



# Church in Regina Newsletter

Meeting Place: 3860 Buckingham Drive E, Regina, SK, Canada S4V 3A1

“Gen. 4:26 ... and he called his name Enosh. At that time men began to call upon the name of Jehovah.”

## Church Address:

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## Contact Numbers:

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## Meeting Schedule:

### Lord's Table Meeting

Lord's Day

10:00AM to 12:00PM

### Prayer Meeting

Tuesdays & Wednesdays

Saints Homes

8:00PM to 9:00PM

### YP Meeting

Fridays

7:00PM to 9:00PM

Brother Hedrick's Place

### Small/Home Meeting

Friday Evening

Saint's Home

## Seven Annual Feasts

1. International Chinese-speaking Conference, Anaheim, CA: February 17-19, 2017
2. International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones (Spring) Anaheim, CA, USA: Mar 31 to Apr. 2, 2017
3. Memorial Day Conference New York, NY: May 26-29, 2017
4. Summer Training Anaheim, CA: July 3-8, 2017
5. International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones (Fall) Leipzig, Germany: October 5-7, 2017
6. Thanksgiving Conference Phoenix AZ: November 23-26, 2017
7. Winter Training Anaheim, CA: Dec. 25-30, 2017

## THE YEARLY REVOLUTION OF THE EARTH FOR GREATER BEGINNINGS

The **yearly revolutions** around the sun bring in greater beginnings. This is really wonderful. We are in Christ and we are in the church.

When the people of Israel came out of Egypt, the Lord told them it was the beginning of a new year (Exo. 12:2). When **we were saved**, that was also **the beginning of a new year, the year of our rebirth, a real revolution in our life.** *My first revolution was in 1925, the year I was **saved**. The second was in 1931, the year I was **revived**. Less than a year later, in July, 1932, I had another revolution—I **saw the church**. That revolutionized my whole Christian life. In my Christian life, I have had many other new years besides these. Year after year, Christ as the real sun gives us a new beginning.*

Genesis 8:13 tells us that **Noah returned to the land** on the **first day of the first month**. He had a new start on the first day of the first month, a new start on the new land. Exodus 40:2, 17 tells us that **the tabernacle was erected** on the **first day of the first month**, another new start. Second Chronicles 29:17 and Ezekiel 45:18 both tell us that **the people cleansed and sanctified the temple** on the **first day of the first month**. According to Ezra 7:9, **the return from Babylon** started on **the first day of the first month**.

Every Christian needs these four new beginnings: coming to the new land, raising up God's tabernacle, cleansing God's temple, and returning from captivity. All of these are new beginnings in your Christian life for your growth in Christ and they must be on the **first day of the first month**.

## GIVING OURSELVES TO THE LORD THAT WE MAY BECOME NEW

Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “*So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.*” When we give ourselves to the Lord and take Him as our person, **old things pass away** and **all things will become new**.

**Genuine change** does not come from outward improvement; rather, it is **the result of giving ourselves to the Lord and taking Christ as our person**. ... Outwardly Paul was Paul of Tarsus, but inwardly his person was the heavenly Christ. Outwardly he seemed to be a person whose bodily presence was weak, but inwardly his person was really the crucified, resurrected, and glorified Christ. Paul was “as...and yet.” This is the issue of giving ourselves to the Lord and of taking Him as our person.

God's way of salvation is that He would become one with us. Although we are living, **He should be the person in us**. This means that we should relinquish our own person and take the Lord as our person. ... If we rely on the Lord only to do things for us, we will limit our experience of Him to knowing His power but not His person. We need to advance in our experience. **Instead of depending on the Lord to do things for us, we should take Him as our person.**

**Concerning our future, we need to be simple. The Lord is among us, He is in us, and He is our person. We simply need to say, “Hallelujah! It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.”** There is no need to explain further. Any explanation is religion. The Word says that we are **vessels** to contain the Lord. We are also His **house** for Him to dwell in and be our **person**. ... **Consecration means to let Him dwell in us by taking Him as our person; hence, our original person has to “move out.”**

We all must go to the Lord and deal with Him concerning the matter of consecration. We should ask ourselves how much we have given ourselves to the Lord. Are we absolute in our consecration? ... When we encounter a problem with our consecration, we should never defeat the Lord. It is very easy for us to defeat the Lord in relation to our consecration. If we defeat Him, we will suffer loss. Whenever we encounter a problem related to our consecration, we should say, “*Lord, defeat me. Have mercy on me and never let me go.*” May He have mercy on all of us.

