A LIGHT TO LIGHTEN THE GENTILES

and the glory of thy people Israel
Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. John 17:17

SLAIN FOR THE WORD OF GOD

“I saw... them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” Revelation 6:9-11

“Lord! open the king of England’s eyes”

WILLIAM TYNDALE TRANSLATED THE BIBLE INTO ENGLISH AT THE COST OF HIS LIFE. JOHN FOXE WROTE: “IT CANNOT BE SPOKEN WHAT A DOOR OF LIGHT THEY OPENED TO THE EYES OF THE WHOLE ENGLISH NATION...”

SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE ENGLISH BIBLE

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“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17

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**EDITORIAL**

**“The Scriptures of the Prophets”**

Having the open Bible in our hands, and in our own language, is a priceless treasure that cannot be compared to anything else that this life has to offer. Here are “the lively oracles of God”—the living words of Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth. These oracles are the words of eternal life (John 6:68) which Peter referred to and of which Hebrews chapter one says:

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (verses 1-2).

Today, we have these living words of God on the printed page of the Bible, but it is only by a process of grafting these words from the paper, and into our minds, that we can truly hear the voice of the one who is speaking. We must “hear the words of the Book” (Isaiah 29:18). We must know and appreciate that it is He who is speaking; “Behold, Here I am” (Isaiah 52:6 c/p Revised Version, Rotherham etc). And again: “If any man have ears to hear, let him hear” (Mark 4:23; 7:16; Revelation 13:9).

To “hear” in the Scriptural sense is to understand and perceive; to attend to what is spoken. It means to have an ear for the truth. Jesus told the religious leaders of his day:

“Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word” (John 8:43).

They could not accept the truth, for their minds were blinded through other considerations and self-interests. In Matthew 13:15 Jesus said: “For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”

This is another way of saying that their minds were closed. There was a vail upon their heart (2 Corinthians 3:15).

The human mind is naturally preoccupied with its present surroundings and conditions. Awareness is more or less limited to the situation that is here and now—only a few have much interest or concern for what is happening in a different part of the world. The tsunami and earthquake in Japan, or the turmoil in the Arab world has little direct impact upon people who live thousands of miles away. Still less are the general populations of today able to relate to the events and circumstances of history. There may be a certain fascination and awe about past events such as the French Revolution, the sinking of the Titanic or Adolf Hitler’s “Blitzkrieg”—but for most these things are barely distinguishable from novels or movies.

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**PROPHECY DAYS IN 2011 (God Willing)**

**KENT PROPHECY DAY APRIL 9, 2011**

**JERUSALEM THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING**

Venue: East Malling Village Hall, New Road, East Malling, Kent NR18 0HQ
Commencing at 4:00 p.m.
For more info, petermoore123@talktalk.net

**NORTHERN PROPHECY DAY (UK)**

Saturday October 29, 2011 (God willing)

“So shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.”
2 Chronicles 20:20

**Speaker: Paul Billington (Brantford, Canada).**
For further information contact Philip Jones 01226-286026

**SOUTH WALES PROPHECY DAY**

Saturday November 5th, 2011 (God willing)

**The More Sure Word of Prophecy**

Nicholas White (Pershore) - “A Light Shining in a Dark Place”
Simon Collard (Cambridge) - “Watch Israel”
Don Pearce (Rugby) - Milestones To the Kingdom

For further info’ Brian Woodall, 01269-596973 brwoodall@tiscall.uk

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**THE PURPOSE OF PROPHECY DAYS ANNOUNCED IN THE BIBLE MAGAZINE**

- To provide brethren and sisters with sound reasons as to why we can still have confidence in our Christadelphian heritage in the area of Bible prophecy.
- To re-introduce these concepts in a non-controversial, yet fresh and stimulating way.
- To encourage renewed interest and study of the prophetic vision provided by Scripture.
In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness” — Genesis 1:1-4.

John, in the New Testament (William Tyndale’s translation) says:
“In the beginnyng was the worde, and the worde was with God: and the worde was God. The same was in the beginnyng with God. All things were made by it, and with out it, was made nothinge, that was made. In it was lyfe, and the lyfe was the lyght of men, and the lyght shyneth in the darcknes, but the darcknes comprehended it not”—John 1:1-5.

These ideas are brought together for us in Psalm 119:105 where the metaphor of “light” is seen to represent the word of God:
“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

A Holy Nation

The Scriptures teach us that as the purpose of God (the Logos) unfolded, this “Light” was channelled through the nation of Israel, for “unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Romans 3:2). And in Romans 9:4 the apostle Paul writes of his kinsmen according to the flesh:
“Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.”

By Paul Billington  BRANTFORD, ON.

So we learn that the Law of God was given through and to the nation of Israel. Moses says: “Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” (Deuteronomy 4:5-8).

It was through this Law that the faithful Israelite could come to know and love all that God was. From that first and great principle, the love of God, we can see the development of the second: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Leviticus 19:18). A society of people who were united in their love of God’s ways would consequently love one another—“for God is love” says the apostle (1 John 4:8). This fact is clearly and wonderfully exhibited in the Law of Moses. Consider a few examples:

Leviticus 19:11-12 The reaper would always leave something for someone else; “for the poor and stranger.” They would not take “every grape” for themselves, even though it might be their own property.

Leviticus 19:13 There would be no stealing or falsehood practised between man and man.
Leviticus 19:13 Payment of wages would be prompt (daily!).
Leviticus 19:14 No advantage would be taken of those who suffered some incapacity.
Leviticus 19:15 Judgment would be just: no favouring of powerful public figures; no perversion of justice because of circumstances.

The rest of this chapter shows that there would be no abuse of land, of human gullibility, of children. The old would receive due honour and respect. Strangers (immigrants) would have the same treatment “as one born among you.” There would be justice in commerce: “Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin.”

Every facet of social life is catered for in the same spirit by the Law of Moses: land ownership, moral standards—even health and welfare responsibilities. Underlying all these precepts one can constantly detect the one fundamental theme: “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

Now this Law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator (Galatians 3:19). It is a unique situation. Writing of this mediatorship in 1853 John Thomas wrote as follows:

**Mediation**

“No other nation besides Israel has received a law “ordained in the hand of a mediator.” The constitutions and laws of the nations have been given to them by evil men who have subdued them; or by men no holier, whom they may have chosen to rule over them. Hence their organizations are evil, and the spirit which actuates them, satanic...

“Mediation being an Israelitish institution, and there being no other between Jehovah and the population of the earth; and it being admitted that no man can come to God save through a mediator approved of Him; it follows that both individuals and nations can obtain access to “the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” only through the mediation which pertains to Israel. Now this mediation was through the Mosaic law. Obviously so; because according to that law there is no acceptance except through sacrifice offered in Jerusalem by the priesthood of Levi. So long as Jerusalem is trodden under foot of the Gentiles, this is impossible; Israel, therefore, like the rest of the nations, although they trust in Moses, are as destitute of mediation as though the mediarpship pertained to the Chinese and not to them...”

Israel then required a mediator.

**Christ: The Light of the World**

It was by a special act of creation described in Luke 1:35 that Mary—a descendant of David—was to conceive and bring forth a son, and it was through this means that (as John describes it):

...the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

This glorious character “manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16) was to be both: “A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” (Luke 2:32).

Jesus said of himself “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12 and 9:5), and he inspired others — as he said (John 17 verses 8 and 14), “I have given them Thy Word.” He could then tell them “Ye are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14). So the apostle Paul could comment: “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, AND to the Gentiles” (Acts 26:22-23).

This light of the word shone forth first to the people of Israel (Matthew 15:24), and when the majority of them rejected it, the light of the Gospel of the kingdom was then sent to the Gentiles through the preaching of the Apostles.

“And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon” (Revelation 5:3-4).

**A Revelation!**

The first news of a break-through came when Simeon, who was “waiting for the consolation of Israel” saw the child Jesus. His words were (King James Version):

“For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” (Luke 2:30-32).

In the 1884 Revised Version and the Revised Standard Version, verse 32 reads:

“A light for revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of thy people Israel.”

The word rendered “revelation” is in the Greek text ἀποκάλυψις (apocalypse), and the New Testament book that bears that name was sent specifically to believers in a Gentile world—it really was a light to enlighten them during the long centuries of those “night visions”—centuries during which the Jewish people have been in darkness. So “the Revelation (apocalypse) of Jesus Christ” was sent “to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass...” (Revelion 1:1):

The light of the Gospel of the Kingdom, elsewhere called “The Hope of Israel” centred upon “the hope of the promise made of God unto” the fathers of Israel, “unto which promise the twelve tribes unto” the fathers of Israel, “unto which promise the twelve tribes hoped to come—Acts 26:6-7. It concerned the resurrection of the son of David—of whom Paul declared:

“Of this man’s seed hath God accorded to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus” (Acts 13:23).

It is important to remember this: Jesus is the Saviour of Israel. The apostate churches of Christendom preach the doctrine of what is known as Replacement theology. This doctrine spiritualizes terms such as “Israel,” “Zion,” “Jerusalem” and replaces them with “Church.” This can be seen from the added notes and headings in many Bibles. For example, a note at the head of Isaiah 30 which prophesies of grace to “Zion at Jerusalem” reads God’s mercies towards his church (Oxford). This alteration of the plain sense of Scripture is subversive of the true Gospel.

An Apocalypse to the Nations

Following his resurrection from death, Acts chapter one tells us that Jesus spent forty days with his disciples “speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (verse 3). So for over a month Jesus instructed his apostles in this central subject—and it is clear from verse 6.
just what they understood about that kingdom, for their question was:

“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). Jesus’ reply was:

“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power”—(Acts 1:7).

This was not a shut-down on the question of the timing of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, but merely referred to the “times and seasons” which were then unknown outside of the Father’s authority. That phrase “times and seasons” is explained by Vine’s Expository Dictionary as follows:

“Broadly speaking, chronos expresses the duration of a period, kairos stresses it as marked by certain features; thus in Acts 1:7, “the Father has set within His own authority” both the times (chronos), the lengths of the periods, and the seasons (kairos), epochs characterized by certain events.”

We find these time periods and characteristic epochs in the book of the Revelation where Jesus shows them to his servants. These are shown in the examples given in the chart opposite.

So “the light of Israel” having been extinguished through unbelief, the apocalypse of Jesus Christ was given as a light to Gentile believers.

As John Thomas explained it in the preface to the first volume of his exposition Eureka:

“The Apocalypse is “the things concerning the kingdom of the Deity and the name of Jesus Anointed,” with the times and the seasons, symbolically and dramatically exhibited: in other words, “the Mystery of the Deity as he hath declared the glad tidings to his servants the prophets”—ch. 10:7. The gospel must, therefore, be understood as an indispensable prerequisite to the true and correct exposition of the book.”

When these “times and seasons” (seals, trumpets, vials and thunders) are all fulfilled, and “when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE FINISHED”—Daniel 12:7. This will then introduce “the times of refreshing:”

“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own authority” (Acts 1:7). The R.S.V. renders Romans 11:25 like this:

“lest ye be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: A hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel will be saved...”

It is true that the Jewish nation has been estranged from the God of Israel, and that some have been broken off because of unbelief as Paul says in Romans chapter 11, but: “...they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft out of the Gentiles a people for His Name (Acts 15:14). The

Example of Times (periods)

“... the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.” Revelation 11:2
“... that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days,” 12:6
“... power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.” 13:5
“... receive power as kings one hour with the beast.” 17:12

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Romans 11:25).

Jehovah will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob; but that he would sift them among all nations as grain is sifted in a sieve, yet that not one good seed should fall to the earth to rise no more: for that when the indignation shall be completed, Jehovah will raise up the dwelling-place of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; he will raise up David’s ruins, and build the kingdom AS IN THE DAYS OF OLD; that they who shall inherit it, may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the nations when Jehovah’s name shall be proclaimed to them: then Israel shall be planted upon their land, and rooted up no more from thence, saith Jehovah Elohim, who hath given it to them, and not to the Gentiles.”

Again, in Ezekiel 9:3 we see the glory of Israel departing. Also in chapter 10:18, and then in 11:23 (please compare 1 Samuel 4:21-22). But in chapter 43:2-4 the glory of the God of Israel returns from the way of the east.

The glory of God is His character (c/p Exodus 33:18-19; 34:6-7) and that character is manifested in His Son (John 1:14), and is seen in all His dealings with His people, Israel. So it is then, that Simeon, in Luke 2:32 declared by the Spirit that the child Jesus was to be both a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. As God said through the prophet Isaiah:

“I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.” (Isaiah 46:13).

When will this salvation be realized, and how will it be accomplished? Isaiah says that it is to be the work of the Redeemer (59:20-21), and of the Deliverer says Paul in Romans 11:26-27. This is to come to pass when the LORD comes to Zion:
“Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD” (Psalm 102:13-18).

The Righteous Nation

So the prophet Isaiah wrote:

“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever” (ch. 59:20-21).

He continues his theme through the chapter division to exclaim:

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.”

The glory of Yahweh is, as we have said, His character. A character that is now manifested in His Son, who John says is “full of grace and truth.” Consider the character of this Holy One. Who else, in the face of a cruel death at the hand of his enemies would cry out: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

The grace and mercy of God is marvellous, and the love of Christ is past understanding. As Moses was told, God is “abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...” We must balance this with His justice of course, for He “will by no means clear the guilty” — and so it is with Israel as He says through Jeremiah 46:28,

“Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.”

The history of the world testifies to this dreadful punishment of the Jewish people—their exile and massacre, centuries of persecution, the Inquisition, the Ghetto, the Holocaust and continuing anti-Semitism. They certainly have not been “wholly unpunished.”

But through the prophet Ezekiel God says:

“I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the

THE CALLING OUT OF THE NATION

Aprox. Dates

1500 B.C. 

CALLED OUT OF EGYPT

The Law of Moses given and the nation invited to walk in God’s ways. The people covenant to obey.

Constant failure to walk in God’s ways during the time of Moses, Joshua, Judges, the kings of Israel.

The prophets urge the nation to repent.

500 B.C. 

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

Restoration under Ezra & Nehemiah.

Repentance soon becomes superficial as the nation refuses to walk in the ways of God.

30 A.D. 

CHRIST: REJECTED BY THE NATION

The appeal of the apostles rejected

70 A.D. 

THE ROMAN CAPTIVITY

The nation is cut off and scattered among all nations.

The anti-Jewish sentiments of an apostate Christendom help to enforce separateness.

2000 A.D.

PERIOD OF RESTORATION leading to Reformation:

The nation will finally recognize Christ as their Deliverer

The nation becomes righteous under the New Covenant & is blessed in the Seed of Abraham

THE BIBLE MAGAZINE Vol. 24 ISSUE No.2
“For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee” (Isaiah 60:2).

In this way then, the words of Simeon will find their ultimate fulfillment. The Gentile believers will have been enlightened by the Gospel and through the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, and he will then be seen as “the glory of thy people Israel,” for Isaiah continues:

“And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (verse 3).

The Gentile nations will be brought to see this, and they will come to appreciate “the Name of the LORD thy God...”

“...and the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee” (Isaiah 60:9-10).

And again, we further read in verses 21 and 22, “Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.”

Who can read the Scriptures and not see these things? As one writer, Robert Roberts, expressed it in his book Christendom Astray:

“We shall find that in the purpose of God, the salvation of the world is bound up in the destiny of the Jews: that apart from their national glorification, such salvation is a dream, to be realized neither by nations nor individuals, spiritually nor temporally—and that the man who is either ignorant or sceptical of this coming future development, is darkened in his understanding on one of the essential features of Christian teaching.”

