

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

JUNE 3-9

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | GALATIANS 4-6

“‘A Symbolic Drama’ With Meaning for Us”

(Galatians 4:24, 25) These things may be taken as a symbolic drama; for these women mean two covenants, the one from Mount Si'nai, which bears children for slavery and which is Ha'gar. ²⁵ Now Ha'gar means Si'nai, a mountain in Arabia, and she corresponds with the Jerusalem today, for she is in slavery with her children.

it-1 1018 ¶2

Hagar

According to the apostle Paul, Hagar figured in a symbolic drama in which she represented the nation of fleshly Israel, bound to Jehovah by the Law covenant inaugurated at Mount Sinai, which covenant brought forth “children for slavery.” Because of the sinful condition of the people, the nation was unable to keep the terms of that covenant. Under it the Israelites did not become a free people but were condemned as sinners worthy of death; hence, they were slaves. (Joh 8:34; Ro 8:1-3) Jerusalem of Paul's day corresponded to Hagar, for Jerusalem the capital, representing the organization of natural Israel, found herself in slavery with her children. Spirit-begotten Christians, though, are children of the “Jerusalem above,” God's symbolic woman. This Jerusalem, like Sarah the freewoman, has never been in slavery. But just as Isaac was persecuted by Ishmael, so also the children of the “Jerusalem above,” who have been set free by the Son, experienced persecution at the hands of the children of enslaved Jerusalem. However, Hagar and her son were driven out, representing Jehovah's casting off

natural Israel as a nation.—Ga 4:21-31; see also Joh 8:31-40.

(Galatians 4:26, 27) But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷ For it is written: “Be glad, you barren woman who does not give birth; break into joyful shouting, you woman who does not have birth pains; for the children of the desolate woman are more numerous than those of her who has the husband.”

w14 10/15 10 ¶11

Have Unshakable Faith in the Kingdom

¹¹ While the Abrahamic covenant had a literal fulfillment for the descendants of Abraham when they inherited the Promised Land, the Scriptures show that the terms of that covenant also have a spiritual fulfillment. (Gal. 4:22-25) In this greater fulfillment, as the apostle Paul explained under inspiration, the primary part of the offspring of Abraham is Christ and the secondary part refers to the 144,000 spirit-anointed Christians. (Gal. 3:16, 29; Rev. 5:9, 10; 14:1, 4) The woman producing the offspring is none other than “the Jerusalem above”—the heavenly part of God's organization, made up of loyal spirit creatures. (Gal. 4:26, 31) As the Abrahamic covenant promised, the offspring of the woman would bring blessings to mankind.

(Galatians 4:28-31) Now you, brothers, are children of the promise the same as Isaac was. ²⁹ But just as then the one born through natural descent began persecuting the one born through spirit, so also now. ³⁰ Nevertheless, what does the scripture say? “Drive out the servant girl and her son, for the son of the servant girl will by no means be an heir with the son of the free woman.” ³¹ So,

brothers, we are children, not of a servant girl, but of the free woman.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Galatians 4:6) Now because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, and it cries out: “*Abba*, Father!”

w09 4/1 13

Did You Know?

Why did Jesus in prayer address Jehovah as “*Abba*, Father”?

The Aramaic word ‘*ab-ba*’ can mean either “the father” or “O Father.” On each of the three occasions that the expression appears in the Scriptures, it is part of a prayer and is used with reference to the heavenly Father, Jehovah. What significance does the word carry?

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia states: “In the colloquial speech of Jesus’ time, ‘*abbā*’ was primarily used as a term of informal intimacy and respect by children of their fathers.” It was an endearing form of address and among the first words that a child learned. Jesus used the expression in a particularly fervent appeal to his Father. In the garden of Gethsemane, just hours before his death, Jesus in prayer addressed Jehovah with the words “*Abba*, Father.”—Mark 14:36.

“‘*Abbā*’ as a form of address to God is extremely uncommon in Jewish literature of the Greco-Roman period, doubtless because it would have appeared irreverent to address God with this familiar term,” continues the above-mentioned reference work. However, “Jesus’ . . . use of this term in prayer is an indirect attestation of His extraordinary claim to intimacy with God.” The other two Scriptural occurrences of “*Abba*”—both in the writings of the apostle Paul—indicate that first-century Christians also used it in their prayers.—Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6.