## Upcoming Activities:

- ▶ January 08, 2017 - Love Feast
- ▶ January 08, 2017 - Churching in Lloydminster (for further fellowship)
- ▶ January 15, 2017 - Perfecting Meeting
- ▶ January 29, 2017 - Brother's Meeting
- ▶ January 30, 2017 - All come to the full knowledge of the truth: Life-Study of Ephesians

**PRAYER BURDEN**

*“Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.”*

1. Lord, thank You for putting us in Your recovery to fulfill Your unique goal of building but we still need Your mercy for us to see the vision that the “**Lord’s recovery**” today is for the recovery of **life and building**.
2. Lord, we cannot serve if we are not built up, open us that we may have a thorough view of the **priesthood** that we are **building** by being **built up**.
3. Lord, give us peace deep within that in all our services are done in **coordination**, and give us the assurance that we are truly **being built** into the **local expression** of Your Body.
4. Lord open our eyes to see that true spirituality is a matter of the **building**, that the only way to be holy, to be spiritual, and powerful is to **be built into** Your building which is also our **protection**.
5. Lord, “the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets” for the sake of the **building up** of Your Body, release us and we allow You to have the building among us by **exercising our spirit** to **function** as Your priesthood of today.
6. Please pray for the Lord’s Table Meeting in **Lloydminster**.
7. Lord bless the church in **Regina** give us a new beginning.

*How blinded we have been,  
Shut in with what concerns us;  
While God’s house lieth waste—  
Lord, break through, overturn us;  
We’ll go up to the mountain,  
Bring wood and build the house;  
We’ll never say, “Another day!”  
It’s time! We’ll come and build!*

**This Weeks’s Pursuit: Crystallization-Study of Exodus (4) - Message Five**

**The Tabernacle and the Priesthood**

Scripture Reading: Exo. 25:8; 27:20–28:2; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9

**I. Life and building are the basic and central revelation of the Bible:**

Life is for building, the corporate expression of the Triune God, and the building is of life. Life is the content, and building is the corporate expression of the content. Life is God Himself, and building is the expression of the Triune God as life in a corporate organic entity. **Life** is the Triune God **embodied** in Christ and **realized** as the Spirit dispensing Himself into us **for our enjoyment**, and **building** is the church, the Body of Christ, God’s spiritual house, as the enlargement and expansion of God **for the corporate expression of God**.

The Lord’s recovery is the recovery of life and building for us to be built up to be the church as the house of God and the Body of Christ. The central vision of the Bible—the building of the house of God— can be considered the highlight of the Bible and also the essence extracted from the Bible.

**II. In the sequence of the divine record in Exodus, the priesthood follows the tabernacle—27:20–28:2:**

Exodus 27:20-21 reveals that immediately after the tabernacle came into existence, there was the **need of the priesthood** for the lighting of the lamps; this indicates that, spiritually speaking, the priesthood and the tabernacle are one entity. In typology the priesthood and the tabernacle as one entity signify the church composed of God’s redeemed people as a spiritual house and a priesthood. In the Old Testament the house and the priesthood were separated, but in the New Testament the spiritual house is the **priesthood**, and the priesthood is the **spiritual house**.

The **twofold function of the church**—that of the dwelling place and that of the priesthood—is typified by the tabernacle and the priesthood.

