arising early, while dark, Jesus goes to a solitary place and prays. Yesterday was packed solid with activity. He taught in the synagogue, healed a demon-possessed man, healed Peter's mother-in-law. At even, they brought all the diseased and possessed. He healed many. A long, exhausting day. His strength was depleted.

When they find Jesus, Peter tells him a crowd is waiting. Peter thinks this is a good way to follow yesterday's work. But Jesus, having talked with his Father in the early morning hours, knows God's will is to preach in the next town.

Jesus teaches that prayer clears the vision, pointing what God would have us do. Prayer stays alert in a hard-pressed society. Prayer strengthens the spirit. Prayer defines duty toward God. As busy as yesterday was, today finds Jesus attune to God's will for him.

In the Wilderness - Luke 5:17

"He withdrew himself into the wilderness to pray." We marvel at the Lord's humility. Although perfect, he does not feel, "I can handle this crowd myself." The more teaching and healing he does, the more he feels the need of communication with the Father.

We often feel pressed by duty, opportunities for service, by great needs around us, for the harvest is truly great. Do we neglect time to pray, thinking that work must be done? Or do we, like the Master, crave for the solitary privacy to commune with and take counsel of the Father? Jesus teaches prayer should have first place; then the service will be charged with power and wisdom from above.

All Night in Prayer - Luke 6:12

"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."

Tomorrow he will choose his twelve apostles and preach the Sermon on the Mount. The fact that he is weary does not alter him from wishing to spend the night alone with his Father. People come to be healed of their diseases. He heals them all.

Looking at his disciples (Luke 6:20), he delivers his sermon on attitudes of the sons of God. Think of all the wonderful things Jesus is accomplishing! He is able to do all this because of the wisdom and insight he received of the Father last night.

Jesus here teaches that if all problems and vexations of life are accompanied by prayer, we will receive strength to endure, his power flowing through us.

Come Apart and Rest

The account is found in Matthew 14:13-23. It is about the time of the third Passover and the beginning of his last year of service. He and his disciples are extremely busy, amidst great crowds coming and going. Then they receive the sad, fearful news of John's tragic death at the hands of Herod. Jesus beckons them to come apart awhile and rest with him.

Taking their boat, they head toward the eastern shore of the lake. The crowd watches, runs around the head of the lake, and arrives there before Jesus.

As Jesus and his apostles step off the boat, over 5000 people are waiting. Jesus' reaction is they are as sheep without a shepherd. He has compassion on them, spending the whole day instructing them. At eventide, he provides food for all.

The Disciples Join in Prayer - Luke 9:18

"And it came to pass, as he was praying alone, his disciples joined him." Jesus is away from the multitudes, but his desire is to pray in his disciples' presence, to draw them into his intimate life of prayer. He is gathering his chicks under his wings to nurture them, by example drawing them into his life of devotion to God.

Jesus teaches the importance of joint prayers with fellow brethren. At every meeting we attend, at least two prayers are offered. These prayers should use language of the innermost self, flowing freely. Prayer, praise and testimony meetings are another way of enhancing fellowship in prayer: hearts overflowing with love to our heavenly Father; prayers for our help or for our brethren; prayers of praise and thanksgiving.

An Altered Countenance - Luke 9:29

Another all-night session. Jesus goes up to the mountain to pray. While praying, his countenance is altered. We see Jesus' need for higher ground, for fresh assurance in the course he is taking.

The subject of Jesus' prayer is his departure at Jerusalem (v.31,21-26). Through the transfiguration vision, God is confirming Jesus' Messiahship and suffering as it had been foretold. Moses and Elijah indicate the great encouragement Jesus receives from the Law and the prophets.

While this is Jesus' unique experience, we, too, may see God's glory while praying. "To see thy power and thy glory, so I have seen thee in the sanctuary" (Psa. 63:2).

A Thankful Prayer - Luke 10:21

Jesus commissions 70 disciples to preach the gospel in places he expects to visit. They return with a joyful report.

Jesus' heart overflows with joy "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Jesus' prayer teaches that the Father's face is visible to him at all times. He is always conscious of the Father's.

Through his sacrifice, Jesus makes the same privilege available to us. Do we avail ourselves of this privilege? Do we talk to our Father on the job, when frustrated, when we make mistakes, while at home amidst the drudgery of housework, in school when none of the students seem to understand us? How about the high moments of our lives? Do we pat ourselves on the back, or do we give thanks to God, the source of our victories?

Jesus' prayers are a powerful incentive to us to likewise offer praise to God.

Teach Us To Pray - Luke 11:1

Jesus is praying. When he finishes, his disciples ask, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). They are praying men. But they conclude there is more to prayer than they had realized. This request delights our Lord! It shows Jesus that his prayer-life example has aroused them to probe deeper into prayer for results.

The first three phrases of the model prayer express adoration concerning God's nature, kingdom, and will; the next five concern man's daily temporal needs, our need of forgiveness, our need to forgive others, our defense against temptation, and our deliverance from evil.

God is indeed Jesus' Father, his lifegiver. By teaching us to pray "Our Father," Jesus is inviting us to share his private life and enter his own relationship as sons of God. This is a staggering thought. In John 20:17, he refers to God as "my Father **AND YOUR FATHER.**"

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." Hebrew names are meaningful. They contain promises and hope in God. God's name was left untranslated, "JHVH." No human description can convey God's name. If we're faithful, we will understand God better and we will know his name.

"Hallowed" means sacred, taken from a word meaning "holiest," also translated "sanctuary" or "holy place."

The Most Holy of the Tabernacle was God's dwelling. Vines Dictionary says, "[Hallowed] is to make a person the opposite of common." Deep reverence should be in our hearts when God's name is uttered.

Jesus teaches us the most important considerations in approaching the Father—his honor, glory, will.

The Prayer at Bethany - John 11

The most climactic point in Jesus' life was the death of Lazarus (John 11). Until then, Jesus had been the fountain of living waters, the light of the world, the Good Shepherd. Now he would be seen as "the resurrection and the life (v. 25)".

The little family at Bethany experienced a personal crisis. Lazarus grew deathly sick. Jesus knew, loved and ministered to this family. They had a good understanding of his gospel.