(Galatians 6:17) From now on let no one make trouble for me, for I am bearing on my body the brand marks of a slave of Jesus.

w10 11/1 15

Did You Know?

To what was the apostle Paul referring when he said that he bore on his body “the brand marks of a slave of Jesus”?—Galatians 6:17.

■ Paul’s words could have suggested a number of possible meanings in the minds of his first-century audience. For instance, a red-hot iron was used in ancient times to identify prisoners of war, robbers of temples, and fugitive slaves. When used on humans in this way, the brand mark was considered dishonorable.

However, brand marks were not always viewed negatively. Many ancient peoples used them to denote membership of a specific tribe or of a particular religion. According to the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, for example, “the Syrians consecrated themselves to the gods Hadad and Atargatis by signs branded on the wrist or neck . . . An ivy leaf was branded on the devotee of Dionysus.”

Many modern-day commentators assume that Paul was referring to scars received in different episodes of physical abuse during his Christian missionary activity. (2 Corinthians 11:23-27) Perhaps, though, Paul meant that his way of life—not any literal marks—identified him as a Christian.

Bible Reading

(Galatians 4:1-20) Now I say that as long as the heir is a young child, he is no different from a slave, although he is the lord of all things, ² but he is under supervisors and stewards until the day set ahead of time by his father. ³ Likewise, we too, when we were children, were enslaved by the elementary things of the world. ⁴ But when the full

limit of the time arrived, God sent his Son, who was born of a woman and who was under law, ⁵ that he might release by purchase those under law, so that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ Now because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, and it cries out: “*Abba, Father!*” ⁷ So you are no longer a slave but a son; and if a son, then you are also an heir through God. ⁸ Nevertheless, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those who are not really gods. ⁹ But now that you have come to know God or, rather, have come to be known by God, how is it that you are turning back again to the weak and beggarly elementary things and want to slave for them over again? ¹⁰ You are scrupulously observing days and months and seasons and years. ¹¹ I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you. ¹² Brothers, I beg you, become as I am, because I also used to be as you are. You did me no wrong. ¹³ But you know that it was because of a physical illness that I had my first opportunity to declare the good news to you. ¹⁴ And though my physical condition was a trial for you, you did not treat me with contempt or disgust; but you received me like an angel of God, like Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Where is that happiness you had? For I bear you witness that, if it had been possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ So, then, have I become your enemy because I tell you the truth? ¹⁷ They are zealous to win you over, but not for a good purpose; they want to alienate you from me, so that you may be eager to follow them. ¹⁸ However, it is always fine for someone to seek zealously after you for a good purpose and not just when I am present with you, ¹⁹ my little children, for whom I am again experiencing birth pains until Christ is formed in you. ²⁰ I wish I could be present

with you just now and speak in a different way, because I am perplexed over you.

JUNE 10-16

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | EPHE- SIANS 1-3

“Jehovah’s Administration and Its Work”

(Ephesians 1:8, 9) This undeserved kindness he caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and understanding ⁹ by making known to us the sacred secret of his will. It is according to his good pleasure that he himself purposed

it-2 837 ¶4

Sacred Secret

The Messianic Kingdom. In Paul’s writings he gives a full view of the revelation of the sacred secret of the Christ. At Ephesians 1:9-11 he speaks of God’s making known “the sacred secret” of his will, and says: “It is according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself for an administration at the full limit of the appointed times, namely, to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth. Yes, in him, in union with whom we were also assigned as heirs, in that we were foreordained according to the purpose of him who operates all things according to the way his will counsels.” This “sacred secret” involves a government, the Messianic Kingdom of God. “The things in the heavens,” to which Paul refers, are the prospective heirs of that heavenly Kingdom with Christ. “The things on the earth” will be its earthly subjects. Jesus pointed out to his disciples that the sacred secret had to do with the Kingdom when he said to them: “To you the sacred secret of the kingdom of God has been given.”—Mr 4:11.