**III. The fact that the tabernacle is mentioned before the priesthood in Exodus emphasizes the need of the believers to be built up to be God’s dwelling place so that they may serve Him as a corporate, coordinated priesthood—25:8; 26:1-30; 27:20–28:2:**

The priesthood is a body of priests who are built together to live and serve as one entity. Apart from the building it is impossible to have the priesthood. The priests are not individualistic believers but a corporate body; the priesthood is composed of priests who have been built together. The service of the priesthood is a body service in coordination; this corporate service is what the Lord is seeking today. Without the building the priesthood will collapse; we cannot have the priesthood without the building.

The priestly service is a work of **being built up** and **of building**. One aspect of our work is to be built up, and another aspect is to build. We are building by being built up; this is to genuinely serve God as priests. To serve God as priests is to build the dwelling place of God, which is also to be built up. We cannot separate the priestly service from the building; we are proper priests carrying out the genuine building work only when we are built up. Being built up into a spiritual house is the basic condition for service; we cannot serve if we are not built up. When we are built up into a priesthood, we can have work that is acceptable to God.

Since the priesthood equals the house, and the house depends on the building, the priesthood also requires the building up of the saints. Because of the need for building up, the church must be the house of God before it can be the priesthood. Building involves coordination; only when we are built into and coordinated into the building do we have the ground to serve the Lord. **Our unique need is to be built up**. The emphasis in the Bible is not on how to be holy or spiritual; instead, the emphasis is on God’s building. True spirituality is a matter of the building; without the building, the spiritual house, there is no sanctification, spirituality, or spiritual power. The only way to be holy, spiritual, or powerful is to be built into God’s building. If we want to be protected, we need to be built into God’s building; our protection is not our spirituality—it is God’s building.

**IV. God’s unique goal is the building—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21- 22; 4:16:**

God’s goal has always been the building. For eternity God wants the New Jerusalem; today He wants the church. **If we do not allow** the Lord to have the building among us, we will be a failure as far as God’s purpose is concerned. The Lord has not yet been able to gain His goal of the building. If we are off from God’s goal, we will not be able to do anything for the fulfillment of God’s eternal purpose.

God wants those who can **dwelt in oneness** with His people, who can **be coordinated into one entity**, and who become His dwelling place. We all need to see that the goal of the Lord’s recovery is to recover Christ as life and everything to us so that we may be transformed and built up. When we are built up together, God will have the building. **This building is the priesthood**.

WEEK	LORD’S TABLE MEETING	PRAYER MEETING	YP MEETING	HOME MEETING	OFFERING
Dec. 18 - Dec, 24, 2016	23	13	11	13	\$332.00
Dec. 25 - Dec, 31, 2016	27	11	9	7	\$490.00

## LIFE-STUDY OF HEBREWS

**December 26, 2016, Monday**

Message Forty-Three

### CHRIST'S SACRIFICES REPLACING AND TERMINATING THOSE OF THE OLD COVENANT

In God's economy, Christ did two main things: He put away sin, which had come in to frustrate God's eternal purpose, and He imparted Himself into us as the divine life which is working within us and spreading into all the inward parts of our being. The main thought in 10:1-18 is that **Christ has put away sin**, accomplishing what all the Levitical sacrifices were unable to do. Having put away sin once for all, **Christ has now imparted Himself into us as the divine life**, so that through the working of this divine life we may become the corporate reproduction of Himself.

These coming good things are what Christ is and does. What the law had could not accomplish anything. It is Christ, the reality of all the shadows in the Old Testament, who has accomplished everything for God's economy.

Today we also need to see that our sins have been taken away by the death of Christ and that the problem of sin has been solved once for all. Since sin is over and has become a history, we no longer need to be bothered by it. **Our attention must be turned from the Christ on the cross to the Christ in the heavens.** We must enjoy the heavenly Christ as our life and all we need in following Him and running the heavenly race. When we enjoy the Christ who is in the heavens, we are truly under the new covenant participating in all the bequests of the new testament.