Knowing his healing powers, the sisters sent word, "He whom thou lovest is sick," hoping he will come without delay. In the past, no amount of fatigue kept Jesus from healing. This time, he waits two days.

We visualize Mary and Martha saying, "Surely he will come." But instead they witness their brother sinking into death.

Jesus says, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (v. 4). These words do not mean that he will be admired by the people for this great miracle. Rather, they are a solemn reminder that through his own death he will be glorified.

Now he lifts his eyes to heaven and says, "Father, I thank thee thou hast heard me." This is a prayer of thanks, not a request. When did God hear Jesus? God heard him when he started to pray, a few days ago. Before coming to the tomb, he was praying in secret about the raising of Lazarus; what follows is an answer to that prayer.

"What shall I say? [Shall I say] 'Father, save me from this hour'? but for this cause came I unto this hour. [This is what I will say], 'Father, glorify thy name.' Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, 'I . . . will glorify it again.'" (v. 27, 28) It is only as we shut out the earth's sounds that our ears become trained to hear the word from above.

In the Upper Room - Luke 22, John 13

It is Thursday night. Jesus is gathered with his apostles in the upper room.

Jesus directs a statement to Peter because of his special weakness, but all of them were in the same category: "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22:31, 32).

Each one gathered at our Lord's table will succumb to one or more of the following temptations: self-confidence, selfishness, jealousy, anger, resentment, weariness, disappointment, betrayal, desertion. Were it not for the fact that Jesus prays for Peter and the other apostles, Satan would succeed in sifting them away from the Truth.

Jesus watches his disciples closely and prays for them as he notices their weaknesses. As Peter's boastfulness and extreme self-confidence come forward, Jesus prays for him to overcome. As he notices Thomas's doubting spirit, Jesus speaks to God about him.

Jesus is the same today. As our advocate, "He is able...to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

This fills our hearts with love and gratitude. Watching our lives, Jesus allows weakness and failure to become stepping stones to the celestial city.

Some parents work hard at preventing failure or protecting their children from the knowledge that they have failed. They do this by lowering their standards or shifting the blame. This keeps the child unequipped for life.

Our Father knows that failure hurts. But it can make a positive contribution to our lives of consecration. Failure teaches us to rely on God. Despite his slipping and stumbling, with the Lord's help Peter was able to rise again, regroup his faculties, and feed Jesus' lambs.

Jesus Prays for Us - John 17

John 12 contains Jesus' last words to the world. In chapters 13 through 17, Jesus is alone with his disciples.

As desperate as Jesus' situation is, there is no evidence of regret in his course. Rather, he expresses supreme adoration, thanksgiving, blessing, and exultation.

He is thankful to the Father for allowing him to suffer and die for the world, thereby glorifying God. His is a willing sacrifice, holding nothing back.

Many times we plead for things that would hinder rather than help us. We should come to the Lord knowing he is eager to guide us.

We should tell God our troubles so he may comfort us, tell him our joys that he may sober them, tell him our longings that he may purify them, tell him our misgivings that he may help us overcome them, tell him our temptations that he may shield us from them.

Jesus speaks of the Church as God's gift to him, "as many as thou hast given [me]." This fills us with humility. How precious our Lord considers us! If Jesus considers our brethren dear and precious, shall we do less? "Let brotherly love continue" (Heb. 13:1).

Verse 5 expresses Jesus' desire to receive the glory of his pre-human existence. If Jesus could once again stand in his Father's presence, see his face, and be his Logos, he would be satisfied. He asked no more.

Jesus' selfless prayer could be applied to us. If we are faithful unto death a crown of life awaits us. He promised that, because we left all for him, in this life we will receive manifold blessings and eternal life in the future (Luke 18:30).

But our love for God has matured to such an extent that, even if death ended any after-life hopes, any rewards, we would continue to serve God. It is a privilege to serve so wonderful a being!

In verse 11, Jesus prays that the Father will protect them through divine providence

Praying For Governments

I urge you first of all, then, to offer petitions, prayers, requests, and thanksgiving on behalf of all persons, for kings and all those in high places, so that we can lead a quiet and tranquil life of the greatest piety and purity, as is good and proper in the eyes of our savior God, who wants all people to be saved and come to the perception of truth.—1 Timothy 2:1-4, The Unvarnished New Testament

By Leonard Griehs

The social structure of human existence is not created by fallen humans. Paul tells us elsewhere (Col.1:16, NAS) that God intended that there would be rulers among his earthly creation: "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him." From this standpoint, those who rule on earth are permitted to do so by God. They exercise authority which has been entrusted to them. Without this stabilizing factor, human existence would plunge into chaos.

It is not government which causes problems. The social organization of man could not be effective without some means to determine and administer the will of society.

Throughout the Old Testament, we find noble characters such as Joseph and Daniel taking an active role in the government of the kingdoms in which they lived. It was their influence, their example of godly living that had a preserving influence over the existing political structure and played an important part in the overruling of earth's affairs for the benefit of the children of Israel.

In the New Testament no such involvement is sanctioned, although Jesus calls his followers the "salt of the earth." (Matt. 5:13). Just as salt was used in to delay the deterioration of meat, so Jesus' followers are to be such an example among men that they will have a delaying influence upon the deterioration of society. Their dealings in the affairs of the world exhibit qualities of justice and fairness which do not generally exist.

The followers of Jesus become a gracious spiritual influence of God that touches human lives in surprising, non-discriminatory ways, transfiguring human existence at all levels. As agents of Christ's Kingdom living in society, members engage those in authority with principles that aim wholly at the good of human beings— not only in terms of their ultimate salvation, but also temporally, in advancing justice and peace in human relationships.

The Necessity For Prayer

"For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but good, and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil. Wherefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake" (Rom. 13:3-5).

"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, all these things will I give thee . . ." (Matt. 4:8,9a) "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh. . ." (John 14:30). In these two scriptures, Jesus tells us in an indirect way that the present order of things is under the supervision of Satan, not God.

God's intent is for leaders to create and administer justice, to protect the good and punish evil. Without such law, and effective administrators of that law, man's fallen condition results in the strong continuously taking advantage of the weak. While powers were intended to be merely instruments in the service of humanity, to be mediators of the structure of society, and to order human existence, their fallen condition, and the overwhelming influence of Satan and his legions, leads some to abuse their place and to seek to dominate and tyrannize those whom they were intended to serve, and to assume for themselves a role never intended by God. This is why Paul urges us to pray for kings and government and those in authority—that they might not be swayed by Satan and use their position for evil.

