HEBRON: Challenge to Faith
“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.”  

_Hebrews 11:13,14._

**WRITTEN OVER 100 YEARS AGO**

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“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17
THE APOCALYPSE IN THE PROPHETS

THE DAY OF VENGEANCE & REDEMPTION

By John Thomas

The Work of the Second Angel (Revelation 14:6-8)

Eureka Volume 3

The “day of vengeance” in which the Great Shepherd who is a priest upon his throne (Zech. 6:13) punishes the goats, is also “the year of his redeemed”—Isaiah 63:4. He is the redeemer of the two classes of mankind; these are first, “his brethren” whom he has taken out from the nations for his name (Acts 14:14); and secondly, the many nations who shall be joined to Him as his people—Zechariah 2:11. Of this second class are the twelve tribes of the house of Jacob. The nation of Israel is to be the first-born, or chief son of the national family, being the beloved nation for the fathers’ sake—Romans 11:28. The first class are redeemed from the earth, and stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, and follow him in all his wars and enterprises “whithersoever he goeth.” The redemption of the second class is the work of the Eternal Power through Christ and his brethren. “He saves the tents of Judah first,” and strengthens Judah’s house (Zechariah 12:7, 10:7); and then saves the house of Joseph, or the ten tribes of the kingdom of Ephraim. This salvation or redemption of Jacob is developed in the Jubilee, when “the Great Trumpet is blown” against the goats; and all Israelites are invited to “return every man to his possession.”

Israel “Delivered”

The day of the second and third angels is “a time of trouble” to all nations—to Israel as well as the rest; but there is this difference with respect to them, expressed in the declaration to Daniel that “at that time thy people shall be delivered every one that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel was an Israelite and a saint. Hence his people are Israelites and saints, both of which classes are delivered in “the time of the end;” “when Yahweh shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning”—Isaiah 4:4. It is the day in which the captivity of Israel and Judah is to be brought again to their own land, consequent upon the breaking of the yoke of the House of Esau from off their neck, that foreigners may no more serve themselves of them; but that they may serve Yahweh their Elohim, and David their king, whom the Eternal Power hath already raised up for them in raising up the crucified “King of the Jews” from the dead.

But this great national redemption is only arrived at through a terribly severe refining process. It is styled in Joel, “the day of Yahweh, great and very terrible; and who can abide it?”—chapter 2:11. The goat nations will be unable to abide it; and all the dross of Jacob will be consumed. All the rebels will be purged out of the great army of resurrected dry bones, now scattered and “very dry” in all the countries of their dispersion where they are politically entombed; but in the time of the second and third angels, passing under the rod of discipline in the Wilderness of the peoples—Ezekiel 20:33-38; 37:1-14. The prophet Malachi asks the same question as Joel. “Who may abide,” saith he, “the day of his coming? And who shall stand when He (the Messenger of the Covenant) appeareth? For He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto Yahweh an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto Yahweh, as in the days of old, and as in former years”—ch. 1:1-4.

Judgment on Rome

This day so great and very terrible, is “the Hour of his Judgment” proclaimed by the first angel in midheaven (Rev. 14:6-7). The judgments or plagues inflicted are styled “torment with fire and brimstone;” and those who are tormented, “them who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the sign of his name.” They are the plagues which cause Babylon the great city to fall. She falls, because of her wickedness in church and state; and of her sanguinary and merciless oppression of the saints and witnesses of Jesus, and of all the Jews and others she has slain upon the earth—ch. 17:6; 18:24. Jeremiah contemplating the terribleness of these “latter days” says, “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith Yahweh Tz’vaoth, that I will break his yoke (the yoke of Esau’s house) from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of Jacob. But they shall serve Yahweh their Elohim, and David their king whom I will raise up unto them. Therefore, fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith Yahweh; neither be dismayed, O Israel; for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith Yahweh, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee, in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.”

Nations are political organizations of men: to make a full end of such is to dissolve and abolish all national bodies founded and built up by the violence and craftiness of the wicked. A full end is to be made of all the nations whither Yahweh has scattered the Jews. This declaration is fatal to the independence and political existence of the United States, as well as that of all nationalities. The Second and Third Angels, (of Rev. 14—Ed) which are identical with the Rainbowed Angel of the tenth chapter, in the great and terrible day of atonement execute this divine purpose of reducing mankind to a common and universal brotherhood; and of subjecting them to the imperial and regal sovereignty of Jesus and his Brethren. The Israelitish Nationality, however, is not destroyed. In this day of judgment, Israelites are “corrected in measure,” and the rebellious among them destroyed: but a remnant will survive the refining process of this terrible day, and its constituents will every man return to his possessions in the land of the Holy One of Israel. Because, therefore, for the sake of his name, “all they that devour Jacob shall be devoured; and all his adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity (ch. 13:10); and...
they that spoil him shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon him will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto Jacob, and I will heal him of his wounds; because they call Zion an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after. In the latter days Israel shall consider it" — Jeremiah 30.

“Governors of Judah”

Now the Lamb-Power, as the Man of war, Yahweh, will do all this after the example of Joshua in his war upon the Canaanites; which illustrates the manner in which Yahweh fought in the day of battle (Zech. 14:3). Christ Jesus, the King of the Jews, with the 144,000, as the commanders of the armies of Israel, are “the Holy Angels” and “the Lamb” in whose presence the worshippers of the beast and his image are tormented in the lake of fire burning with brimstone. As the prophet like unto Moses, he will serve these as the great lawgiver served Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, whose story is narrated in Deuteronomy chapters 3 & 4. When he opens his eyes upon the house of Judah, “he will make the governors of Judah (the Saints) like a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the peoples round about, on the right hand and on the left” (Zech. 12:6). Judah will then be the sword, and the bow, in the hand of the Lamb; and the house of Joseph, the ten tribes of the old Ephraim kingdom, His arrow which shall go forth as the lightning. When this bow is drawn, its arrows will be sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies; as it is written, (Zech. 9:12-16) “today do I declare that I will render double for thee; when I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece (the goats), and made thee (the Lamb) strong in thy sons, O Greece (the goats), and made thee (the Lamb Power in Zion) as the Zion, against thy sons, O Greece (the goats), and made thee (the Lamb) strong in thy sons, O Greece (the goats), and made thee (the Lamb)

They shall bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and room shall not be found for them—Daniel 2:35. When he opens his eyes upon the house of Judah, “he will make the governors of Judah (the Saints) like a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the peoples round about, on the right hand and on the left” (Zech. 12:6). Judah will then be the sword, and the bow, in the hand of the Lamb; and the house of Joseph, the ten tribes of the old Ephraim kingdom, His arrow which shall go forth as the lightning. When this bow is drawn, its arrows will be sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies; as it is written, (Zech. 9:12-16) “today do I declare that I will render double for thee; when I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece (the goats), and made thee (the Lamb Power in Zion) as the sword of a mighty man. And Yahweh shall be seen over them, and his arrow (Ephraim) shall go forth as the lightning: and Adonai Yahweh shall blow with a trumpet, and shall go forth with the whirlwinds of the south. And Yahweh Tz’vaoth shall defend them. And Yahweh their Elohim shall save them in that day as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land.” “And they shall be as mighty men who tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight because Yahweh is with them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off. And they of Ephraim shall be as a mighty man: yea, their children shall see it, and be glad. And I will hiss for them and gather them. And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries: and they shall live with their children, and turn again. I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and room shall not be found for them”—Zechariah 9 & 10.

Thus, on returning home from their dispersion after they stand upon their feet as a great army, they will have to fight their way through all the countries of the house of Esau. In this jubilee return, under the Second and Third Angels “the house of Jacob,” says Obadiah (verse 18-21), “shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau. For Saviours shall come up on Mount Zion (the Lamb with the 144,000) to judge the Mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be Yahweh’s.”

Edom (“Babylon”) Judged

In this way, Babylon and the goat-nations are “made to drink of the wine of the wrath of the Deity, prepared without mixture in the cup of his indignation.” Esau will have had the dominion over Jacob long enough; and the time will now have arrived to prove to mankind “that there is a God that judgeth in the earth.” Esau has lived by his sword, but not righteously. He crucified the king of Israel, persecuted and killed his brethren, corrupted the faith, trod under foot the Holy City forty and two months, and poured out the blood of Jacob like water upon the ground. But they who war against Zion and her sons “shall be as nothing, as a thing of nought.” Therefore, “fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith Yahweh, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains (or empires) and beat them small, and shalt make the hills (or smaller states) as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in Yahweh, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel”—Isaiah 41:11-16. This has never come to pass since it was recorded by the prophet; for hitherto Jacob has been under the heel of Esau, whose metallic image stands unbroken upon its feet of iron and miry clay. The work of the Second and Third Angels is to grind to powder the various metals of which it is composed; and to do the work so effectually that no place can be found for the things they represent—Daniel 2:35.
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Lessons from Levi

Northern Prophecy Day 2010
3:00pm, Saturday, 30th October 2010, God Willing
“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed”

CASTLEFORD CHRISTADELPHIAN HALL
Hartley Street, Castleford (off High Oxford St.)
Castleford, West Yorkshire, WF10 5DQ
Speakers: Simon Collard (Cambridge)
Andrew White (Rugby)
John Evans (Swansea)
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In 1929 Sir Leonard Woolley announced to the world “We have found the Flood.” Since that time the search for Noah’s Ark and the thirst for tangible evidence of its existence has been ongoing. Woolley’s findings occurred during an archaeological dig in the region of Ur of the Chaldea where several years had been spent searching for the tombs of the Sumerian kings; this had been the main focus of his work. However not content with the valuable discoveries in the tombs he insisted that the excavations should go deeper to ensure that they had exhausted the evidence for early civilization. Below the tombs Woolley found further evidence, but then suddenly the evidence abruptly stopped. Upon further examination the ground was pure clay, such as would normally have been deposited by water.

At first it was thought that the clay had been deposited by the flow of the River Euphrates, but this did not fit the evidence. Woolley decided to extend the depth of the shaft and to his surprise the clay extended to a depth of 3.75 meters (ten feet). Then as abruptly as the clay had appeared it suddenly ended and further evidence of civilization became apparent, although of an earlier period. The only satisfactory explanation was that a flood of enormous proportion had engulfed that region.

The period of the tombs has been identified as being between 2600-2400 BC; according to the Bible the flood encompassed the earth in 2348 BC. Can this be considered coincidence and what do we make of this evidence?

All kinds of objections have been presented against there being a flood similar to that described in the book of Genesis.

• The Flood couldn’t be universal; it had to be a local flood.
• It would be impossible for the ark to accommodate all the animals.
• The technology wasn’t around at that time to build such a vessel.
• Where did all the water come from and where did it go?
• If God exists how could he destroy every living thing?

These are not unreasonable questions but are we ready to accept the evidence?

A Universal Flood

The Biblical account teaches that the whole earth was affected by the Genesis flood. We read, “And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth, and every man; All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died” (Genesis 7:21-22).

Terms such as “all flesh” and “all in whose nostrils was the breath of life,” and again “all that was on dry land” certainly indicate that it was a universal phenomena. Nevertheless it has been argued that when the scriptures use the word “all” it does not necessarily mean everything. This is perfectly true, but each application must be determined by the context. For example we read that Adam called his wife Eve, “because she was the mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20). This comment would be recognized to mean all human life and obviously not the animals and birds. The Gospel of Luke records that prior to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ Rome issued a decree that “all the world should be taxed” (Luke 2:1). Again this obviously must be understood in the context of the Roman world. Genesis however is quite specific when describing the flood; it affected all living, breathing creatures that were on the land. This is confirmed in the New Testament when the apostle Peter wrote of this period saying, “Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished” (2 Peter 3:6); the world being a reference to the
Take the seed of all creatures aboard the ship.  

I boarded the ship and closed the door.  

I sent out a dove... The dove went, then came back, no resting-place appeared for it, so it returned.  

Then I sent out a raven... it was the waters receding, it ate, it flew about to and fro, it did not return.  

I made a libation on the peak of the mountain.

Surely describes the universal nature of the flood. Moreover we also read that the waters extended above the mountain tops approximately twenty two feet (Genesis 7:20). Whilst we may not know the exact topography of the earth at that time, we need to ask, in light of the fact that water finds its own level, what contained the water if the flood was local to that region?

Evidence for a worldwide flood and a global catastrophe is also supported by archaeology. Mass graveyards have been found throughout the world. New Mexico, Wyoming, Nebraska in the USA; Alberta, Canada; the Gobi Desert of Central Asia, Africa and Belgium all testify to vast populations of animals being trapped in fossil graveyards. In Siberia the mass remains of all kinds of reptiles and mammals have been found preserved in excellent condition. The positions of the skeletons were found to be pointing in the same direction, indicating that they were trying to escape from some catastrophe. The bodies of thousands of woolly mammals have been found frozen with food in their mouths and stomachs suggesting that they died suddenly, becoming frozen before decomposition could set in.