**December 27, 2016, Tuesday**

Message Forty-Four

### COME FORWARD TO THE HOLY OF HOLIES AND DO NOT SHRINK BACK TO JUDAISM

God is on the throne of grace, and the throne of grace is in the Holy of Holies. This is the scene of the new covenant age. Wherever we may be, we must come forward to the Holy of Holies, the throne of grace, and to God. When we do this, we come forward to the new age, to the new economy, dispensation, and administration in and through which God fulfills His purpose. God's eternal purpose can only be fulfilled with God sitting on the throne of grace in the Holy of Holies in this new covenant age. Coming forward is not merely a matter of our salvation or even of our glorification; it is for the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. For us to be saved or glorified is a small thing, but for God's eternal purpose to be accomplished is a tremendous matter. Thank God that He has included us in this. Our coming forward and enjoying the new testament is altogether for Him and His purpose. It is for Him to be expressed and for His eternal purpose to be accomplished. This requires four things: God on the throne, the throne of grace, the Holy of Holies, and the new covenant age.

The **first tabernacle**, that is, the Holy Place, is only **a figure**, not the reality. As we have seen, all the things in the Holy Place, such as the showbread table and the lampstand, are the types of Christ, not the reality.

The **second tabernacle**, which is the Holy of Holies, is realized by the new testament dispensation (9:3, 8, 10). The Holy of Holies is **a reality**. It is realized by the new covenant dispensation in which we now are experiencing its reality. The presence of God, the shekinah glory of God, God's meeting with man, and God's speaking, which are in the **Holy of Holies, are all real**. They are not types but realities which are fully realized and experienced by us in the new testament dispensation.

Let us come forward to the Holy of Holies, that is, to the new covenant dispensation. The Holy of Holies not only denotes a place, but also means a covenant, an age, and a dispensation. We must come to the Holy of Holies with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and having our body washed with pure water. For us to come forward to the Holy of Holies, our heart must be true, our faith must be with full assurance, our conscience must be sprinkled, and our whole being must be washed. We should not consider this as a light thing. We must be very serious in this matter.

Hebrews 12: 25-26 say, "*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom with some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day drawing near. For when we sin willfully after receiving the full knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.*" For the Hebrew believers to shrink back to Judaism and offer again the sacrifice for sin would be to do something which God had terminated. For the Hebrew believers at their time and in their situation to forsake the assembling of themselves together would have been to forsake the new covenant way of contacting God, to forsake the church, and to return to their old religion—Judaism. That would have broken God's administration of grace, thus constituting a serious sin before God. It would have been to "*sin willfully after receiving the full knowledge of the truth.*" Truth here refers to the things disclosed in the foregoing chapters and verses, which affords the Hebrew believers the full knowledge that God has annulled the old covenant and has established the new. **To sin willfully means to forsake the assembling of ourselves together with the church.** The Hebrew believers had been instructed to abandon Judaism and remain under the new covenant. If they had returned to Judaism, they would have forsaken assembling themselves with the church. This constitutes a willful sin in the eyes of God after receiving the knowledge of the truth, after knowing that God had forsaken Judaism, which was formed according to the old covenant, and had established the new and living way of contacting God according to the new covenant.

**December 28, 2016, Wednesday**

Message Forty-Five

### NOT ETERNAL PERDITION, BUT DISPENSATIONAL PUNISHMENT

God's salvation is eternal. Once we have received it, it is secured eternally; by the Will of God, by the Selection and Calling of God, by the Love and Grace of God, by the Righteousness of God, by the Covenant of God, by the Power of God, by the Life of God, by God Himself, by the Redemption of Christ, by the Power of Christ, and by the Promise of Christ

The salvation which we have received from God is eternally secure. Nevertheless, we must be careful regarding our way of going on with God after we have been saved, especially after receiving the full knowledge of the truth as it has been given to us in these messages on Hebrews. If these messages do not help you to go on, then they will be unprofitable as far as your welfare is concerned. If we know the Lord's will and yet do not do it, we shall be beaten more. But if we are ignorant of the Lord's will and do not do it, we shall be beaten less. Luke 12:48 says, "He that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." If you do not have the heart to go on with the Lord, you are better off to be left ignorant. But we are no longer ignorant. May we all heed the warning to come forward and not to shrink back. May our prayer be, "Lord Jesus, help me to come forward."