"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Dan. 7:27). Here we are told that when Jesus begins his reign over the human family, only then will kings and priests and people serve and obey him voluntarily. It is only then that God's principles and rules will reign in the hearts of those who lead, and only then will the "desire of all nations" come (Hag. 2:7)..

Under all the kingdoms that have ruled since Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:37-43), men have demonstrated their inability to fix the difficulties which confront humanity. None has been successful in abolishing sin and sorrow, crying and dying. Each nation seeks power, claiming to be more capable of rulership, yet none successfully eliminates the problems which dominate society.

As one nation has helped another, it has rarely done so without seeking some reciprocity. Both righteousness and unrighteousness have at times dominated. Yet in all countries and in all ages, the selfishness of individuals has ultimately surfaced to displace fairness and equality. That is the predicament which faces fallen man.

When God's kingdom is established, the contrast between its government and all other governments will be marked by eternal benefits for all. Those who have suffered injustice

during the reign of the present governments will be better prepared to appreciate the beneficial rulership of Christ's kingdom. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 53:7). Until that time, it is necessary that we pray for God's overruling of leaders throughout the earth.

Jesus' Guidelines

"And they sent some of the Pharisees and Herod's men to him to trap him in his words. And they came and said to him, 'Teacher, we know that you are truthful and no respecter of persons, because you do not look to the face of the world, but teach the way of God based on the truth. Are we allowed to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn't we?' Seeing through their performance, he said to them, 'Why are you testing me? Bring me a drachma and let me see it.' And they brought it, and he said to them, 'Whose picture and inscription is this?' They said to him, 'Caesar's.' Jesus said to them, 'Give Caesar's things to Caesar and God's things to God.'" (Matthew 22:16-21, UNT)

Jesus' answer establishes guidelines for prayer. The situation in Israel was not unlike our own, in that Jews were subject to the Roman government, yet were very divided in their view of how to deal with that government. While Pharisees accepted Rome as God's punishment for disobedience, Zealots favored revolution. Sadducees supported Rome openly while the Herodians not only supported Rome, but collaborated against the Jews.

The Zealots were attracted to Jesus because he had on occasion criticized the authorities. In Matthew 9:10, Jesus categorized tax collectors with sinners, and in Luke 13:32 he referred to Herod as "that fox." Perhaps this was the cause for Judas Iscariot, a Zealot, to be drawn to Jesus.

Jesus made it clear that his followers should not be partisans of Herod or puppets of Caesar. Neither should they be enemies of the state. He repudiated any political understanding of his kingdom: allegiance to God does not mean that his followers refuse to pay tribute, even if it might be going for evil purposes. Nor does it mean that they embark on a revolutionary movement to displace evil governments or evil laws. His kingdom was not to be advanced by any political movement.

Similarly, God is not honored by thoughtless obedience to the state. While He has given existing governments lease over earthly affairs, they are not His vicar. The follower of Christ must remain outside the political atmosphere, a judging and transforming influence, supporting government's right to exist for the benefit and order of society.

Submission To Authorities

Although authorities are as much heir to the problems of sin as their subjects are, Peter admonishes Christians to submit to authority because it is rightfully exercised in God's scheme, and He will overrule for His own cause. "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right." (I Peter 2:13,14.NAS)

However, this submission cannot remove the possibility that Christian principles will at times cause conflict with the state. Jesus told his followers, "And you shall even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the gentiles." (Matthew 10:18) Therefore, it is in the interest of God that, as followers of Jesus, we pray as Paul has suggested.

Years ago a chaplain of the American Senate was asked by a visitor, "Do you pray for the senators?" He replied, "No, I look at the senators, and then I pray for the country!" So we may ask, "Why should we pray for those who have authority when the government is corrupt?" Paul makes no distinction between good and bad leaders even though the Roman ruler at the time he wrote these words was Nero, one of the harshest and most inconsiderate leaders in history.

However, the prayers we offer are not to be for the benefit of individuals in particular. Our prayers are not that certain leaders may continue in power and control, nor that certain others be removed. Nor are our prayers that certain individuals be elected who we believe would best represent Christian ideals. That would be contrary to God's expressed plan, which is to break in pieces and consume all of the kingdoms of this world. (Daniel 2:44). Nor are we to pray for the conversion of the leaders, even though they might be reached through our witnessing efforts. (John 17:9). Jesus did not pray for Caesar, or Pilate, or Herod, nor make any special effort to reach them with his message. When he gave the disciples the formula for prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), it contained no reference to kings and rulers of this age.

God's Overruling Of Gentile Powers

How then, should we understand Paul's admonition? We are to pray that God would so overrule and direct affairs by raising up or casting down leaders who would be most beneficial for working out his plan for the development of the Church now being selected, and for the proper preparation for the establishment of His kingdom. That is what Paul meant by "so that we can lead a quiet and tranquil life in piety and purity" and what Jesus meant by "thy Kingdom come."

Although God has given over the world to the rule of worldly agents until the full end of the gentile Times, He has not given them unlimited powers over the world. He will suffer them to take their course only so far as it does not interfere with his plans. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." (Psalm 76:10)

David tells us that God causes man's unrestrained desires to work to his praise, and that those who hinder or thwart his cause are prevented from working harm. One example from recent history illustrates this principle.

When World War I began on August 1, 1914, leading Jews were pressing the Jewish interests in Palestine. This was in harmony with God's planned restoration of the nation of Israel at the beginning of the end of the Gentile Times. (See *Thy Kingdom Come*, Study VIII.) Turkey was in control of the area and would have to be expelled before the Jews could do anything in Palestine. In the latter part of 1917, the allied armies under the leadership of General Allenby of the British army, drove the Turks out and took possession of Jerusalem. Just one month prior to this event the British government had signed the Balfour declaration which had as one of its purposes the reestablishment of Jews in Palestine. This declaration was given by what was then the greatest world power among the gentile nations. The League of Nations was to confirm the mandate to have the Jews reestablish Palestine in July, 1922.