**Polystrate Fossils**

Perhaps one of the most significant pieces of evidence for a universal flood is that of polystrate fossils; these are usually fossil trees that are buried upright and are found projecting through multiple layers of strata such as sandstone, limestone and shale. Whilst they vary in size some of these fossil trees have been found over 24 meters (80 feet) in length. Under normal conditions dead trees eventually fall over and rot. The time it takes for a tree to rot depends on a number of factors. A red cedar tree may take a century to completely decompose. Pacific silver fir will totally decay in about 50 years. Polystrate fossils contradict this natural process and reinforce the argument that some form of catastrophe overtook the earth encapsulating the trees in their upright position. A typical example of this can be found in the small scale catastrophe of Mount St. Helens, which erupted in 1980; trees were torn from the ground and deposited in the mud at the bottom of Spirit Lake; some have been found in a vertical position, some upside down. Polystrate fossil trees are also visible in Yellowstone Park, projecting vertically out of the ground. The Genesis flood supplies the evidence for polystrate fossils.

**Could Noah's Ark accommodate all the animals?**

Noah's ark was a very large floating vessel by any standard. It was 137.2 meters (450 feet) long, 22.8 meters (75 feet) wide and 13.7 meters (45 feet) high. This makes the ark about half the length of the Queen Mary II.

The ark had to be large enough to carry two of every unclean animal and seven of every clean animal (Genesis 7:2) and this included all sizes from the insect to the larger land mammals. Plus additional space would be required for the food storage. The ark was constructed with three stories (Genesis 6:16) and if we assume that it was a vertical structure, each floor would be 3128 m² (33,750 feet²) — the equivalent of 7 basketball courts per floor. Some years ago a book entitled *The Genesis Flood* was published, in which the authors estimated that no more than 35,000 individual vertebrate
animals needed to be housed in the ark. Since that time others have concluded that as few as 16,000 animal species would be required to preserve God’s creation. The Bible says nothing about marine life which makes up a large portion of creation, but is careful to record that it was “all flesh” that lived on “dry land,” or that which was upon “the face of the ground” (Genesis 7:22-23) that was preserved in the ark.

Those that argue that the ark could not sustain the larger animals, such as the elephant, the giraffe or the dinosaur, surely overlook the possibility that animals in their infant state could easily have been brought into the ark. Unfortunately human beings tend to formulate opinions without considering all the possibilities. Neither was it necessary, for example, to include every kind of dog; it has been estimated that there are approximately 5000 different breeds of dogs throughout the world, but all were not required to go into the ark. Collies, the poodle, the grey hound all have a common ancestry; a dog is a dog and what went into the ark was their common ancestor; this would also be true for other mammals.

Another factor to be considered is that the larger species of animals are relatively few. It has been estimated that land animal species above the size of sheep numbers about 290; those ranging from sheep down to the rat size account for approximately 760 and those smaller than a rat are in the vicinity of 1360. Within this total range of animals the average size is that of the cat which would be comfortable occupying 0.465 m² (5 ft²). Many of the creatures from the cat size down could easily be accommodated in cages and stacked to maximize the floor space; this would result in only a small portion of one deck being occupied and would leave room for the various species of birds, reptiles, lizards and insects that required space. Obviously no one knows the distribution of the animals throughout the ark, but for those willing to accept the Bible account and consider the mathematical options, all the objections pale into insignificance.

**Did Noah have the Technology to Build the Ark?**

The Biblical record informs us that the ark was built according to God’s specifications (Genesis 6:14-16). How many people worked on the project we are not told, but at that time it is possible to calculate that the earth was populated by approximately 775 million people, and it is not unreasonable to believe that Noah hired people to assist him.

Today the scientific world still puzzles over the construction of the Pyramids in Egypt and can only resort to theories about how they were built. Notwithstanding the Pyramids are there for all to see. Not knowing how does not mean it could not be done. In 2005 a Dutch carpenter (Johan Huibers) began fulfilling his dream; in sixteen months he had completed a half size replica of Noah’s ark practically single handed. Noah was given 120 years by God to complete the ark (Genesis 6:3).

The stability of the ark has also come under scrutiny. While the scriptures provide only scant information about its shape, it is evident from what is recorded that the Ark was not designed as a ship. There is no mention of navigation gear such as a rudder, however when the water began to build up we read, “and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth… and the ark went upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 7:17-18). In other words the ark floated on the surface of the water.

Some have suggested a square hull design, while others have promoted a triangular shape. Studies have been completed on both shapes and found that the ark would have been surprisingly stable.

**Where did all the Water come from and Where did it go?**

It would be foolish to assume that the world we know today is exactly the same as the world prior to the flood. Evidence is now available which illustrates that the Polar Regions were more tropical than they are now, hosting a variety which illustrates that the Polar Regions were more tropical than they are now, hosting a variety of animals above the size of sheep numbers about 290; those ranging from sheep down to the rat size account for approximately 760 and those smaller than a rat are in the vicinity of 1360. Within this total range of animals the average size is that of the cat which would be comfortable occupying 0.465 m² (5 ft²). Many of the creatures from the cat size down could easily be accommodated in cages and stacked to maximize the floor space; this would result in only a small portion of one deck being occupied and would leave room for the various species of birds, reptiles, lizards and insects that required space. Obviously no one knows the distribution of the animals throughout the ark, but for those willing to accept the Bible account and consider the mathematical options, all the objections pale into insignificance.

The Ark was not designed as a ship

Evidence hasn’t been denied. In whatever form the pre-flood oceans existed such activity would produce tsunami conditions all around the world bringing an end to the civilization of Noah’s day. Such a large amount of water in a relatively short period of time would encapsulate its victims in a moment, providing the conditions which could easily fossilize the dead in the newly established geological strata. As an example, 25 mm (one inch) of rain contained in a single acre (0.42 hectares) of ground would weigh 102 metric tons (113 tons). That creates a lot of pressure; yet nothing compared to the flood waters of Genesis.

When God spoke of the “great deep” being “broken up” He is describing volcanic or earthquake activity which erupted with enormous force. The phrase “broken up” is translated from the Hebrew word “baqa” and signifies to cleave or rip apart; it is translated “clave” in reference to the earthquake that occurred when God judged those that rebelled against Moses (Numbers 16:31). Whatever theory is promoted to determine where the flood waters came from, the evidence for a catastrophic flood has never been adequately challenged and the supporting evidence hasn’t been denied. In whatever form the pre-flood oceans existed such activity would produce tsunami conditions all around the world bringing an end to the civilization of Noah’s day. Such a large amount of water in a relatively short period of time would encapsulate its victims in a moment, providing the conditions which could easily fossilize the dead in the newly established geological strata. As an example, 25 mm (one inch) of rain contained in a single acre (0.42 hectares) of ground would weigh 102 metric tons (113 tons). That creates a lot of pressure; yet nothing compared to the flood waters of Genesis.

At the end of 150 days the water began to recede, “and the waters returned from off the earth continually” (Genesis 8:3). Where did all the water go to? The Psalmist tells us, “Thou hast
set a bound that they (the seas) may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth” (Psalm 104:9). The evidence for these boundaries can be seen in the oceans that cover the earth today. Two thirds or 71% of the earth’s surface is covered by water and the continents form the natural boundaries established by God at the time of the flood. The earth’s crust is divided by 14 major continental plates which could easily have been created at the time of the flood. The movement of these plates along with smaller sub-plates creates the volcanic and earthquake conditions we experience throughout the world. In some cases as the continental plates collide land mass is created as in the case of the island of Surtsey, off the coast of Iceland in 1963. Surtsey was formed as a result of volcanic action under the sea, and within a week an island appeared in the ocean and within a few short months the island landscape was transformed into what appeared a mature island, with greenery and sandy beaches. If one volcano can produce such a creative miracle, what would the Genesis flood produce?

Why would God Destroy every Living thing?

For many people this question is perhaps the most difficult to understand. The Bible explicitly states that “in the beginning God created the heaven and earth” (Genesis 1:1). We are also told that God created this earth to be inhabited (Isaiah 45:18); but not by people who corrupt His ways, not by people who ignore His laws; God created this world for His pleasure (Revelation 4:11); He created the world so that it may be “filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord” (Numbers 14:21).

The Genesis flood occurred 1656 years after the creation of Adam, and during that time, as people began to multiply on the earth, “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). The apostle Peter says it was a world of ungodly people, and although Noah was a preacher of righteousness during this time (2 Peter 2:5), he reminds us that the people “were willingly ignorant” and because of this “the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished” (2 Peter 3:5-6).

It wasn’t as though God refused to provide the opportunity to consider His word; Noah preached for 120 years, during which time we read, “the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah” (1 Peter 3:20). But nobody was listening! The Lord Jesus Christ said that they were too busy with their lives and didn’t have time for God, “they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” (Matthew 24:38); they were consumed with themselves and there was no place for God in their lives.

Unfortunately the picture painted in the Bible is typical of today’s world. We read in the New Testament:

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Today there is a preoccupation with self; in the last 150 years society has gone to great lengths to remove God from the picture. The education system is geared to teaching ungodly ways by the promotion of evolutionary ideas; by teaching self reliance on humanistic values, and because of this we live in a society where “every man does that which is right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6). During this same time period Christadelphians have been preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God in the hope that some will turn from their evil ways, because “as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:37).

What people don’t appreciate is that God will not tolerate man’s wickedness for ever; we read that God, “has appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:31). This creation is His creation, it is His world, and God intends to fill it with His glory. When that day comes Noah will be there because he built an ark to the saving of his house (Hebrews 11:7); Noah and his family were saved by water which, we are told, points forward to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:20). Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized by water which, we are told, points forward to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:20).

Blessed with the doctrine of the Apocalypse, the reader must not suppose, that any man, woman, or child, who is ignorant of the word, can be regenerated, or born again, by being plunged into a bath.

JOHN THOMAS
Elpis Israel 1849

As soon as a man understands and believes the gospel, he is bound to lend himself as an instrument for its diffusion. The command is direct from the mouth of the Lord Jesus himself: “Let him that heareth say, come” (Rev 22:17).

ROBERT ROBERTS
Christendom Astray

Once recognize that the Jews are God’s nation, that the ministry of the prophets was a divinely ordained and controlled testimony concerning God’s purpose, the like of which was not made in the history of any other nation, and we have then the right point of view for the study of their messages.

JOHN CARTER
Prophets After the Exile 1945

The teaching of the clergy is opposed to, and subversive of, the Christian faith, and therefore, from alpha to omega at variance with the doctrine of the Apocalypse in faith, hope and practice. Blessed is the man who, instructed by its teaching, is delivered from the dogmas and commandments of the craft.

JOHN THOMAS
Eureka Volume 1 (1861)

A mind that destroys Truth in the last part of God’s word is no less dangerous than one that destroys Truth in an earlier part.

GRAHAM PEARCE
Babylon and Jerusalem 1976
By Nick Barnes  

The God we serve is the creator of the Universe —every creature, every star, every planet, every moon. His wisdom has designed each detail; His might brought all things into being: His spirit sustains every breath of every living creature.

And yet he chooses to call himself the God of Jacob!

How great, a man of faith was this Jacob, that the Father should entitle himself with this man’s name, more times than with Abraham, Isaac, David or any other—in fact almost as many times as all others combined?

In any consideration of Jacob, or other great men of faith, it is important to do so in humility. For it is very easy, in our studies of such, to discuss their faults and their mistakes, as if we ourselves were perfect; as if we ourselves sat in the heights of moral virtue, looking down on lesser mortals such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Whilst Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were but mortal men, with all the natural propensities, they nevertheless are set before us as great examples of faith—men whose names God has chosen to associate with His, in a way that he has honoured no other man.

Yet discourse, on this subject, often deals with Jacob quite harshly. Much sympathy is shown to Esau, who, it is said, was supplanted and tricked out of his birthright. But God does not see it that way. He says “Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated.”

Affinity is felt for Laban, who received Jacob with nothing but the clothes on his back, but left (after only 6 years working for “ringstraked, speckled, and grisled”) with “much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses.” We see justice in the complaint of Laban and his sons who said:

“Jacob hath taken away all that was our father’s; and of that which was our father’s hath he gotten all this glory” (Genesis 31:1).

But God does not see it that way, and spoke to him in a dream saying,

“...Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee.”

If we are to manifest God’s glory, then we must learn to see Jacob as God sees him. We must allow God to guide our thoughts, and in so doing we will see Jacob as a great man of faith.

The story begins in Genesis 25:22-23. We read:

“And the children struggled together within her (Rebekah); and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.”

God underlines the great difference between Jacob and Esau, and between their two seeds. He says “two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels.” Two completely different kinds of people would come from Rebekah’s womb. And the Spirit through the Apostle Paul comments on this in Romans (9:10-13),

“And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

Whilst we will deal with details of this passage later, for the moment let us just notice that God judged it right that the elder would serve the younger; that the elder should be hated and the younger beloved. Let us not consider this an arbitrary love and an arbitrary hatred. It is, as I hope to show, righteous judgement.

The narrative continues (Gen. 25:24-26):

“And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau’s heel; and his name was called Jacob...”

Again we see God showing his view on the subject. It was not by Jacob’s design, or by chance, that he grasped his brother’s heel. It was by God’s design. He signified that He intended Jacob to obtain that, which would normally have been Esau’s. So his name was called Jacob, literally the heel holder—a name which by extension implied that he would displace his brother from that position as firstborn.

It is generally accepted that Jacob means supplanter, but can I slightly question this assertion? Supplanter is a very negative word, which implies that one obtains dishonestly and by displacing the rightful possessor.