(Ephesians 1:10) for an administration at the full limit of the appointed times, to

gather all things together in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth. Yes, in him

w12 7/15 27-28 ¶3-4

“One Jehovah” Gathers His Family

³ Moses told the Israelites: “Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.” (Deut. 6:4) Jehovah’s actions and purpose are harmonious. Thus, “at the full limit of the appointed times,” God put into operation “an administration”—that is, an arrangement for unifying all his intelligent creatures. (**Read Ephesians 1:8-10.**) This administration will carry out its objective in two stages. The first stage prepares the congregation of anointed ones for life in heaven under Jesus Christ as their spiritual Head. This stage began at Pentecost 33 C.E. when Jehovah started to gather those who would rule with Christ in heaven. (Acts 2:1-4) Since the anointed have been declared righteous for life on the basis of Christ’s ransom sacrifice, they readily acknowledge that they have been adopted as “God’s children.”—Rom. 3:23, 24; 5:1; 8:15-17.

⁴ The second stage prepares those who will dwell in Paradise on earth under Christ’s Messianic Kingdom. The “great crowd” make up the initial part of this group. (Rev. 7:9, 13-17; 21:1-5) During the Thousand Year Reign, they will be joined by billions of resurrected ones. (Rev. 20:12, 13) Imagine how the resurrection will further demonstrate our unity! At the end of the thousand years, the “things on the earth” will be subjected to a final test. Those proving faithful will be adopted as earthly “children of God.”—Rom. 8:21; Rev. 20:7, 8.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Ephesians 3:13) So I ask you not to give up on account of my tribulations in your behalf, for these mean glory for you.

w13 2/15 28 ¶15

Let Nothing Hinder You From Taking Hold of Glory

¹⁵ Our perseverance in doing Jehovah’s will helps others to take hold of glory. To the congregation in Ephesus, Paul wrote: “I ask you not to give up on account of these tribulations of mine in your behalf, for these mean glory for you.” (Eph. 3:13) In what sense did Paul’s tribulations “mean glory” for the Ephesians? Paul’s readiness to continue ministering to them despite trials demonstrated to the Ephesians that the privileges they enjoyed as Christians were weighty and of the highest conceivable value. Had Paul given up under tribulation, would that not have conveyed the message that their relationship with Jehovah, their ministry, and their hope were not valuable? Paul’s endurance exalted Christianity and demonstrated that discipleship is worth any sacrifice.

(Ephesians 3:19) and to know the love of the Christ, which surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness that God gives.

c/ 299 ¶21

“To Know the Love of the Christ”

²¹ The Greek term rendered “to know” means to know “practically, through experience.” When we show love the way Jesus did—unselfishly giving of ourselves in behalf of others, compassionately responding to their needs, forgiving them from our hearts—then we can genuinely appreciate his feelings. In this way, by experience we come “to know the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge.” And let us never forget that the more we become like Christ, the closer we will draw to the one whom Jesus perfectly imitated, our loving God, Jehovah.

Bible Reading

(Ephesians 1:1-14) Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through God's will, to the holy ones who are in Eph'e-sus and are faithful in union with Christ Jesus: ² May you have undeserved kindness and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in union with Christ, ⁴ as he chose us to be in union with him before the founding of the world, that we should be holy and unblemished before him in love. ⁵ For he foreordained us to be adopted as his own sons through Jesus Christ, according to his good pleasure and will, ⁶ in praise of his glorious undeserved kindness that he kindly bestowed on us by means of his beloved one. ⁷ By means of him we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one, yes, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his undeserved kindness. ⁸ This undeserved kindness he caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and understanding ⁹ by making known to us the sacred secret of his will. It is according to his good pleasure that he himself purposed ¹⁰ for an administration at the full limit of the appointed times, to gather all things together in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth. Yes, in him ¹¹ with whom we are in union and were assigned as heirs, having been foreordained according to the purpose of the one who accomplishes all things as he decides according to his will, ¹² so that we who have been first to hope in the Christ should serve for the praise of his glory. ¹³ But you also hoped in him after you heard the word of truth, the good news about your salvation. After you believed, you were sealed by means of him with the promised holy spirit, ¹⁴ which

is a token in advance of our inheritance, for the purpose of releasing God's own possession by a ransom, to his glorious praise.