However, it was realized that if opposition should arise in the council of the League of Nations against the confirmation of this mandate, it would not be confirmed and the Jews would not be allowed to rebuild Palestine. Great Britain was in favor of the Jews return to the land, but the man representing that nation at the council, Lord Curzon, was not. Shortly before the time of the vote on the confirmation, Lord Curzon became seriously ill and could not represent Great Britain. Mr. Balfour, the sponsor of the original declaration in 1917, was selected to vote in his place. Mr. Balfour led the voting, the confirmation was passed, and Great Britain was appointed as administrator of the land of Palestine.

In this way, God overruled the existing authorities to exercise his purposes. Thus prayers in that day for the blessing and comfort of Israel were accomplished through God's overruling of the leadership.

What Should We Pray?

We should feel a keen interest in the whole world, its great and its poor. They are our brethren and neighbors according to the flesh and God loved them and redeemed each of them with the blood of his son. In proportion as we are in accord with our Lord we should love mankind and desire to "do good unto all men." (Galatians 6:10)

Everything which relates to the beneficial interests of humanity must come close to our hearts. It is appropriate, that on proper occasions prayer be made on behalf of rulers, indicating our good wishes for their welfare and leading in ways of righteousness toward our fellows.

Ambassadors For Christ

We who belong to God are as citizens in a foreign country. We see that we are more or less influenced by the condition of the things of this world. Elsewhere Paul calls us "ambassadors for Christ." (2 Corinthians 5:20) As ambassadors, we must represent the

One to whom we pledge allegiance. In our dealings with others, and in our prayers for those leading our "host" country, we would follow Paul's advice by formulating our thoughts along the following guidelines.

1. **Personal integrity.** We should pray that we can live an honest life with provision for ways to exercise our Christian principles when the needs of the state might require individuals to submit. For example, we can give thanks for those laws which provide for those with religious conviction against participation in war.

2. **The dignity of individuals.** We should be thankful and pray that laws can be maintained which allow us to treat our fellow man without partiality. For example, civil rights laws which place all individuals on an equal level without respect to sex, race, religion or sexual orientation. These laws make it possible for us to follow God's principles in dealing with coworkers, subordinates, or superiors who may not hold respect for such people.

3. **Objectivity.** We should be thankful for laws which administer justice without partiality and under due process of law. For example, the principle of "innocent until proven guilty" allows us to escape the tortures of the dark ages, when many were put to death for no cause other than being accused by someone in authority who disagreed with the accused's religion or lifestyle. Also, some governments even today treat certain ethnic or religious groups as "second-class" citizens.

4. **Independence.** We should give thanks for laws which do not require us to pledge allegiance to any person or political party. At times in history it has been required that individuals pledge allegiance to a religious leader or political figure or else be imprisoned or even killed.

5. **Development of Others .** We should give thanks and pray for laws that provide for those individuals who cannot care for themselves, or that we may have the opportunity to care for those less fortunate. For example, in ancient Rome, the state left unwanted babies abandoned on the street to die at the hands of the elements; today the state has created agencies to provide for unwanted children and place them in the hands of those willing to care for them.

6. **Interest in the major problems of the day.** We should be thankful and pray for leaders who take a genuine interest in protecting the people from harm. For example, laws which prevent misuse of our environment, or laws which regulate the safety of our food and water supply guaranteeing our ability to live our life without worry over basic needs.

Let us continue to view the kingdoms of this world in passing, and look forward to the day when the righteousness of the Lord will displace feeble human efforts and His glory will fill the whole earth.

Pray For The Intercession Of The Spirit

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."—Romans 8:26

Contributed

The concept of interceding suggests a weakness or inability of an individual rendering them incapable of presenting their position. Possibly a quality is lacking and a weakness exists, preventing the individual to act on their own behalf. Thus a representative or assistant acts on behalf of the individual and interposes, presenting the thoughts and circumstances for the individual.

An Internal War

Paul sets the scene for the Romans in 7:22 and 23 by using himself as an example. Paul reveals to the Romans his personal feelings, limitations, and failures as a new creature.

"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

Reckoned Alive

The renewed or transformed mind or spirit of each consecrated member was once worldly, but in determination and commitment to walk in newness of life is reckoned "spiritual." However, this spiritual new mind and new will is captured in a human body of imperfection and Paul is referring to this condition of the new creature in the above text. Paul encourages the Romans to reckon themselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:11).

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."—Romans 8:1

Adoption

The begetting of the holy spirit brings one into a new relationship with God. Paul offers assurance that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Also, the Spirit beareth witness with the spirit of the new creature, that he is a child of God (Rom. 8:14, 16). In the same context Paul describes the church members as waiting for this "adoption" (vs. 23) as sons of God when the "reckoned" adoption will become "actual," resulting in the redemption of the spiritual body of Christ.

Saved By Hope

Trust in these promises of adoption nurtures and develops a "hope" in the new creature. This hope is a reflection of faith and the power of the holy spirit, activating a desire for the fulfillment of

God's promise of glorious liberty from the present fleshly condition. This hope is so vital to the new creature that Paul says, "we are saved by hope" (Rom. 8:24).

Infirmities

In the first part of Romans 8, verse 26, Paul tells the Romans "that the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." He is returning to his earlier description of himself knowing that this is typical of all new creatures. The internal "warring" is unavoidable. This condition is caused by the weaknesses or "infirmities" of the flesh, the old man. This beautiful new spiritual being, full of faith and hope, is temporarily captured in a fleshly body and is limited in the purity of spiritual communion with the Heavenly Father.

Intercession Required

However, in the second half of the theme text, Paul assures the Romans that the holy spirit of the new creature will "maketh intercession" in representation of this child of God when the fleshly infirmities prevent proper spiritual expression. This is truly a precious gem of encouragement for all those who are diligently seeking to please the Lord.

The Holy Spirit

God, in his wisdom, has provided the intercession of the holy spirit, allowing communion between the Heavenly Father and his "child". God does not recognize the fallen flesh, but looks at the heart desires and intent of the new creature. The holy spirit serves to bond the "father and child" until the true adoption is complete.

"And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he (the holy spirit) maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:27).

The Comforter

Jesus made a promise to his disciples that can be identified in the assurances of Paul to the Christians at Rome. Jesus said,

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; . . . for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16, 17).