Unfortunately, it is not possible, using lexicons and dictionaries, to be sure whether Jacob (Yacov) is correctly represented as...
“And he dreamed, and beheld a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed...”

Genesis 28:12,13.

supplanter, or if it should be more rightly represented by a more neutral word such as “displacer” or “replacer.” However, we can determine the answer—because the Bible teaches us how to understand the word. It was God who predetermined that, “The elder shall serve the younger.”

It was God who said, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” (Genesis 25:31).

In reality there is no trickery here. Jacob’s response to this opportunity was: “And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.” (Genesis 25:31).

In reality there is no trickery here. Jacob’s offer is quite straightforward. Esau understands about the promises to Abraham and Isaac. And so verse 32,

“And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?”

Esau could only see the here and now. He asked “What good is a birthright if I’m dead?” Because, to him, the birthright entitled him to the goods of his father—and that was all.

But to Jacob, the birthright entitled him to the promises to Abraham. The birthright entitled him to possess the land for ever—a birthright that was of great value, even after death. And so verses 33-34,

“And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.”

Notice the Divine comment on the event. Esau despised his birthright. Not “thus Jacob tricked Esau out of his birthright.” Not “thus Esau was deceived.” Not “thus Esau was supplanted.” But “thus Esau despised his birthright.”

If we are left with any doubt who was the sinner, in this transaction, we read in Hebrews 12:16,

“Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.”

Jacob is not the guilty party. Jacob is a man, earnestly seeking the blessings of Abraham and Isaac. Esau was a man seeking instant satisfaction, without care for the glory and honour and immortality, which will come to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for it (Romans 2:7).

So we come to Genesis 27:1-4.

“And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and come out to the field, and take me some venison; And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.”

Now the tendency, when reading... is to focus on the deceit practised upon Isaac, by Jacob and Rebekah, but the party most guilty of dishonesty, of deceit and of slander in this chapter is, in fact, Esau.

Yet again, we find that the inspired record, contrasts these two men. One was a skilful hunter, a man of the field. The other was a plain man, it says, in the KJV—but this translation cannot be accepted. The word for plain (tam the offer, and although Jacob knows that he has caught Esau at a weak moment, the only reason that Jacob can even seriously make such a proposal, is that he knows that Esau is not really interested in the birthright; Esau does not care about the promises to Abraham and Isaac. And so verse 32,

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Now the tendency, when reading this passage, is to focus on the deceit practised upon Isaac, by Jacob and Rebekah, but the party most guilty, of dishonesty, of deceit and of slander, in this chapter, is, in fact, Esau.

Surely, if Esau had been an honest man, he would have openly admitted that he was unable to receive the blessing, because he had sold it. For what was it that Jacob had bought, if it was not these very blessings? Yet Esau is quite willing to steal these privileges from his
brother, and see him disinherit. He is quite happy to deceive his father, who believed he was blessing the son who had the birthright, even though he had sworn, with an oath, that they would be Jacob’s.

In Genesis 27:33, when...

“You see at this juncture, the true state of affairs? Does Esau admit that, after all, they would be Jacob’s.

The conclusion that Jacob, quite logically, comes to is that Esau has slaughtered in his heart—but that does not seem to be the case, for in Genesis 33:4, when they finally meet, Esau is very friendly. We read, "Esau ran to meet him (Jacob), and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept." So what was the purpose of bringing 400 men? The answer, I believe, is simple enough.

So the Spirit writing to the Hebrews specifically tells us that the reason, he did not inherit the blessing, was because he had sold the birthright; he had sold the right to inherit those blessings.

But slander was not enough for Esau and in Genesis 27:41 we read, “And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.”

He hated Jacob for the same reason Cain hated Abel! “Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous” (1 John 3:12).

So Jacob is forced to flee to Laban, but if we jump to Genesis 32:3 the story of Jacob and Esau resumes—where Jacob now returns from Haran, from Laban.

Thus we see Jacob was a man of faith. From a child he had desperately wanted that blessing given to Abraham and Isaac. And in this later stage in his life, the desire remained unabated—as we see in Genesis 32 where Jacob wrestles with the angel. The angel said (Gen. 32:26), “Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he (Jacob) said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.”

Also in Genesis 35, Jacob again seeks and receives the blessing, and his new name of Israel is confirmed.

What a contrast there was between these two brethren! In Jacob and Esau we see the ecclesia of all ages. Some are brethren who, like Esau, despise their birthright—whose real love is the riches, the pleasures and the pride of this world. Some are brethren whose earnest desire is the glory of God and the beauties of the age to come.

In Romans 9:6 the apostle Paul, speaking of natural Israel, says: “...they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”

Just because Ishmael was son of Abraham, did not make him the seed of promise, but Isaac was the seed of promise. And verses 10-13, “And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”
Again there was the seed of promise and there was him who despised his birthright.

This is how it always is. There are always two groups in the ecclesia—those of faith and those who are not.

Herein is an important doctrine. Whilst the churches believe that Natural Israel is replaced by Spiritual Israel, the Bible teaches us that:

- There is only one Bride of Christ—not one Gentile and one Jewish (Rev. 19:7; 21:9; 22:17; Eph. 5:31-32; Matt. 19:4-6). There is no such thing as “the Gentile Bride.”
- We can be adopted into the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:27-29), grafted into the Israeli Olive Tree (Rom. 11:17-27) and so can be saved—but we don’t replace it.

Salvation has always been by faith in Christ. This is from the time of Genesis 3:15 and applied to Adam, Abraham, David, the prophets as well as Gentiles adopted into the same hope and inheritance (Gal. 3:6-9).

While the Law of Moses has a purpose (1 Tim. 1:9-10; Gal. 3:19, 24), it was never the means of eternal salvation (Gal. 3:11, 17).

While many in Israel sought salvation by works, the faithful knew better (Hab. 2:4; Deut. 32:20; Psa. 40:6; 51:6; Hos. 6:6). This is equally true in the ecclesia today.

In fact the phrase Spiritual Israel is frequently misused and in any case is not strictly a Biblical phrase. Often Spiritual Israel is understood to refer to the Gentile ecclesia, but Romans 2:28-29 from whence the phrase is drawn tells us:

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

Consequently, a Spiritual Israelite is one who is circumcised in heart—whether Jew or Gentile. Spiritual Israel is not the opposite of Natural Israel, but is the faithful subset of Israel—made up of faithful Jews and faithful Gentiles. A faithless Gentile member of a modern ecclesia is no more a Spiritual Israelite than was Ahab or Korah.

If we want to be a Jew inwardly, then we must be like Jacob, who throughout his life earnestly sought the blessing. It was his greatest desire. If instead we fill our lives with seeking after pleasures and comforts and possessions, then are we of Esau.

Jacob held on to the angel and said (verse 26), “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.”

We too must hold on tight for that blessing. Let it not slip from our grasp and we too will be part in that name that Jacob received, Israel — ruler with God.

“...the enemy hath said against you, Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession.”

Ezekiel 36:2

“Hear the word of the Lord God; Thus saith the Lord God; Because thou saidst, Aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity...” Ezekiel 25:3

“And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword...”

Hebrews 11:35-37

“They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them... for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.”

Jeremiah 31:9

Jews arrive in Israel — 1948
As the prophetic word continues fulfilling we see unfolding events as “milestones to the kingdom”.  

By Don Pearce  RUGBY, U.K.

There is quite an eclectic mix of items to consider since our last update! We start our review with looking at things Papal. We know from the prophets and from the book of Revelation that Rome continues her influence over the affairs of men. What grew into the Roman Empire which controlled the civilised world in the times of the Lord Jesus and the apostles, was the power that was instrumental in putting Messiah to death and bringing an end to Temple worship and the Jewish nation.

“And out of one of them (the 4 horns) came forth a little horn, (Rome) which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down” (Daniel 8:9-11).

The ending of the Roman Empire didn’t finish the power of Rome. Daniel in the previous chapter had seen another little horn whose power was a persecuting power.

“And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time” (Daniel 7:25).

The power of Rome continued in the Roman Catholic Church, whose inquisitions and intrigues shed the blood of millions. Daniel described this power in dramatic words.

“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be finished: and the place of his sanctuary was cast down” (Daniel 11:36-38).

The apostle Paul takes up these words in his description of the man of sin power that would arise out of the ecclesia, deceiving the world as to its truth (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). He adds to the picture.

“He shall exalt himself.”

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:9-11).

This system is alive and flourishing as we turn to a review of recent events, and serves as a guide to our attitude to this vast system that claims to be the true church. Let us not be deceived, we have been warned as to her skills to deceive!

Bringing the Daughters home

The current Pope, Benedict XVI, set out his goal in his first papal speech; speaking in the third person he said:

“With full awareness, therefore, at the beginning of his ministry in the Church of Rome, Peter’s current Successor takes on as his primary task the duty to work tirelessly to rebuild the full and visible unity of all Christ’s followers. This is his ambition, his impelling duty” (Catholic Online 16-9-10).

Benedict has purged the Roman Curia of its liberal wing, reinstating the Latin Mass and traditional liturgies. This has increased the respect that the Russian Orthodox Church has for his aims; they have stuck to their traditional ways. We have seen a tremendous movement since Benedict’s election towards the healing of the 1,000 year old rift between the Russian Orthodox and the Roman Churches. The drive is also on to bring back the traditionalists amongst the Lutherans and the Church of England.

Ahead of the Pope’s visit to Britain, Metropolitan Hilarion, head of the Moscow Patriarchate’s department for external church relations, was in London addressing the Church of England leaders.

“All current versions of Christianity can be very conditionally divided into two major groups—traditional and liberal. The abyss that exists today divides not so much the Orthodox from the Catholics or the Catholics from the Protestants as it does the “traditionalists” from the “liberals” (Ibid).

He spake of the divisions that he had witnessed in the C of E as an observer at their last conference.

“Among the vivid indications of disagreement within the Anglican Community (I am reluctant to say “schism”) is the fact that almost 200 Anglican bishops refused to attend the 2008 Lambeth Conference. I was there as an observer from the Russian Orthodox Church and could see various manifestations of deep and painful differences among the Anglicans” (Ibid).

Last year the Pope had made special arrangements for married C of E priests to come over to Rome with their congregations. A few have responded, and it would appear that many others are preparing to make that journey, as too are a section of the American Lutherans.

The 1st Papal State visit to Britain

When Pope John-Paul II visited in 1982 it was a “pastoral” occasion; this was a state visit. The former Prime Minister Gordon Brown had extended a formal invitation to visit here back in February 2009 at a private audience with the Pope in the Vatican. It was well timed in this drive to bring back “the separated brethren.” Its climax was to do something that the Pope does not do! It was to conduct the ceremony to beatify Cardinal Newman. This totally papist process of “saint making” is the penultimate step to declaring that a “saint” in heaven can be universally worshiped. Canonisation is the final step. Here lies the exception. “The pope doesn’t do beatifications, only canonisations.”

“That Benedict XVI is to oversee the beatification demonstrates the esteem in which he holds the man who founded the Oxford Movement to bring the Anglican Church back to its Catholic roots” (BBČ 13-9-10).

Ah! There we have it. A useful tool at this time to encourage movement to Rome. The Reformation is dead! It is time to come home to Rome!

And so the Pope’s visit to Britain was full of meaning. Looking back it was a PR triumph. There had been a growing swell of anger at the cost to the tax-payer of this visit—some £12m out of the total cost of around £22m. The arrangements had been mired in controversy until the coalition government took over and Mr...
Cameron appointed a Roman Catholic heavyweight, Lord (Chris) Patten to take over the arrangements. There were many others who protested at the visit, with calls for the Pope to be arrested on his arrival because of the abuse scandals rocking the Roman Church. Although many Protestants, atheists, gay rights activists took their opportunity to organise their protests and even Roman Catholics failed to take up many of the tickets to the various organised events, it all ran smoothly. Two skilled players—Britain and the Vatican—with centuries of diplomatic skills ensured that the visit went to plan. The BBC output has been incredible, diplomatic skills ensured that the visit went to plan. The BBC output has been incredible, involving some 400 staff—“more than for the World Cup”—and many hours of broadcasting with normal schedules postponed to give live coverage of the main events. But what appeared would be an apathetic response to the visit was for people to be inspired by Newman's visit was for people to be inspired by Newman's fame as a leader of the Oxford Movement in the 1830’s, protesting at the secularisation of the Church of England and establishing what would be regarded as High Anglican Church. After 20 years as a Church of England priest, he “crossed the Tiber” and the following year, in 1846, was appointed as a Roman Catholic priest, and died in 1890.

Following claims of a miraculous healing in 2001 to a man suffering after back surgery, who, following his prayer to Newman, suddenly was able to walk pain free, Newman was put on this path to sainthood. It needs another miracle to be declared before the final step can be taken. Allegedly this has already taken place and is being investigated (Oh! How different from Bible saints!). This intermediate step means that he can be called “The Blessed” Cardinal Newman (again what a travesty) and “... is recognition accorded by the Catholic Church of a dead person’s accession to Heaven and capacity to intercede on behalf of individuals who pray in his or her name” (Wikipedia).

How true are the words given through Daniel and Paul with which we opened this article. What a corruption of the truth!