Under the Messiah and his brethren the Saints, Israel’s light will shine forth during the millennial age of the kingdom. Then, under the New Covenant Israel’s people will be all righteous:

“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” (Isaiah 2:2-3).
“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” —Matthew 19:28

By John Thomas

This article, slightly abridged from The Herald of the Kingdom 1856, was written in defence of the true Gospel after the Truth had been attacked by a church that denied the restoration of the Jewish kingdom.

There are three things to be approved by the faithful in the truth, which are good, better, and best. Opposition to the gospel of the kingdom is good, belief of it is better, and obedience to it, best. If men will not believe and obey it, the next best thing they can do is to oppose it with all their might and main. This is good; not for themselves indeed, but for the dissemination of the truth. Matches are incendiary and destructive; but left alone they are neither. Is it not so also with the truth? Leave the truth alone; bring it not forth; let there be no agitation about it, and the truth will be as innocuous, as peaceable, and harmless, as a lamb — no one would be converted by it; and no man’s crotchets would be endangered nor disturbed. We rejoice, then, to hear that the adversaries of David’s throne and kingdom are making war upon believers of the true Gospel. We hope they will give them no rest. Let them bring all their “men of learning,” all their “good shaped heads” and “good voices,” with all their holy tones and nasal twangs; let them array all their “powers,” tactics, and talents, against them — “The virgin, the daughter of Zion, despises them, and laughs them to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem shakes her head at them;” and the merest stripling of David’s house will hook their nostrils and bridle their lips, and turn them back whither they came — Isaiah 37:22-29. Collision will cause the truth to shine with a brightness destructive of the enemy. Let him oppose, it is good; their opposition is the rage of an infant against a rock; the demonstration is attractive, proving they are troubled by what they cannot subdue. All this is good for is to call attention to the gospel by opposing it. They have proved themselves to be the reverse of “honest and good hearts;” and as the truth was only designed for such, it is therefore not for them. Like Demas, they love the present world, whose approbation and good things they seek and obtain; and with him they will vanish into perdition, unless they repent and turn from their wickedness, and be healed. The truth alone can bring them to this; and against the truth they harden their hearts, and close their eyes. Surely, such a generation is nigh to cursing!

Abstractly, “regeneration” signifies a producing again—a meaning which implies that the thing or things so produced existed in some state previously to reproduction. In Matt. 19 the word is used in reference to thrones, tribes, glory, ruling and rulers; which are the elements of a kingdom. It is therefore used there in a political sense, and implied when so used by “the King of the Jews,” that those things did not then organically exist, but that they should be thereafter reproduced. The kingdom of the twelve tribes had existed in the Holy Land, the only country where it can exist; but when Jesus spoke the words, the Holy Land was a province of the Little Horn of the Goat—the power that afterwards destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. From the days of John the Baptist’s proclamation to (the present), Jehovah and his king’s land has continued to be a province of the Little Horn. “WE HAVE NO KING BUT CAESAR,” was the public avowal of a fact attested by all history to this day. Caesar has been de facto; though not de jure, king of the Jews ever since.

Restoration of the Kingdom

Two hostile kingdoms cannot coexist in the same capital; much less possible is it for Caesar and Messiah to reign together over Jerusalem; and to suggest that the Apostles reigned over that city, where, at the will of Caesar’s vassals they were cast into prison, and finally expelled, is too absurd for serious confutation.

The throne of David, and the thrones of David’s house, the Glory of Jehovah, the twelve tribes, and their twelve ruling princes, all existed in Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the days of David and Solomon; seeing then, that they did not exist when the greater than Solomon was
there, nor since, it follows that reproduction in relation to what Jesus and his Apostles were interested in, imports the restoration of those things to their appropriate place. This is what the apostles themselves understood was to be accomplished “in the regeneration”: for, after Jesus had been discoursing to them about the kingdom some forty days subsequent to his resurrection, they inquired of him, “Wilt thou in this time restore the kingdom of Israel?” This question shows that they did not consider that Israel possessed the kingdom at that time. Therefore, they wished to know if he would not then re-produce it. What does (the opposition) do with this? How do they evade the force of it? O nothing more easy! “The apostles were ignorant, and did not know what they were talking about!” They had not studied at some orthodox school of Gentilism; and were, consequently, too carnal, too Jewish, in their notions of the kingdom? Then we must study Gentile theology to understand the words of Jesus and his apostle! Reader, is this your conviction? If it be, then burn your Bible, and cast the Herald into the bottomless abyss; you have no use for either.

In the re-production of the twelve tribes, the territory, the nation, and the capital, will all be the same—the Holy Land, the Twelve Tribes, and Jerusalem. The government will be monarchical “as in the days of old.” This will not be changed. The persons by whom the government will be administered will be different. Instead of David, succeeded by Solomon, succeeded by Rehoboam; it will be “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” succeeded by no one; and instead of the princes of David succeeded by the princes of Solomon, etc.; it will be the apostles and brethren of Jesus, the immortal princes of the house of Bethlehem, succeeded by none: for “The kingdom shall not be left to other people,” as in former years—Daniel 2:22. None, who have not previously been the subject of “a change of heart”—“renewed by knowledge after the image of God”—can have any part in that kingdom. This will exclude those who “are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them;” but sincerely do we hope that they are not yet “past feeling.” At present, they despise “the word of the kingdom;” and it is written, that “Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed”—Proverbs 13:13. Without knowledge there is no righteousness—“Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” Ignorance of this truth is a barrier against sanctification by it. The truth must be known to be believed; and without faith, or belief of the gospel of the kingdom it is impossible to please God: and he that pleaseth not God is not righteous; and “the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

**Heirs and Subjects of the Kingdom**

Many have not yet learned the difference between the subjects of a kingdom and the heirs of a kingdom. The latter are they who are to rule over the kingdom, and to possess the glory and honor of it forever; the former, the nation which is to obey their statutes and ordinances. Christians (ie. the saints) are not the subjects of the kingdom. They rank higher than this. They are to rule. They are joint heirs of all things promised to their Elder Brother—the Joseph of the family. The apostles and their brethren were all joint heirs, and rulers of the kingdom elect. This is irreputable; where then, were their subjects? Let them answer this if they can.

The subjects of the kingdom are the generations of the ages—those generations of the Twelve Tribes contemporary with the reign of Jesus on his father David’s throne in Jerusalem: the descendants of the downtrodden and despised outcasts of Israel in all the Ghettos of Rome, Constantinople, and other sinks of Gentile abomination and iniquity. These outcasts, however degraded, are not lower in the social scale than the Egyptian bondsmen from whom sprang the generations that conquered Canaan, and were the terror and admiration of the Orient under David and Solomon. The first generation that shall be resettled in the Holy Land by Jesus will be brought into the righteousness prepared for God for its justification. “Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more,” says Jehovah, and “they shall be all righteous”—a righteous nation, whose shepherds shall be after Jehovah’s heart, and shall feed them with knowledge and understanding—Jeremiah 3:15.

There was no “change of government” effected in Jerusalem on Pentecost. All the Jews that resided or sojourned in that city, whether Nazarenes or not, continued to obey the laws. The Roman government was not changed; and the municipal and the ecclesiastical customs were observed as usual, and for nearly forty years after. All that the Christian Hebrews did was to cease from seeking righteousness by works of law. A Christian in Britain abstains from seeking salvation through state-church, or dissenting institutions; nevertheless, he pays tithes, and taxes, and is careful not to violate the law. It was so with the Pentecostian Christians—they continued to render unto Caesar what belonged to him, and to God the things that were his.

The great event of the Day of Pentecost was, the proclamation for the first time of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus as the Messiah, to all those who believed the gospel of the kingdom, and recognized his claims to its throne. All such were baptized, and became a society in Jerusalem; not a kingdom, but suffering tribulation in hope of receiving one.

**Throne**

“Throne” is used for that magnificent seat whereon sovereign princes usually sit to receive the homage of their subjects, or to give audience to ambassadors; where they appear with pomp and ceremony, and from whence they dispense justice.” The Scripture describes the throne of Solomon as the finest and richest throne in the world. Thus it is written in 1 Kings 10:18; “Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays. And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom.”

It is true that “throne” is also put for sovereign power and dignity, it being the symbol of royalty and regal authority—“Only on the throne,” said Pharaoh to Joseph, “will I be greater than thou.” It is not pretended that Jesus is to sit upon the identical piece of palace furniture made by David’s cabinet maker, or Solomon’s goldsmith... No! thrones signify an elevated seat with a footstool; and the city that contains such a seat occupied by a king, is also styled in Scripture a throne—the container being put for the contained. Hence, as Zion and Jerusalem were the dwelling-place and seat of David and his dominion when he ruled the Twelve Tribes as king for Jehovah, they are styled “the throne of Jehovah,” and “the throne of David”—Jer. 3:16. To restore the throne of David, therefore, is to set up a royalty in the Holy Land with the regal authority located in Jerusalem. But this is not all. To constitute the throne of the monarchy, David’s throne, the twelve tribes of Israel must be planted in the land, and the person occupying the throne must be a Son of David.

It is the regal authority in David’s house, executing judgment and justice in the Holy Land
from Jerusalem, as its palatial residence, that is David’s throne—
the regal authority enthroned, or seated there, and exercised by himself or a descendant. We look for the reestablishment of such a throne as this in Jerusalem, when we speak of the restoration of David’s throne.

**Restoration of the Tribes of Israel**

Of course, one who does not believe in the restoration will certainly not believe the gospel of the kingdom; for no restoration no kingdom; and no kingdom no salvation for Jews or Gentiles. As we have said, we assuredly believe that all the tribes will be restored to the land covenanted to Abraham and his Seed; and that not a single straggler will be left behind. Now and his Seed; and that not a single

belief in the restoration will

David’s throne.

we speak of the restoration of

throne as this in Jerusalem, when

for the reestablishment of such a

himself or a descendant.

seated there, and exercised by

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from Jerusalem, as its palatial

OWN LAND , and feed them upon

high mountains of Israel shall

their fold be

shall they be in a good fold, and in a fat pasture

I will bring them out from the people, and

gather them from the countries,

THEM TO THEIR OWN LAND , and feed them upon

the inhabited places of the country. I will feed

them in a good pasture, and upon the

top mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all

the inhabited places of the country. I will feed

them in a good pasture, and upon the high

mountains of Israel shall their fold be: THERE

shall they be in a good fold, and in a fat pasture

shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.

I will bring them out from the people, and

gather them from the countries, and WILL BRING

THEM TO THEIR OWN LAND , and feed them upon

the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all

the inhabited places of the country. I will feed

them in a good pasture, and upon the high

mountains of Israel shall their fold be: THERE

shall they be in a good fold, and in a fat pasture

shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.


Any honest, unsophisticated mind, reading this can understand it. Such a one can see that it relates to Israel’s future, and to that only; for the testimony declares, that Israelites shall no more

be a prey to the nations, and bear these nations’

reproaches and ill-treatment no more: but they
do now endure them all, and are now a prey;

therefore the word being true, it follows that

the testimony concerns the future.

Yes, and not a single straggler shall be left in

a foreign land, however indisposed he may now

be to return to Palestine. Hear this, ye Gentiles,

who make the word of God of none effect by your nonsensical traditions, what that glorious old “madman,” as ye call those who believe his doctrine, says in regard to this;—

“And it shall come to pass,” says Moses,

“when all these things are come upon thee, the

blessing and the curse, which I have set before
thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among

all the nations, whither I shall be thine Elohim hath driven thee, And shall return

unto I shall be thine Elohim, and shall

obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thy

heart: that then I shall be thine

Elohim will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and

will return and gather thee from

all the people, whither I shall be thine

Elohim hath scattered thee.

“If any of thine be driven out unto

the outmost parts of heaven, from

thence will I shall be thine Elohim

gather thee, and from thence will

be fetch thee; and I shall be thine

Elohim will bring thee into the land

which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers”—Deuteronomy 30:1-5.

The doctrine of the restoration of the twelve tribes was also inculcated by the “Prophet like unto Moses,” who said to his contemporaries what is equally applicable to ours, “If ye believe not Moses’ writings how can ye believe my words?” In his prophecy on Mount Olivet, he said, “The son of Man (the I shall be thine Elohim of Moses) shall send his messengers with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his chosen (people) from the four winds, from the outmost heavens even to their extremities”—Matthew 24:31.

Such is the concurrent testimony of Ezekiel, Moses, Isaiah, Jesus, Paul, etc. all speaking by one and the same Spirit. Had they lost their senses? If we have lost ours in believing and looking for the accomplishment of what they wrote, then certainly they had lost theirs in predicting such improbabilities as the Gentiles regard them. Only think of it, reader, here are they charging the Holy Spirit in effect with having lost his senses!! We know not how much nearer men can come in these times to the “sin against the Holy Spirit” than this. Happy, happy is he who believes the simple truth; yea, thrice happy is he who is stigmatized as a lunatic by such blind guides. “Christians!”—call them Christians and ministers of Christ, who deny the work the Father hath appointed Him to do! “To bring back Jacob to him: to raise up his tribes, and to restore the desolations of Israel: to establish the land, and cause to possess the desolate estates”—Isaiah 49:5, 6, 8: Deny this, and pretend to understand, believe, and teach the truth as it is taught in Christ Jesus! Preposterous—such teaching can only be tolerated and endorsed by those who exclude Moses and the prophets from their pulpits, and are taken captive of the Satan at his will.
We saw in part one (Vol 24:1) how the Tabernacle Lampstand, built up of its 66 parts, amazingly foreshadowed that the scriptures would contain 66 individual books when completed.

In this second part we examine how these particular books were chosen to form the Canon of Scripture. We shall look first at the Old Testament and then at the New Testament. The uniqueness of this collection of 66 books is that there were many authors, from many backgrounds—travellers, farmers, kings, prophets, fishermen—yet behind their writings was a common authorship, that of God. We shall examine not only why these particular books were chosen but how God was their author.

First some Background

What do we mean by the Canon of Scripture? It is the list of books which are considered as the books chosen by God, written under inspiration, which form the basis for our belief and understanding of God and His Purpose. The Canon of Scripture is not a scriptural phrase, (but the Greek word for Canon is used several times) but is a phrase that is widely used when discussing the scriptures. The word Canon has its origins from the Greek word kanon which is used of a measuring-rod or standard including a rod used for measuring straightness: it also has the idea of a list or index. The Hebrew equivalent is “kaneh” and has similar meanings. These wonderfully expressive words indicate that what is contained within the covers of our Bible is a God-given instrument which we should use to judge the Truth and to measure our lives against.

The foundation of the Bible is the book of Genesis. Not only does it tell us of God’s work of creation, it tells us of His work among mankind. It speaks of the saviour who would come, through whose covering, sins could be forgiven. It tells of the great destruction in the Flood because of the wickedness of man and reveals God’s choice of Abraham and subsequently the Jewish nation. Upon the foundation of the Book of Genesis the rest of the Bible stands, with that wonderful message from the Lord Jesus, the Book of Revelation, as its capstone. Its writings were spread over many centuries, yet the message is consistent because of its ultimate authorship—the Lord God. What it records is over 4000 years of history, (Fig. 1) and through prophetic utterances spans ultimately over 7,000 years of history, from Creation to the time beyond the Millennium when Jesus shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father (1 Cor 15:24).

The Old Testament is considerably longer than the New Testament—whether we look at the number of books within each Testament or the number of pages (Fig. 2).

Old Testament

Did these books come to be selected because:
1. There were no other writings?
2. Because of the standing of those who wrote them?
3. Or because somebody chose them?