Later, in verse 26, Jesus explains that the Comforter is the holy spirit, which dwells in the new mind and heart. Indeed, great "comfort" is provided by the intercession of the holy spirit as described by Paul. To comfort is to bring relief of opposition, consolation, and peace of mind. The holy spirit which dwells in the true followers of Christ is the "Comforter" which Jesus promised. As the invisible power of the holy spirit has its intervening effect, peace of heart and mind is attained.

Spiritual Oneness

When praying, attitude, concentration, and ability to express thoughts and feelings may be vulnerable to the weaknesses of the inherited fallen condition. Paul says, "we know not what we should pray for." Since the new creature is constantly influenced by the flesh, this is a particularly appropriate time for the intercession of the holy spirit. Unbeknownst to the Christian, the frequency of intercession could be more than imagined, and the Heavenly Father, in His infinite

wisdom and love, has made this provision for his child. Thus, the "sweet hour of prayer" is accomplished and the opportunity for precious communion and oneness with the Father is not lost.

Groanings

The theme scripture text refers to the "groanings which cannot be uttered." These "groanings" or "sighings" (see Strong's concordance #4726) by the holy spirit have the same concept and implication as when previously Paul described the whole creation groaning in verse 22. The base of this word comes from #4727 and implies a condition of being in "straits" or a limited or confined position. This certainly applies to the world of mankind. They unknowingly are waiting for the adoption, the redemption of the completed body of Christ.

But verse 26 is specifically referring to the spiritual class, and as Paul previously described the new mind or child of God is spiritually limited. He is "in straits" due to the confining of the flesh.

This "groaning" must not be misunderstood to mean complaining or an expression of pain or suffering. Paul has already identified the new creature as "patient" in the previous verse. Paul is merely using this term as an identification of the condition in which the spiritual creature exists. He is groaning (sighing) and waiting patiently for the "actual" adoption, the redemption of the completed body of Christ.

Therefore, God chooses to ignore the fallen creature, that is the old man, and only deals with the new creature, the new mind and spirit. He has graciously provided the role of the holy spirit to assist in spiritual expression which is sometimes in feelings and thoughts which cannot be put into words.

Pray For Intercession

Let us be encouraged to apply this scriptural lesson taught by the Apostle Paul. With faith in the "intercession of the holy spirit" when, "we know not what we should pray for as we ought," let us pray for the holy spirit to intercede on our behalf. Peter explains that by the great and precious promises we are, indeed, made partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

Let us claim this precious promise of spiritual intercession with heart thankfulness and be determined to develop an even deeper and more intimate relationship with our Heavenly Father.

PRAYER PARTNERS

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.-James 5:15

A verse by verse study in James 5

The final chapter of the epistle of James appears to be an oddity. Nestled in a book lauding the necessity of works, the Christian requirement of controlling the tongue, and a discussion on intercessory prayer we find inserted an apparent prophecy of the woes of the rich in the latter days. This anomaly is more apparent than real.

Woes of the Rich

Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is eankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were ire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you (vs. 1-6).

While undoubtedly prophetic in nature, James is not writing these words as a prophecy of world conditions but as the natural result of men failing to heed the counsel of the preceding chapter (vs. 13-15): "Go to now, ye that say, 'To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:' Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, 'If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.'"

It is because greed is so endemic in the human race that the results of failing to live altruistically take on world-wide prophetic scope.

The spoilage and rust of the silver and gold is reminiscent of Jesus' own words in Matthew 6:19, 20: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal"

The "last days" of verse three can either be taken as each man's final hours or as prophetic of the end times, the transition from the conditions of the present evil world into the kingdom of Christ. The injustice of their greed is pointed out when contrasted

with the conditions of the farming and laboring classes whose blood and sweat produced the gains of the capitalistic and monopolistic upper classes. Karl Marx phrased it well with the rallying cry of Communism, "Workers of the world, Unite!"

This cry for justice by the oppressed classes is heard by the Lord. The word *sabaoth* in verse four is not to be confused with the word *Sabbath*. The word *sabaoth* literally means "armies," and the title *Lord of sabaoth* is equivalent to the Old Testament "Lord of hosts." The term is describing God in a militaristic capacity, as the leader of a large army. Thus these oppressed classes of James seem directly linked to another group of have-nots in Joel, described as an army of locusts (Joel 2:25).

The further description of the "rich" as being "wanton" and viewing others as their rightful victims ready for "slaughter" again highlights how heinous is their crime and how low their hearts have sunk in the mire of sin.

While the final verse in this section may be merely an allusion that they have built their financial empires on the bodies of those more just than themselves, it is not improper to apply "the just" to the person of Jesus himself. It was, after all, this same disposition of love for power, office and gain, which led those who condemned and killed the Nazarene to commit their fateful act.

Judgment and Patience

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy (vs. 711).

The grand theme of the Bible concerning the question as to why God permits evil revolves around one principle, "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). It may not be in this life, for "now we call the proud happy" (Mal. 3:15). Some men's judgment follows after the present life (1 Tim. 5:24). As the farmer waits for both the early and latter rains before concluding what his crop shall be like, so the Lord is abundantly patient for the inequities of present society to run their course knowing that in due time their appropriate fruitage will be manifest. It is this same patience he would have the Christian practice.

The time of reckoning is clearly identified in our passage as being at the "coming of the Lord" when he, as the righteous judge, "standeth before the door" (Rev. 3:20). How parallel is this assessment of the matter with that of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:5: "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to

light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."

The story of Job is introduced to show how the Lord rewards the righteous in the end even though their present lot may seem bleak indeed. It is only when viewed from the long range that the compassionate mercies of God can be clearly seen. As it has been often stated, judging the Lord on the conditions of the present time is like judging an architect on his incomplete building.

Unwavering

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation (v. 12).

While patience is being tried and tested there is a natural tendency to waver in one's decisions. When a given course of action produces only sorrow and poverty and a less righteous course seems to produce positive results it is only human to doubt the long course. Therefore James counsels a set path, unwavering, where our yea is yea and our nay, nay. Having glimpsed the heavenly vision, our eyes must remain fixed on it in order to obtain the prize. Well did a king of ancient Israel say, "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off" (1 Kings 20:11).

Intercessory Prayer

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. " (vs. 13-16).

James appears to suddenly jump in his thought patterns from the sin and evil that will reap their due reward to the subject of intercessory prayer. This subject change though is not what it seems.