JUNE 17-23

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | EPHESIANS 4-6

"Put On the Complete Suit of Armor From God"

(Ephesians 6:11-13) Put on the complete suit of armor from God so that you may be able to stand firm against the crafty acts of the Devil; ¹² because we have a struggle, not against blood and flesh, but against the governments, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places. ¹³ For this reason take up the complete suit of armor from God, so that you may be able to resist in the wicked day and, after you have accomplished everything, to stand firm.

w18.05 27 ¶1

Young Ones—Stand Firm Against the Devil

THE apostle Paul likened our life as Christians to that of soldiers engaged in hand-to-hand combat. Of course, the war we fight is spiritual, not literal. Even so, our enemies are real. Satan and the demons are skilled warriors with vast experience. At first glance, our prospects may seem bleak. Young Christians in particular may appear to be vulnerable. How can they hope to win against superhuman, wicked spirit forces? The fact is, young ones can win, and they are winning! Why? Because they "go on acquiring power in the Lord." But they do more than draw on God's power. They are dressed for battle. Like well-trained soldiers, they have "put on the complete suit of armor from God."
—Read Ephesians 6:10-12.

(Ephesians 6:14, 15) Stand firm, therefore, with the belt of truth fastened around

your waist, wearing the breastplate of righteousness,¹⁵ and having your feet shod in readiness to declare the good news of peace.

w18.05 28-29 ¶4, 7, 10

Young Ones—Stand Firm Against the Devil

⁴ Similarly, the truths we learn from God's Word protect us from the spiritual harm that false teachings cause. (John 8:31, 32; 1 John 4:1) And the more we love divine truths, the easier it is to carry our "breastplate," that is, to live by God's righteous standards. (Ps. 111: 7, 8; 1 John 5:3) In addition, when we have a clear understanding of the truths from God's Word, we can confidently stand our ground and defend them against opposers.—1 Pet. 3:15.

⁷ What an appropriate symbol of how Jehovah's righteous standards can protect our figurative heart! (Prov. 4:23) Just as a soldier would not swap a breastplate of iron for one made of an inferior metal, we would never want to exchange Jehovah's standards of what is right for our own. Our judgment is just too flawed to offer us the protection that we need. (Prov. 3:5, 6) Instead, we regularly check that the 'iron plates' Jehovah has given us are firmly fixed over our heart.

¹⁰ While the literal boots worn by Roman soldiers carried them into war, the symbolic footwear worn by Christians helps them deliver a message of peace. (Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:15) Even so, it takes courage to speak up when the opportunity arises. "I was afraid to witness to my classmates," says 20-year-old Bo. "I think I was embarrassed. Looking back, I don't know why I should have been. Now I'm happy to witness to my peers."

(Ephesians 6:16, 17) Besides all of this, take up the large shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the wicked one's burning arrows.¹⁷ Also, accept the helmet of

salvation, and the sword of the spirit, that is, God's word,

w18.05 29-31 ¶13, 16, 20

Young Ones—Stand Firm Against the Devil

¹³ Some of the "burning arrows" that Satan might fire at you are lies about Jehovah—that He does not care about you and that you are unlovable. Nineteen-year-old Ida struggles with feelings of unworthiness. She says, "I have often felt that Jehovah isn't close to me and that he doesn't want to be my Friend." How does she deal with this attack? "The meetings are a giant boost to my faith," says Ida. "I used to sit there and never comment, thinking that nobody would want to hear what I had to say. Now, though, I prepare for the meetings and try to answer two or three times. It's difficult, but I feel much better when I do. And the brothers and sisters are so encouraging. I always come away from the meetings knowing that Jehovah loves me."

¹⁶ Just as a helmet protects a soldier's brain, our "hope of salvation" protects our mind, our thinking ability. (1 Thess. 5:8; Prov. 3:21) Hope keeps us focused on God's promises and helps us see problems in the right perspective. (Ps. 27:1, 14; Acts 24:15) But if we want our "helmet" to be effective, we must wear it on our head, not carry it in our hand.

²⁰ Paul likens God's Word to a sword that Jehovah has given us. But we must learn to use it skillfully when defending our beliefs—or when adjusting our own thinking. (2 Cor. 10:4, 5; 2 Tim. 2:15) How can you improve your skills? Sebastian, aged 21, says: "I've been writing down one verse from every chapter in my Bible reading. I'm compiling a list of my favorite verses. That way, I feel more in tune with Jehovah's thinking." Daniel, quoted earlier, says: "As I do my Bible reading, I pick verses that I think will help people I meet in the ministry. I've found that people respond well when they

see that you are passionate about the Bible and are doing your best to help them.”