There were certainly plenty of
It is recorded of King Solomon that he entrusted, but what was entrusted were the oracles of God! We shall see how this was done in a committed or entrusted to the Jewish people to preserve. We shall see that the selection was made by God!

God the Author and Preserver of the Bible

The words of the apostle Paul are clear: “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Rom. 3:1, 2).

That exceeds what we have within the scriptures. So it was not the standing of the penmen that determined their inclusion in the Canon of Scripture. No—we shall see that the selection was made by God!

The words of the apostle Paul are clear: “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Rom. 3:1, 2).

The Old Testament scriptures had been committed or entrusted to the Jewish people to preserve. We shall see how this was done in a moment. Paul is telling us that not only were they entrusted, but what was entrusted were the words of the Living God. As we read through the Old Testament, time after time we read such words as: “Thus saith the Lord” (occurs 413 times in scripture) or “the word of the Lord came unto me saying…” (Exodus 19:3, 7, 8).

We read that the Israelites were frightened at the display of power by God at Sinai—even Moses said “I exceedingly fear and quake!” (Heb 12:21) and so they requested that God speak through Moses and not directly in their hearing. “And Moses said unto the Lord, ‘Let me, and my people, go a journey into the desert, and worship, and return: and let me take knowledge of this great burning, that I die not’” (Exodus 3:1-5).

And so it was that the wonderful words God spoke were directed through the Prophets and written down, preparing Israel for the day when He would speak once again to the Jewish nation, but through the mouth of His Son, as we are reminded in those majestic words that open the Book of Hebrews, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1, 2).

Moses was one of God’s Prophets and there would be many more that would follow, to whom God would speak and they would write. And so step by step the Prophets recorded God’s Message. The apostle Paul wrote these sound words to his friend in the faith Timothy.

“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:14-17).

What has been given is sufficient to furnish godly men and women with all that is needed for salvation. Down through the centuries believers have absorbed its message and had their lives transformed by its power.

Peter fills out the picture. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye hearken, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:19-21).

The prophet Jeremiah speaks of this powerful force that filled his mind with words from God. “But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee shalt thou speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.” (Jer. 1:5-7).

The words he had to speak were hard words that didn’t bring him any favours with his people! At times Jeremiah just didn’t want to speak out at the risk of his life—but he found he had to! “O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jeremiah 1:7-9).

Written Down and Given to the Priests

It would appear that God’s plan for the...
selection and preservation of the scriptures was simple. In His foreknowledge, God knew that there would be an unbroken chain of Priests from the time of Moses to the time of the coming of His Son. Unlike the kings of Judah which wouldn’t start for another 350 years and came to an end with the captivity of Zedekiah; the priesthood was the only sure link from one generation to another. Not that the Priests were always faithful. There was another advantage! The Priests’ duties also involved reading God’s Word to the people and ensuring that they understood it. 

So we read of Moses writing down things given him by God and handing them to the Priests for safekeeping. 

“And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing” (Deut. 31:9-11).

This chapter of Deuteronomy unlocks the key to the Canon of Scripture as these verses show.

“And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of (beside NKJ) the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee” (Deut. 31:24-26). 

So the Canon was fixed at the time by the Prophet—Moses in this case—being told not only what to write, but whether it was to be entrusted to the Priests for its long-term preservation. It meant that subsequent generations had access to these scriptures, via the Aaronic Priests. So Joshua was exhorted to be thoroughly learned in that which had been written down.

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Joshua 1:8).

Did Joshua write out his own copy? We are not told, but built into the Law that God gave his people, was this instruction for the time when they would have Kings.

“And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites” (Deut. 17:18).

Towards the end of his life we find Joshua continuing the work of adding to the unfolding scriptures.

“And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the Lord” (Joshua 24:26).

The record does not specifically state that what he wrote was handed to the priests, but this is surely the implication—he was adding to the scrolls that Moses had written, which Moses had earlier handed to the Priests to put in or by the ark. Joshua did his writing at the spot where the tabernacle was and therefore where the ark was at this time.

The next great Prophet was Samuel. We read of him continuing the work of adding to the unfolding Scriptures.

“Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord” (1 Samuel 10:25).

And so it would appear that step-by-step the Old Testament was assembled. What was to be preserved would be given to the Priests for safe keeping, under instruction by God, and what was not to be considered part of the Canon of Scripture would not be handed over. The Priests would therefore know that these scrolls were the ones they had to read from, in their instruction of the people. And so the books of the Old Testament were added one by one to the Temple Library, the successor to the Tabernacle library. In spite of the wickedness of many of Israel’s Kings, and in spite of the times of faithlessness of some of Israel’s Priests, God was able through the instrument of faithful Prophets to reveal His Word to man. And so the 39 books of the Old Testament were completed.

God could appeal to His people to read and meditate in His Word; it was there for the Priests to copy from the master scrolls and read to the people. One Prophet could quote the words of another Prophet—Isaiah was able to quote from Micah (Isa. 2:2-4) and Jeremiah could quote Micah’s words (Jer. 26:18).

The scrolls would have been taken to Babylon together with the other Temple treasures. God ensured that there was a prominent Jew—Daniel who could ensure that they were returned with the exiles. We know that Daniel in exile could read what Jeremiah had written some 70 years earlier in Jerusalem about the length of the captivity (Daniel 9:2).

As mentioned in the first article, these same books, but in a different order and through amalgamation, formed the 22 books of the Jewish Bible. We must stress that these contained exactly the same writings as found in our Old Testament. When we come to the time of Jesus we have the witness of the Jewish historian, Josephus, who being a Priest and highly educated in Jewish matters (Life of F. Josephus 1 & 2) would be well acquainted with the Temple library of Holy Writ. We quote some interesting words of his.

“For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another (as the Greeks have), but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till
his death. This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life. It is true, our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time; and how firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add any thing to them, to take any thing from them, or to make any change in them; but it is become natural to all Jews immediately, and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain Divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be willingly to die for them” (Josephus Against Apion 1:8).

This confirms that the Prophets were the instruments used by God and that the priesthood was the repository for these writings. There having been no Prophets in the past few hundred years since Artaxerxes, no more books were added—the Hebrew scriptures were complete and there was no doubt about which books were regarded as Holy Scripture.

Josephus refers to the Temple rolls in several passages.

“Now that Scripture, which is laid up in the temple, informs us…” (Antiquities Book 3 ch 1:7).

“…is expressed in the books laid up in the temple” (Antiquities Book 5 ch 1:17).

“Last of all the spoils (taken by Titus AD 70) was carried the Law of the Jews” (Wars Book 7, 5, 5).

Interestingly, all the quotations that Jesus made which are recorded in the Gospels and those made in the Letters and Epistles, only quote from the scripture sources contained in our 39 Old Testament books. All the many historical events referred to are also only from these same writings.

The New Testament

When we come to the New Testament books we can ask similar questions. Were the books chosen because they were the only ones written, or were they preserved because of the standing of the penman? We can answer no to both questions. Luke (1:1) records that “…many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us.” So there must have been more records of Jesus’ life than the 4 gospels. Paul wrote other books which have not been preserved. Paul mentions a letter sent to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. 5:9) which, when they replied to it, triggered the letter we call 1 Corinthians. Paul also speaks of a letter that he wrote to the Laodicean ecclesia (Col. 4:16) which has not been preserved.

It is clear, however, that a change was needed to the system of preservation. In New Testament times it was no good handing writings to the Priests for their preservation, as the Priests were bitterly opposed to the Christian teachings. Their voices had been foremost in opposition to Christ’s ministry; they had called for his crucifixion!

The Temple system also was drawing to a close; because of the leaders’ rejection of their Messiah, it would be swept away, and the call concentrated on the Gentiles. So, reading carefully the various hints that are given, we see a new method of establishing the authenticity of a writing to be treated as Scripture was set in motion. In it the Prophets played a major role. In the First Century ecclesias there were bestowed the various Holy Spirit gifts. Paul in fact ranks them in order.

“And God hath set some in the ecclesia, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:28).

Second only to Apostleship was the office of Prophet. Through the guidance given them by the Holy Spirit they were able to straightway determine if a writing should be added to the Canon of Scripture. Paul hints at this a few chapters on.

“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37).

It is clear that the authority was fixed within the life time of the Apostles, for we have Peter speaking of Paul’s writings as “scripture.”

“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:15, 16).


“For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward” (1 Timothy 5:18).

In fairness, the words of the Master recorded in Matthew—for the workman is worthy of his meat—isn’t instantly recognisable as the source of Paul’s quotation. We find, however, that the Greek word for workman is the same as for labourer and the word for meat is the word for rations or wages; and so the quote is then made clear. We find Jude quoting Peter (Compare Jude 17, 18 with 2 Peter 3:2, 3).

So we find the Canon of Scripture being established in the First Century, with the Book of Revelation the final book around AD 96, just as the Spirit gifts were being withdrawn. The Word of God was complete, the need for the special gifts had ceased, men and women throughout the Roman world had access to God’s Living Word.

We have an interesting confirmation that the 27 books of our New Testament were recognised as part of the Canon of Scripture soon after the close of the first century. Their veracity was attacked by Marcion, a wealthy son of a believer who attacked the religion of his father. Indeed he was disfellowshipped by his father for gross immorality. Around AD 140, he proposed a cut down version of the Holy Scriptures. The Old Testament was written off completely and the New Testament reduced to one cut down gospel and 10 letters of Paul. But the significant point was, as he goes through the existing New Testament and shows why, in his view, a book should be accepted or rejected he only deals with the 27 books that form our New Testament. In a roundabout way he was bearing witness that these books were considered by believers to be part of God’s revealed way (Early Date of the New Testament Canon Bill Cooper. Leaflet 362 Creation Science Movement).

Yes this is God’s Living Word, brought to us by the care of the Great God; we are not dependent upon the whim of man, we have a more sure word in our hands. What we have to do is read and meditate in its pages.
It may surprise a lot of people to learn that every day someone somewhere will quote from the King James Version of the Bible. Whether we appreciate it or not, phrases from the 1611 version are part of our everyday language. We speak about irritating people as being “a thorn in the flesh,” or exceptional people as being “the salt of the earth.” People that are known for their good deeds are described as “good Samaritans” and favourite children are sometimes described as “the apple of his or her eye.” A common quotation, especially when we have exhausted all avenues in solving a problem and don’t know where to turn, we say, “I am at my wit’s end.” All these common sayings are taken straight out of the King James Version of the Bible. So when we discard the Bible as having no relevance today, let’s remember that all of us have been influenced by it in our daily language.

Many people claim that the 1611 King James Bible is couched in archaic language that makes it difficult to understand. The language certainly is different but the lack of understanding could also be due to level of literary comprehension that is taught in today’s school system. Be that as it may, the publishing houses over the past fifty years have been busy producing modern translations of the Bible which, it is claimed, bring more clarity to the written word. There is no disputing the fact that many of the modern translations can be very helpful in providing a better insight into what the writer is trying to convey. But it is important to remember that a good translation is one that seeks to clarify what the original text is saying, and not what the translator thinks it is saying. To illustrate this point we will consider Luke 17:211 (in the panel opposite) and examine the differences between three translations.

The King James Bible speaks about the kingdom of God being “within you,” which has led many to place an incorrect meaning upon Jesus’ words. The Amplified Bible confirms this by interpreting the phrase as “in your hearts,” which reflects a distinct bias towards the Church view (not the Bible view) that the kingdom of God exists in men’s hearts, thus distorting the original intent of the verse. On the other hand, one of the latest modern translations, the English Standard Version (published in 2001) is careful to reflect the true meaning of the King James Version.

But how can we be sure which translation is correct? The safest method is to compare what is written with other translations, and there are plenty to choose from. It has been calculated that over 450 versions have been created from the English Bible; over 70 English translations have been published since the beginning of the twentieth century. One publication—“The Word, The Bible from 26 translations”—is particularly focused upon the King James Bible, providing the complete King James text followed by 25 classical and contemporary English Translations, highlighting the variations of the different versions. Having a core selection of Bible translations is beneficial but expensive; with the computer age many of these translations are now available online, making it easy for the student to verify the accuracy of the text.

The most accurate method for determining the accuracy of the word used in the Bible is to consult a Hebrew or Greek lexicon...
flexibility in Bible research.

There are Bible concordances which can trace the various verses where an English word is used, or can provide the meaning of the word in its original language. With some concordances it is possible to determine the derivatives of the Hebrew or Greek words; but in the majority of cases, this is only possible if the King James Bible is used. One specific Bible concordance that has influenced the updating of a number of earlier Bible study aids is the Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance. It is well known for its “Strong’s Numbers,” a method that links every English word in the Bible with a number that is listed in a lexicon at the back of the concordance with the Hebrew or Greek meaning. Many lexicons published in the eighteen and early nineteen hundreds such as Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Brown Driver Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon, and Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament have been republished to include the Strong’s Numbers thus making it more user friendly for those with no Hebrew or Greek skills.

Other valuable study aids such as The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge developed by an evangelist named R.A. Torrey (1856-1928) are available. Whilst it is possible to use this book with other translations, the work was originally produced for use with the King James Bible. In this study aid Torrey provides over 500,000 cross references to other sections of the Bible, making it the largest “centre” reference Bible in print. Also many commentaries which were published in the eighteen hundreds have been republished, all of which are based upon the King James Bible.

The age of technology has made available many study aids for the computer and again, whilst the modern translations are readily available, it is the King James translation and its related armory of linked material that offers the greatest scope for Bible study. For example the Bible dictionaries available on most software programs were produced to be used with the King James Bible, therefore when the need arises to search for a particular topic in a dictionary the terminology of the King James Version must be used. No doubt there are ways of working around this but it is another example of the influence that the King James Bible has had on Bible study.

Despite all the complaints that the King James Bible is outdated and archaic in its language, this Bible translation continues to rank with other works such as Shakespeare and the Oxford English Dictionary as a foundation for English literature. It maintains a level of reverence which is lacking in most of the modern translations of the Bible and it remains a key link for the majority of serious Bible study aids.

What is sad however is that despite all that is available to assist us in our study of God’s word there continues to remain a dearth of understanding, a complete lack of familiarity with God’s message of life. Why is it that so much has been written and so little is known about the Bible? Two reasons are offered in the Bible; one is that the message of the Bible can only be received in an “honest and good heart,” and the second is that before this can happen it will only be received by those “that hath ears to hear” (Luke 8:8, 15).

1 For a fuller commentary of this scripture refer to The Bible Magazine, Volume 20, Issue 4.
2 How Strong is Strong’s? See Vol. 19, No. 4.
Most people think of our home, planet earth, as ‘Man’s world,’ while others think of it as ‘God’s world.’ For many it is a unique place that has come through the slow and unguided path of the evolutionary processes. For a few, it is the crowning jewel of a Creator God, especially suited to the development of a race of people who will intelligently and freely serve Him. This article was written for the latter group who are inclined to see the guiding hand of their Creator throughout their life.

The Bible has recorded the purpose of the Creator God for millenniums of time, but few have paid attention to its clear declaration that, “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of YHWH, as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14).

As it is impossible for God to lie, so it is impossible for this prophecy to fail. Through multitudes of angels God works with people to ensure that His pronouncements come to pass. His method is laid before the reader of His book, who taking the time to search its pages, will see that God works with the choices that people make, in order to advance His will in the earth. He has worked through those with hearts as hard as Pharoah’s and with hearts as soft as King David’s. God’s will, will be done.

