

Russell Pollock - Our Spiritual Blessings

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Ever since the announcement that we made on Sunday on January 2, that we then learned and Brother Pollock would be with us on the 19th, we have looked forward to this opportunity of blessing that the Lord would have in store for us, and then we learned last Saturday that Brother Fay would also be with us on today. Why then we have looked even more so to this day, where we have these two brethren who would be with us and could serve us in a way that would be an encouragement to us. I'm sure that we appreciate their service and the harvest work and particularly their labors and love on behalf of the Bible Answers program, which is certainly having the Lord's blessing and a great witness that the Lord's people have to present to the people. We have enjoyed our morning session and we are looking now to the Lord's blessing upon the ministry of Brother Pollock, who has served us on many occasions.

We have been blessed with his presence with us on previous occasions. Now we would like to introduce the subject and Brother Pollock has suggested the topic. Our spiritual blessings.

Thank you, Brother Bleachers. It's nice to be here this morning, isn't it, Brother?

Nice to begin every week in fellowship with the Lord and in communion with his children and talking about the things of the truth, and I have some love to bring to you. This morning, just before I left for the snowy east, the Los Angeles class sent their warm love to the brethren in New York and to you because they knew that I was planning to be with you. Very glad to be able to extend that love, and also the West Los Angeles class where I'm leading the study this quarter, wish to be remembered to you.

And it me a great deal of pleasure to extend Pauline's love. She doesn't come east in the wintertime very often, as you know, but she wanted me to convey her love to you, and there's another family out in Los Angeles that was very insistent that I give their love to you. I think you know who. The Ribas wanted to tell you all how much they're enjoying California and how they will enjoy seeing you out there at any time.

I told them I would tell you that I'm going to. The apostle wrote while he was in prison in Rome, and this epistle is another evidence of the fact that God can make the wrath of man to result in praise to him. Because being in prison, the Apostle Paul had the time to write this epistle and other epistles, and thus preserve to us through the inspired word of God admonitions and exhortations that have been A wonderful help to the Church of God. The Epistle of the Ephesians magnifies the Church's calling, and it also magnifies the transcendent grace of God through Jesus Christ as it is felt in our lives.

And I think that if I were to try to tell you this morning in just a few words, what the main theme or the central thought of this letter to the Ephesians was, I would state that in this letter the Apostle Paul has endeavored to make a complete statement of the whole purpose of God with respect to the human race. In other words, I think that this epistle to the Ephesians comes closer to giving an outline of the divine plan of the ages, as it was understood by the Apostle Paul, than any of his other epistles. We find in this letter, of course, the basis of our salvation, and that our salvation is through our Lord Jesus Christ. We find also the call of the Church from all peoples and nations and tongues, and we also find here an emphasis on the subject of restitution, a subject that is very dear to the hearts of us all.

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All of these that I have mentioned are found and emphasized in this Epistle. So now, with those few words of introduction to the book, because of so much to be said concerning what the Epistle, the first chapter. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God to the saints, which you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. I am going to read principally from the Authorized Version, although I may refer to other translations as we go along.

But here again, as he has done in other epistles, the Apostle Paul emphasizes that he speaks as an apostle, that he is an apostle Jesus Christ, that he is an apostle, because it was God's will that he be an apostle to declare things to the Church of God. Now, at first, when we read that this Epistle is written to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful of Christ Jesus, we might think that two classes are referred to here, that is, to the saints and to the faithful. But of course, we know that such is not the case. I like the way Moffat reduces these two expressions to one sentence, and he says, to the saints who are faithful in Jesus Christ.

And as we read those words, we realize that this epistle, while it was first read by the saints at Ephesus, that it was written to a far wider group of consecrated people than those who lived in Ephesus that is, it is written to the saints, it is written to the consecrated, it is written to the faithful believers, it is written to those who are in the truth.

It was written for you and for me, and it is only as we are able and as truth people, we are able to take the statements of the epistles and make a personal application of them to our own lives that we are able to get the full value and the full force and the full beauty of the message that the Lord gives us through these epistles, and I like the way that the pastor expressed it. He says, those who cannot think for themselves cannot apply to themselves the precious promises of this Epistle. I know that it might be easy to apply all of the promises and exhortations of this epistle to to the Ephesians, but we're to do more than that.

We are to apply these lessons to ourselves. Verse 2 says, Grace and peace be with you. Grace from God our Father, and as we read this epistle, we find that this word grace is a very dominant one as the apostle gives his message. I think that I have spoken to you here on the book of Philippians, and how when the apostle wrote to the Philippians, he had one word to which he referred time and again, and that was rejoice.