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Ephesians 4:30) Also, do not be grieving God’s holy spirit, with which you have been sealed for a day of releasing by ransom.

it-1 1128 ¶3

Holiness

Holy spirit. Jehovah’s active force, or spirit, is subject to his control and always accomplishes his purpose. It is clean, pure, sacred, and set apart for God’s good use. Therefore it is called “holy spirit” and “the spirit of holiness.” (Ps 51:11; Lu 11:13; Ro 1:4; Eph 1:13) The holy spirit operating on a person is a force for holiness or cleanness. Any unclean or wrong practice constitutes a resisting or “grieving” of that spirit. (Eph 4:30) Though impersonal in itself, the holy spirit is expressive of God’s holy personality and therefore can be ‘grieved.’ The practice of any wrongdoing tends to “put out the fire of the spirit.” (1Th 5:19) If such practice is continued, God’s holy spirit is, in effect, made to “feel hurt,” and this may result in God’s changing into an enemy of the rebellious one. (Isa 63:10) A person grieving the holy spirit may go so far as to blaspheme against it, which sin Jesus Christ said will not be forgiven in the present system of things nor in that to come. —Mt 12:31, 32; Mr 3:28-30; see SPIRIT.

(Ephesians 5:5) For you know this, recognizing it for yourselves, that no sexually immoral person or unclean person or greedy person, which means being an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of the Christ and of God.

it-1 1006 ¶2

Greed

Becomes Manifest in Actions. Greediness will manifest itself in some overt act that will

reveal the individual’s wrong and inordinate desire. The Bible writer James tells us that wrong desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin. (Jas 1:14, 15) The greedy person can therefore be detected by his actions. The apostle Paul states that being a greedy person means being an idolater. (Eph 5:5) In his greedy desire such a one makes the thing desired his god, putting it above the service and worship of the Creator.—Ro 1:24, 25.

Bible Reading

(Ephesians 4:17-32) So this is what I say and bear witness to in the Lord, that you should no longer go on walking just as the nations also walk, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are in darkness mentally and alienated from the life that belongs to God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the insensitivity of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having gone past all moral sense, they gave themselves over to brazen conduct to practice every sort of uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰ But you did not learn the Christ to be like this, ²¹ if, indeed, you heard him and were taught by means of him, just as truth is in Jesus. ²² You were taught to put away the old personality that conforms to your former course of conduct and that is being corrupted according to its deceptive desires. ²³ And you should continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude, ²⁴ and should put on the new personality that was created according to God’s will in true righteousness and loyalty. ²⁵ Therefore, now that you have put away deceit, each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, because we are members belonging to one another. ²⁶ Be wrathful, but do not sin; do not let the sun set while you are still angry; ²⁷ do not give the Devil an opportunity. ²⁸ Let the one who steals steal no more; rather,

let him do hard work, doing good work with his hands, so that he may have something to share with someone in need. ²⁹ Let a rotten word not come out of your mouth, but only what is good for building up as the need may be, to impart what is beneficial to the hearers. ³⁰ Also, do not be grieving God's holy spirit, with which you have been sealed for a day of releasing by ransom. ³¹ Put away from yourselves every kind of malicious bitterness, anger, wrath, screaming, and abusive speech, as well as everything injurious. ³² But become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you.

JUNE 24-30

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | PHILIPPIANS 1-4

“Do Not Be Anxious Over Anything”

(Philippians 4:6) Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God;

w17.08 10 ¶10

“The Peace of God . . . Surpasses All Understanding”

¹⁰ What can help us not to be anxious over anything and to experience “the peace of God”? Paul's words to the Philippians show us that the antidote to worry is prayer. So when we are anxious, we need to turn our worries into prayers. **(Read 1 Peter 5:6, 7.)** Pray to Jehovah in full faith, knowing that he cares for you. Pray to him “with thanksgiving,” remembering your blessings. Our confidence in him will be strengthened when we keep in mind that he can “do more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive.” —Eph. 3:20.