Benedict’s clear message throughout this visit was for people to be inspired by Newman’s life.

“May the profound ideas of this great Englishman continue to inspire all Christ’s followers in this land to conform their every thought, word and action to Christ, and to work strenuously to defend those unchanging moral truths which, taken up, illuminated and confirmed by the Gospel, stand at the foundation of a truly humane, just and free society.”

Now this call to follow Newman’s ideas can only have one logical outcome. It is a call to members of the state church, of whom the Queen is the head, to follow the footsteps of Newman and come back to the “mother” church!

As this Catholic Culture (17-9-10) article openly put it: “But when he spoke to a group of Anglican (and Catholic) bishops, and offered Cardinal Newman as a model for ecumenical actions, the Pope was making his point clearly enough. Any Anglican prelate who takes that suggestion seriously, and models his actions after those of Cardinal Newman, will very soon run up against an immovable fact. Cardinal Newman became a Catholic. If you want to follow him, you’ll have to follow him to Rome.

“The Pope stressed that Cardinal Newman made his move gently, politely, without breaking friendships, without recriminations, without renouncing his heritage—the same way other Anglicans might take the step today, under the provisions of Anglicanorum Coetibus.”

We wait to see what effect the Pope’s visit has on the role of Christianity in Britain; certainly it has been increasingly marginalised in the past few years.
recognizing the fact that the State of Israel exists and the recognition that it has the right to exist. The camp that supports Mahmoud Abbas has no qualms with the first definition: “Israel exists, and it’s apparently worthwhile to recognize it diplomatically; this is the way to guarantee for the Palestinians what only Israel can give. This agreement is fit for the present, but as to the future—who knows…” The entire concept of “Hudna” (long-term ceasefire) is based on an approach that espouses compromise in an effort to elicit what can be achieved now, without abandoning the intention to fight and get much more in the future. The way to curb future demands, especially in respect to the refugee issue, is to create a Palestinian obligation to accept Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state” (Ynet 15-9-10).

Palestinians set their Sights on all of Jerusalem
“The Palestinian Authority on Sunday again reiterated to its own people in Arabic that the ultimate goal in regards to Jerusalem is to wrest control of the entire city from Israel. And once again, the international media ignored the nefarious agenda that the Palestinians themselves admit they have” (Israel Today 7-9-10).

The picture in scripture is of Israel dwelling “confidently” in the midst of the land” (Ezekiel 38:11-12). This would point to Israel in control and occupying the middle area of Israel, which would indicate the West Bank area.

The EU has been excluded from the peace talks much to Europe’s displeasure!

European Feathers Ruffled Over Exclusion from Peace Process
“Israel’s refusal to allow a contingent of five European foreign ministers to visit Jerusalem and Ramallah this week is not likely to reverse the pique already developing within the European diplomatic community regarding its position vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Diplomatic sources report the Europeans were miffed that they were excluded from the Washington pomp-and-circumstance marking the elevation of Israeli-Palestinian talks to direct level. The foreign ministers from France, Spain, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom wanted to come to the region one day after U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton makes a one-day visit. Israel said the scheduling was bad, but most believe the Israelis just wanted to avoid additional pressure as the venue of the talks shifted from Washington to Sharm A-Sheikh to Jerusalem” (MidEast Daily News 12-9-10).

Preparations for Middle East War
Israel’s engagement in Peace Talks has not stopped their preparations for a Middle East war. It would appear that Hamas in Gaza are desperate to thwart any agreements between Israel and the Fatah leader. After months of comparative quiet from rocket attacks on Israel targets, Hamas have sharply increased their attacks, targeting also Egypt and Jordan. They have also fired phosphorus shells at Israel. Just before the Talks started in America, a Jewish family was murdered by Hamas near Hebron. It now emerges that they were hoping to abduct the bodies in order to barter for release of Hamas prisoners and were banking on Israel taking retaliation and thus wrecking any talks. They were thwarted in their plans with the unexpected arrival of another vehicle at the scene of the shooting. Hamas have re-equipped with more numerous and more powerful weapons since Cast Lead.

Israel is taking very seriously the attempts by Syria to stir up Hezbollah in Lebanon to attack Israel. Again a formidable arsenal has been assembled in Lebanon, estimated at being four times greater than in 2006 and with a much longer range, so virtually anywhere in Israel could be hit. There is a prospect of civil war within Lebanon as the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, investigating the murder of the Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in 2005, inches its way to pointing at Hizballah members within Lebanon as the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, investigating the murder of the Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in 2005, inches its way to pointing at Hizballah members as being responsible. According to Debka, Syria and Iran will resist any moves to arrest suspects. Syria and Hizballah were also reportedly coordinating their war preparations against Israel.

Syria & Hizballah Inc. Set up Joint Command for Coordinated War against Israel
“Last weekend, Syrian President Bashar Assad and Hizballah leader Hassan Nasrallah... concluded a secret military cooperation pact. Its object is laid out clearly in the preface which states that the accord is dedicated to the premise that a Syrian-Hizballah war on Israel is no longer a matter of speculation but of inevitability for the near future. “Reporting this, DEBKA-Net-Weekly’s military and intelligence sources disclose that the secret pact commits the Syrian armed forces and the Lebanese Hizballah militia to complete their preparations for the war together and sets out the ground rules and military frameworks for their march against Israel in lockstep. “These preparations are designed for two optional game plans:
1. Syria and Hizballah will make war on Israel together;
2. Hizballah will take Israel on alone under military and intelligence support from Syria” (Debka 3-9-10).

They are looking to unify their army and naval forces and to coordinate which targets each will attack to avoid duplication. Israel is on heightened alert and has made clear that the fact that Hizballah is using civilian houses, schools and hospitals to conceal weaponry will not prevent Israel attacking them, unlike in the 2006 Lebanon War. Israel has taken preparatory steps against the expected backlash against civilian casualties by releasing video footage of Hizballah’s weapons concealment.

Russia has upped the pressure by confirming that they have supplied Syria with sophisticated P-800 cruise missiles with a range of 186 miles, capable of skimming the surface of the sea at supersonic speeds, threatening Israel’s naval superiority. This announcement came shortly after the Israeli Defence Secretary, Ehud Barak, had been in Moscow to discuss the supply of Israeli drones to the Russians. Israel is threatening to supply weaponry to Russia’s enemies in retaliation for reneging on their promise not to supply weapons which could end up in Hizballah’s hands.

“Israel ready to destroy Lebanese Armed Forces in 4 hours”
This announcement followed a border incident where Lebanese troops opened fire on Israeli soldiers guarding workers clearing a tree from the Israeli-Lebanese border fence, killing one soldier and seriously injuring another. Israel had obtained UNIFIL permission to carry out the work. For a while it appeared that the situation might escalate. The Lebanese were warned not to let it happen again.

“According to the report, Frederick Hoff, assistant to US Middle East Peace Envoy George Mitchell, told Lebanese Army chief of staff Jean Kahwaji that Israel was ready to implement a plan to destroy within four hours all Lebanese military infrastructure, including army bases and offices, should a similar confrontation occur in the future” (Jerusalem Post 27-8-10).

Israel receives US support.
Although President Obama takes a harder line over Israel than his predecessors, there is close cooperation between the Israeli and US military. An unexpected bonus for Israel has come from America’s drawdown in Iraq. A huge quantity of military equipment has needed to be removed from Iraq and some of it has gone to Israel!

“Night after night, in the weeks leading up to the end of US combat mission in Iraq on Aug. 31, long American army convoys made their way from Iraq to Israel via Jordan. Their big lights were turned off as they travelled the Hashemite kingdom’s roads with Jordanian Engineering Corps escorts. They switched...
high again after crossing the border posts and the bridges which separate the kingdom from Israel.

“Most of the military equipment shipped out of Iraq goes to the largest American emergency depot in southern Kuwait and is redirected to Afghanistan to meet US military needs there.

“The overflow was diverted through Aqaba, Jordan’s Red Sea port into the Israeli Negev desert, some of it ending up in US emergency military depots, the second largest strategic reserve stores in the Middle East after the Kuwait depot.

“Some of the trucks also rumbled across the Damia Bridge, also known as the Adam Bridge which spans the Jordan River border, 30 miles north of Jericho, traveled for another hour and a half or so up to the big Israeli military maintenance bases near Haifa, in central Israel east of Tel Aviv or at Israel’s Ben-Gurion International Airport.

With pullout from Iraq, Kuwait emerging as Key regional ‘Depot’

Kuwait is being turned into an American strategic base, bordering Iraq and Iran and close to other American assets in the region.

“The Defense Department has been awarding contracts for the enhancement of the U.S. military infrastructure in Kuwait. The Pentagon awards were meant to ensure combat support and other services for the U.S. missions in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

“'Kuwait has become a regional military depot that goes beyond our needs in Iraq,’ an official said” (GeoStrategy Direct 22-9-10).

Israel completes Preparations for an Attack against Iran

Iran continues towards having nuclear weapons, its pace has not slackened, in spite of the sanctions against her. Experts are saying that breakthrough could be achieved anytime now. Some of her top secret laboratories have been moved close to the Bushehr civilian nuclear power plant. Iran is confident that now the plant moved close to the Bushehr civilian nuclear power plant. Iran is confident that now the plant

The ‘European Air Transport Command’ (EATC) ... is to be prepared to conduct future war missions of the German military (Bundeswehr) and other European states in a far more efficient and cost effective way.

“Politically, the commissioning of the EATC weakens both the national scope of the participating countries and establishes the strongest member, Germany, with not only the chance to take immediate advantage of the military assets of smaller EU states, de facto, but also the possibility to force discussions with her fierce rival, France, about the precise configuration of the EU-war procedures.”

Transporter planes are in short supply and often nations have had to make use of American transporters. Germany is keen for Europe to stand on its own feet. Germany has also been busy seeking to remodel her own military forces in these austere times and changing needs.

Germany set to Scrap Conscription

Faced with defence cuts of some £1bn over the next 4 years, the charismatic young Defence Minister, Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, has proposed the unthinkable—to do away with national service. The length of service has in recent times shrunk to 6 months, which is too short a time to do anything worthwhile, and so it has become a drain. After years of saying that this will not be touched, the main party leaders are preparing to put to their party conferences this Autumn the proposal to suspend conscription. Guttenberg wants to slim and streamline the Bundeswehr—the unified armed forces—and make them an all-professional force.

Germany is also lobbying hard at the UN to have one of the 10 rotating seats on the UN Security council. These are held for two-year terms with member states voted in by the General Assembly on a regional basis and do not allow a veto. Gaining a seat would give Germany a step-up on her dream of eventually joining the 5 permanent members, China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

As the weeks and months fly by we are witnessing in so many ways the coming to reality of the long held expectations of Bible students. We can lift up our heads in the keenly anticipated expectation that the Master’s call is so very close. For the vast majority of the Lord’s brothers and sisters that time is but a waking breath away, when with mighty power the Lord Jesus will raise from the sleep of death a vast multitude from all ages, to gather them with the living to stand before their judge. So come Lord Jesus.
"The hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our fathers instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that the dead?” Acts 26:6-8.
It requires courage to live in Hebron. For Jews it requires courage and it requires a burning conviction founded upon the hope of the promise made unto the fathers, who are themselves buried there. Among the many barriers that prevent Israelis from living in this city of the Patriarchs today there is the fact that it has been the scene of violence and murder of Jews over many years. Add to that the legal barriers and prohibitions which restrict the building of Jewish homes, and we may begin to understand the challenges that have to be overcome in order to live and exist here.

Promises

The first mention of Hebron in the Bible occurs in Genesis chapter 13. It immediately follows the promise recorded in that Scripture: “And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to me will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD” (Genesis 13:14-18).

Abram, later named Abraham, clearly understood this promise as referring to the possession of the literal Land which he had been invited to inspect. This was no ‘pie in the sky’ promise. It was not a promise of going to heaven, or of some future bliss that his soul might enjoy after death—no; this was a piece of real estate which Abraham could expect to possess “for ever.” So it was upon this understanding that Abram took up residence “in the plain of Mamre, which is Hebron.”

But there was a challenge, for Abram was also told about the future development of his offspring, about the affliction they would experience: “And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age” (Genesis 15:15).

Now did this mean that Abram had misunderstood the promise concerning the Land? If he was to die and be buried was the promise merely referring to his seed and offspring—the Land would be transferred to them? This is not the sense of Scripture, for we see that God repeated His promise in Genesis 17:7-8 in these words: “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Barriers & Challenges

Both Abraham and his seed are involved in the everlasting possession of the Land, so if God meant what He said (and He always does), Abraham, Isaac and Jacob must not only live again—they must come forth from the cave of Machpelah where they are now buried, passing through the barrier of death, in order to receive an “everlasting possession” of the Land! This of course involves the doctrine of resurrection. As it is written in Isaiah 26:19, “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”

From earliest times Hebron has presented the people of God with barriers as well as challenges. In Numbers chapter 13 when Moses sent in the twelve spies, they reported back saying that it was indeed a land flowing with milk and honey:

“Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there” (Numbers 13:28).

Joshua and Caleb trusted that God would give Israel victory over the obstacles and the giants, but the other spies were intimidated by those things and spread their fears and doubts among the children of Israel so that they lacked the necessary faith and courage to meet the challenges that faced them.