**December 29, 2016, Thursday**

Message Forty-Six

### THE KINGDOM REWARD AND THE GAINING OF THE SOUL

We all must be clear about four words: salvation, perdition, reward, and punishment. The reward is not salvation; it is something in addition to it. **Salvation is by grace through faith**, whereas the **reward is according to the life and work** we have after being saved. As the reward is different from salvation, so is punishment different from perdition. As we have pointed out, **perdition is for the unsaved** while **punishment is for believers**. Thus, punishment here is something altogether different from perdition. We have been saved forever and we can never perish. The unbelievers face two choices—salvation or perdition. We, the saved ones, also must consider two possibilities—receiving a reward or suffering some punishment. All the saints in the Lord's recovery must be clear about this, for it is a matter of God's economy, God's way of dealing with His children.

**Eternal salvation is by grace**, but the **kingdom reward is by righteousness**. In 2 Timothy 4:8, Paul says that a crown of righteousness, the symbol of this reward, not a crown of grace, was laid up for him. So in verse 18 of the same chapter, he has the assurance that the Lord will save him into His heavenly kingdom. This was due to his faithfulness in following and serving the Lord. The Lord, the "righteous judge," will give him this reward of the kingdom according to His righteousness, not according to His grace.

The **kingdom reward will be according to our work**. In Matthew 16:27 the Lord Jesus said that at His coming back He will reward us according to our works. In Revelation 22:12 He says, "*Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*" As we have already seen, 1 Corinthians 3:8 says that we shall be rewarded according to our labor. Eternal salvation has nothing to do with our works, but the kingdom reward will be altogether according to our works which we have by the Lord's life after being saved.

Eternal salvation is by faith, having nothing to do with our work (Eph. 2:8-9), whereas the kingdom reward is for our work after we are saved (1 Cor. 3:8, 14). We may not receive the kingdom reward even though we are saved, because we are void of the work which the Lord would approve (1 Cor. 3:15). The Hebrew believers were here charged not to miss the kingdom reward—the coming Sabbath rest, the enjoyment of Christ and the reign with Christ in the coming age.

The **gaining of the soul** is for our whole being to enjoy the coming Sabbath rest, that is, to share in Christ's joy and glory in the coming kingdom. Our being is of three parts—spirit, soul, and body, and our soul is different from our spirit. At the time when we believed in the Lord Jesus and were saved, our spirit was regenerated with the Spirit of God. But we must wait until the Lord Jesus comes back for our body to be redeemed, saved, and transfigured. As to the saving or gaining of our soul, it depends upon how we deal with it in following the Lord after we are saved and regenerated. If we lose it now for the Lord's sake, we shall save it, and it shall be saved, or gained, at the Lord's coming back. This will be the reward of the kingdom to the overcoming followers of the Lord.

To gain our soul in the coming age will be a great reward to our suffering for following Christ in this age. If we care for the enjoyment of our soul, the psychological pleasures, and do not follow Christ faithfully today, we shall suffer the Lord's discipline in our soul in the coming age. If we are willing to lose the enjoyment of our soul for the Lord's sake today, we shall have the full enjoyment of the Lord for our whole being, especially for our soul, in the coming age. That will be a reward to our suffering today.