And again I say rejoice, and the theme of that Epistle was that we should be rejoicing Christians. That's the way in which that expression that is common to our understanding was born, because Paul wrote to the Philippians, but when he wrote to the Ephesians, he emphasized the word grace time and again. I think, if I counted correctly, 13 times, at least 13 times in this Epistle, this word grace is used. Grace is a gift.

It is a gift that is bestowed upon you by our Heavenly Father. Grace can be described as the unmerited favor of God, and I think that's one of the things that we should feel in our Christian lives, and that is that we are a recipient of the unmerited favor of God because we know that none of us can be worthy or can merit what the Lord has done for us. But we are recipients of his grace. The Bible says this grace wherein we stand, we stand in grace.

It is the standing of righteousness. It is the standing that we have of justification that is made possible through our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 5:1 2. A text familiar to us all combines these two words, grace and peace. It says, therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God

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through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by Faith into this grace, into this unmerited favor wherein we stand.

Therefore, grace and peace are used in describing our standing before our Heavenly Father, the favor made possible by the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, and our faith in that blood, as we have evidence, evidenced it through consecration to God.

Of course, Paul was not a Trinitarian, and in verse three he speaks of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that is quite specific, and I am sure that the Trinitarians wish he wouldn't say that so often. But through his writings he does constantly repeat the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But nevertheless, this gem of truth that dispels the Trinitarian theory is but a byproduct of the beautiful verse of divine revelation.

Ephesians 1:3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all earthly blessings, life, health, strength, clothing, warm homes, beautiful halls in which we meet.

These are all wonderful blessings. But these aren't the blessings that the Lord is speaking of here. They are things to be appreciated. I think every day every one of us thank the Lord for the amount of blessing that we receive in temporal things. But nevertheless, the text doesn't say that.

It says, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Can you and I bless God? Isn't it God that blesses us? Well, the word here, as you know, should be praise, and we can all praise God. We can all praise him for his grace and his unmerited favor.

And again we come to an expression that we often hear, praise him for his grace and favor, and these verses of Scripture is the basis upon which that expression has come. Certainly we have every reason to praise the Lord every Sunday morning. But how about Monday morning? And how about Tuesday night?

And how about Wednesday in the middle of the day? Ah, yes, you name the time, and we know that we should praise him for his grace and favor because he is worthy, and in this text of Scripture, it says that we should praise him because of the spiritual blessings that we have received from Him. That is, the blessings that have come to us that are beyond temporal blessings.

What are spiritual blessings anyway? Our spiritual blessings, you could say, are the Holy Spirit given blessings that we enjoy. They are the blessings that we could not enjoy unless we first partook of the Holy Spirit of God, and because the Lord has given us of His Spirit, we are able to appreciate these blessings that are of the Spirit and by the Spirit of God. That is the blessings that come to us through our possession of the Holy Spirit, these are spiritual blessings.

They're unseen for the most part, but they are the eternal blessings of the truth and of our fellowship, connection with the truth, and note in this text, they are the same blessings as those enjoyed by the ones who live in heaven. Now, I want you to look that up. You look it up and you'll find that that is exactly what he is saying. That through the Holy Spirit given to us, we enjoy blessings as those do who are in heavenly places.

What are these blessings which come through the anointing of the Holy Spirit? Communion with God undoubtedly, is one of them. The blessing of understanding spiritual things is another one of them. The blessing of peace, that is reconciliation with God is another one of them. The blessing of being able to stand in the unmerited favor of God is another of these blessings.

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You know, when we take time to analyze some of these taken for granted texts of Scripture, we learn something of the depths of meaning that is contained in the inspired word of God, and as we do gain an understanding of the depth of the Word that has been given to us for our admonition and our help, we are lost in wonder, love and praise. Now let us go on. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the richness of his grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. So therefore, in these verses the apostle continues to tell us not only that God has blessed us, but he also tells us of what those blessings consist.

He also tells us how we are blessed, blessed of God. He has blessed us by choosing us to be his children. That's right. That's one of our spiritual blessings, you know, is our call out of darkness and light, the call out of the kingdom of this world and of the kingdom of his dear Son. That's a spiritual blessing.

It's not extended to everyone in all the world. It is only extended to a little flock, and you and I are included in those who are thus blessed.

The Heavenly Father, that beautiful talk this morning, described to us the goodness and the greatness of our God. But nevertheless, that great Heavenly Father has chosen you and me to inherit spiritual life, a privilege that is restricted to only a few in Verse five, we have the word adoption. However, as you noticed, I substituted the word sonship for adoption, and I think you, as Bible students, realize that that was properly done. Rotherham says in love, marking us out beforehand unto sonship through Jesus Christ, unto himself.