Verse 13 can be best understood by going back to the previous chapter, "Go to now, ye that say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:' Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, 'If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that'" (James 4:13-15).

It is to ward against this independence of the wealthy in pocket or the proud in spirit that we are told to acknowledge God in all that happens to us (Prov. 3:6). If, therefore, our

experiences are those of affliction, take it to the Lord in prayer; and if they are joyful, sing the Lord's praise and accept them with thanksgiving. Praise the Lord!

Then, however, knowing that those experiences which depress us are often the more common, James concentrates on the handling of these. The Greek word translated "sick" in verse 14 (*astheneo*) can refer to either physical, mental, or emotional weakness and is used in the Bible in a broad sense.

The context in James 5 speaks little of physical suffering, but rather the depressions that come from the continued observance of inequities around us. Therefore it seems logical to conclude that the point of emphasis here is on spiritual and emotional weakness.

Verses 14 and 15 give the first line of approach, asking the elders of the ecclesia, as representing those who should be the most mature, to join in as prayer partners over the matter. The use of oil was evidently a custom of the time in anointing those with sicknesses (Mark 6:13) and, to the early church, hearkened back to the role of the holy Spirit in their lives (1 John 2:20, 27). Whether the oil is to be taken literally or metaphorically for the holy Spirit it is obvious that the assistance for the sick came from the prayer and not from the oil.

Persistency in Prayer

(Question Box)

Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.—Luke 18:1

Question: How long should we pray for a particular request?

Answer: In the parable recorded in Luke 18:1-8 Jesus describes the attitude of an unjust judge who finally hearkens to the pleas of a woman because of her importunity. Similarly, he informs us that our loving heavenly Father always answers proper prayers offered by his children, even though the responses may not be forthcoming immediately.

Two of the many scriptures which affirm this promise of God to the spirit begotten are: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7); "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that are desired of him" (1 John 5:14, 15).

In contrast we read of the Apostle Paul's experience in 2 Corinthians 12:7-9: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

James 4:3 reads as follows in the Jerusalem Bible: "When you do pray and don't get it, it is because you have not prayed properly, you have prayed in something to indulge your own desires."

In view of the many texts cited in support of God's willingness to answer the prayers of his people, we conclude that when the Apostle Paul made the foregoing petitions he was not yet spiritually mature regarding what is acceptable prayer. To his credit, however, when the Lord informed Paul that he had a sufficiency of grace to compensate for his infirmity, the apostle immediately acquiesced to the will of the heavenly Father.

The reference in 2 Corinthians 12:7 concerning the "thorn in the flesh" which the Apostle Paul sought to have removed illustrates the kinds of things for which we should not pray, as evidenced by God's denial of this request.

Since Paul had consecrated his all and, being in Christ, was required to crucify the flesh (Gal. 5:24), for God to have granted this petition to have the thorn removed would in effect have been a withdrawal of a part of his sacrifice. It was for this same reason that Jesus, though hungry, refused to heed the adversary's temptation while in the wilderness

to command that stones be made into bread. The operating principle for all new creatures to note is that spiritual means are not to be employed for the satisfaction of human desires. Thus, if we have petitioned the Father repeatedly about some burden of our hearts, used our best consecrated judgment to bring about a change in these circumstances, and no answer seems to be forthcoming, we would be well advised to reconsider the content and motive of our prayers. If they relate to earthly concerns in our lives rather than the setting of our affections on things above, we may well conclude that the answer is "no" since the granting of that request would not enhance our spirituality.

The scriptures give many examples of things for which we should pray including those items found in the model "Lord's prayer"—more of the holy Spirit, wisdom and understanding, peaceable and quiet lives, for all the saints, and for strength to endure our trials. Nevertheless, answers to our petitions, even in these areas, may be delayed to help us develop greater earnestness, to test our humility, to measure our faith, or to foster increased patience on our parts. If we discern needs in our character along one or more of these lines, we should continue to "wait upon the Lord" and reflect upon the import of such texts as Mark 11:24: "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

As we grow in our spirituality our expressions to the throne of grace should largely be in the form of thanksgiving for the many blessings received. Assurances from such texts as "My God shall supply all your needs (Phil. 4:19), and "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" (Psa. 23:1), should further confirm our faith that if we sincerely ask for our desires to be granted according to God's will instead of attempting to dictate how we would like our heavenly Father to respond, there can be neither delay nor the disappointment of unanswered prayer, for truly "He knows best."

Homer Montague

THANKSGIVING

There is a time for every man to praise and thank the Lord
That he is good, that he has done according to his word.

He laid the plan, and he created all the world of men,
He foresaw sin, placed man in death, and brings him back again.

All that he's done for men has been with long- range plans in mind
And soon he'll raise the dead and cure the sick and heal the blind.

No harm that's come to earth will be without its fitting end
No one who's lived will be left out for he his Son did send.

King of the world soon he will be because he gave his life,
Knowing that as the king his reign would put an end to strife.

So let us raise our voice in song and sing his praises loud,
Shouting to all salvation's news to earth's long-suffering crowd,

Giving ourselves in living sacrifice to haste that coming day,
Gladly we'll join our lives with him so men no more may stray.

Instead they'll walk along the road that leads to holiness,
Inclining hearts and ears to learn the laws of righteousness.

Victoriously they'll join their lips in heartfelt, earnest praise,
Vowing to serve their Lord and King throughout their endless days.

In view of such a plan as this how can we hold our voice,
Instilled by such a love as this, how can we but rejoice.

Naught that we own or now possess will we refrain to give
Now that we know how God has planned for us and all to live.

Give out the sound, proclaim the news, awake both harp and lyre,
Go forth, rejoice and sing the glad new song with earth's grand choir.

NEWS & VIEWS

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Herald renewal subscriptions are not getting to us as they should. Please be sure to look at your address label to note when your subscription is due to expire. Many subscriptions expire in October. If you do not renew your subscription, it costs us much time and no little expense to follow up on these. It may also cost you in that you will not get your magazine when you should. Please be sure to check that your expiration date is sometime in 1995. If it is not, then it would probably benefit you to send in your renewal now. We want to keep the Herald coming to you. Please help us by keeping your subscription current.