The situation facing Israelis today is not so very different in many ways. Evidence of God’s ability to give them a miraculous victory was especially seen during the 1967 six-days war when Judea and Samaria—which included Hebron—fell into Israeli hands. Yet there was hesitation; they seemed to lack the courage and conviction to go in and possess the land. Israel’s political leaders were more concerned about international opinion than they were about the fact that God had given them control over the Biblical heartland—over Judah and Jerusalem—just as the ancient prophet had predicted. Like the fearful spies in the time of Joshua and Caleb, all they saw was apparent problems and difficulties facing them; the giants—the “super-powers” of the day.

Over 3,500 Years in Hebron

The evidence that we have from both the Biblical records and subsequent history, clearly establishes the fact that Jews have lived in the city for some 3,500 years or more.

From the times of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the times of the exodus when the spies came to report on Hebron, the city was the City of the Hope. As it is expressed in the New Testament (Hebrews 11:9-10).

“Abraham... sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Abraham never lived to see Israel in
possession of the Land or of the city—all that he saw there was the graveyard that he had bought for four hundred shekels of silver “current money with the merchant.” Thus:

“The field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth” (Genesis 23:20).

But the barrier of death did not destroy the Hope that was focussed in Hebron, and with which other faithful Israelites became associated also. For example, Caleb the son of Jephunneh:

“And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel” (Joshua 14:13-14).

The Hope of Israel was by no means limited to those who were buried in the location of Hebron of course, but the hope of the promise of resurrection has been associated with that place because it is where the fathers rest in hope of the promise (see Acts 26:6-8). Hebron is, as it were, a monument to their faith, and it is fitting that it should be given to the children of Aaron the priest who were of the children of Levi, and to be a city of refuge (Joshua 21:9-15).

Hebron, like Jerusalem, has a special place in the outworking of the Divine purpose. Not only was it the first city that Abraham dwelt in after he received the promise (Genesis 13:14-18), but it was also the beginning of the kingdom of Judah under David (2 Samuel 5:3; 1 Chronicles 12:38-40). These beginnings are significant and must be borne in mind when we consider the restoration of the kingdom in these latter days. This pattern of events is important (compare Zechariah 12:7).

City of Trial & Probation

There are many lessons that we are taught in the history and development of Hebron. Even its name indicates this:

“And the name of Hebron before was Kirjatharba; which Arba was a great man among the Anakims” (Joshua 14:15).

The former name, Kirjatharba (Kiryat Arba), means “the City of Arba” (Genesis 35:27). Arba was a great man among giants (Numbers 13:32-33), among men of neck! This was a city of giants, of mighty men, men of renown and famous (compare Genesis 6:4). They were “the great men of the earth” (Revelation 18:23); the important, rich and powerful. The challenge facing the children of Israel in the City of Arba was one of wrestling “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places...” (Ephesians 6:12). They were pitched against the Obamas, the Tony Blairs, the E.U. Presidents and the popes of that ancient time.

Whether the enemy were physical giants, military super-powers or the otherwise great men, the challenge before Israel was to transform the City of Arba into the City of Hebron—a name meaning the seat, or centre of association (joining), or fellowship. This was Abraham’s original objective—to form an environment in which he could teach his children God’s ways and the basis of true fellowship:

“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they

The unexcavated ruins of ancient Hebron conceal history and truth that are not wanted in today’s political climate.
shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” (Genesis 18:19).

So it was that Abraham looked for a city (a society) in a fellowship designed by God:

“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10).

So it is that the kingdom of God must begin in Hebron, the City of fellowship, before it can be fully realized in Jerusalem, the City of Peace.

The Call to National Repentance

Following the Babylonian exile, the children of Israel returned to the Land of Promise and to the city of Arba—Nehemiah 11:25. Again, this would involve challenge and trial in a world of giants—Greek giants and Roman giants. How could a city of fellowship be developed in this environment of the Second Temple period when the Land and its people were under Roman domination? And why were they under Gentile domination? There can only be one answer, and that answer is given in the Scriptures of the Prophets which are as applicable to Roman times as they were in the time of the Babylonian exile. The prophet Daniel declared:

“Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him... As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth” (Daniel 9:11, 13).

The appeal through Isaiah the prophet (chapter 1:16-17) was:

“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.”

Now such a call as this, to repentance, was made by “John, that was called the Baptist” says the Jewish historian Josephus (Book XVIII, chapter V, section 2). And it appears that this John the Baptist was probably born in Hebron.

“A City of Judah”

The evidence from the New Testament not only points to a Jewish presence in Hebron during the Second Temple period, but suggests that it was the home of Zacharias and Elisabeth, the parents of John the Baptist. Zacharias was a priest who ministered in that office and would doubtless have lived in a city that was home to priests. His wife Elisabeth was “of the daughters of Aaron,” which provides us with another probable link to Hebron (see Joshua chapter 21). In Luke chapter 1 we are told that when Mary went to visit Elisabeth, she “went into the hill country... and into a city of Judah; and entered into the house of Zacharias...” (verses 39 and 40). The phraseology here is interesting and may echo Joshua 21:11 which tells us that Hebron is “in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it.” This evidence may not be conclusive, but most commentators believe that Hebron is meant (for example, The Geneva Study Bible). The only other suggestion has been Juttah (modern Yatta, located about 10 kilometres south of Hebron), but that conjecture has no positive evidence to confirm it, says Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible.

Mary’s visit with Zacharias and Elisabeth lasted about three months, and we can only imagine some of the conversation that took place in the house between the two women (for Zacharias, the sceptical priest was dumb). The topic of discussion is surely indicated by the two recorded passages that Luke has given us: the words of Elisabeth (Luke 1:42-45) and those of Mary (verses 46-55). If Mary’s words were spoken in Hebron, and almost within sight of the tomb of the patriarchs which Herod had recently adorned with a new building, how appropriate were those words about “God my Saviour” who she said was helping “his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.”

What a thrilling moment in the history of Hebron this would have been! And Zacharias, the priest because he believed not (verse 20), was unable to utter a word until after his son John was born. When Zacharias did speak however, he “prophesied” saying:

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he swore to our father Abraham” (Luke 1:68-73).

Here was the Hope of Israel arising out of the promises made to Abraham. Here was fellowship centred in Hebron!

Hebron—2,000 Years Ago

On a recent visit to Hebron we asked about any remains from the Second Temple period—where would the synagogue of that time have been located, and where would the priests have lived? Would it have been anywhere near Herod’s construction around the cave of Machpelah?

As one writer has said, “The magnificent structure above the tomb of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs is the only visibly active building standing in its entirety from the period... An entire building that has survived everything for 2,000 years.” He continues to say:

“The Machpelah Tomb is unique. Not only due to its archaeology and history, but also, and not in the least, because it was built by the Jewish people during the time of King Herod. During this time, the Jewish people inhabited their own land, which, of course, also included the hills of Hebron, Samaria, Jerusalem and Benjamin. These areas are what politicians today call the West Bank.”

Directing us to a largely unexcavated site on a hill-top, the community spokesman, David Wilder, explained that this was probably where Hebron was located 2,000 years ago “keeping in mind that after the destruction of the Second Temple and the Bar Kochba Revolt, they (the Romans) wiped things out. What was here? We don’t have too many videos from that time. Probably we’re talking about Hevron in the high area up there... but of course there haven’t been excavations up there—There should be because that’s it.”

David Wilder went on to say that if there was any kind of synagogue, it would have been in this location, but for largely political reasons—and in case the Arabs become offended, there is...
a reluctance to demonstrate any Jewish connection with the site. We were shown round the area and took photographs (reproduced opposite), but it is not an area which many visitors ever get to see.

David Wilder commented that “they think that King David built the original City of David in Hevron at the highest point, which may very well have been up there” on the hill. One reason why this area (Tel Hevron) can be identified with the ancient city is the discovery made there of seals and stone from the days of king Hezekiah and which have inscriptions in ancient Hebrew saying “To the King” and “Hevron.”

What we can say with some certainty is that a thriving Jewish community existed here in Hebron about 2,000 years ago, and from what we can glean, it was very probably the home of Zacharias and Elisabeth at the time of Mary’s visit. When John the Baptist was born and Zacharias delivered his prophecy, the news of those events spread like wildfire:

“And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him” (Luke 1:65-66).

With this background being so well known, it would be quite natural that John’s subsequent preaching would gain publicity and attention.

So just as the promise made to Abraham took him to Hebron, and just as the kingdom of David was commenced there, so “the glad tidings” (Luke 1:16-19) that one was born who would go in the spirit and power of Elijah in order to make ready a people prepared for the Lord circulated throughout Judea.

The Return to Hebron

Bible prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel in the latter days will be well known by most readers. The fulfillment of these things is readily recognized in the development of the Jewish state over the past century or more. The hand of God is seen in this and was foreseen by several writers who studied the Prophets. For example, H. Grattan Guinness, writing in 1880 said:

“However improbable it may appear that Palestine should ever again be the home of a mighty Jewish nation, Scripture leaves no room to doubt that such will be the case,—that the same Almighty arm, which to place Israel there of old, plagued Egypt, destroyed the host of Pharaoh, and extirpated almost entirely the seven nations of Canaan; which subsequently overthrew the mighty Babylonian monarchy, in order to restore Israel to it for a comparatively brief period, by means of Cyrus and Artaxerxes, will in due time overthrow the Turkish power which has so long trodden down Jerusalem, defiled the sanctuary, and desolated the land of Israel, and will, the second time, restore his ancient people, to their inalienable inheritance. Every barrier must fall, every obstacle be overthrown, that the purpose of God may be accomplished, and the promises to Abraham and to his seed be fulfilled.”

What we have also seen is the revival of Jewish life upon the mountains of Israel and in the territory of ancient Judah (Judea). This is what we have seen since 1967, and a part of this has been the rebirth of the Hebron Jewish community.

There had been a continued Jewish presence in Hebron for thousands of years, but it was brought to an end in 1929 when Arabs were stirred up to massacre the Jewish population. They did so with unspeakable cruelties, matched only by inhuman atrocities committed in Catholic Europe and by Nazi Germany. It would have taken immense courage and determination to overcome the psychological barriers created by that dreadful background—a background which many readers will probably be unaware of. Whether we can appreciate the situation or not, the fact is that some remarkable Jewish people emerged who were able to overcome the barriers. One such person was Miriam Levinger who was interviewed in the 1976 film entitled “A People Chosen.” The following is transcribed:

“When we first came to Hevron, those of us who came and lived through the first three years which was a very difficult experience—Most of us were religious. We had this very big religious conviction: We felt that this was a logical outcome of everything that had been ever written in the Prophets. We sort of felt that we were just continuing. It was a very strong feeling in us—that all these prophecies were coming true in our time. We felt that it was a very great reward to be able to live in this day and at this time.”
Visible remains of the ancient city. Olive trees almost 2,000 years old

Who ascended these ancient steps?

A Jewish community once thrived here

Remains of a gate to the city: Genesis 23:17,18

Archaeologist’s pit where Hezekiah inscription was found now filled with rubbish by Arabs
Kiryat Arba—that is Hebron—has been called ‘the mother of settlements,’ for there are many settlements in Judah today that have been borne out of great affliction. Many have experienced massacres and killings even since the establishment of Israel in 1948. We have not the space here to tell the story of each one—of Gush Etzion, of Efrat, Neve Daniel or even Jerusalem itself. Each one has had—and still has—its challenges and barriers to building and development. But these troubles will not last for ever. The prophet Isaiah tells us that there is to be Glad Tidings; and indeed, after a time, the crisis of some kind.

In Zechariah 12:2-3 we are told about Judah and Jerusalem being under siege—one that will involve many peoples and nations being “gathered together against it.” The situation here harmonises with what we find in other prophecies such as Ezekiel 38 and Joel 3:1-2 and it is in these circumstances that the Lord says that He will open His eyes upon the house of Judah:

“In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people (RV “peoples”) with blindness” (Zechariah 12:4).

Verse 5 tells us about the response of the Governors of Judah who will say in their hearts: “There is strength to me and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the Lord your God” (verse 7). But who or What will He Be? The answer given to Moses in Exodus 3:15 is “the God (Elohim) of your fathers…”

The word “God” (Hebrew Elohim) is a plural noun, which in the singular is Eloah or El. The Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon gives us the basic meaning as “strong, mighty, a mighty one, a hero.” The plural form says Gesenius signifies “heroes, mighty ones.” He says “to Hebrews this word would present the notion of strength and power.” So a literal reading of Exodus 3:15 would be “the Elohim (Mighty Ones) of your fathers…” So if we apply the meaning of the words the message to Moses was:

“I Shall Be who I Shall Be. And he said, So shall you say to the Children of Israel, I Shall Have sent me to you.” God said further to Moses, “So shall you say to the Children of Israel, ‘Hashem, the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has dispatched me to you. This is My Name forever, and this is My remembrance from generation to generation.’”

The J.P.S. Tanach edition renders the Exodus 3 passage thus:

“Moses said to God, ‘When I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is His name?’—what shall I say to them?’” Hashem answered Moses, “I Shall Be As I Shall Be.” And He said, “So shall you say to the Children of Israel, ‘I Shall Have sent me to you.’” God said further to Moses, “So shall you say to the Children of Israel, ‘Hashem, the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has dispatched me to you. This is My Name forever, and this is My remembrance from generation to generation.’”