Losing our soul in this age is to suffer for the Lord's sake in a human way. If we follow the Lord today, we shall certainly suffer for His sake. Because you are a faithful and straight follower of Jesus Christ, your teachers may not give you the higher grade, and you may not receive a promotion on your job. Many such things are related to losing our soul. **Our destiny in this age is to lose our soul and all human enjoyment. This loss of our soul today is the condition of our gaining it in the next age. To gain our soul in the next age is to enter into the Lord's joy and reigning.** According to the parable in Matthew 25, the Lord said to the faithful servants, "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord." To enter into the Lord's joy is to enter into His reign in the coming kingdom. This age is for us to suffer; the next age is for our enjoyment.

God's goal is to make us all the same as His Firstborn Son. If we cooperate with God, He will work within us day by day, and every day we shall enjoy Christ to the uttermost. This is the highest enjoyment. If we have this enjoyment of Christ today, when He comes to reign, we shall enter into His reign as His co-kings and partners. This is God's goal.

**December 30, 2016, Friday**

Message Forty-Seven

### THE UNIQUE WAY OF FAITH AND FAITH'S DEFINITION

Hebrews 6:1 speaks of "*faith toward God.*" Since we cannot see God, we must take Him by faith. The only way to enter into the Sabbath rest is by faith. Anyone who does not believe will be unable to enter into it. For this matter we must exercise our faith. **Faith is the unique way for us to inherit God's promises.** In the Scriptures God has given us many promises. To inherit these promises we need to be infused by God with faith. Since most of the things promised by God are unseen or hoped for, we need faith to substantiate them.

We must come forward to the Holy of Holies and to God's new covenant dispensation in the **full assurance of faith**. Our hope is Christ. His indestructible life, which has been imparted into us with its functioning law of life, and His kingly and divine priesthood, in which He ministers all the riches of God into us, are also our hope. This must be our confession. We need to exercise our faith to hold fast this confession of our hope without wavering. Only by faith can we realize the confession of our hope in Christ.

The writer of Hebrews, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said, "*Faith is the substantiating of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*" Since faith is the substantiating of things hoped for, it is the assurance, confidence, confirmation, reality, essence, supporting ground of things hoped for, the foundation that supports the

things hoped for. ... Faith is not a substance; it is a **substantiating action**. To have faith is not to have a substantial element; it is to have a substantiating ability. Although certain things cannot be seen, heard, or touched, we nevertheless have within us the ability to substantiate them. This is faith. The Bible says that whoever believes shall have eternal life. When we hear this word, we sense that it conveys something real, although no one can see or touch it. Nevertheless, the faith within us substantiates what is conveyed in this word.

The Bible is a will filled with bequests. An unbeliever, however, would say that this is nonsense. To him, the Bible is simply a book which is difficult to understand. But for us, God's called ones, the Bible is a book of bequests. When we hear this, something within us responds to substantiate it. This substantiating is what we call faith. How do you know that you have eternal life? How do you know that the Lord Jesus is in your spirit? We know these things by faith. We can neither explain nor show people that Christ dwells in our spirit. Although we cannot present this to others, we can substantiate it for ourselves.

The believer's life is a life of things hoped for, a life of hope which goes together and abides with faith (1 Pet. 1:21; 1 Cor. 13:13; Rom. 4:18). The unbelievers, being without Christ, have no hope (Eph. 2:12; 1 Thes. 4:13). But we, the believers in Christ, are a people of hope. The calling which we received from God brings us hope (Eph. 1:18; 4:4). We are regenerated to "a living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3, Gk.). Our Christ, who is in us, is "the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27; 1 Tim. 1:1), which will issue in the redemption, the transfiguration of our body in glory (Rom. 8:23-25). This is "the hope of salvation" (1 Thes. 5:8), a "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13), a "good hope" (2 Thes. 2:16), "the hope of eternal life" (Titus 1:2; 3:7), which is the "hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2), "the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:23), "the hope which is laid up for us in heaven" (Col. 1:5). We should always keep "this hope" (1 John 3:3), and "boast in it" (Rom. 5:2). Our God is "the God of hope" (Rom. 15:13), and "through the encouragement of the Scriptures we may have hope" (Rom. 15:4) all the time "in God" (1 Pet. 1:21) and "rejoice in it" (Rom. 12:12). This book of Hebrews charges us to "hold fast the boast of hope firm to the end" (3:6), "show diligence unto the full assurance of hope to the end" (6:11), and "lay hold of the hope set before us" (6:18). It also tells us that the new covenant brings in "a better hope, through which we draw near to God" (7:19). Our life should be a life of hope, which goes together and abides with faith (1 Pet. 1:21; 1 Cor. 13:13). We should follow Abraham "who beyond hope believed in hope" (Rom. 4:18, Recovery Version).