Soon after the age of the Apostles, through the machinations of a clergy who were bent on preserving their own limited and faulty understanding, the Truth of God’s word was obscured from the view of the average man. The Apostle Paul had stated, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

No doubt there were small groups of people who became separated from the apostate Church and held to the truth of the Bible. However, most people were too comfortable in leaving the teaching of the Bible to those they thought ought to know the Truth of what it said. Thus the world remained in darkness for centuries.

“The Spirit of Life from God” (Revelation 11:11) moved amongst men to revive a witness to the true Gospel for the latter days. Essential to this work was the translation of the Bible which brought about a degree of reformation and a development in the religious world leading to the Truth’s rediscovery.

The King James Version of the Bible was dominant; its influence on both government and citizens alike was immense...
many of the key personages needed to bring the Truth to light were already at work, and actively involved in their part of the ‘Reformation.’ One key voice, however, was missing from the stage and that was about to be added.

**Early Preparation**

It is quite likely that most mothers while nursing their infant sons will wonder about the adventure and fortune that awaits the little one who stares back at their affectionate glances. How many mothers however, are like the Lois and Eunice of Biblical fame and will take the time and effort to try to ensure the best possible outcome by instructing their sons in the knowledge of the Scriptures from the earliest possible age?

“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also” (2 Tim. 1:5).

John Thomas was born in Hoxton Square, London, England in 1805. Of his mother’s interest in having him grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Scriptures, he was to later say, “First, we remark that our moral training at the hands of a kind and pious mother was the best her education in the Calvinism of the Scottish Kirk could enable her to give. She instilled into us a profound veneration for the Holy Scriptures, which we retain till this day.”[1]

The fact that John Thomas was well educated and graduated as a medical doctor in his early twenties illustrated the man’s human abilities. As he burned the midnight oil in study and preparation for this vocation he would have had no idea of how this training of his mind would assist him for his greater vocation. His medical practice also led to his nickname “Dr. Thomas” that in records of his life was more associated with his person, than his proper name. As time revealed, the real work of his life would make good use of his inquisitive and lively mind, disciplined to study under pressure, and to making decisions leading to life and death.

**The Pressure of Circumstances**

The Scripture conveys a great deal of wisdom with the proverb, “Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Prov. 27:1). A companion verse in the New Testament is, “For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (James 4:14-15). At the age of 27, young Dr. Thomas set out for the port of New York to check into US a profound veneration for the Holy Scriptures, which we retain till this day.”[1]

Alexander Campbell

Walter Scott

Scott made a significant impact upon the life of John Thomas, persuading him to be immersed

Walter Scott

He was now to be brought into the lives of other individuals who, like a catalyst, would drive him on to fulfill his vow and rediscover the Truth of God’s Word.

**The Influence of other People**

Typical of the time, a person could move with relative ease from place to place in America, even from England to America, that is, if he had ‘Letters of Introduction.’ These letters tended to have quite an influence, at least initially, on one’s life while settling into a new area. When Dr. Thomas together with his father, who had decided to join him in America, finally arrived in Cincinnati, they had ‘Letters of Introduction’ to a banker, a professor of surgery and a Baptist preacher.

Major Daniel Gano, who was a Clerk of the Supreme Court of the United States and part of the religious ‘Reformation’ that was taking place at that time, met John Thomas and very hospitably took an interest in him. When he found out about the experiences that the Doctor had at sea and that he was looking to find the Truth about what happens at death, he introduced him to Walter Scott who was one of the religious leaders of the area. Walter Scott made a sudden and significant impact upon his life, giving direction to his thinking and further reason to pursue his goal of searching for the Truth. Finding out that the Doctor claimed to be a Christian but having never been immersed, he rushed him into making a decision to be immersed, or baptized, as he understood it then. This event, however quick and right it seemed at the time, was destined to have a great influence on him in later years, especially as he began to rediscover the Truth.

This was just one of the events that acted as a catalyst in John Thomas’ investigation into the Truth of God’s word. Shortly after his immersion, he was introduced to Alexander Campbell, the leading preacher of the ‘Reformation.’ Mr. Campbell could see potential...
in young Thomas and subsequently leaned on him to give public addresses to a number of his Campbellite congregations. John Thomas initially chaffed over this, feeling inadequately prepared for this task. However, members of the Campbellites seemed to like what he had to say and so instead of fleeing the scene, he made greater preparations and persevered with the work for awhile. The preparation, however, caused him to study his Bible, the source of the information that would answer the questions of his vow. Unknown to all of his friends, this opportunity, together with the pressures of life, was to bring forth an understanding of the Scriptures in his mind that would clash with his mentors, and severely test the mettle of all involved.

The Need to Provide

John Thomas was a restless man and did not stay in one location for very long. After a short stay with Alexander Campbell, he left the west and travelled back to Philadelphia. At the age of 29 he married Ellen Hunt in the year 1834.  

Although Ellen was a devoted wife and follower of her husband, she was diagnosed with Tuberculosis in 1835. Possibly somewhat related to her physical weakness, she was left with relatives for long periods of time while her husband labored in the work of his Lord. It is a requirement of the Scripture that a man provide for his household, “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Tim. 5:8). The Doctor was often perplexed about his career because he didn’t spend enough time promoting it and often his patients were those he was also preaching to on Sundays. He summed it up in these words, “Had we devoted ourselves to medicine, as we did to the things of the kingdom, we might probably have succeeded; but the fact is, that having to address the public continually, our time and energies were absorbed in preparing to acquit ourselves, from time to time, as a workman that needed not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth. Ever since leaving the West, our spiritual pursuits have been clashing with our temporal, until we are left with the idea of going to ‘heaven’ or ‘hell’ at death. Seeing that the Scriptures declared, he believed that the Gospel message. As the Scriptures declared, he pondered the question of what ‘critical’ teachings constituted the Gospel message. As the Scriptures declared, he believed that the Gospel was known to Abraham...”

Questions needing Answers

The Bible caters to people who have inquisitive minds. The following words of Jesus are sufficient to illustrate the point, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matt. 7:7). John Thomas’s mind had been examining baptism. He was told that he was ‘baptized’ as an infant and because he was not immersed at that time, he was ‘baptized’ in the waters of the Miami canal, in Cincinnati, as an adult. This did not sit well with his further studies in the Scripture. He concluded, “a man may be immersed, and yet not baptized; a man, however, cannot be baptized without being immersed.”

The Doctor was now very occupied in the task of re-discovering the Truth of the Gospel and he dared to publish his ideas without knowing the reaction of his former brethren in the faith. As Baptists, Millerites and Campbellites joined in worship the question of re-baptism had not been properly dealt with and hence this ‘question’ of John Thomas caused much consternation amongst those who thought about its implications.

The controversy however, caused sincere Bible students to think deeper about their own positions, which in turn led to a greater understanding and conviction about what constituted ‘the Truth.’

Around the same time as the controversy over re-immersion the Doctor published a series of questions to invite others to help him in his search for the Truth. As he put it, “One question led to another, until the list grew to upwards of thirty. When we had finished, the thought occurred, if these questions were also published in the Advocate, they would, perhaps, elicit examination of the Scriptures; and replies, which might likewise furnish ‘information’ on their divers subjects.”

The questions were very revealing of the direction of thought that he was taking and challenged many of the beliefs still held by members of the ‘Reformation.’ He openly challenged the idea of an ‘immortal soul’ and all of its related ideas. He appealed to his readers to provide the Bible teaching supportive of the idea of going to ‘heaven’ or ‘hell’ at death. Seeing that the Scriptures declared, he believed that the Gospel, before baptism, he pondered the question of what ‘critical’ teachings constituted the Gospel message. As the Scriptures declared, he believed that the Gospel was known to Abraham...”

Seeing that the Scriptures declared a person must believe the Gospel, before baptism, he pondered the question of what ‘critical’ teachings constituted the Gospel message. As the Scriptures declared, he believed that the Gospel was known to Abraham...”

Living by Principles

To rediscover the Truth that had been essentially lost for centuries was not an easy task. Some of his opponents refused to answer his questions; others attacked him and his character. As John Thomas said himself,
“SAVED BY THE HOPE”

THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

“...for we are saved by hope”—Romans 8:24.

On this passage of Scripture John Thomas wrote: “This was the turning point. ‘Saved by hope,’ said we. ‘What hope?’ Hope may comprehend a multitude of general matters—saved by hope of what? Did the apostle not express himself more definitely than this? We will look into this. Accordingly we turned to the original, and found that he had said, ‘THE HOPE’; and not only so, but affirms this salvation by the hope in time past—we WERE saved by THE HOPE. This was very definite.

“WITHOUT THE PROCLAMATION OF THE ANCIENT HOPE, THERE CANNOT BE ANY PROCLAMATION OF THE ANCIENT GOSPEL.

“...What did we know about this hope before we heard Mr. Scott’s ancient gospel? Nothing. What did he teach us about it? Nothing. What did we know about it before we were immersed? Nothing.”

Led by the convictions indicated in these remarks, the Dr. came to the conclusion that he was an unbaptised man; that when he was immersed by Walter Scott, he was immersed into a sect merely, and not into Christ; that being ignorant at that time of the one faith and one hope, he was yet in his sins.

“Thus,” says the Dr., “after a journey of fourteen years, I had found the truth, which, on the ocean I declared I would not rest till I had found.”

Extract from “Dr. Thomas: His Life and Works” by Robert Roberts

“Had no notice been taken of these questions, it is exceeding probable we should have thought no more about them.” “Instead of intimidating or putting us to silence, it only roused our determination to comprehend the subject; if wrong to get it right and when righted, to defend the right, and to overthrow the wrong or perish in the attempt.”

On a number of occasions the Doctor was approached by some of those who approved of his teachings to become their minister, that is, a paid minister. John Thomas however, came to believe that a paid ministry had been a significant factor in the original apostasy and he would have no part of it. Since those times, Christadelphians have wisely and consistently resisted the pressure to follow the ways of Christendom in this respect. Most people can readily comprehend the enticement to ‘tickle the ear’ of those paying the pastor’s salary. God’s law cautions us against this evil, “Keep thee far from him; do not let him catch the wit of thy understanding” (Proverbs 1:19-20).

John Thomas stated, “Riches are not the object of my desire. If I am enabled to live so as to die in the faith and owing no man anything but love, let my survivors remember that I die more wealthy than the ancient Crosus. The riches I desire here are liberty of speech, of action, and of opinion; the enjoyment of the right of free discussion in relation to things past, present and to come. I desire food and raiment and that with these I may be content. I desire to participate in the rich luxury of emancipating the human mind from the dogmata and traditions of men.”

Truth versus Error

By the time that John Thomas was in his early 40’s he prepared what he called, ‘A Confession, Adoration and Declaration’ of his new beliefs. In his confession he stated openly what he had been initially taught about baptism when he first came to America, was wrong. At that stage he had not understood the Gospel and neither had he a proper knowledge of baptism, therefore his first ‘baptism’ as a baby and his first ‘immersion’ as an adult were invalid. As such, he had remained unbaptized and not in the way of salvation. Therefore, upon a simple declaration of his new belief in the true Gospel, John Thomas was baptized into Jesus Christ for the first time.

His search for the Truth had revolved around answering the question he had asked himself under the terrifying circumstances of imminent shipwreck at sea. John Thomas renounced the idea of humans having an immortal soul. He reasoned from the clear teaching of the Scripture: “But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:10).

He argued that, if immortality is made manifest by the Gospel, then it cannot be a present possession of those who do not know the Gospel.

John Thomas was able to see the shallowness of the reasoning of the part of Christendom that claimed, “once saved, always saved.” He discovered that the Scripture taught “we are saved by hope” (Rom 8:24). Seeing that idea to be consistent with the fact that before any receive the gift of immortality “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10), he was convinced he now believed what the Bible actually taught.

Thus his mission in life was in one sense complete. He had found the answer to his question. If he and the others had indeed perished in the cold waters of the Atlantic there would have been nothing further to life for them, than the dark silence of eternity. The great benefit of his study was not only in the conviction of what really happens when a person dies, but also in learning the Truth of the many associated ideas, such as: resurrection; judgment; heaven going; hell fire; and eternal life. If he had been validly baptized and believing in the Hope of the Gospel and then suffered the fate of shipwreck in the Atlantic graveyard, things would have been very different. For as the Doctor persevered to find out, the faithful, though long returned to dust, will come forth to life again at the resurrection and judgment, never to die again. This was the original teaching of the Bible and now some 2000 years after it was first taught amongst the Gentile believers, he was able to openly teach it again.

Finally—Conversion

Many people believe that conversion happens at baptism, Baptism is a starting point, but conversion involves more as the following Scripture citation suggests. ‘And the Lord said, Simon Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren’ (Luke 22:31-32). Peter thought that he was converted. He measured it by the fact that he felt so convinced of the truth of Jesus’ words as to be prepared to die for Jesus’ sake. As the text goes on to show, he was not ready to die for Jesus’ sake, and neither was he prepared to strengthen his brethren. However, by the time the Apostle Peter wrote his epistles, he was converted and illustrated that he knew what the Lord meant by ‘strengthen thy brethren.’

After the public declaration of his beliefs, the Doctor changed his role from asking questions, to giving answers. He now tried to strengthen his brethren which were scattered across both sides of the Atlantic. He travelled back and forth from continent to continent, visiting as many congregations as would accept him, teaching and expounding the Scriptures. He wrote a number of books, including Elpis Israel, Phanerosis and Eureka which are landmarks of the Christadelphian ecclesias around the world, who still hold fast the Gospel message that he rediscovered.

Footnotes
1. Dr. Thomas—His Life and Work Robert Roberts The Christadelphian 1954; Pg. 124
2. John Thomas—His Friends & His Faith; Peter Hemingray; Christadelphian Tidings 2003; Pg. 38
3. Dr. Thomas—His Life and Work Robert Roberts; The Christadelphian 1954; Pg. 17
4. ibid; Pg. 26  5. ibid; Pg. 33  6. ibid; Pg. 36  7. ibid; Pg. 58
When King James I of England ordered a new translation of the Bible at Hampton Court in 1604, the world looked very different from what we see today. A glance at a historical map of that time shows Europe dominated by two main powers. Central Europe was under the shadow of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire, while south east Europe was under the control of the Islamic Turkish Empire, also known as the Ottoman Empire which also ruled over most of the Middle East and what is now the Arab world.

When King James came to the throne, uniting England, Wales, and Scotland, it was a time when there was a great deal of interest in—and controversy about—Bible teaching. Many Bible students of that day looked out upon a Europe that was heavily influenced by the Roman Catholic Church and saw in that situation the “Man of Sin” prophecy of 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, and in the Holy Roman Empire (Austria and Germany) the beast of the Apocalypse. This is reflected in the “Epistle Dedicatory” that appears even today as a preface in most copies of the King James Version where “that Man of Sin” and “Popish Persons” are referred to.

The Holy Land

Interest in the Bible also focused attention upon the Jews and their ancient homeland. Contemporary with the publication of the King James version in 1611 there was an awakening enquiry into the question of the Restoration of the Jews. For example Thomas Brightman in 1615 published his Revelation of the Revelation in English. Commenting upon Revelation 16:12 he wrote: “The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared”—he gives reasons why these kings of the east must mean the Jews, and then says: “But what need have they to have a way prepared for them? What! shall they return to Jerusalem again? There is nothing more certain: the prophets do everywhere confirm it and beat upon it.”