How can you and I become sons of God? He tells us how. How can we in our perfection be looked upon as holy by a righteous God? How is that possible? Well, he tells us how.

How can we, who have so many blemishes.

And I want to read verse four again, because I didn't read it as I should have read it, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love. Blemish is the word and not blame. Blame is a poor translation here. But nevertheless, how can we, who are possessed of so many blemishes, stand before God as being without blemish of any kind? How is that possible?

Now he tells us how. He simply says that that is possible because we are accepted in the Beloved. There's the whole answer. Simple, isn't it? But very necessary.

We are made accepted to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Acceptable through faith, yes, of course. But acceptable as sons through Jesus Christ, and this is the way that you and I have been made accepted of God through the beloved, and that's a spiritual blessing.

Verse 7 reads, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the richness of his grace. You notice, I am sure, how this word grace comes in in whom we have redemption, and he presents that as one of our spiritual blessings. The distinction, of course, we make, and must make between the word redemption and the word ransom, there is a difference. Our Lord's death is the ransom.

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His perfect human life was the ransom in the sense of compensation or a corresponding price. It is the application of the merit of the ransom that affects our release from Adamic condemnation. This is redemption. Thus redemption comes as a result of the ransom based upon the ransom, and through redemption we receive the benefits of. Of the ransom.

So when we are made accepted in the Beloved, when Christ's merit is applied to us, because through faith we have consecrated ourselves to God, we are delivered from Adamic condemnation. That's the only reason why any of us could be at any time delivered from Adamic condemnation. We are forgiven our sins. We stand holy and without blemish before God. In other words, we are righteous before God because we have been released from Adamic condemnation.

We are justified without blemish in his sight. We are accepted in the Beloved, and thus God's grace is manifest in our redemption, and the apostle says that this is one of our spiritual blessings, and it is a spiritual blessing. You know, when we get talking like this and we realize how wide a point is expressed in so few words, you think, why not stop just right here and develop that point? But you can't always do that.

So we go to verses 9 and 10. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth even in him.

These two verses possibly are the most important verses in the whole epistle to the Ephesians. In my mind they parallel Acts 3, 1921, proving the great divine doctrine of restitution. In Acts 3, 1921, you will remember Peter presents as his proof of the doctrine of restitution the mouth of all God's holy prophets, and every one of us as Bible students lean on that expression as the basis of our faith. Restitution.

All God's holy prophets believed it, therefore we should believe it.

However, here Paul presents as his proof of restitution in that God has purposed it in his own heart. Well, that's a pretty good reason for believing it too, isn't it? That's pretty good reason for believing it. God purpose it in his own heart. He also says that this great event is made known unto his faithful saints.

What does that mean? That means an appreciation of restitution is one of the spiritual blessings that he said we were to enjoy. Oh, you say restitution. That's for the world, isn't it? An appreciation of restitution according to the word of God.

The appreciation of restitution to the extent that it causes us to spend time and effort and means, or whatever we have in the proclamation of the kingdom of God. That appreciation is for the saints of God, and is one of their spiritual blessings. What is the mystery of God's will that he has purposed in himself? That redemption is to the church alone? Oh, no.

That redemption is for all.

Dispensation means divine arrangement. Dispensation means divine economy. Here the apostle envisions a series of epochs or ages, and when the last epoch dawns, as he puts it, in the fulness of times, the will of God will have been accomplished. The divine arrangement concerning redemption will have become an ultimate fact.

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God within his heart has purposed a restoration to that former condition, when all things were in unity with God, when all things were perfect. We know that this unity was broken by the introduction of sin, and the apostle is saying that this unity between God and man is going to be restored through the reign of Jesus Christ, a truth that is believed by so few, a truth that has been entrusted to us. When that is accomplished, there will be one kingdom on earth and in heaven, and unity and perfection will be restored, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him. Surely that will be cause for jubilation.

Surely that will be the time when. When God is all in all.

So therefore is restitution important? I think so. But the reason I think so is because God thought so. Certainly God purposed it in his heart.

God revealed it to those who. To whom he calls his Son.

God, through the Apostle Paul and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit said that this subject of restitution and our appreciation of it is a spiritual blessing, therefore lets you and me realize and continue to realize that its importance. This unity of the Divine family is based upon a unity of blessing and understanding of the divine plan of the ages. 11th verse. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him that worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ, in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of the purchased possession of unto the praise of his glory. Here we have introduced another of our spiritual blessings.