Faith, which is the way to realize and enjoy the things of God, is not a part of our natural being. It is a divine ability which has been infused into us. The proper faith is the divine element, even God Himself, infused into our being as the ability to substantiate the things which we do not see. This infused element is our substantiating ability. Whenever we contact God or listen to His word, the substantiating ability which has been infused into our being by God Himself spontaneously begins to realize the things of God, the things hoped for, and the things not seen, and we simply believe. As we have seen, faith is a special sense in addition to the five senses derived from our natural birth. This sense substantiates the things of God, things which we do not see. Since the Christian life is a life of hope and in this life we aim at things unseen, we need more of the transfusion and infusion of God that we may have the ability, the faith, to substantiate the things hoped for and to have the conviction of things unseen.

## December 31, 2016, Saturday

Message Forty-Eight

### THE HISTORY OF FAITH AND ITS WITNESSES

Hebrews 11:3 says, "*By faith we understand that the **universe** has been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not come into being from things which appear.*" The universe was framed by the word of God. God spoke and it came into being. We do not know this by our five senses; we know it by faith, by our substantiating sense.

Verse 4 says, "*By faith **Abel** offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained testimony that he was righteous, God testifying to his gifts, and through it, he having died still speaks.*" According to typology, Abel's more excellent sacrifice was a type of Christ who is the real "better sacrifices".

Verse 5 says, "*By faith **Enoch** was translated so that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he was well-pleasing to God.*" Enoch was not only translated from death but from the seeing of death.

Verse 7 says, "*By faith **Noah**, having been warned concerning things not yet seen, being devout, prepared an ark for the salvation of his house, through which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*" Consider Noah's situation: as he was building an ark for a flood that was to come, no one believed him. The sky was clear and no one expected a flood to come. Nevertheless, substantiating the coming flood by faith, Noah built the ark.

**Abraham** has been called the father of faith. By faith he obeyed God's calling to leave his homeland, dwelling as a foreigner in the land of promise (vv. 8-9). Abraham obeyed God and went out of Chaldea "*without knowing where he was going.*" This afforded him constant opportunity to exercise his faith to trust in God for His instant leading, taking God's presence as his map.

Verse 11 says, "*By faith also **Sarah** herself received power to conceive seed, even beyond the season of age, since she considered Him faithful Who promised.*" Sarah had become an old woman whose function had ceased; yet in the midst of her situation, she believed in God's word.

Verse 20 says, "*By faith **Isaac** blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come.*" If you read Isaac's history, you will see that he was not a smart man; he was quite common, and there was nothing special about him. Nevertheless, he did something marvelous—he blessed his two sons, Jacob and Esau. Although Isaac blessed them blindly, he did it in faith.

Verse 21 says, "*By faith **Jacob**, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph.*" When Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph, he not only did it by faith but with very clear sight. His inner sight was exceedingly clear. When Joseph attempted to change his hands, being displeased that Jacob's right hand was upon Ephraim instead of upon Manasseh, the firstborn, Jacob refused and said, "*I know it, my son, I know it.*" Jacob knew what he was doing and blessed Joseph's sons by faith.

Verse 22 says, "*By faith **Joseph**, when near his end, remembered concerning the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.*" Joseph remembered the coming exodus of the sons of Israel and charged them to bring his bones out of Egypt and into Canaan. This took great faith. When the Israelites entered into Canaan, they brought Joseph's bones into the good land.