“The Calling of the Jews”

In 1621, John Prideaux delivered a discourse in Latin at Oxford University entitled “On the Calling of the Jews.” He was contemporary with another expositor, Joseph Mede, but does not seem to have shared his views about the restoration of the Jewish people. Prideaux argued against the ideas of Mede and other contemporaries, for he wrote in 1621: “Whether any Christians go the length of the Jews (whose expectations of a third temple, and a throne at Jerusalem, and an army to be sumptuously entertained, he details,) I know not. But observe how near they come. For they hold a stupendous conversion of the Jews after the end of the Turkish kingdom to commence in precisely 350 years. Then they bring them, converted, out of I know not what countries of the East, and expect the Euphrates to be miraculously dried up to open for them a passage. After this they engage them with the Turkish army, not far from Jerusalem, where the Sultan himself falls first, and then his army... Then shall be established that most glorious kingdom at Jerusalem, under which all tribes shall be united.”

It is interesting to us that there were those at that time (in the 1600’s) who expected a crisis and a restoration of the Jewish kingdom around AD 2000 or not long after. Events in the world today, especially in the Middle East and involving the Jewish State of Israel suggest that some were not far from the Truth!

The Hope of Israel

Not only were Protestant writers of this time attracted to the idea of the restoration of the Jews, there were stirrings also among Jews...
themselves. Writing about the Jewish scholar Manasseh ben Israel in his book on The Jewish People (1966) Max Wurmbrand says:

“In this work he explained the reasons which justified the Messianic expectations of his time, he also pointed out that the advent of the Messiah must be preceded by the dispersion of the Jews in all the countries of the world and that their readmission to England—a country without Jews since their expulsion in 1290—was one of the conditions for the fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies. The book also appeared in English and made a profound impression on Puritan readers.”

In 1655 Ben Israel travelled to England where he met the “Lord Protector” Oliver Cromwell with whom he discussed the idea of Jewish restoration—but the time for it had not quite yet arrived. Meanwhile Bible students were becoming more and more convinced that the prophecy of Scripture must be fulfilled.

Also contemporary with King James I was the expositor of Bible prophecy, Joseph Mede (1586-1638).

James reigned from 1603 to 1625, so Mede would have been about 18 years old when James ordered the new translation, and 25 years old when the King James version was published in 1611. Joseph Mede published his “Key to the Revelation” in Latin in 1627. It was translated into English in 1643 after both James and Mede had passed off the scene. But Mede’s exposition of the Revelation had a major influence on prophetic writing for many years afterwards. And it is not difficult to see why. It was ordered to be printed by Parliament as follows (though the archaic language is a little difficult to follow):

The Light of Prophecy

Portrait of Manasseh ben Israel: A Jewish scholar who published a book entitled “The Hope of Israel” in 1650

The works of Joseph Mede published in English 1643
restoring Israel, should be fulfilled (chap. 12). But that this Kingdom is it which he called the finishing of the mystery of God, that acclamation subjoined to the same Trumpet afterward sounding, suffereth us not to doubt: the Kingdoms of this world are become our Lords and his Christ, and he shall reign for evermore: and a wonder it is, that there should be found any one who should understand it otherwise.”

So the Holy Roman Beast empire was to be “slain,” and Israel was to be restored. But he does not end his explanation there. He continues later in his work to say this:

“The Sixth Vial shall be poured out upon that great river Euphrates, that being dried up, a passage may be prepared for new enemies of the Beast to come from the East; that is, for the Israelites to be wonderfully converted to the pure faith and worship of Christ, and now to have conferred upon them the kingdom promised so many ages since. Whom the worshippers of the Beast, haply, shall esteem for the army of their imaginary Antichrist to arise from among the Jews, God so revenging the obstinacy of their error.”

The symbolic Euphrates he saw as the Turkish Ottoman Empire, through which territory it ran.

When we look at this today and realize how the world has changed over the past 400 years; that the Holy Roman Beast no longer exists as such, that the Ottoman Empire has evaporated, and that the nation of Israel is back in their ancient Land, we must surely agree that Mr. Joseph Mede was not far wrong in his expectations.

In Powell’s Concordance (1673) the return and re-establishment of the Jews, with many miraculous and peculiar circumstances, is laid down with abundant references to the prophetic Scripture.

Pierre Jurieu

An Edict issued in France in 1598 had granted tolerance to Protestants (known as Huguenots and Calvinists), but it was revoked by King Louis XIV in 1685 forcing many French Protestants into exile. Among these exiles was Pierre Jurieu whose Accomplishments of the Prophecies was published in English in 1687.

Jurieu expected a revolution to take place in France on the basis of Revelation 11:11-13 and he refers to a remarkable passage from another Protestant writer, Monsieur du Moulin, who he says “thinks that Antichristianism will not be at an end before the year 2015, so we should have yet 330 years longer to suffer.” From Acts 1:6-7 Jurieu argues that the kingdom must be restored again to Israel. In a Foreword to his book entitled “To the Nation of the Jews” (see above) Jurieu says:

“I Desire of that People, that they would please to read this book attentively, and without prejudice; especially from the middle of the Second Part to the end; they will find nothing there that can irritate ‘em. I confess the hopes they conceive of a Kingdom of the Messiah, which shall be chiefly for them, is built upon express and unquestionable Prophecies; that even their Jerusalem should be rebuilt, and that they shall be again gathered together in their own Land. And if any thing be capable to recover them from their obstinacy, for the establishment of the Law of Moses, and against the Law of Christ; this is certainly the most likely method, which we make use of, because it grants them almost all the Advantages which they expect.”

Also well known is the work of Sir Isaac Newton, though the only book of his on prophecy to be published did not appear until 1733, six years after his death. He wrote:

“We have Moses, the Prophets, and Apostles, and the words of Christ himself; and if we will not hear them, we shall be more inexcusable than the Jews. For the Prophets and Apostles have foretold, that as Israel often revolted and brake the covenant, and upon repentance renewed it; so there should be a falling away among the Christians, soon after the days of the Apostles; and that in the latter days God would destroy the impenitent revolters, and make a new covenant with his people. And the giving ear to the Prophets is a fundamental character of the true Church.”

Arthur B. Robinson in an introduction to Newton’s book refers to his understanding of “the last horn of the Beast and a numerical evaluation of the length of his reign.” He also gives the approximate time of the beginning of this reign, but does not add the numbers or make a prediction.

“Addition of these numbers, however, places the time of judgment and the beginning of the everlasting reign of the Saints of the Most High approximately in the time period between the years 2000 and 2050.”

1611-2011 Prophecy Fulfilling

As we note the words of these several writers from three centuries ago, we today can be instructed by them. Our world is very different from that of King James, Joseph Mede or Peter Jurieu. Much of what they anticipated and looked for we now see! Europe is different, the Turkish Ottoman Empire is no more—it has been “dried up.” A restored Jewish nation now exists—and we can see a great crisis developing in the Middle East.

The writers of the 1600’s were followed by other students who published their works in the 1700’s. The King James Bible had created an entire Biblical culture—one in which many looked for the restoration of the Jews.

Lowth, in an essay published in 1739 has the following remarks about Daniel 12:7.7;

“When the Jews Dispersion shall be ended, then the most remarkable Events contained in this Prophecy shall be fulfilled. The Restoration of the Jewish Nation is foretold by the Prophets as one of those signal Events to be brought to pass in the latter Days, or Times of the World.”

Again, Thomas Newton whose Dissertations on the Prophecies was published in 1754 had the following to say about Jerusalem:

“By thus tracing the history of Jerusalem, from the destruction by Titus to the present time, it appears, evidently, that as the Jews have been ‘led away captive into all nations,’ so Jerusalem hath been ‘trod down of the Gentiles.’ There are now almost 1700 years, in which the Jewish nation have been a standing monument of the truth of Christ’s predictions, themselves dispersed over the face of the whole earth, and their land groaning under the yoke of foreign lords and conquerors: and at this day there is no reason
to doubt but they will continue in the same state, nor ever recover their native country, ‘until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.’ Our Saviour’s words are very memorable, ‘Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.’ It is still trodden down by the Gentiles, and consequently the times of the Gentiles are not yet fulfilled. When ‘the times of the Gentiles’ shall be ‘fulfilled,’ then the expression implies, that the Jews shall be restored and for what reason, can we believe, that though they are dispersed among all nations, yet, by a constant miracle, they are kept distinct from all, but for the farther manifestation of God’s purposes towards them? The prophecies have been accomplished, to the greatest exactness, in the destruction of their city, and its continuing still subject to strangers; in the dispersion of their people, and their living still separate from all people: and why should not the remaining parts of the same prophecies be as fully accomplished too, in their restoration, at the proper season, when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled?’

That was written over 200 years before the remarkable events of 1967 when Israel regained control of Jerusalem. Today, it may appear that these things have made little impact upon the world—or upon the English-speaking people in particular. Well, it is true that the masses are blind, but there have been those who recognized the fact of this amazing phenomenon in English literature. These books are a testimony and a witness to the unbelieving age in which we now live.

Witnesses from the 19th Century

The King James Version of the Bible continued to be the main influence upon religious thought in England throughout the 19th century. Not until 1884/1885 was there much alternative. But the new Revised Version was launched at a time of growing scepticism and against the background of Biblical criticism and the theory of Darwin. It was not a tremendous success, and the majority of people preferred the familiar King James Version. Not only did the King James Version continue as a powerful influence, but so also did the writings of students from the same era. In addition to those mentioned earlier, such as Joseph Mede, there was the work of Sir Henry Finch in 1621 and that of Samuel Gott in 1648. In a book entitled The Jewish National Home edited by Paul Goodman and published in 1943, the following passage appears:

The King James Bible had created an entire Biblical culture—one in which many looked for the restoration of the Jews.

“The tradition of this doctrine once created in England has never been interrupted. It was developed into a spiritual movement by numerous tracts, treatises, dissertations, letters, and poems. John Milton, the greatest representative of ‘English Hebraism,’ dealt with the question in an admirable way in his Paradise Regained. Even the age of enlightenment caused no setback to the doctrine, but marked rather a further development. Isaac Newton himself became one of its adherents. Thomas Burnet, author of the Sacred Theory of the Earth, wrote the first methodical treatise on the matter. William Whiston, mathematician and theologian, enriched the doctrine with new interpretations of prophecies; and David Hartley, the famous physician and philosopher, in the middle of the eighteenth century, incorporated the doctrine of the Restoration in his Observations on Man. In 1747 appeared the first book dealing with the question without a conversionist tendency, S. Collett’s Treatise of the future Restoration of the Jews and Israelites to their own Land.”

The book continues to trace the development of both religion and politics which led to the National Home:

“The theological doctrine of the Restoration of the Jews continued to be cultivated by many new adherents, e.g. by the Christadelphians. The founder of this movement, Dr. John Thomas, in his Elpis Israel (The Hope of Israel), predicted the ‘pre-adventual’ colonization of Palestine by the Jews, based on purely political principles.

“All these voices indicated that the Restoration of the Jews, without having lost its religious significance, had become also a political problem of vital importance for Great Britain. Palestine had shifted from the scope of the Roman Empire and the Roman Church to the worldwide sphere of the British Empire. Nothing could stress this fact more than the purchase of the Suez Canal by Great Britain in 1875.”

And it was Benjamin Disraeli who was twice the Prime Minister of Britain who said:

“The Lord deals with the nations as the nations deal with the Jews.”

When one considers the facts and the developments of some three centuries, it is no exaggeration to say that the English Bible—and the King James Version in particular—so influenced the British nation that the Balfour Declaration of 1917 was a logical, if not inevitable outcome.

It was more than political foresight that caused Winston Churchill to write:

“But if, as may well happen, there should be created in our own lifetime by the banks of the Jordan a Jewish State under the protection of the British Crown, which might comprise three or four millions of Jews, an event would have occurred in the history of the world which would, from every point of view, be beneficial, and would be especially in harmony with the truest interests of the British Empire.”

So it is that a grand purpose has now been achieved, and today we see the State of Israel as a beacon of light, declaring by its very existence that the Bible is true. Not that the story is now complete. As the prophets have declared, the nation of Israel has yet to be purified, so that we might expect to see a great religious reformation that will prepare the people for the coming kingdom of God. The kingdom will be restored again to Israel.
“Having turned,” says John, “I saw seven golden lightstands;” and in the last verse of the chapter, he records the signification of them as communicated to him by the Spirit, saying, “the seven lightstands which thou seest are Seven Ecclesias.”

When the Hebrew would say that one thing represents, typifies, or symbolizes, another thing, it affirms that the one is the other; as, “that rock was Christ,” “this bread is my body,” “the seven lamps are the seven spirits,” and “the seven lightstands are the seven ecclesias;” that is, “that rock typified Christ,” “the bread represents my body,” “the seven lightstands symbolize seven ecclesias.”

The golden lightstand, as a symbol, is taken from the seven-branched golden lightstand of the temple. It was peculiar to the Holy Place, where it stood on the south side, opposite to the table of Show-Bread. As there were no windows, the illumination was by the combustion of pure olive oil in its seven lamps. Without this lightstand and its burning oil, the holy was a dark place. It was therefore “a light shining in a dark place,” both lightstand and light being typical of something else. This Mosaic lightstand was of one stem, with a lamp on the top, and three branches projecting from each side, with their several lamps, making in all seven lamps or burners. Thus, the stock, stem, or shaft, was “in the midst of the seven lightstands,” altogether, stem, branches, bowls, knops, and flowers, constituting one illuminator of the holy place.

This was part of “the parable” (Heb. 9:9), which Paul says was made up of “the patterns of things in the heavens” (Heb. 9:23)—in the true holy places. The things that the Holy Spirit signified by the pattern-lightstand in the pattern holy place, are of the Christ; for in speaking of the substance, or body, of these shadowy things, he says, “the body is of the Anointed One”—and that anointed one John beheld in his first vision.

The area of the vision is the state of being between the resurrection and the entire exhaustion of the wrath of Deity contained in the seventh vial; for until the wrath of Deity is filled up, no man can enter into the Most Holy Place of the Apocalyptic Temple, which is the Millennial Aion—Rev. 15:1,8. In this post-resurrectional and pre-millennial holy state of being, the saints of previous generations are gathered together in Seven Ecclesias, or in complete assembly, as typified by the seven ecclesias of the proconsular Asia.

These seven Asian ecclesias were very different in “gifts,” “administrations,” and “operations,” from anything extant, called “church,” in our time. The assemblies of the faithful in Christ were constituted of two classes of saints—the rulers and the ruled. “Obey them that have the rule over you,” says Paul, “and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account”—Heb. 13:17. “The elders which are among you,” says Peter, “I exhort, who are an elder... feed the flock of the Deity which is with you, taking the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; not as dominering over the heritages, but being examples of the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away”—1Pet. 5:1.

These official brethren, called episcopoi and diakonoi, “overseers and assistants,” (Phil. 1:1) constituted the pneumatikoi, or spirituals, of the congregations, because they were endowed with pneumatika, or spiritual gifts, (Gal. 6:1) while the rest of the saints, constituting the ruled, were styled idiotai, or privates. To the Spirituals were given nine different gifts, called spirits, pneumatata—1 Cor. 14:12) not for their own gratification, but for the common good. These spirits are enumerated as, “a word of wisdom,” “a word of knowledge,” “faith to remove mountains,” “gifts of healing,” “inworking of powers,” “prophecy,” “discerning of spirits,” “kinds of tongues,” and “interpretation of tongues;” “all these inwrought the one and the same Spirit dividing to each one respectively as he willed”—1 Cor. 12:1-11. Being thus ordered in Corinth and elsewhere, Paul said to them, “Ye are Christ’s body, and members partitively”—they were all of the body, but it was only specially endowed saints who constituted the foot, hand, ear, eye, and so forth, of the body; these special ones were members partitively—special parts of the whole.