It will be noted that the Jewish translation of this passage from Exodus 3 renders the meaning of the Name as “I Shall Be” or by the Hebrew Ehyeh. Otherwise the terms “THE LORD,” and sometimes “God,” are rendered as Hashem (which means literally “The Name”).

The reason for these renditions may be seen from the marginal notes in the Revised Version of 1881-1885 where it is stated “I Will Be” is the meaning of the Divine Name communicated to Moses. But who or What will He Be? The answer given to Moses in Exodus 3:15 is the God (Elohim) of your fathers…’

But there is more to it. Zechariah 12:5 has told us that the governors (i.e. Rulers) of Judah shall say in their hearts “There is strength to me and to the inhabitants in the Jerusalem in YAHWEH OF HOSTS THEIR ELOHIM” (in Elohim) Be manifested in the Mighty Ones of the fathers: of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob after they shall have come forth out of the tomb in the cave of Machpelah.

Risen from the dead!

So it is, we believe, that He shall save the tents of Judah first and subdue the nations through the work of Messiah and his company—all of them having been raised from the dead by the power of the Almighty. The kingdom will thus be restored again to Israel:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”
The last chapter of the book of Revelation, having completed the prophetic record, concludes with a number of important admonitions.

Their importance is enhanced by the thought that these are the last words God has addressed to us; the last chapter of the last book.

One admonition is:

“Behold I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.”

So the blessing Jesus will bring is for those that keep the sayings of the book. The chapter goes on to show that “keepeth the sayings of the book” is a characteristic of all the brethren of Christ: the one revealing the message to John says: “I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren and of them that keep the sayings of the book.” In every age, we must presume, the believers have understood the apocalyptic record relative to their own times, and its sense generally, so as to be able to keep the sayings of the book. This is implied by the words that follow: “Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” The brethren of Christ are expected to understand.

It is astonishing how indifferent we are today to this word of guidance and warning. Do we not want the blessing?—yet how rarely are we exhorted to “keep the sayings of the book.” Indeed, how few ecclesias have any regular study of the Apocalypse. And with so difficult a book, how can the brethren and sisters generally understand the sayings of the book so that they can keep them, if there is not an appointed class and able teachers?

Some try to escape the plain meaning of the words “blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” They propose that it only means an additional blessing to those that have done so; not that those who are ignorant of the teaching of the book will receive no blessing.

But the plain sense is that only those will be blessed who keep the sayings. And the blessing is made up of all the good things promised: eat of the tree of life—be part of the new Jerusalem—sit with Christ in his throne, etc. These are the blessings Christ will give, and he says he will give them to the keepers of the sayings of the book. If we are not “blessed” when he comes, we shall be left outside.

This matter is so important that it is worthy of further remark. We shall be most unwise to discount the meaning of the “blessed,” as some desire to do through their indifference, or poor acquaintance with the Apocalypse. The intended sense of the word may be seen from similar usage elsewhere. In Revelation 16:15 it says:

“Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that keepeth his garments.”

Would we say, it does not matter if we do not watch and keep our garments, there will still be some blessing for us? When Jesus says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit—they that hunger and thirst after righteousness—the merciful, etc.” Can we say that we shall receive any blessing if we do not diligently seek this disposition of mind? Of course not. In the same way, “Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the book” of the Apocalypse, means that there will be no blessing for us if we do not diligently seek to keep them.

So it is very important for every one of us to study the Apocalypse. That means studying Eureka, and those books which pave the way to its study, Why Eureka? Because it is essential for us to have a correct knowledge of the Apocalypse. God having revived saving Truth through John Thomas’ instrumentality, also provided through him a complete outline of this complicated book. No one else has done this. Parts have been interpreted in various ways, but in our language there is no other harmonious fitting in of the various sections of the book, and an unfolding of the symbols in a continuous sense. In some details there were mistakes arising from the limitation of view at the time of writing, which following years have made clear. But a small amount of faulty details is not of significance in the whole.

Why this insistence on an accurate understanding? What is wrong with others putting forward their variations of interpretation? Because the book concludes with a dreadful warning against all perverters of the teaching of the book. It says:

“I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall take away from the words of the prophecy of this book, God shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city.”

This warning is not addressed to the enemies of the Bible, but those who are reading it; “I testify to every man that heareth the words of the
book.” So he is speaking to such as ourselves (i.e. the true believers, Ed) who claim to “hear the words of the book!” To us he gives warning of adding or taking away from the book. We could hardly do this literally. In any case this is a book of sign or symbol, and the ideas used have a degree of figure. The sense surely is, we can add or take away by expounding it falsely, and spoiling its sense, so that the hearers are caused to fail in “keeping the sayings of the book.”

The book of the Apocalypse is in a peculiar way our book, specially for us. In this long time of the Gentiles, when there is no open vision, it has been provided to guide us, throw light on the world around us, and sustain our faith to the end. How important therefore to understand it correctly, and then to keep its sayings. Let each of us resolve to be more active in stirring up our brethren and sisters, and ourselves, to the great danger there is in neglecting this book. After studying the more elementary books, the need is to patiently study Eureka (and put on one side the novelities of interpretation that perhaps come more readily to our notice). Every ecclesia should have a Eureka class. The Arranging Brethren, the shepherds of the flock, have a grave responsibility if they do not provide for the flock in this way.

**Keeping the Sayings**

The blessing is to those who keep the sayings. The Greek word for “keep” has the sense of watching, guarding, holding fast. In chapter one it says that the blessing is to those who “hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things that are written therein.” Keeping therefore is something additional to reading and understanding. It means taking the matter to ourselves, heeding it in our life, making it part of our life. Jesus used similar language in the parable of the sower:

> “But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15).

Jesus also said,

> “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

We may perceive therefore what a fulness of idea there is in “Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” These things have got to enter into our very life. Reading and study are not an end in themselves, but a means to an end.

**The Witness of Jesus & Keeping the Sayings**

Having dealt with the “blessing” and the “keeping,” we now ask, What are the “sayings” or words (Gk. logos) of the book? Clearly they are very many, describing a multitude of matters through twenty centuries. But though there is much variety in the detail, in general the sayings have much in common, they are all about the same thing. The book, taken generally, is a record of the age-old conflict of the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, as it has developed in the times after Christ’s first coming. It shows the seed of the woman oppressed and witnessing in sackcloth through many centuries, but finally triumphant and glorious, ruling the whole world in righteousness.

In all the ages past, the seed of the serpent has taken possession of the earth, and ignored the Creator, to whom all things belong. Man has ruled on the principles of satisfying the desires of the flesh, using fraud, deceit and oppression to possess the good things the earth provides. The seed of the woman, enlightened by God’s word, has witnessed against this way of man, declaring a coming judgment when God will intervene in the affairs of the world.

In the times after Christ, men made use of the gospel of Christ to build a very successful system by which they might continue in possession of the earth and enjoy its riches. Their doctrine was, to possess the good things the earth provides. The enemies of the flesh, using fraud, deceit and oppression to take away the sweets they enjoyed. Always therefore they were full of indignation and wrath against the “heretics.” Again and again edicts of banishment, confiscation of goods, and death were issued against them (See Eureka vol. 2).

But down the ages there has been a stream of witnesses, those who had “the testimony of Jesus.” The book of Revelation is a record of this conflict and witness. These witnesses were those who “kept the sayings of the book.” Having understood the general theme of the book, and as much of it as pertained to their own times, they kept these things by the way they lived and the witness they maintained.

So to keep the sayings is to sustain the witness. This may be seen more clearly by comparing Revelation 22:9 with 19:10. In both places John falls down to worship the one who is giving to him the Revelation. In both places the reply is:

> “Do it not, I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren.”

The reply is almost identical in the two places. In chapter 19,

> “Do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God.”

In chapter 22,

> “Do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of the book: worship God.”

It would seem that the two passages express approximately the same idea: keeping the sayings is having the witness or testimony of Jesus.

The further words in Revelation 19:10 confirm this. The speaker adds, “for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of the prophecy.” That is to say, the general sense of this book—the spirit of its sayings—is the record of the witness for Jesus that his people have sustained; that witness concerning his coming Apocalypse and the day of judgment upon all nations. The sayings of the book are largely concerned with the witness for Jesus.

John, in passing on to us the visions he saw, says he “bare record of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” (Chapter 1:2). He personally was a sufferer for keeping the sayings, and bearing the testimony. He says:

> “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

**Our Keeping of the Sayings of the Book**

For us today to keep the sayings of this book, we have first to study the records concerning our
Witnesses flee persecution in the Alps

brethren who have gone before and imbibe their spirit and outlook, then understand the record it gives of our own time, and so sustain the witness of Jesus in our lives.

The witness, as we know, was revived in the middle of the last century in America and Britain. The papal power was small in these countries at that time, and the witness was directed more against the other sects of Christendom, who all teach the same false doctrines that permit men to enjoy the wealth and glory and honour of this present life. The doctrines of all the churches lend support to the continuance of the present world. The characteristic of the witness was that the time had at last arrived for the manifestation of Jesus with power in the earth and this would put an end to peoples’ present way of living. The believers lived in a state of expectancy, in generally avoiding entanglement in business and social life and pleasant living.

The witness has continued down to our own day, growing more feeble as the years pass. The world has grown more wicked and the need for witness has increased. Never before to such an extent have men had a general awareness of the God of the Bible, and yet ignored or despised his existence. In the name of science and progress men glory, and feel no dependence on the authority of the State, would mean much less influence in high places, and the increased national emergency arises, the increased Catholic influence in high places, and the increased condemnation of sin in the flesh.

 Often our leaders are well-placed in the business world, or in positions of responsibility in local government or industry. In such positions they may have no desire to witness that the appearing of Jesus will mean the break-up of the whole interweaving system of commerce, industry, government and society; when all its key men will be sent away empty. Generally, too, prosperity has weakened our stand. In some ecclesias there is a widespread attitude that we should not be outspoken against the world around. Anything in the nature of attack is frowned upon.

This decline of our witness, coupled with the undermining of the Bible by the churches, and the material progress in all fields, has permitted a slow unheeded development to take place in this country in the present century. Rome has found a favourable situation for her “Conversion of England.” In the past ten years or so (written in 1959—ed) she has moved with boldness and rapid progress. So it has now come about that our enemy of past ages is now around us with rapidly increasing influence. It is very doubtful whether there is enough faith and strength in our community to raise a witness against her. Only if we more generally get back to “the sayings of the book” could this be done.

According to our appreciation shall we find faith and courage to make our lives and words a witness. We must try to live so that we are worthy of companionship with those of earlier days who suffered the loss of all things:—symbolically “beheaded for the witness of Jesus” (Revelation ch. 20). We do not expect to have circumstances like theirs, but nevertheless if a national emergency arises, the increased Catholic influence in high places, and the increased authority of the State, would mean much less toleration for the people of God. Let us live, and arrange our circumstances so that we are prepared for such a situation. And let us also press all these things more insistently on our brethren and sisters, though they frown on us for so doing.

Soon the Master will appear and say, Blessed is he that hath kept the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

THE BIBLE MAGAZINE Vol. 23 ISSUE No.4

EUREKA,
THE APOCALYPSE EXPLAINED
BY DR. THOMAS

- Do you want to understand the Apocalypse?
- Would you like to be made acquainted with the prophets?
- Do you desire to know all about the kingdom of God?
- Desire ye a scriptural exposition of the covenants of promise and the Hope of Israel?
- Would you be instructed in the history and doctrine of God manifestation in the flesh?
- Are you in any uncertainty on the subject of condemnation of sin in the flesh?
- Do you require a new translation of the book of Revelation, with a faith-satisfying and intelligible explanation of all its mysteries?
- Do you need enlightenment on the subject of Paradise, the New Jerusalem, the New Heavens and the New Earth?
- Do you wish to become acquainted with scripture chronology with reference to the World’s Age, and the fulfillment of the great prophetic periods?
- Are you troubled to know the meaning of the Apocalyptic seals, trumpets, vials, thunders, lightnings, earthquakes etc?
- Have you any taste for a thorough and faithful exposure of the Papal Abominations whether Romish or Protestant?
- Wonder ye after the meaning of the Apocalyptic Beasts and the kindred animals seen by Daniel?
- Do you desire to read a scriptural interpretation of the Devil and Satan of the Apocalypse, the Lake of Fire, the Bottomless Pit, and the Second Death?
- Do you wish to be acquainted with the Signs of the Times and the nature of acceptable preparation for the Second appearing of Jesus Christ?
- Are you puzzled to know the meaning of the mark of the Beast and the number of his name?
- Are you wishful to become acquainted with the whole counsel of God, and be made wise unto salvation?

READ EUREKA

And if you consider the above recommendation extravagant or too highly coloured—then:

READ EUREKA
Who were “the angels that sinned”?

In chapter 2 of his second letter, Peter is warning believers about God’s judgement on false teachers in the assembly of believers:

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Peter 2:4).

Peter says, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy” because “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:19-21). But in chapter 2 Peter says that there were also false prophets in Israel—God did not select them to speak his words. Because of their lies, God punished them. In Jeremiah 29:21 we hear about two of them:

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name; Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall slay them before your eyes.”