Verse 23 says, "*By faith **Moses**, having been born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw that he was a handsome child, and they did not fear the king's decree.*" His parents hid him by faith. When he had "become great," he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be ill-treated with the people of God than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin"

Because Moses was willing to suffer the reproach of the Christ, he will receive the reward of the kingdom. He was not allowed to enter into the rest of the good land because of his failure at Meribah, but he will be with Christ in the kingdom. By referring to this, the writer certainly intended to encourage the Hebrew believers, who were suffering persecution for Christ's sake, to follow Moses by esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the things they had lost and by looking away to the reward.

Verse 28 says, *“By faith he instituted the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the firstborn should not touch them.”* It took faith for Moses to institute the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood. It also took faith for Moses to tell the people to prepare the lamb and to sprinkle the blood on the lintels and posts of the doors. God honored Moses’ faith in instituting the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood. Without seeing the Passover, which was to come, Moses substantiated it by faith and acted according to this substantiation.

Verse 29 says that by faith the sons of **Israel** *“passed through the Red Sea as through dry land, which the Egyptians attempting to do were swallowed up.”*

Verse 30, passing over the years of wandering in the wilderness, says, *“By faith the walls of Jericho fell, having been encircled during seven days.”* The Israelites did not have the best weapons when they encircled the walls of Jericho. They did this by faith, doing what God had told them to do, and He honored their faith.

*“By faith **Rahab** the prostitute did not perish with the obstinate, having received the spies with peace”*. Rahab let down a scarlet cord which signifies the flowing blood of Jesus. By faith, she was saved from the destruction which the Canaanites suffered.

By faith **Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel,** and the **prophets** did many marvelous things. Although they did marvelous things, many of them also suffered martyrdom. God performed miracles for some of them, but He did not do such things for all of them. Do not think that if you have faith God will always do something for you. Many times the exercise of our faith will only bring us the enjoyment of God’s silence. To suffer persecution without any rescue coming from the Lord requires great faith.

God’s silence is greater than His miracles. Which do you prefer to have—God’s miracles or His silence? If we would be honest, most of us would say that we prefer God’s miracles. When the Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross, the mockers said to Him, *“If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross,”* and, *“If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him”*. For at least three of the six hours while the Lord was on the cross, there was silence in the universe. It seemed that there was no God, and the mockers and the blasphemers said whatever they wanted. It was their world and they were the gods at that time. God will remain silent much more often than He will perform miracles. At times, we all must enjoy God’s silence by faith.

Verse 35 says, *“Others were beaten to death, not accepting deliverance, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection.”* The better resurrection is the resurrection in which the Lord’s overcomers will receive the reward of the kingdom, after which the Apostle Paul sought.

Verse 38, speaking of those who endured such affliction by faith, says that the world was not worthy of them. These faith people are an extra-people, of the highest estate, of whom the corrupted world is not worthy. Only the holy city of God, New Jerusalem, is worthy of having them.

Verse 40 says, *“God having in view something better concerning us, that **apart from us** they should not be made perfect.”* This verse implies a great deal. None of the witnesses of faith was ever perfected. They all need to be perfected by the believers of the new covenant. In God’s economy there are two dispensations: the dispensation of the old covenant of shadows and the dispensation of the new covenant of realities. All the martyrs and witnesses of faith were under the old covenant of shadows; they were not in the reality. Since the new covenant dispensation of reality in which we are is better than the old covenant dispensation of shadows in which the witnesses of faith were, they need us for their perfection.

Hebrews 12:1 says, *“Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, putting off every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, run with endurance the race which is set before us.”* The cloud is for leading people in following the Lord, and the Lord is in the cloud to be with the people. The children of Israel followed the Lord by the pillar and enjoyed the Lord’s presence in the pillar of cloud. **All the witnesses of faith, even the martyrs of faith, are a cloud. By this cloud of witnesses we follow the Lord and enjoy His presence.**