The official saints collectively constituted in each congregation the presbytery, or eldership—1 Tim. 4:14; and that each brother might know his place, they were set in regular order. They were called “apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers”—Eph. 4:11; and were ranked as, “first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, powers; then gifts of healing; sixth, helps; seventh directors; eighth, kinds of tongues”—1 Cor. 12:22. This eldership thus remarkably endowed, was the Lighthstand of the Ecclesia, each member thereof being a body, or vessel, containing the anointing oil, or spirit, so that when they exercised their functions in the midst of the saints, they were as trimmed lamps with their lights burning—Matt. 25:4; Luke 12:35. They shone collectively as a bright STAR in the midst of the body; and as the spiritual gifts
were sent “for the perfecting of the saints, for the
work of the ministry, for the building of the body
of the Anointed,” the Presbyteral Star is
styled “the Angel of the Ecclesia,” from
angelos, “one that is sent.”

Such was the arrangement of things in the
seven typical eccasias of Anatolia; typical, not
of “the church” in seven periods of its history
during the times of the Gentiles; but of the saints
in their gathering together unto Jesus Anointed,
after their resurrection, and before they pass from
the Holy into the Most Holy of the Apocalyptic
Temple.

In the typifying relation of things
(theyselfs typified and typifying) they were in
the partitive, and not the perfect state. Referring
to this, Paul says, “we know in part, and we
prophesy in part; but when the perfect thing is
come, then that thing which is in part will be
done away.” This phrase, rendered in the English
Version “in part,” is literally from parts—“we
know from parts,” or partitively. That is, the
word of knowledge, and the gift of prophecy,
(“he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to
edification and exhortation, and comfort”) were
“spirits” possessed only by certain individuals
of an ecclesia—by parts of the body, not by all
the brethren: so that the knowledge and the
prophecy proceeded from parts, or specially
endowed individuals. But “when the perfect
thing is come,” symbolized in John’s first
vision, “then that thing which is from parts,”
the partitive, or partially distributive, order of
things in the seven Asian eccasias, will be
abolished. This has been abolished, and we may
say, before the time—before the arrival of “the
perfect thing;” for this has not yet come, nor
will it till after the resurrection. The knowing
and prophesyng from parts might probably
have continued if “the Mystery of Iniquity” had
not spoiled and desolated every thing;
but as this prevailed through the
working Satan, the Angelic
presbyteral Stars, or Lightstands of
the Eccasias, shining by the Spirit,
were abolished; or, in the words of the
Spirit to the ecclesia in Ephesus, “I
come unto thee quickly, and will
set thy lightstand a-going out of its
place, except thou change thy mind.”
But things got worse instead of better;
so that, as a punishment for apostasy,
all the lightstands went out for want
of the Golden Oil of the spirit; and the
eccasias were turned into
“churches,” mere dark places in
Satan, as we behold them at this day...

In the first century, the Body
of Christ was in its childhood and made
up of “babes;” liable to be “tossed to
and fro, and carried about with every
wind of doctrine by the sleight of
men, and cunning craftiness, whereby
they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. 4:14). The
Spirituals, and the privates, apart from the gifts,
spoke as children, thought as children, and
reasoned as children; and, by the truth, looked
into a mirror at an enigma; and multitudes of
them were “corrupted from the simplicity that is
in Christ.” But when the Body becomes a
Man—“A PERFECT MAN”—as represented by
the Son of Man in the midst of the Seven
Lightstands with the Seven Stars in his right
hand,” in the post-resurrectional state of
holiness, then there are no childish things found
with it. Then every saint of the body will be in
accord, seeing face to face, or eye to eye. Distribution of gifts to individuals only will not
recur; and the body will no more be divided
into spirituals and privates. Then all will be
official and spiritual; and the idiotai subject
to their jurisdiction, will be Israel and the Nations.
Every individual member of the Perfect Man,
will be omniscient, and omnipotent; for this
Man was revealed to John as “He who is
coming, THE Almighty.” There will be no
knowing from parts then; for all the elements
of the Perfect Man will be equally wise, and
equally knowing; and the enigma, which is now
revealed as a word and testimony, called
the “Word of the Deity, and the Testimony of Jesus
Anointed,” on account of which John was in
banishment,—this enigma, as Paul styles it, will
then be practically solved in the eyes of all
nations...

The mystery, or meaning, then, of the Seven
Lightstands is, that they represent the sevenfold
ecclesia; and of the Seven Stars is, that they are
symbolical of the Elderships anointed with the
Spirit, and shining with the gifts. While an
anointed eldership was a lightstand to a
particular ecclesia; this ecclesia was itself a
lightstand to the pagan and rabbinical darkness
on every side. But in the future state, no such
distinction will obtain; for that which is “from
parts” being nonexistent, and every saint
“shining as the sun;” or, “as the brightness of
the firmament, and as the stars in the Olahm
and beyond” (Matt. 13:43; Dan. 12:3). The
Sevenfold Ecclesia, as the Perfect Man, will be
the Seven-Branched Golden Lightstand of the
Earth. How brilliant then will be the
illumination of the world; the whole earth will
indeed be enlightened by the glory.
The righteous have always treasured the word of God all down through the centuries. They have poured over its pages and parchments, memorized its text, stained its leaves with tears, looked for comfort in trouble and sought guidance and wisdom from the treasures of its depths. At the very end of his life, the great Apostle Paul in one of his last requests, sought for it: "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments." The brethren and sisters of Christ down through the ages have risked their lives for it, hidden and smuggled it. Many were burnt for possessing it. This was in fact a fulfillment of prophecy:

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Revelation 6:9,10).

Each of these faithful witnesses who were slain for the word of God, may have had a Bible in the form of a scroll or codex. This would be the manuscript that they treasured and ultimately gave their lives for. Gibbon, in The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, records how the Bible had spread throughout the empire by the year 303. "The copies as well as the versions of Scripture were already so multiplied in the empire, that the most severe inquisition could no longer be attended with any fatal consequences."

Those who came into contact with these faithful ones, came into contact with the word of God which they held. William Jones in "The History of the Waldenses: Connected with a sketch of the Christian Church, etc.", relates how a man fleeing persecution left a New Testament with someone he came in contact with, and so began the sect of the Paulicians.

"While the Christian world, as it has been the fashion to call it, was thus sunk into an awful state of superstition—at a moment when darkness seemed to cover the earth, and gross darkness the people”—it is pleasing to contemplate a ray of celestial light darting across the gloom. About the year 660, a new sect arose in the east, under the name of Paulicians, which is justly entitled to our attention.

"In Mananalis, an obscure town in the vicinity of Somosata, a person of the name of Constantine entertained at his house a deacon, who, having been a prisoner among the Mahometans, was returning from Syria, whither he had been carried away captive. From this passing stranger, Constantine received the precious gift of the New Testament in its original language, which, even at this early period, was so concealed from the vulgar..." (Vol. 1, Page 350).

William Jones also records in this history the persecution of those in the valleys Piedmont. When they were persecuted they scattered taking their faith (and no doubt their manuscripts), with them.

"Multitudes, however, fled like innocent and defenseless sheep from these devouring wolves. They crossed the Alps; and travelled in every direction as Providence and the prospect of safety conducted them, into Germany, England, France, Italy, and other countries. There they trimmed their lamps and shone with new lustre. Their worth every where drew attention, and their doctrine formed increasing circles around them. The storm which threatened their destruction, only scattered them as the precious seeds of the future glorious reformation of the Christian Church" (Vol. 1, Page 403).

The Waldenses—as the sect was called, who made their abode in the valleys of Piedmont—had a great love for the Scriptures. In A History of the Church of Piedmont, written by Samuel Morland to Oliver Cromwell in 1658, we are given a glimpse of their devotion to the word:

"All those which are to be received as Pastors amongst us, while they remain with their Brethren they are to intreat our People to receive them into the Ministry, as likewise that they would be pleased to pray to God for them, that they may be made worthy of so great a Charge; and this they are to do, to give a proof or evidence of their humility.

"We also appoint them their Lectures, and set them their Tasks, that they may get by heart
The early Christians of Antioch (Acts 11:26) from whom arose the Paulicians (says the historian Edward Gibbon) were dispersed with their New Testament manuscripts as a result of persecution, and migrated across the Euphrates river to Armenia. In process of time “They were transplanted from the banks of the Euphrates (Armenia) to Constantinople and Thrace.” Thus, John saw an “angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God” (Revelation 7:2). This “seal” represents the word of God as it is impressed upon the minds of those who believe the Truth. Gibbon wrote: “From the blood and ashes of the first victims a succession of teachers and congregations repeatedly arose.”

In 1453 when Byzantium fell to the Turks, Christian scholars (including Paulicians) with their New Testament manuscripts made their way across the Alps (and some via the river Danube) into western Europe, bringing with them the Received Text of the New Testament. It was here that Erasmus gained access to that text—a text that found its expression in the English Bible. “The visible assemblies of the Paulicians, or Albigeois, were extirpated by fire and sword; the bleeding remnant escaped by flight, concealment, or Catholic conformity. But the invincible spirit which they had kindled still lived and breathed in the Western world” —Gibbon.
all the Chapters of St. Matthew and St. John, with all the Epistles which are called Canonical, and a good part of the Writings of Solomon, David, and the Prophets.”

The Waldenses financed the translation of the Bible into French, from their treasured manuscripts. This Bible was published on June 5, 1535 and is known as the Olivetan Bible. Samuel Morland records the following in his history:

“...in the name of a certain poor people thy friends and brethren in Jesus Christ, who ever since they were blessed and enriched therewith by the Apostles and Ambassadors of Christ, have still enjoyed and possessed the same: and being now willing to gratify thee with what thou desirlest so earnestly, they have given me a commission to draw this precious treasure out of the Hebrew and Greek cabinets, and having wrap't the same in a French mantle, to the best of my skill, and according to that talent which the Lord hath given me, forthwith to present thee with it...”

Samuel Morland also provides a list of some of the Biblical manuscripts that were brought over to England from the Waldenses in the 1600’s. It is understood that the Waldensian Bibles and manuscripts were used as sources for the King James 1611 edition.

As each one of these witnesses of God’s word would have a gripping story to tell; so—if they could speak to us—would the manuscripts that they carried. We believe that the Almighty has preserved his word down through the centuries of time. What better hands to preserve the Bible with than those who gave their lives for it! The story of these manuscripts spans centuries of time; so many hands gently touched them, faithful eyes have followed the words across the parchment and hearts have been strengthened. Many manuscripts were seized and burnt like the faithful that carried them. But through the providence of God, His word has been preserved to go forth and accomplish His purpose. Not just preserved but multiplied. The Bible is the most printed book in the world. It is the Almighty that has preserved these precious manuscripts down through time, by his providence. This often makes the story of these scrolls and codices extremely interesting.

The Aleppo Codex is the oldest and most complete Hebrew Bible, aside from the Dead Sea Scrolls. For many centuries it made its home with the Jewish community in Aleppo, Syria. This manuscript is renowned for its accuracy and beauty and is known as the Keter or “crown.” The Keter reached Israel over 50 years ago in 1958. Its story is a fascinating one.

The Aleppo Codex was written in Tiberias, Israel, by a scribe named Salomon and proofread, vocalized and edited by Aharon Ben Asher in about 930 AD. From Tiberias the codex travelled to Jerusalem where it spent about 100 years; it was pillaged during the first crusade and ended up in Egypt and finally it was transferred to Aleppo, Syria where it remained for centuries. In 1947 when the United Nations voted for the establishing of the State of Israel, Arab riots broke out in Syria. The synagogue in Aleppo was...
burned and it was thought that the codex had been destroyed, but later it was discovered that the codex had been damaged and not destroyed. It was kept in a secret hiding place and the majority of the manuscript was saved. In 1958, the Aleppo Codex was smuggled out of Syria to Jerusalem and delivered to the President of the State of Israel, Izhak Ben-Zvi by a Syrian Jew.

The story of the Aleppo codex reflects the story of the Jewish people. It was plundered from Jerusalem and spent many years in exile in Egypt and then Syria. Today the Aleppo codex can be seen home again. Today the Aleppo codex can be seen in the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem, which also houses the Dead Sea Scrolls. Many read from its pages. It was always seen as an authoritative text and was valued for accuracy.

**The Dead Sea Scrolls**

The giant rock of Masada at the eastern edge of the Judean desert, with a sheer drop of more than 1,300 feet to the western shore of the Dead Sea, is the site of one of the most tragic episodes in Jewish history. In the year 66 the Jews revolted against the Romans who ruled over them. The revolt resulted in a 4 year country wide war, during which time the Romans brought in more and more legions to deal with the insurgents. In the year AD 70 the Roman general Titus conquered Jerusalem, sacked the city, destroyed the temple and expelled most of the surviving Jews from the country.

One Jewish outpost held out for another 3 years — Masada. Masada was made into a great fortress by Herod the Great between 36 to 30 BC; he built a wall, towers, storehouses, large cisterns that cleverly filled with rain water, palaces and more. In 72 AD the Roman Governor Flavius Silva resolved to crush this Jewish outpost of resistance; he marched on Masada with the tenth legion and settled in for a long siege. As Jesus had prophesied in Matthew 24: “For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.” The last remains of the carcase of the Jewish nation were left surrounded by the Roman Eagles.

When the Romans arrived they began to build a ramp of beaten earth and large stones. When this was completed they constructed a siege tower and battering ram with which they began to breach the wall. When this was done the last Jewish outpost of resistance was bound to fall the next day. The 960 men, women and children decided to take their own lives rather than become slaves to the Romans.

The Jewish Historian Josephus records this event:

“They then chose ten men by lot out of them, to slay all the rest; everyone of whom laid himself down by his wife and children on the ground, and threw his arms about them and they offered their necks to the stroke of those who by lot executed that melancholy office; and when these ten had, without fear, slain them all, they made the same rule for casting lots for themselves, that he whose lot it was to first kill the other nine, and after all, should kill himself.”

When the Romans arrived the next day there was only silence. They threw the carcasses of the rebels into pits. In a network of caves near the top of the southern cliff of Masada, the Israeli archeologist Yigal Yadin found the dried bones of 25 of the Jewish rebels. This was the bitter end of the Jewish nation.

Who would have ever imagined that these dried bones could ever live again? That the Jewish nation would arise again from the graves of the nations? Few believed that those bones could live.

“The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones. And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there was very many in the open valley: and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest” (Ezekiel 37:1–3).

On the northwestern section of the wall of Masada a synagogue was unearthed by the archeologist Yigal Yadin, and in the synagogue, a G’nizah—where worn out scrolls are discarded. In the G’nizah a scroll was found. Yigael Yadin recounts the event in his book Mazada:

“Though the parchment was badly gnawed, we could immediately identify the writing as chapters from the Book of Ezekiel; and the parts that were better preserved than others, and which we could easily read, contained extracts from Chapter 37—the vision of the remained bones... these two scrolls, too, are virtually identical with the traditional biblical texts. There are only a few slight changes in the Ezekiel scroll.”

It was the prophecy of Ezekiel chapter 37! The prophecy of the dried bones coming to life. What an incredible discovery! So fitting for the place, its history and the fulfillment of Bible Prophecy.

Last year when I visited Masada I wanted very much to see the remains of the synagogue and the G’nizah. However, the G’nizah had a room built over it and the door was locked. Peering through the glass I could make out a scribe sitting at a desk. There was a notice on the door to be quiet as the scribe was busy writing a new scroll. The Jewish people have returned to their land and are returning to the Biblical roots as prophesied in the scriptures of truth.