That is our inheritance. Our inheritance is a spiritual blessing. Verse 11. It says that we have obtained it. But you notice how this is qualified in verses 13 and 14.

In verses 13 and 14 that we are told we are now sealed with the Holy Spirit, something that was promised to us by our Master, that if he goes, the Holy Spirit would come.

Holy Spirit seals the child of God, that is, the Holy Spirit in our lives is that which stamps us as being genuine. The Holy Spirit is that which attests to our sonship. But the Holy Spirit is but an earnest of our inheritance. That is, it is only a pledge.

A pledge that if we are faithful, we are going to receive our full inheritance, our future inheritance and our future inheritance we know is the divine nature. In my humble opinion, this is one of the texts which proves that we are begotten to our inheritance. Remember that our inheritance is the divine nature. Another text that seems to me teaches the Same Thing as One Peter, 1:23, where Peter tells us that we are begotten again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

Then again you remember it says, grieve not the Holy Spirit whereby we are sealed. That's also important. The only way that we can do that is by taking account of our thoughts and words and actions, that our words may be unctuous and blessed to all. These are the only ways in which we can respond to the spiritual blessing of having a heavenly inheritance. That's the only way we can demonstrate our appreciation of being called out of darkness into this marvelous light.

Verse 15.

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Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding, being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance. In the saints. Here again is a description of temporal blessings. Here is a description of some of the spiritual blessings that every one of us have and appreciate.

The apostle Paul knew that the Ephesian brethren had love for all the family of God. In another place, Paul says that it is easy to love some of the brethren, but that it takes the Holy Spirit, it takes faithfulness to love all of the brethren some of the time. No, all of the brethren all the time. That's where the test comes in, and you know that as well as I do. But when he recognized in the Ephesian Church that true spirit love, the Bible says he gave thanks to God in prayer.

And you know, it is encouraging to all of us to realize that some are mentioning us in prayer. For instance, just as an example, two of you today, since I came into this building, have said, hello, Brother Pollack, I prayed for you this morning. That's a little thing, and yet at the same time, it is one of the greatest privileges that we have of praying for each other. The apostle Paul did it.

And if we do it sometimes, singling out those who we may have an especial effort to express love toward at the time, it will have its result in love. But he not only thank God for them, he asked the Father to reward their faithfulness, and again you notice that he says, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and again I say, I know that the Trinitarians wish that he wouldn't say that, but he continues to do it. But he asked the God of our Father.

He asked the God of our Lord Jesus Christ to give them wisdom and understanding in order that they might gain a personal knowledge of God.

Would you like a deeper personal knowledge of God? How can you? How can I increase my appreciation of a personal knowledge of God that can only come through spiritual vision, that can only come through what is termed here the eyes of our heart? Only by the Holy Spirit enlightening our mind only by taking advantage of the spiritual blessing of wisdom and understanding, through the knowledge of his love toward us. That's the only way.

But it is the way, and only thus can we know the hope of his calling. Only thus can we know the riches of the glory of of his inheritance in the saints. The glory of his inheritance in the saints. God's heritage will be Christ and the Church exalted to the divine plane, enjoying his nature, God's new creation, God's heritage to be able to enjoy the fellowship of a whole family.

And therefore it is his inheritance. As far as our inheritance is concerned, sometimes we think of our inheritance only being on the other side of the veil. But that is not really true. This inheritance that we have applies right now to joint heirship applies to our relationship with him on this side of the veil just as much as it will on the other side of the veil. If we suffer with him, we'll be glorified with Him.

If we die with him, we shall live with him. If we suffer with him, we shall reign with Him. If we are united with him in his death, we will be united with him also in his resurrection to me. All this is the basis of that strong conviction that we share that the Church, the body of Christ, shares with him in the sin offering as part of our present inheritance, and that it is only as we are faithful in our present inheritance that we will be able to enjoy the wonders and the glories of our future inheritance. This

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is the inheritance that he shares with the faithful family of God.

Hebrews 1:4 reads, being made much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they, surely he would not call us to one inheritance, but to beget us to another. Or so it seems to me. But let us go on to verse 19, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us were to believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

These verses continue, of course, the same theme. He wants our spiritual vision to be keen. He wants us to be wise in the things of God. He wants us to have a personal knowledge of him, and if we have a personal knowledge of God, it will include the understanding of his own mighty power.

But let us just say it the way the Apostle Paul says it. The exceeding greatness of his power to us, Ward, who believe now, how great is that power? Oh, you say that's easy. It says exceeding great. That's right.