Peter says that there were going to be false teachers in the Christian church too, and that God will judge them also. As a warning to us, Peter gives three examples of how God judged the ungodly in the past:

Verse 4  “The angels that sinned” reserved for judgement.

Verse 5 The great Flood—all were drowned.

Verses 6-8 Sodom and Gomorrah—burnt up.

The “unjust” are those whose sins are not covered by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Peter says in verse 9 that they will be punished on “the day of judgement.” This will be after Jesus returns (2 Timothy 4:1), and the resurrection of all those who have known the will of God (1 Thessalonians 4:16; John 3:19).

Jude in his letter is also concerned with “ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.” He also gives three examples of what God did to such men in the past:

Jude 5 God destroyed all the men who escaped from Egypt with Moses.

Jude 6 “The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”

Jude 7 The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire.

Jude then goes on to say more about the false teachers who were appearing at that time in the Christian church.

The Greek word angelos in 2 Peter 2:4 and in Jude 6 means “messenger.” The Greek word occurs 180 times in the New Testament, and if it was translated literally, it would be “messenger” in every case. The context often clearly shows whether it is referring to a human messenger or to a heavenly messenger of God. When it is the heavenly messenger, the translators have written “angel.” So when we read “angel” in the Bible, this is the translator’s opinion. We need to read each passage and decide whether it should be “angel” or a human messenger. Let’s look at four passages:

In Revelation 1:1 John received the Revelation. “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.” This is clearly an angel of God. The message is sent to “the seven churches which are in Asia” (verse 4).

Revelation 2:1 “Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write…” In fact, the Scriptures are not concerned with messages from God to angels. It is about God’s message to mankind. This should have been translated “to the messenger of the church in Ephesus write…” It is clear by the context of the letters to all seven of the churches, that God was giving his message to the leaders or elders of those churches, not to heavenly angels.

2 Peter 2:4 “If God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” Peter says these messengers “sinned.” Paul says that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23)—so these messengers will die. But Jesus teaches that the angels of God do not die (Luke 20:36). This shows that the messengers who sinned could not have been heavenly angels. They were mortal human messengers.

There is another problem: it is imagined by some that “the devil and his angels” are evil spirits. They claim these evil spirits roam freely, causing temptations and troubles. But that cannot be true, since Peter says they are in “chains of darkness” (they are in darkness and cannot escape). Also, they were mortal men. We will come back to who they were after looking at the fourth passage.

Jude asks his readers to remember what
happened to all the men who came out of Egypt under Moses. He says in verse 5, “I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.” The next verse begins with “and” (Greek τε), which means Jude is now giving some details of how the disobedient Israelites were destroyed. Verse 6 is therefore about an event that occurred while Israel was with Moses after leaving Egypt.

Jude verse 6  “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

There was an event in Moses’ lifetime which agrees with this. Jude says in verse 4, “For there are certain men who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, crept in unawares,” to teach error. He then says about them in verse 11 “Woe unto you! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core (Korah).”

Korah was from the tribe of Levi, the tribe which God chose to administer his law to Israel—“the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at Israel—see Numbers 16:9-11—and make themselves the leaders instead.

God, who had appointed Moses and Aaron, sent down fire and killed the 250 men who supported the rebellion. Then the earth split open under Korah, Dathan and Abiram and swallowed up their entire households (Numbers 16:33).

“They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.”

These men are “bound with everlasting chains for judgement on the great day” (Jude 6). In other words they are held in the bonds of death (see Psalm 18:4-5), until the resurrection and judgement, when Jesus comes back.

Peter says that God “sent them to hell” (Greek Tartaros). The word occurs only once in Scripture. The ordinary “hell” is from the Greek word Hades which is the grave. There is a saying in some places that a dead man is “six feet under”—in other words he is buried nearly two metres down in the ground. But Korah and the others were buried much, much deeper in the ground.

In Greek mythology Tartaros was a place, deep in the earth, where they believed wicked people were kept. The Spirit of God evidently moved Peter to borrow this very appropriate word to describe the death of Korah and those with him. No better Greek word could have been used to describe how the earth cracked wide open under Korah and the others, making them fall deep, deep down, perhaps deeper than the shaft of a South African gold mine. Then the earth closed back over them!

These “angels who sinned” can never tempt or harm anyone. This is because they are dead, “bound with everlasting chains” in “gloomy dungeons” from which they cannot escape until Judgement Day.

**Did Satan Fall from Heaven, or was he Pushed?**

Early in his work, Jesus made a small beginning, and sent out twelve hand-picked men. They were to go ahead of Jesus and gather people for his arrival, for them to hear his preaching—Mark 6:7-13.

“And he called unto him the twelve, and gave them power... they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.”

Later, Jesus chose a larger group of men to do the same work: God cannot sin. “Lucifer” was a nickname for the king of Babylon (Isaiah 14) who fell from his position of great power, when the Medes and Persians took his place.

From what we have seen from the scriptures, Satan is a figure for sinful human nature, in opposition to God. It can help to understand what Jesus was saying in Luke 10:18, when we see how he used the word “Satan” elsewhere. After the Jewish leaders hired Judas to betray him, Jesus said to Peter, in Luke 22:31,

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.”

In plain words, the human opposition to Jesus was organized by the Sanhedrin, which was the council of seventy elders over Israel. That “Satan” wanted to scatter the disciples whom Jesus had gathered to him. This council of elders saw Jesus as a threat to the position of influence which they enjoyed. They wanted to “destroy him” whom God had sent (Luke 19:47; John 17:3). Less than 40 years later, the Roman armies destroyed the Jewish state in A.D. 70.

But the Jewish government was not the only “Satan.” Pilate, the Roman governor, was compelled to have Jesus crucified, because Jesus admitted that God had made him “king of the Jews” (John 18:37). After that time, the Roman government continued to oppose Christ’s disciples. Paul wrote to the believers in Rome, in Romans 16:20 “the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”

Meanwhile Paul encouraged believers to continue steadfast in the faith, in the face of opposition from the pagan (idol-worshipping) government of Rome. It was human opposition which had prevented Paul from going to Thessalonica to visit the believers there:

“Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us” (1 Thessalonians 2:18).

Both the Jewish authorities and the Roman rulers did not want Paul to go there (Acts 17:1-9).

But it was definitely not an angel of God that was thrown out of heaven in the book of Revelation—it was the “Great Dragon.”

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:7-9).

Here is a prophetic figure of a civil war in the Roman empire, which happened in A.D. 312. The pagans were thrown out of power when Constantine became a friend of the corrupted Christian church. Their members paid no heed to Christ’s rebuke of Peter when he took the sword. They fought with Constantine’s soldiers and brought him victory. The pagan government fell, and so did the government support for the pagan religion and their priests, who were their messengers (angels). The beginnings of this
corrupted church can be seen in the messages of Jesus to the seven churches of Asia.

“To the angel of the church in Pergamos (or, Pergamum) write... I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name... But I have a few things against thee because thou hast there... them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate” (Revelation 2:12-15).

The Nicolaitanes is a word coined by the Lord, to refer to those who had corrupted the Truth. Their name means “vanguishers of the people,” and refers to their effort to develop a division between ordinary members of the church (the “laity”) and a Christian priesthood, called the clergy. By the time of Constantine, they had become the most numerous party of Christians, and under the emperor Constantine, their church became the state religion of Rome. Corrupted Christendom became the new Satan to rule over the territory of the Kingdom of Men (see Daniel chapter 7), and he will continue until he is removed at the return of Jesus Christ.

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season” (Revelation 20:1-3).

No mortal men will be permitted to take any part in ruling, or in giving religious instruction during the thousand year reign of Christ. None will be permitted to “deceive” with false religious ideas or with the modern humanistic teachings, like “evolution,” and the “rights” of man. But at the end of the thousand years Satan will be let out of his prison.

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:7-10).

Mortal men will be permitted to organize a rebellion against Christ’s authority, but only for a short time. The rebellion will be crushed. The head of “Satan” will be finally bruised for all time, meaning that all human opposition to God will come to an end.

This now concludes the series of articles on the Personal Devil by Art Bull
Catholic journalists and the media presented the visit of Pope Benedict to the United Kingdom as a “success.” The U.K.’s Daily Telegraph, in an article by the Catholic Damian Thompson had the headline “Personal Triumph for the Pope.” He called the event “this remarkably successful papal visit,” and went on to belittle and discount the protests that were organised. But the Associated Press commented on the major protest in London saying that:

“Organizers said they expected 10,000 people, and thousands were seen marching through London. Police declined to give a crowd estimate. Even a crowd of a few thousand would make it the largest protest against Benedict since his election in 2005.”

So this protest is not so easy to dismiss. Even the Vatican’s spokesman Federico Lombardi had to take account of it in his presentation of the visit:

“... the important thing wasn’t so much the turnout—crowds were much smaller than when Pope John Paul II visited in 1982—but that Benedict’s warning about the dangers of an increasingly secularised society has been received “with profound interest” from Britons as a whole.

“Indeed, the British media coverage was remarkable in the seriousness with which newspapers and television took Benedict’s message, and TV stations ran virtually all of the pope’s speeches, Masses and other events live.

“Everyone is agreed about the great success, not so much from the point of view of the numbers, but... by the fact that the message of the pope was received with respect and joy by the faithful.” —That is, of course, by Catholics.

When we realize the extent of Catholic control of the British media, it is hardly surprising that the event was covered with so much enthusiasm. The British do not appreciate having religion pushed down their throats, but whether it was wanted or not they were force-fed through the T.V. tube, as well as by print and radio. The Daily Mail (newspaper) told everyone that the pope flew home “after a triumphant four-day state visit.”

The Papal Conquest

In many ways the pope’s visit to Britain was a triumph. Rome has overcome tremendous obstacles in England. It is four hundred years since the translators of the King James Version penned their “Epistle Dedicatory” saying that the king had “given such a blow unto that man of sin, as will not be healed.” Indeed, as Barbara Tuchman wrote, “Wherever the Reformation took hold the Bible replaced the Pope as the final spiritual authority.” Thus, in order to overcome the Reformation it was necessary for Rome to overcome the obstacle of the Bible, and in particular the King James Authorized Version. In fact it would require the sort of cultural revolution that Peter Hitchens wrote about in his book “The Abolition of Britain” (published in 1999), a revolution that has been all but completed.

This spiritual and cultural revolution was set in motion many years ago. The facts are shocking, yet true. The Roman Catholic system had set itself the task of conquering Protestant England. It was Cardinal Manning (1808-1892), a former Archbishop of Westminster who exhorted his clergy with the following words (recorded in his Sermons on Ecclesiastical Subjects, Vol. 1 pages 166-167):

“It is yours, right reverend fathers, to subjugate and to subdue, to bend and to break the will of an imperial race, the will which, as the will of Rome of old, rules over nations and peoples, invincible and inflexible... You have a great commission to fulfil, and great is the prize for which you strive. Surely a soldier’s eye and soldier’s heart would choose by intuition this field of England for the warfare of the Faith.”

So the conquest of England was the stated goal of the Roman Church since the nineteenth century. It has taken persistence and it has taken time, but today the objective is within reach as Britain abandons her historic position. Article XXXVII of the Church of England’s 39 Articles stated:

“The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of England” (paragraph 3).

How does that sound as we witness Benedict XVI on a state visit to Britain and see him being welcomed by the Queen—the head of the Church of England? And how kind of the Prime Minister, David Cameron, to shake hands with “that man of sin” (as the pope was described in the front-piece to the Authorized Version of the Bible).

One of the most influential men who helped to defeat Protestant England was the man who was beatified by the pope on his recent visit—John Henry Newman.

Catholicism Restored

The U.K.’s Daily Mail (September 20, 2010) ran a headline that said “Almost a saint,” telling us that “John Henry Newman, who was beatified by the pope yesterday, helped lead the Roman...
Catholic Church from near-outlaw status in England to respectability and popularity."

"His conversion to Rome in 1845 came as a shock to the Church of England and led many of his former colleagues to despise him. Only 13 years previously the law of the land had still forbidden Catholics to attend universities or take seats in Parliament."

But what this paper—or any other media outlet—fails to explain, is why Catholics were placed in that situation. Why did England prohibit Catholics from occupying positions of influence—from seats in Parliament and from the throne of England? The Act of Settlement (1689) provides a hint. It reads, in part:

"Whereas it hath been found by experience that it is inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this Protestant Kingdom to be governed by a Popish Prince or by any King or Queen marrying a Papist..."

Did the passing years prove that "experience" to be no longer relevant? Was the "safety and welfare" of the kingdom now quite secure under the guidance of Roman Catholics?

About 200 years after the Act of Settlement, in 1875, W.E. Gladstone, a former Prime Minister in Britain, published his book entitled "The Vatican Decrees in their bearing on civil Allegiance." His words have been quoted before in this magazine. Gladstone wrote:

"... there is a fixed purpose among the secret inspirers of Roman policy to pursue, by the road of force, upon the arrival of any favourable opportunity, the favourite project of re-erecting the terrestrial throne of the Papedom, even if it can only be re-erected on the ashes of the city, and amid the whitening bones of the people.

"It is difficult to conceive or contemplate the effects of such an endeavour. But the existence at this day of the policy, even in barest idea, is itself a portentous evil. I do not hesitate to say that it is an incentive to general disturbance, a premium upon European wars."