**The Discovery of the Isaiah Scroll**

It is most remarkable that the Dead Sea scroll known as the ‘Isaiah Manuscript 2’ was purchased by Eleazar L. Sukenik, professor of archaeology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, on the very day in 1947 that the United Nations voted on the establishment of a Jewish state—an important event that led to the Declaration of Independence in 1948 and the establishment of the State of Israel.

Eleazar had purchased the scroll that morning from a Bethlehem antiquities dealer. Maybe there is some significance in the fact that the scrolls were purchased by Israel in the “beth,” or house, of “lechem,” bread. He returned to Jerusalem, and that evening, as his son Mati was listening to the debate and vote at the UN on the
radio, Eleazar was engrossed in the scrolls.

In New York, previous to these events and the UN vote, Chaim Weizmann was preparing his address to the United Nations with painstaking care. Abba Eban, the now well known Israeli diplomat recalled the event in his diary:

“Worked on draft for four steady hours. After each sentence was written in huge letters and agreed, he would go to lamp-stand and bring the text right to his eyes, endeavoring to learn it by heart. By the end of the session his eyes were watering as if in tears. Finally he said: ‘We’ll make this do—but how about a posuk (biblical verse) for the ending?’” We looked for a Bible and eventually found one supplied by the hotel in the bedside table. Spent a half-hour on Isaiah, looking for ‘Return to Zion’ passages. Finally his mind was caught by the prophecy of ‘an ensign for the nations.’ As I left he said: ‘Well, this is it. Over the top for the last time!’”

So on October 16, 1947 in the lead-up to the vote, Chaim Weizmann concluded his speech with that verse from Isaiah:

“The Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

Eleazar Sukenik would purchase the “Isaiah 2” scroll on the day of the vote. His son Yigal Yadin, the late renowned lecturer in archaeology at Hebrew University, recognized in his book, The Message of the Scrolls, that there was some significance to the timing of these events:

“I cannot avoid the feeling that there is something symbolic in the discovery of the scrolls and their acquisition at the moment of the creation of the state of Israel. It is as if these manuscripts had been waiting in caves for two thousand years, ever since the destruction of Israel’s independence, until the people of Israel had returned to their home and regained their freedom. This symbolism is heightened by the fact that the first three scrolls were bought by my father for Israel on 29th November, 1947, the very day on which the United Nations voted for the re-creation of the Jewish state in Israel after two thousand years.”

Yes, there is significance. These events herald the beginning of the redemption of Israel and all the world. And the existence of the state of Israel today proves that God’s hand is at work, to reestablish His kingdom as spoken by the prophets and to bring world righteousness and peace. From the same Isaiah scroll:

“He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit” (Isaiah 27:6).

This discovery also proved the accurate transmission and authenticity of Isaiah’s message and prophecy of the return of the Jews that has been fulfilled in the last century. In the same book quoted above Yadin says:

“...it is easy to appreciate the great importance of two Isaiah texts discovered among the Qumran Scrolls. These texts are about a thousand years older than the oldest Hebrew text known to us, and about five hundred years older than the earliest Greek version of the Septuagint... the Isaiah scrolls found in Qumran were being copied only about six hundred years after the words were uttered by the prophet himself... What is astonishing is that despite their antiquity and the fact that the scrolls belong to the pre-standardization period, they are on the whole almost identical with the Masoretic text known to us.”

The Masoretic text is the traditional Hebrew text from which the Old Testament was translated. The Aleppo Codex is considered the finest example of the Masoretic text.

Can it be a coincidence that a nation was reborn after 2,000 years according to prophecy? Can man predict the future? Again Isaiah the prophet writes the words of the Almighty and issues a challenge to man:

“Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods...” (Isaiah 41:22, 23).

Not only did the Bible predict that the Jews would return to their ancient homeland—but the way they would return:

“Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.”

Anyone familiar with the history of the return of the Jews over the last century will know that the way of return described by Jeremiah the Hebrew prophet thousands of years ago is exactly how the events happened!

“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.” (Isaiah 40:8).

The story of each manuscript is fascinating when we can see the hand of providence at work. These things also give us an added confidence in the word of God. We can rest assured that our God has preserved the scriptures in an accurate form that correctly informs us of his purpose with us and with his nation of Israel.

“Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever” (Isaiah 30:8).
Recent economic headlines have highlighted the remarkable way in which Israel’s 2009 positive growth stands in contrast to other developed economies of the world. Despite the Global Recession, Israel has enjoyed a healthy 2009 Gross Domestic Product growth rate of 0.7% featuring an impressive Gross Domestic Product growth rate spurt of 4.9% over the 4th quarter of 2009.

Particularly striking is how this prosperity and growth has arisen from knowledge-based hi-tech industries such as computer microprocessors and other industries. Global giants such as Intel, Microsoft, Motorola, Google, Applied Materials, Hewlett Packard, Deutsche Telekom, Samsung and others turn to Israel for product research and development.

Most striking has been the discovery of significant amounts of gas in Israeli territory in the Dead Sea area. Exploratory drilling in Israel began back in 1947 but it is only since 1998 that Trillions of cubic feet (Tcf) in proven gas reserves from several Israeli and Gaza fields have been discovered. The presence of gas is a promising geological indicator of the presence of oil. Offshore gas fields near the territory of ancient Asher, and the prospect of Israel becoming an oil-rich nation prompts us to consider Deuteronomy 33:24-25. Deuteronomy 33 is about the prophecy that Moses gave before his death concerning the children of Israel. These verses say of Asher.

“... Let Asher be blessed with children; Let him be acceptable to his brethren, And let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; And as thy days, so shall thy strength be.”

This prophecy has exercised Bible students for many years regarding its true meaning.

A note about the author
Although Glenn Blair Ford will be well known to U.K. readers for his memorable talks at Prophecy Days in Wales and South East England, what readers may not know is that whilst on a school journey trip three years ago, he met with an accident which has left him completely paralysed unable to move arms and hands. He is now cared for in a specialist Nursing Home in South London about 5 miles from his home where his wife and two children live. Yet notwithstanding his affliction, Glenn has continued with his Bible studies by means of voice activated computer software, and a blowpipe device acting as his “mouse.” This article is the result of much painstaking work, and by means of “laptop-and-skype technology” he is able to contribute personally to his local Bible Class at the Forest Hill Ecclesia, London.

Glenn’s courage, faith, and diligent studies are an inspiration to all who visit him and we hope to receive further articles from him in the future.

John Ramsden LONDON UK.
Opinions have Varied over the Years

Points of view have been varied and diverse. For example, a Major J. Scott Phillips is published in ‘Herald of the Kingdom and age to come’ in June, 1860 stating that the “iron and brass” in the above excerpt from Deuteronomy 33 refers to a modern railway running from Antioch to the Persian Gulf. J. J. Blunt in his book “Undesigned Scriptural Coincidences” stated that the term “dip his foot in oil” was “an indication of the future fertility of that region, and the nature of its principal crop (olive oil GBF).” C. A. Ladson in 1937 addressed the mineral oil possibility and wrote “The confusion of the olive oil of the blessing of Asher by Moses with the petroleum of the pipeline is curious. There is perhaps more of evil than of blessing in the uses of petrol to-day.” This view contrasts sharply with that of David Sutcliffe, who, against the backdrop of oil speculation in the territory of Asher in 1981, wrote “Moses in the same prophetic context in Deuteronomy describes Israel as being made to “suck ... oil (Latin oleum GBF) out of the flinty rock (Latin petra GBF).” He proposed that the Bible was practically saying that Israel was to extract petroleum As for the shoes of iron and brass, he speculated that this could be “a hint in this of the structure of an oil derrick.” It is also very interesting to note that there is a successful company called Zion Oil & Gas, Inc., which was specifically set up to speculate for oil in Israel. It uses Bible passages such as Genesis 49:22-26, Deuteronomy 33:13-17; 33:24 and 33:18-19 as its guide as to which areas to drill for oil. They state “The decision to name our company “Zion Oil & Gas” reflects the company’s firm belief that our activities will benefit the Land of Israel and its people, as well as working toward the fulfillment of olive oil production? Is this theology really about geology? This article seeks to take a close look at what Moses actually said; and to compare what he said with Asher’s history, Asher’s current affairs, and what we know of Asher’s future through Bible prophecy.

“Let Him Dip His Foot In Oil”

Moses said of Asher “Let Asher be blessed with children; Let him be acceptable to his brethren, And let him dip his foot in oil...” (Deuteronomy 33:24-25 KJV)

Asher, the man, was the progenitor of the tribe Asher. He was the eighth son of Jacob, the second by his mother Zilpah the handmaid of Leah Jacob’s wife. The name Asher is derived from a word meaning “to be guided, or to be announced or made happy/blessed.” Thus the name Asher means “blessed.” It is said in the rabbinic tradition that he was blessed such, that “He never spent a night in an inn as he inherited lofty palaces throughout the world.”

The ancient tribal territory of Asher was the strip of land situated on the northern tip of Israel’s west coast. The territory stretched from the northern border with Lebanon, southward beyond the Kishon River, beyond the modern city of Haifa and Mount Carmel, as far south as Nieve Yam on a modern map. The territory was about 60 miles from north to south and extended approximately 10 miles inland from the coast.

The prophecy was that Asher was to “dip his foot in oil.” The Hebrew for “dip” means to place a solid object into a liquid with the purpose that some of the
liquid is taken up by the solid object. Like dipping bread in sauce, it carries the idea of partaking of that which has been dipped into. Thus we get the idea that Asher was to partake of the oil.

This Hebrew word, translated as oil, is pronounced “Shemen” (שֶׁמֶן). This word is translated as oil 165 times of the 195 times as it appears in the Scripture. When the Bible says oil, it almost exclusively means olive oil, thus the notion that Asher shall partake of olive oil has a certain logic in its favour. When we look at the history of the area we find that Asher was indeed renowned for its prolific production of olive oil. According to the Encyclopaedia Judaica, Second Edition, rabbinic tradition holds that “The soil of Asher’s inheritance was so fertile that it sufficed to supply all Israel’s needs (particularly olives), even in a sabbatical year.” This is supported by Smith’s Bible dictionary which says of Asher “They possessed... some of the richest soil in all Palestine.” So if “Shemen” (שֶׁמֶן) exclusively means olive oil, it appears that Asher has already dipped his foot in (or partaken of) oil.

The Essence of Prosperity

While it is true that “Shemen” (שֶׁמֶן) is correctly translated as oil, the idea of oil comes from the concept that “Shemen” (שֶׁמֶן) expresses. The idea of oil is derived from the concept of richness and fatness. The richness and the fatness of an olive is in its oil. “Shemen” (שֶׁמֶן) relates to the rich produce of the earth. The concept extends to that of having prosperity, well-being and the best of what life has to offer. In the same way that the oil of an olive is the distillate of that which provides its richness. This part of the Moses’s prophecy is a blessing about Asher experiencing the essence of prosperity and well-being. Isaac gave the same blessing to Jacob (who had Asher “in his loins”) regarding his future prosperity in Genesis 27:28.

“Therefore, God give thee of the dew of heaven, And the fatness (Shemen שֶׁמֶן) of the earth, And plenty of corn and wine.”

Exactly the same blessing is given by Jacob to Asher regarding the last days in Genesis 49:20.

“Out of Asher his bread shall be fat (Shemen שֶׁמֶן), And he shall yield royal dainties.”

Thus the prophetic testimonies of Isaac, Jacob and Moses all bare witness to Asher’s blessing. Asher enjoyed the abundant agricultural fatness of the land, especially valuable olive oil, in an ancient era when the well-being of the nation was largely derived from its agricultural viability.

Asher was dead before Moses was even born. Therefore, this prophecy was not about the literal man Asher, nor did it concern his literal foot, so should we really expect it to be about literal oil? “Shemen” i.e. prosperity and well-being can be derived from a range of sources in a modern global market economy. These include the extraction of raw materials such as oil, gas, metals and agricultural crops; the processing of commodities, e.g. refining oil, manufacturing goods, and the development of new products and processes. All are means by which nations and provinces obtain prosperity and well-being, the fatness of the Earth.

Asher’s Blessings of Prosperity

The gas, and oil which might follow, in the region of Asher in Israel can be seen as the possible supply of “Shemen,” not because it is oil, but because it is wealth. An Israeli Ministry of foreign affairs headline proclaimed “Natural gas find could transform Israel’s economy.” This may be so, but there have been a number of other sources of prosperity and well-being with which Asher has already been blessed and, which have transformed Israel’s economy to bring it to its present diversified and prosperous state.

Agriculture

Agriculture is a bedrock of Israel’s well-being. It is proportionally the third most productive nation on earth. The territory of Asher is on land that has been a fertile farming ground since ancient times. The soil in Asher is excellent for growing citrus fruit, Israel’s most successful agricultural export, and it is used for that purpose even today.

Industry

Manufacturing industry is another source of Israel’s well-being and prosperity. It provides Israel with by far the largest proportion of its income from export. We simply have to look at a map of industrial land use in Israel to see that the widest variety of industry in all Israel is to be found in the southern part of Asher’s territory (the vicinity of Haifa).

Research & Development

“Israel’s economy is the most hi-tech dependent in the world, with 15 percent of the country’s GDP and one third of all exports originating in the high tech sector.” The city of Haifa in the southern part of Asher’s territory is one of Israel’s R&D hotspots with clusters of multinational R&D centers and academic institutions. This brings billions into the economy. This is another example of Asher partaking of Israel’s “shemen.”

The Gifted and Talented Jewish People

The Jewish people are Israel’s fundamental shemen or source of prosperity. Without them the blessings of the land would amount to very little. The Lord himself declared “He that scattered Israel will gather him,” (Jer. 31:10). Inspired by God’s promises to Abraham, political ideology, and a drive to preserve and improve their lives, Jews came to Israel from all over the globe to build a Jewish state. God’s dispersal of the Jews was such that Jewish immigrants brought with them contemporary expertise from the world’s most technologically advanced and prosperous regions which they applied to Israel’s development. These immigrants fueled Israel’s “miraculous” economic growth. The quality of Israel’s human resources is unmatched; Israel has a higher concentration of scientists and technicians than any other developed country. It also has the highest concentration of engineers in the world. The territory of Asher with internationally acclaimed research and development centers and two university campuses is especially rich in this intellectual “shemen.”

Whether we understand the oil, (i.e. essence of prosperity and well-being) to be olive oil, crude oil, agriculture, industry, scientific prowess or the uniquely high concentration of talent and ability of the Jewish people, it is clear that Asher’s “shemen” is symbolic and typical of the well-being and prosperity that God has bestowed on all of Israel. Deuteronomy 26:18–19 and 8:18 tell us that the Lord has declared them to be his peculiar people, to make them high above all nations in praise, and in name, and in honour; that they may be a holy people unto Him, as He has spoken. Thus it is He that has given them power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore by His own name. It is through the hand of God that the children of Israel prosper in our time. This is witness to the truth of God’s word of promise.

As for the question “when will Asher dip his foot in oil?” Surely Asher’s foot has been dipped in oil for millennia and will continue to be so until the nations of iron and brass “think an evil thought” come out of the North “like a storm,” to plunder the promised land (Ezekiel 38:9-12). And this is the subject of the second part of this article which explores Deuteronomy 33:25 and is entitled “Thy shoes shall be iron and brass.”