NEW BOOKLET AVAILABLE

The booklet on God's Kingdom, which has been mentioned the last few issues, is now ready. We have now filled quite a few of the back orders. If you ordered the booklet, but have not yet received it, please be patient. If you haven't ordered one of these new booklets which detail the ransom, you may want to do so. They are excellent for witnessing to people about the reason for Jesus' death. The booklet gives great hope in the resurrection, and the blessing of all man in a future earthly kingdom. There is no cost for these booklets.

Although it is not mentioned in the booklet, there is a video version which was produced by the Dawn Bible Students Association in conjunction with the Chicago Bible Students. The cost is \$7.00 per video. They can be ordered from Carl Hagensick, 2929 Hillside Lane, Darien, IL 60561.

SUBSCRIBERS NEEDED

Over the years, Herald subscriptions have declined significantly. This year, the directors of the PBI and the editors of the Herald have a goal of increasing subscriptions substantially. The Herald makes an excellent gift for your Christian friends. Our goal is for the magazine to be a source of comfort and inspiration to consecrated Christians. If you are looking for unique gifts, consider giving a subscription to the Herald. It doesn't cost very much, but it could be a wonderful source of Christian growth for those who are seeking to have God's truths govern their life.

POLISH/ENGLISH YOUTH CAMP

Director and Editor Leonard Griehs had a unique experience during the summer with a trip to Poland with his family for the first Polish-English Youth Seminar for Bible Students. This is a report on the trip.

In September, 1993, we received a letter from Daniel Iwaniak, a young Polish brother from Krakow. He was very interested in organizing a seminar for the young people in Poland who were learning to speak English. He wanted to use leaders from North America.. His dream was that they might become translators for the brethren who visit there, and even to help the translation work in Poland. (There are about 2,000 to 3,000 Bible Students in

Poland, but there is not much material written in the Polish language. Most of it was written in the early 1900s and uses a style of Polish which is difficult to understand today.) With the help of Michael Nekora of Los Angeles, Daniel wrote to several American elders who would be attending the International Convention of Bible Students in France (see separate report) to see if they would be willing to come to Poland afterwards to be leaders at a seminar.

By January, 1994, five elders had agreed to bring their families to Poland, and plans began to take shape. Those attending were: Wade and Lois Austin of Los Angeles; Paul and Joyce Lagno of Omaha; Len and Gretchen Griehs of Philadelphia; Michael and Nannette Nekora of Los Angeles; John and Esther Trzeciak of Grand Rapids. Also attending was Bill Beyer, Gretchen Griehs' father. Additionally, twelve North American young people agreed to attend and Ray and Carmella Luke took the journey to Poland, but spent their time visiting the brethren there.

The seminar was to begin on Wednesday, August 17 and run through Tuesday morning, August 23. Daniel kept the location a secret, as he believed that many Polish brethren might "surprise" the Americans by showing up at the seminar. He was determined that this would be a small, effective group.

For seven months, the brethren in the United States received newsletters put together by Michael Nekora, who generously agreed to do most of the work on this side of the world. When the plans were complete, the travel itinerary was set: take a bus from the International Convention site in Poitiers to Paris; spend Sunday with the ecclesia in Lamorlaye, France; take an overnight train from Paris to Berlin; rent six cars in Berlin and drive to Poland. The complete journey from Paris to Krakow began on Sunday evening at 9 p.m.

Twenty-nine hours later, the entourage of 24 people arrived at the Krakow home of the Dabeks, where we all slept and woke to a breakfast of *golabki*. We spent Tuesday afternoon at the concentration camp known as Auschwitz and the death camp of Birkenau. It was a sobering visit, and all who attended testified that it was more than we

would have expected it to be. The Polish people keep the camps as a museum and testimony to those who died in terrible horror.

When we arrived at the "secret place" later that afternoon, we discovered the charm of the small Polish town of Lanckorona. When you travel south from Krakow, you find yourself in a small place called Mogilany. There, from the top of the hill you can admire a wonderful panorama of mountains, with the sharp ridge of the Tatras, covered with snow for the better part of the year, on the horizon. One mountain, however, closer than others, attracts your attention. In the 14th century, King Casimir the Great built a castle on that mountain. While the exact date of the building is not known, it is certain that the castle existed already in 1366 when the city was named Lanckorona. It was only a little way from that castle that the seminar was held in a hostel. Twenty-two Polish young people attended the seminar.

Although the seminar was conducted in English, we had to remember that it was a second language for these young people. Our efforts to speak slowly and distinctly and without a lot of English idioms were rewarded by the extreme friendliness and warm fellowship of these young brethren. They were a fine example of the hospitality of the Eastern European brethren.

Studies during the week ran an assortment of topics: The Chart of the Ages; Translating a Hymn into Polish; Translating a written discourse into Polish (this discourse was subsequently given in Krakow on Sunday, with 19 young people translating for the brethren there!); Bible Student Vocabulary; English Bible Study Aids; English Truth Periodicals (including a review of the Herald). There also were testimony meetings, and discussions of the cultural differences between the brethren in Poland and the brethren in America.

On Sunday, August 21, we spent the day with the class in Krakow. Michael Nekora and I delivered a discourse for the brethren there. Michael's discourse was translated by the Polish young people from the seminar, while mine was translated by Anna Grudzien of the Chrzanow class (Some of you may remember Anna from her visit to the United States in 1986. She is an English teacher at the University in Krakow, and many of the young people in Poland have learned their English from her.)

As happens frequently, the week went by faster than any of us imagined. As also happens frequently, we found ourselves in love with the Polish brethren and with the Polish countryside. There were tearful good-bys before we reversed our journey on planes, trains and automobiles. We realized that we may never see some of those brethren again in this life. A comment by Daniel Chaehlica, Daniel Iwaniak's partner in the organization of the seminar, said it all for me. As we shook hands and hugged goodbye, he said, "I will never forget you the rest of my life." I will never forget him, either. Nor any of those brethren whom I met there. When I sing the song, "Blessed be the Tie That Binds," I remember those brethren in Poland and the precious time we spent together.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

From August 7 to August 12, the Seventh International Convention of Bible Students was held in Poitiers, France, about 250 kilometers from Paris. Four hundred brethren from 13 countries attended the convention. Of special interest to those gathered there were those brethren attending from Romania, Moldova, and the Ukraine. Most did not even know there were other Bible Students in this part of the world. But these brethren proved to be a special blessing to those who attended. Their desire to cling to the Lord and his truth despite 50 years of suppression under Russian Communism was a real testimony to others. While exact numbers are difficult to ascertain, the brethren reported that there are over 2,000 Bible Students in Romania. Although religious material was forbidden under Russia, the brethren preserved their faith by handwritten copies of the song book, and an occasional booklet. Special sessions were held at the conference to allow others to question these brethren, some of whom spoke English. All who attended were enriched greatly. As a result of the knowledge that these brethren are in need, many from North America are now venturing to this part of the world to help the brethren there.