That is what it says. Now, how great is exceeding great?

How great is his power? Well, you say according to this verse, it raised Jesus Christ from the dead. It exalted our Lord Jesus to his own right hand. It changed nature from earthly to divine. It placed our Master far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named.

You mean even above angels? Oh, yes. Far above angels, principalities, yes. It doesn't matter which one we name. We know that regardless of how little we understand of the spiritual host, we know that he has been exalted above them all because of the working of God's mighty power, that in all things he might have preeminence.

Why did Paul pray that? The Ephesians, or should I say you and I in Detroit this morning? Why did the apostle pray that we might understand what God's power did for Jesus Christ? Because that's really what he's doing, if you read closely. Because if we understand what God's power did for Jesus Christ, we'll be able to catch a glimpse, at least of the exceeding greatness of his power to us, Ward, who believe.

And that's the important lesson. That's the important lesson. Because then we grasp the exceeding greatness of his power to me, and you grasp the exceeding greatness of his power in your life, and that's the important lesson.

We have that same power to aid us in our calling. We have that same power to help us to attain our full inheritance or our future inheritance. The power of God, then in our lives becomes one of our spiritual blessings.

And if you have ever felt the power of God in your life, and every one of us have, we realize that we've been blessed of God, and in every instance, when we feel the power of God in our lives. We should take time to thank God for the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe. Let us depend upon it not upon human might, certainly not upon human strength, of either mind or body. But by my power, saith the Lord, verse 22, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

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We are glad that we are not our head. We are glad that he is our head. We are glad, however, that we are members of his body, and we are glad that we realize that in these days, when there is so much godlessness, that the body of Christ is a real, live, vital organism that has a work to do. If we think of the body of Christ in any other way, we lose the beauty of the strength that comes from the head into the body members.

And Christ is our head, and we are the members of his body, and we are so glad that the time is near when all things are to be put under his feet. But we are glad also that we have the opportunity now in various ways, to show forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into light. We're so glad that in various ways we have the privilege as members of the body, to declare the glories of the coming kingdom, even though we know that the time is soon here when all things will be put under his feet, and when that happens, we also shall be a part in the age which is to come in bringing about the condition where it is written in the last sentence of the last verse of this chapter, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Because through the work Christ, the time will come when he will hand over the kingdom to God, even the Father, and then God will be all in all. Then man will have been returned to his former possession, and then every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess.

They will enjoy many temporal blessings. But you and I now have the privilege of enjoying spiritual blessings, such as they do who live in the heavenlies. The Lord is good.

Thank you, Brother Pollock, for that very interesting study on the first chapter of Ephesians on our spiritual blessings. We have a few announcements to make at this time, like to remind the brethren that next Sunday is Convention Sunday beginning at 10am and our speakers for the day will be Brother Patius from the Pittsburgh Ecclesia and Brother Penrose from the Columbus, Ohio Ecclesia. We were very happy and grateful for the love and greetings brought to us through Brother Fay and also Brother Pollock, and I'm sure that we would like them to return our love and greetings to their Ecclesiastes and to the brethren that they may meet before they get to the Ecclesiast, and particularly also to Sister Fay and to Sister Pollock.

All those in favor of this, would you please raise your hand? Oh, and the Ribas we had all in favor to please raise your hands. Now, while we're talking about the Ribas, it was brought to our attention that the Ted Majesky family had the opportunity to visit the brethren of California, and they also bring to us the love and greetings of the Ribas and also of Sister Ripper, which to us here is better known as Sister Krupa. We appreciated that.

Loving greetings. Also, there is a need of accommodations for Brother Ed Jesuit, who will serve on our Memorial Convention program. If anyone is able to have this privilege, would you please see me after the meeting? Brother Ed Jesuit for the pre Memorial convention, which is March 21st and 22nd. Now, at the last ecclesia business meeting that we had, there was a discussion on an additional meeting.

And arrangements have been made for an additional meeting in a northeast area. This meeting will begin on February 3rd, which is the first Monday in February, and it will be held at the home of Sister Cret. The address is 1123313 Mile Road and Warren, Michigan. This information is also on the bullet, Sister Craig.

Well, I've got the wrong one. In the secretary's book 3 01.

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You've all heard that from her. I'll try to get it corrected for the bulletin board then.

And also beginning the first Monday in February, all the mundi meeting places, that is the three of them, will begin a special study on the Passover or the memorial in the sixth volume, and that will begin on February 3rd and continue until the memorial. I think that that just about concludes the announcements that we have, and we will conclude the services today by singing hymn number 194, rising at the last verse, 19 4.