The principle outlined by Gladstone had a bearing not only upon the throne of the Papal States in Italy ("Papedom"), but by extension, upon that of the German Holy Roman Empire, and indeed upon the Protestant throne of England. We cannot doubt that Rome would welcome the abolition of the Protestant throne which claims the allegiance of Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and others.

Gladstone’s Critic

Gladstone’s book (or tract) raised the issue of allegiance. The Proclamation of Papal Infallibility (1870) was still current, and so the question of divided loyalties had been raised by the former (and still future) Prime Minister. One of those who challenged Gladstone’s Vatican Decrees was John Henry Newman: Revived Catholicism in England, entered into controversy with Prime Minister Gladstone and called Queen Victoria "Antichrist."

John Henry Newman (the Anglican who had converted to Catholicism). The other main critic was Archbishop Manning. Gladstone answered both critics in a pamphlet entitled "Vaticanism: An Answer to Reproofs and Replies." After having a great deal to say about papal infallibility and its consequences, Gladstone wrote:

"Of that system as a system, especially after the further review of it which it has been my duty to make, I must say that its influence is adverse to freedom in the State, the family, and the individual; that when weak it is too often crafty, and when strong tyrannical; and that, though in this country no one could fairly deny to its professors the credit of doing what they think is for the glory of God, they exhibit in a notable degree the vast self-deluding forces which make sport of our common nature...

"In some of the works to which I am now offering my rejoinder a protest is raised against this discussion in the name of peace. I will not speak of the kind of peace which the Roman Propaganda has for the last thirty years been carrying through the private homes of England."

So after some 200 years, since the Act of Settlement, a Prime Minister could endorse "what hath been found by experience" in regard to Rome’s activities.

A Contemporary View

It is interesting and informative to learn the reactions of those people who witnessed Newman at work in the 19th Century. We happen to have on our bookshelves a volume of The Scottish Protestant, and in the issue for July 26, 1851, we find the following reference to "the Rev. Dr. Newman, who lately lectured in Birmingham." There is a copy of the account of this lecture reproduced from the Birmingham Journal. The Scottish Protestant commented:

"Here is a man who received his education in a Protestant university, and who exerted all his great talents for a series of years to make that university Popish—who abused his privileges and advantages to pervert the faith of the national establishment—who enjoyed the emoluments which the state had devoted to Protestant purposes, while he was labouring assiduously for the establishment of Popery, and who at last seceded from the Established Church, and now openly assails it, without having ever been for one moment molested or obstructed by policeman, or magistrate, or mob. But what did he propose to do in his lecture? "He proposed to investigate how Catholics came to be so trodden under foot and spurned by a people who were endowed by nature with many great qualities, moral and intellectual; how it was that the Catholics were cried out against by the very stones, bricks, tiles, and chimney-pots of a place such as this town."

The report went on to point out that Newman’s lecture was not interrupted:

"—no, not even when he had the hardihood, whether in earnest or not, to take the following liberty with the name of our gracious Sovereign, and to intimate that Victoria is Antichrist! ‘Queen Victoria causes herself to be represented on her
coins as the goddess of the seas, with a pagan trident in her hand. Astonishing to say, Queen Victoria is distinctly pointed out in the Book of Revelation as having the number of the beast! The number is 666. Now, she came to the throne in the year 37, at which date she was eighteen years old. Multiply, then, 37 by 18, and you have the very number 666, which is the mystical emblem."

That Britain—the once upon a time Great Britain—can now genuflect before the Roman Pope (and Elizabeth has) is astounding. Never mind that upon his arrival back in Rome Benedict was greeted by the news that his Vatican Bank is under investigation for money laundering "and police have frozen 23 million euros ($30.21 million) of its funds." The charge will be denied of course!

Prophecy Fulfilling

Many prophecies relating to the papacy are cited in the Milestones Update on page 14 of this issue. That the Pope of Rome should appear to be doing quite well for himself—even though that whole system is being exposed almost daily as corrupt to its very core—is not something that we should marvel at. The picture of Rome towards the end of her career is given to us in the Revelation:

"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (Rev. 18:7).

By her sorceries (pharmakia: drugs, poisons, spells) are all nations deceived—verse 23. So it is that this terrible system has risen up to such a position of power and influence in this world. Not only in Britain, but across the globe.

As the world moves ever closer to the final crisis, we must expect to see the Pope and his Vatican exercising power and influence on a scale never before seen in her long and evil history. In Eureka volume 3, John Thomas wrote:

"When the crisis (i.e. of Armageddon—Ed.) is formed, the Prophet of the Great City will be in high feather, exerting himself in the presence of the Beast, with all the spiritual influence he possesses over the millions of Antichristendom, to induce them to join in the crusade preached, as the grand rally of “the earth and the whole habitable” against the great and pressing terror of the situation."

The Failure of Protestantism

If the pope’s visit to Britain was a triumph and a success, it is largely because the established church in England has been unable to defend the Bible; not because of lack of evidence to support the Scripture, but because of the unfaithful clergy who were persuaded not to believe it.

The only road to recovery for Britain is the path of repentance—to turn again to the Book of Books which enlightened the nation in the past and could do so again. The Failure of Protestantism was that the Reformation never went far enough. Church leaders clung to power instead of to Truth.

President Woodrow Wilson

THE BIBLE MAGAZINE Vol. 23 ISSUE No.4

The publication of the King James Authorized Version of the Bible in 1611 was a landmark in British history, for it is true to say that it became the most influential book ever printed in the English language. The Bible Magazine purposes (God willing) to produce a special issue to cover this in January 2011.

Many writers have testified to this version of the Bible, and their words are worth our consideration today.

Among these is the former British Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone, who wrote:

"I have known ninety-five great men of the world in my time, and of these eighty-seven were all followers of the Bible... My only hope for the world is in bringing the human mind into contact with Divine Revelation."

Other statesmen paid tribute also—among whom were Presidents of the United States of America. For example, Theodore Roosevelt who said:

"The great debt of the English-speaking peoples everywhere is to the translation of the Bible that we all know—I trust I can say, all here know—in our homes; the Bible as it was put forth in English three centuries ago. No other book of any kind ever written in English—perhaps no other book ever written in any other tongue—has ever so affected the whole life of a people as this Authorized Version of the Scriptures has affected the life of the English-speaking peoples.

“I ask that the Bible be studied for the sake of the breadth it must give to every man who studies it.”

Again, at a meeting in Denver, May 7, 1911, in celebration of the Tercentenary of the Authorized Version of the Bible, President Wilson, at the time Governor of New Jersey, concluded his address with the following declaration and request:

“America was born a Christian nation. America was born to exemplify that devotion to the elements of righteousness which are derived from the revelations of Holy Scripture. I have a very simple thing to ask of you. I ask of every man and woman in this audience that from this night on they will realize that part of the destiny of America lies in their daily perusal of this great book of revelations—that if they would see America free and pure, they will make their own spirits free and pure by this baptism of the Holy Scripture.”

Then there was the vice-President Thomas R. Marshall who said:

“But more particularly ought this Book, in this land, to be exalted high. If I were to have my way, I would take the torch out of the hand of the Statue of Liberty, in New York Harbor, and in its stead place an open Bible.”

Today, and as we believe at the end of this age, there ought to be an effective witness to the English Bible. We hope readers will join us in causing the sound to go forth with as much power as we can muster. We urge you to place orders for this special issue early that we might be enabled to fulfill requests for it.

We need to hear from you and your ecclesias so that we might print sufficient quantities.
Four years into his reign as King of the Jews, Herod, with the help of a Roman legion, took his capital of Jerusalem. Before his escape to Rome, Herod had been tetrarch of the Galilee, but Antigonus, the Hasmonean who deposed his patron, Hyrcanus, aided by the Parthians, had sought his death. The Roman Senate, prompted by Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, named Herod “King of the Jews” in the year 40 BC, according to Josephus. Although Antigonus was his enemy, Herod married his niece, Mariamne, the Hasmonean, in an attempt to raise his popularity with the Judeans during the war to retake the land. Doris, his wife, and Antipater his 3 year old son were banished.

The war with Antigonus took 3 years to achieve its goal. The Hasmonean dynasty came to an end with the execution of Antigonus by Mark Antony. As the sole ruler of the land, Herod called himself king, but he was a ‘client-king’ of the Romans—although more successful than others of his time. The Herodian dynasty had begun.

Scripture references and Josephus give us the majority of the information we have about Herod. The Herods found in the Gospels and Acts are, for the most part, his successors. Luke tells us that Herod was king at the time of the conception of John the Baptist and Jesus, while Matthew relates the events of the visit of the magi from the east, and movements of the family down to Egypt and back to Nazareth upon the death of Herod and the change to the rule of Archelaus. This glimpse of Herod tells us something of his power when he ordered the killing of all the male children in Bethlehem and area under the age of two.

“Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men” (Matthew 2:16).

Critics make much of the lack of other records of this “massacre of the innocents,” but the events are totally in accord with everything we know of the character of Herod. It is thought that Herod reigned from 39 to 4 BC. Josephus says that he died shortly after a lunar eclipse, which some have dated to March–April of 4 BC.

Herod is best known for his changing relationships with the rulers of Rome during turbulent times, for his building program, and for his treatment of his family. Mark Antony was a strong supporter and apparently a good friend, but when he and Cleopatra lost the Battle of Actium against the forces of Octavian, Herod was able to convince Octavian that he would be as loyal a supporter of his administration as he had been for Mark Antony. The Romans needed a powerful personality capable of preserving the existing order in the country, and one whose loyalty to them was not in doubt. Since the Jews made up the overwhelming majority of the population of the land, it also seemed proper from the Roman point of view that its king should be a Jew. However, in order to include a large non-Jewish population within the borders of Judea, it was necessary that the character of the regime should not be theocratic, as had been the case with the Hasmoneans when the ruler combined the functions both of king and high priest. Herod thus fulfilled the demands of Roman policy in the land of Israel, and was a commander and politician who throughout his life cooperated fully with Rome’s representatives in the East. In his military struggle with the Nabateans during the time of Antony and Cleopatra, the balance had swayed back and forth, but Herod had used his considerable military skill to win a decisive victory, proving to Rome’s rulers that he was a valuable leader, capable of sustaining security and order in the region. Herod carefully cultivated his personal relationships, particularly with Octavian-Augustus, and his right hand man, Agrippa, the Roman commander.

Using his influence, Herod was able to help Jewish communities in the Diaspora. When a serious dispute broke out about the rights of the Jews in the cities of Asia Minor, Agrippa, to whom the decision was entrusted, decided in...
favour of the Jews. In the land itself, Herod succeeded in maintaining peace, and there was no open rebellion against his rule. His regime was sustained until the day of his death.

After taking Jerusalem, Herod established a royal council to deal with important matters, while removing the political power previously wielded by the Sanhedrin. Since he still wanted their loyalty, he reached out to the priestly ruling class to negotiate the rebuilding of the Temple. Having been to Rome, Herod saw the value of a building program to impress his subjects, just as politicians today are inclined to make their mark with infrastructure and public works programs. His first efforts involved strengthening the city defences, and the refurbishing of the Second Temple began about 19 BC. It was not rebuilt, but rather renewed. As a beginning, the platform of the Temple Mount was enlarged to twice its previous size. The Temple itself was covered on all sides with plates of gold, and white stone. Josephus called it “a structure more noteworthy than any under the sun.”

The enclosure at Machpelah, the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, bears witness to the scale of the project. Although we can not be positive concerning the order in which the works were done, or what happened to spur each of the projects, some massive works were undertaken, only a few of which remain in evidence today. A Roman city—Caesarea—was created on the Mediterranean shore with a state of the art environment in Roman ruled Israel and the rest of the Ancient World. Jubilee and his son Antipater, Herod dealt with his family in a way that shows us how jealous he was of his rule. Just as he tried to destroy our Lord, the Messiah—the “King of the Jews” of Matthew 2:2—by ordering the death of his own sons, Herod, in many ways, was a true Roman ruler.

Starting with the banishment of his wife Doris and his son Antipater, Herod dealt with his family in a way that shows us how jealous he was of his rule. Just as he tried to destroy our Lord, the Messiah—the “King of the Jews” of Matthew 2:2—by ordering the death of his own sons, Herod, in many ways, was a true Roman ruler.

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LOCAL INFORMATION
When the God of Israel manifested Himself through a pillar of cloud, it was often for the purpose of communication, as for example in Deuteronomy 5:22—

“These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.” See also Numbers 11:25.

As the passage from Exodus 13 tells us, the pillar of cloud was to “lead them the way” and the pillar of fire was “to give them light.” Here is the purpose of God in communicating His word, to lead His people in the way of righteousness (Psalm 5:8) and to give light to their path (Psalm 119:105).

But as the natural phenomenon can be frightening and destructive, so the word of God will destroy those who set themselves against it. His word is like a fire, says Jeremiah 23:29. The godless world of today must expect judgement: “For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire...” (Isa.66:15,16)

A tornado may remind us of the passage from Exodus 13:21 quoted at the top of this page. They are pillars of cloud extending from the clouds (heaven) to the surface of the earth. A rare phenomenon is the fire tornado (left).

Natural elements will be used to destroy Israel’s enemies according to Ezekiel 38:19-22 etc.