The International Convention is a unique experience. Those who attended for the first time in 1994 felt extremely blessed, and many vowed to attend the next one in 1996. While the site is still somewhat uncertain, it is possible that the convention may be held somewhere in Eastern Europe in order to accommodate the many brethren who live there. Anyone interested in attending should watch for future notices in the Herald.

OUR READERS SPEAK OUT

Re: New Archaeological Find (July/August)

Editor's note: Israeli archaeologists were quick to cast doubt on the find reported in the July/August issue of News & Views by the Institute of Judaic Christian Research. The following is from an article published by the Associated Press.

"Vendyl Jones is not part of the scientific community, is not a professional in the area of archaeology or history," said Yitzhak Magen, the archaeologist in charge of digs in the West Bank. "His work is not based on scientific criteria or acceptable codes and therefore his discoveries have no truth or scientific importance."

"Nobody knows where the real Gilgal is," said Avrahaim Biran, director of Biblical Archaeology at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem. "His guess is as good as any, but it could be anything."

-Contributed by James Caudle

INDIAN GENERAL CONVENTION

The 1995 General Convention of the Indian Bible Students will be held during the first week of May 1995. The convention will last for three days. There will be ample time to visit cultural and historic sites in India. Any brethren interested in more information should contact the editor of News & Views.

AROUND THE WORLD

Israel

Israel and Morocco have established low-level diplomatic relations. This makes Morocco the second Arab country to have formal ties with the Jewish state. Some 600,000 Israelis, about 10 percent, are of Moroccan Jewish descent. Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said that Jordan and Morocco want to advance regional economic cooperation. Morocco will host a Mideast economic conference in October with participation of most nations in the region and thousands of companies. Israeli media reported that Morocco decided to establish ties with Israel because King Hassan, the monarch of Morocco, wants to play a role in determining the future of the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem.

He claims descent from the Prophet Mohammed and heads the Islamic Conference Organization's committee on Jerusalem.

-Dow Jones News Service (9/1/94)

Israel and Syria are moving closer to a first agreement in their peace negotiations. Formal talks in Washington were suspended earlier in the year, but Israel and Syria have begun a back channel involving the two nations' ambassadors to Washington. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has offered to withdraw immediately from part of the Golan.

-Associated Press (9/14/94);

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin sent a letter to almost every active rabbi in the United States to ask them to praise the Israeli government's attempts to make peace with the Palestinians. Jews in America have been the most vocal at expressing disdain over the attempted peace. Mark Rosenblum, founder and political director of Americans for Peace Now, said, "They had a series of nevers: Never talk to the PLO, never withdraw from the Golan Heights. And all these nevers are falling by the wayside." Groups like Pro-Israel and Americans for a Safe Israel have sponsored advertisements in the Jewish press calling Rabin's administration "a government of national suicide."

-Washington Post (9/6/94)

Cairo

The population conference in Cairo spurred fallout which may not be settled for years. At the center of the controversy is the disagreements over abortion, premarital sex and homosexuality. While Muslims and Catholics resisted the language that would sanction, or at least give a nod to abortion, the final document incorporated the language.

-Wall Street Journal (9/2/94)

South Africa

Police in South Africa say they know of 73 people who have been put to death as witches this year in one area alone. The total number killed is believed to be much larger. Leaders of the African National Congress see the killings as a symptom of the breakdown of authority and the cheapening of life that hardened a generation raised on defiance. Police report that the usual method of killing those accused of witchcraft is by burning.

-New York Times (9/18/94)

Christendom

Followers of Harold Camping, radio evangelist and owner of Family Radio Network, told listeners that the world would end sometime between September 6 and September 28, 1994. In his book, *1994?*, Camping cited his proofs for believing that Christ would return and the rapture of the church would occur sometime during the Jewish holidays of September. Reggie Wiggins of Philadelphia quit his job managing a storage company so he could devote more time to prayer and self-analysis. He said he doesn't want God to find him lacking. "If the Lord doesn't come in September, I'm going to have to question where I went wrong," he said. Another follower, Alvin Allen of Claymont, Delaware, said, "I will be absolutely shocked if this (the rapture of the church) doesn't happen on September 6."

-The Philadelphia Inquirer (9/1/94)

BOOK REVIEW

The Timetables of History. The New Third Revised Edition. Bernard Grun. Simon & Schuster. 1991. 724 pages. \$20.00.

This book is a direct translation of much of the material that appears in the original work on which it is based, a German book titled, Kulturfahrplan (The Culture Timetables). First produced in Germany in 1946 by Werner Stein, it has been updated several times and has sold millions of copies. It is now available in paperback for the first time.

The book covers the period from 4500 B.C. to the present. The number of pages (724) should not scare anyone, as the material is presented in columnar form, easy for reference. The timetables are divided into seven separate listing of areas of events: History and Politics; Literature and Theater; Religion, Philosophy and Learning; Visual Arts; Music; Science, Technology and Growth; Daily Life.

While identifying the years of specific events is difficult in years before accurate historical recording, the book circumvents this problem by grouping years prior to the common era. For example, 5000 B.C.E. to 4001 B.C.E. In this way, students are able to get some idea of the sequence and concurrence of various events. Especially intriguing for Bible Students will be those years surrounding prophecy. One example will illustrate, from the entry for the year 1799, generally recognized by students of prophecy as the beginning of the "time of the end" spoken of by Daniel in chapter 12.

While Napoleon advanced into Syria to begin his campaign which would end Papal dominion, the Rosetta Stone was found in Egypt, which made possible the translation of hieroglyphics. This in turn would prove invaluable in translating various books related to scripture.

The book is available from most bookstores