(Philippians 4:7) and the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.

w17.08 10 ¶17

“The Peace of God . . . Surpasses All Understanding”

⁷ No doubt when the brothers in Philippi read Paul's letter to them, they remembered what had happened to him and how none of them had expected Jehovah to take action in the way that he did. What lesson was Paul teaching them? Basically: Do not worry. Pray, and then you will receive the peace of God. But notice that “the peace of God . . . surpasses all understanding.” What does that mean? Some translators render this expression “surpasses all our dreams” or “excels all human planning.” Paul was, in effect, saying that “the peace of God” is more wonderful than can be imagined. So although from a human viewpoint we may not see a way out of our problems, Jehovah does, and he can do the unexpected.—**Read 2 Peter 2:9.**

w17.08 12 ¶16

“The Peace of God . . . Surpasses All Understanding”

¹⁶ What results when we receive this “peace of God that surpasses all understanding”? The Scriptures answer by saying that it ‘will guard our hearts and our mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.’ (Phil. 4:7) The original-language word for “guard” was a military expression. It referred to a garrison of troops that was assigned to guard a fortified city in ancient times. Philippi was such a city. The inhabitants of Philippi slept soundly at night, knowing that soldiers were guarding the gates of their city. In a similar manner, when we have “the peace of God,” our hearts and minds remain at rest. We know that Jehovah cares for us and wants us to succeed. (1 Pet. 5:10) That knowl-

edge guards us from becoming overwhelmed by anxiety or discouragement.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Philippians 2:17) However, even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and the holy service to which your faith has led you, I am glad and I rejoice with all of you.

it-2 528 ¶5

Offerings

Drink offerings. Drink offerings were presented along with most of the other offerings, especially after the Israelites had settled in the Promised Land. (Nu 15:2, 5, 8-10) This consisted of wine (“intoxicating liquor”) and was poured out on the altar. (Nu 28:7, 14; compare Ex 30:9; Nu 15:10.) The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians at Philippi: “If I am being poured out like a drink offering upon the sacrifice and public service to which faith has led you, I am glad.” Here he used the figure of a drink offering, expressing his willingness to expend himself in behalf of fellow Christians. (Php 2:17) Shortly before his death, he wrote to Timothy: “I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the due time for my releasing is imminent.”—2Ti 4:6.

(Philippians 3:11) to see if at all possible I may attain to the earlier resurrection from the dead.

w07 1/1 26-27 ¶5

“The First Resurrection”—Now Under Way!

⁵Next, anointed members of “the Israel of God” must join the Lord Jesus Christ in heavenly glory, where they will “always be with the Lord.” (Galatians 6:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:17) That event is called “the earlier resurrection” or “the first resurrection.” (Philippians 3:10, 11; Revelation 20:6) When that resurrection is completed, the time will be at hand for millions

to be resurrected back to the earth with the prospect of gaining everlasting life in Paradise. Hence, whether our hope is heavenly or earthly, we have a keen interest in “the first resurrection.” What kind of resurrection is it? When does it occur?

Bible Reading

(Philippians 4:10-23) I rejoice greatly in the Lord that now at last you have renewed your concern for me. Though you were concerned about me, you lacked opportunity to show it. ¹¹ Not that I am saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be self-sufficient regardless of my circumstances. ¹² I know how to be low on provisions and how to have an abundance. In everything and in all circumstances I have learned the secret of both how to be full and how to hunger, both how to have an abundance and how to do without. ¹³ For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, you did well to share with me in my tribulation. ¹⁵ In fact, you Phi-lip’pi-ans also know that after you first learned the good news, when I departed from Mac-e-do’ni-a, not a congregation shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone; ¹⁶ for while I was in Thes-sa-lo-ni’ca, you sent something to me for my need not just once but twice. ¹⁷ Not that I am looking for a gift, but I want the fruitage that brings more credit to your account. ¹⁸ However, I have everything I need and even more. I am fully supplied, now that I have received from E-paph-ro-di’tus what you sent, a sweet fragrance, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. ¹⁹ In turn my God will fully supply all your need according to his riches in glory by means of Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen. ²¹ Give my greetings

to every holy one in union with Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send you their greetings. ²² All the holy ones, but especially those of the household of Caesar, send you their greetings. ²³ The undeserved kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ be with the spirit you show.