Part Two of this article is to be in the next issue of The Bible Magazine, God willing.
He sight was unbelievable—a wall of water so high, so strong that all before it was tossed aside like a hand of a bad-tempered giant sweeping through a crowded toy cupboard. Nothing was spared—cars, lorries, houses, ships—tossed and pounded together by the invading waters. Filmed from the air, the pictures showed the awesome power of the tsunami that followed the Japanese Sendai earthquake on March 11th, mid-afternoon local time. In a moment of time the lives of tens of thousands were wiped out. Nothing could live before this 60 mph onslaught that in places swept 6 miles/10km inland. Such was the power of the earthquake that triggered the tsunami that Japan's location has now moved 8 feet/2.5 m eastwards as the Eurasian tectonic plate upon which it sits slid over the Pacific plate. The tilt of the earth's axis shifted 10°/25 cm under the force of the 9.0 earthquake—11 thousand times stronger than that which shook Christchurch in New Zealand in February. The resulting up-thrust sent a huge body of water racing across the Pacific at speeds of 500 miles an hour—that's the speed of an airliner! For those who know Britain, it was like dropping a “stone” the size of the Isle of Wight into the ocean!

We have spoken for years about a coming time of trouble: when world events would frighten people. Now we have a taste of the troubles which are coming—and we have seen nothing yet.

The weather patterns seem out of kilter. From fires raging in Australia it turned to rain, more rain and devastating floods, then destructive typhoons. Then eyes turned to New Zealand as last September the city was struck with a force 7.1 earthquake. Then Christchurch was struck again, not so strongly but much closer to the surface. The densely built Business District with its higher rise office buildings was badly hit, many buildings demolished or so seriously damaged they will need pulling down. The relentless aftershocks continue; on the day of the Japanese earthquake, Christchurch had about 20 shocks. “Not surprisingly, a lot of us are stressed,” said a friend living through this frightening experience. But this disaster which shook New Zealand, leaving some 116 dead and still counting, was nothing compared with the Japanese earthquake. The Japanese are very proud of their engineering skills at making buildings withstand the frequent shocks they get. But this was the biggest recorded earthquake in Japan, the 5th biggest ever recorded in the world. But it wasn't so much the earthquake damage, but the tsunami triggered by it, whose destructive advance chilled the minds of those watching. This was no stage-set horror movie, this was reality. Amid the snow and the cold and the wet and the mud, Japan was frozen in time. The enormity of the destruction was beyond comprehension.

Then came the fear over the nuclear power stations. Lacking natural energy sources, Japan is very dependent on nuclear energy. The plants at Fukushima Daiichi were 40 years old and only designed to withstand earthquakes of 8.2—this was a 9.0 quake. They can’t be shut down in an instant—with back-up diesel pumps to drive the cooling systems knocked out in the tsunami, the ever-rising pressure within the plant grows and grows until, if not cooled, it bursts with a spectacular explosion. As I write, all three plants have exploded, bringing real fears of radiation spreading. Provided the vessel around the fuel rods remains intact, the radiation threat is limited, but if it bursts the consequences are potentially devastating. As it was, people nearby were exposed in one day to what would normally be a lifetime's exposure.
be a year’s worth of radiation. The haunting pictures of the people affected by radiation in the Chernobyl disaster in 1986 are burned into many minds who lived through this period. Even in Britain, some 1,400 miles away, the radiation fallout from Chernobyl affected the sheep which ate the contaminated grass; it was months before lamb was restored to the markets and even today, 25 years later, there are still affected farms in Britain where the sheep can’t be sold for meat!

**Long Overdue, the Eastern Mediterranean Awaits an Inevitable Big Quake**

Where next? California? Jerusalem? Both are “ overdue” a severe earthquake, based on the frequency of past occurrences; or how about that notable Icelandic volcano, it was thought that the 2010 eruption which cleared Europe’s skies of aeroplanes for days, might trigger its bigger neighbour Katla. It didn’t but who knows the effects of a huge earthquake on the other side of the world, which happens to be on the same Eurasian plate? It seems to have triggered one of Japan’s volcanoes into life, 3 days after the earthquake the Shinmoedake volcano roared into activity with a loud bang, sending ash and rock thousands of feet into the air, its most violent activity with a loud bang, sending ash and rock

The above heading is from *MidEast Daily News* (18-Jan-11). “While the area that encompasses Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria has suffered destructive earthquakes before, the kind of tremors that scientists classify as great—between a magnitude of seven or eight on the Richter scale—haven’t rippled through the region in almost exactly 65 years. The lull in activity means the Holy Land and the surrounding region could soon be in store for a deadly rocker, scientists say. ‘Most large earthquakes that are very destructive came in areas where there had been a long period of quiet, which is called a seismic gap,’ Shmuel Marco, a professor of geophysics at Tel Aviv University, told *The Media Line*. ‘For Israel this is very worrying. ‘It will happen for sure, it’s only a question of when.’”

It is interesting to look at the frequency of earthquakes over the past 100 years or so when there have been reasonably accurate instruments to measure them. It would be fair to say that there are far more instruments and more sensitive ones out there, so of course more are going to be recorded. So let’s just look at the more powerful ones, say over 7.0 on the Richter scale.

Our chart shows earthquakes 7.0 or higher. It is in 38 year bands. The last one shows earthquakes to date (Mar. 15)—there are another 3 ¼ years to run, so one would expect this to rise to nearly 200.

If we have another natural disaster soon after the Japanese earthquake, then people will indeed be wondering where it is going to end! **Japan condemns Israeli Buildings Proposals**

Exactly one year—to the day—before Japan was struck by the earthquake, the Japanese Foreign Ministry put out a statement condemning Israel’s decision to build more houses in Jerusalem and on the West Bank.

The Government of Japan deplores the decisions of the Government of Israel to give permission for the construction of 1,600 housing units in East Jerusalem in addition to 112 units in the West Bank just after the Israeli and Palestinian leadership’s acceptance of the start of indirect talks. The Government of Japan does not recognize any act that prejudices the final status of Jerusalem and the territories in the pre-1967 borders. Japan demands that the plans should not be implemented (*Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan* 11-Mar-10).

Now, according to today’s news, Japan faces the task of rebuilding and repairing some

**Devastation in Japan following earthquake and Tsunami last month**

100,000 homes, a figure that rises daily as the extent of the damage is assessed. It may well rise to a figure one hundred times greater than the numbers Israel proposed building a year ago. Incidentally, Israel was one of the first countries to offer Japan help after the earthquake struck.

**Signs for our Times**

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Let’s collate some of the passages that speak of troubles in these latter-days, the days of the return of the Lord Jesus.

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (*Luke* 21:25-28).

Much of what Jesus spoke to the disciples in what we call the Mount Olivet prophecy had its main application in the days of the disciples, warning of the events which would mark the end of the Jewish nation in AD 70, a terrible time in Israel’s history. Doubtless we should expect similar times at the end of what Jesus termed the times of the Gentiles, the times of the past 2,000 years, which will rapidly come to an end with the return of the Lord Jesus and the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth. However, the above words do seem to have an application in our day. They stretch beyond the return of Christ to his household, to the time of God’s judgements which will be poured out at that time, to destroy those nations who will have invaded Israel. The nations will be brought to appreciate God’s mighty hand when the Lord Jesus and his immortalised saints go forth to save Israel from their enemies.

We understand the sun, moon and stars to refer to the political and religious rulers. We recall Joseph’s dream where he saw the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowing down to him. Just as the sun, moon and stars are lights in the natural heavens, so they are an apt symbol for the rulers of the political heavens. Their destiny is to be totally shaken out of that political heaven, to be replaced by Christ and his saints. Scripture also used the earth as a symbol for people and their rulers.

Isaiah chapter 24 speaks of the destruction that would come upon Israel at the time of the Babylonian invasions of Nebuchadnezzar. He speaks of the earth being turned upside down (v.1) and reeling to and fro like a drunken man (v. 20)! It is clear that it also has an application at the time of Christ’s return for the chapter ends: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the
Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously (Isaiah 24:21, 23).

As we shall see after our next section, the upheavals in many of the Middle Eastern and North African countries are further signs of the Time of the End.

Not Normal Times

This was the headline to an article (UPI 14-Mar-11) following an extraordinary week, just a few days after the Japanese earthquake.

“In normal times, any one of three or even four news items in the last week would have stunned the markets, so these days we are either all punch-drunk or nobody knows what’s going on. But it took the tragedy of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami to send stock markets reeling.”

The “three or four” news items were:
• Fitch rating agency warning of a 60% chance of a Chinese Bank crisis by 2013. This was followed by news that China’s trade balance had gone into deficit to the tune of $7.3 billion, with exports down and imports rising.
• Then there was the on-going euro crisis. The struggling Greeks are facing interest rates rising to almost 13% on their 10-year bonds—an incredible burden, especially as the European Central Bank signalled that it was preparing to raise interest rates.
• With the Libyan crisis, oil prices continue to rise putting further strains of the European and American recovery. The German PIMCO Investment Fund—the world’s largest, has dumped its entire holding of $26 billion of U.S. Treasury bonds.
• The world’s 3rd largest economy, Japan, on her knees facing financial ruin. With nuclear reactors seemingly out of control.

Yes! Quite a week! As a result, the Japanese stock market dramatically tumbled as did European and American stock markets.

Winds of Change blowing through the Middle East

It seems to have all started with a comparatively small event—yet so did World War I! A young Tunisian fruit seller, unable to obtain a license to ply his wares, set fire to himself in protest. That was mid-December. Here we are, 3 months later, with troubles flaring in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Bahrain, UAE, Iraq, Iran and now Libya. The whole Middle East and North Africa is ablaze with people power rising up in protest. For years they suffered under their dictatorial rulers, now, having seen that change is possible, they are seeking change for themselves. So far the Tunisian leader has been deposed; the Egyptian President Mubarak gone; the Jordanian government dismissed; the PA government resigned; Yemeni and UAE rulers declaring they won’t re-elect, and many concessions granted to improve living standards. The problem is, will the changes be for the better or worse? We remember the people of Gaza voted in Hamas in elections in 2006; far from gaining freedom, they suffer from harshly imposed Shia laws.

The fact that demonstrations arose in so many countries in such a short space of time, might point to a common hand behind them. This does not seem to be the case, however. The time was ripe, and this domino effect spread throughout the region. Even Iran has not been immune to protests, but they have been brutally suppressed.

There is no doubt, however, that Iran is seeking to exploit the situation, to make as many gains as she can in the changing situation, but one can’t see her hand as the prime cause of these troubles. So why was the time ripe?

I believe it is part of the frog spirits that are going forth to the kings of the earth preparing them for the gathering of the nations to the battle of Armageddon, as spoken of in Rev. 16:13, 14.

We refer readers to earlier articles in the Bible Magazine on the frog spirits—embodied in the spirit of the French Revolution, when Europe was similarly wracked with the uprising of the people, when church and state felt their wrath. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity was one of their rallying cries. A godless, false spirit. The only true liberty will be found in Christ, where also will be found true equality (one in Christ Jesus) and a true spirit of fraternity. What changed Europe, America, Russia, Turkey, has now spread to the very area which will be the future battleground. The changes here may well be the final adjustments to the countries surrounding Israel, some supporting her, others wishing her elimination. We will briefly look at Egypt, Libya and Bahrain.

Egypt

The dramatic overthrow of President Mubarak, who had been president for 30 years, shook the rulers of the surrounding countries. America had supported Mubarak, pouring $1.3bn a year into Egypt, second only to Israel in American aid receipts. Yet in his hour of need, America stood aside and allowed him to fall, a chilling thought to so many Middle East rulers. At the moment, the army is firmly in control, and the changes that the peoples thought they had gained have been slow in coming. From Daniel 11:42, 43 we expect to see Egypt dependant on the West and part of the southern alliance of nations who remain friendly to Israel. It has been interesting how the Egyptian army has been cooperating with America over Libya—they have no love of Col. Gaddafi and would happily see his departure. They have been trained by the US and they need the continuing flow of aid as the Egyptian economy is weak.

At the time of writing, the gas supply from Egypt to Israel remains shut down following an explosion (thought to have been carried out by Hamas) at a pumping station on the pipeline on February 5th. This gas supply branches off to Jordan and continues up into Lebanon, neither has had supplies resumed. Egypt supplies 40% of Israel’s gas, much of which is used to generate electricity. Israel has had to switch to oil to power the production of electricity, costing Israel an extra £1.7m a day! Jordan is far more affected; 80% of her electricity is generated from Egyptian gas and she faces daily extra costs of some $4.2 million a day! There have been several dates put forward by Egypt for the gas supply to be resumed, but so far each has passed without resumption. It is expected that the very low prices paid will be renegotiated, and volumes reduced.

Libya

The situation is on-going as we write. The opposition forces are being pushed back by Col. Gaddafi’s superior forces, after their spectacular initial gains. The opposition forces have appealed to the West for help. America doesn’t want to get involved—it is a European matter. Germany is lukewarm, like most of Europe. Only Britain and France are prepared to act to impose no-fly zones in support of the opposition’s fighters, but they need UN backing, which has not, so far, been forthcoming. The Arab League have now declared their support for a no-fly zone, which has strengthened Britain’s hand, but will it be sufficient to swing the UN against Gaddafi? In the meantime, while the nations dither, Gaddafi is changing the facts on the ground, soon it may be too late.

Russia has agreed to ban arms sales to Libya; this is a painful decision as she has arms contracts worth $2bn with Libya.

It is clear from Scripture that Libya is on the side of the Gogian invaders (Ezek. 38:5 and Dan. 11:43). However this doesn’t help us with this outcome. At the moment Libya has close ties with Russia, but even if Gaddafi was overthrown—not a certain outcome at the moment—its replacement would be pro-European and so supporting Gog in the invasion of Israel.

Bahrain

Stratfor has been emphasizing the
importance of the struggle here on this small island in the Persian Gulf. It is connected by an archipelago—in addition to the main island there are 33 small islands. Bahrain is home to over 1 million people and is famous for its pearls and oil. It has strong ties to Britain and America and is home to the American 5th Fleet. It is an archipelago—in addition to the main island in an effort to thwart Iran’s plans. How Iran will react remains to be seen. She prefers to work in the background rather than open contest. Will she openly defy the might of Saudi Arabia with her Western backing? Stratfor thought that she will probably try to cause trouble elsewhere—Iraq is open to such action at a time when America is pulling her troops back. Interference here would pose a big problem for Obama; to slow down troop withdrawals to support the Iraqi government, or to withdraw troops and leave Iraq to an Iranian fate? The situation is fluid.

Interesting Outcomes!

The situation in Libya has brought David Cameron, the British Prime Minister to the fore. America under Obama has as it were retreated. Maybe nothing will come of Cameron’s plans, Europe is so divided, but it has shown his willingness to act in the region. Who knows, it may be Egypt next that seeks Britain’s help in defending her assets. Britain has a role to play in the area as the Tarshish power.

Who was the first Western leader to visit Egypt after the overthrow of President Mubarak? David Cameron. He was on his way to a 3-day tour of the Middle East, to drum up trade for Britain. His itinerary was amended and he visited Cairo and talked to the demonstrators in the main square as well as talking to the new military rulers. With typical British diplomacy he told them: “As old friends of the Egyptian people, we come not to tell you how to do things but to ask how we can help you do what we know you want to do” (The Economist 21-Feb-11). Wasn’t it interesting that just at a time when Germany could have been expected to exert her military might in the Libya situation, their charismatic Defence Minister, von Guttenberg, had been forced to step down over plagiarism in the writing of his doctorate thesis! I’m sure we shall be seeing him again, there was a wide outpouring of dismay at his resignation, but this was not yet the time. So Germany is taking a backseat to France and Britain.

The events of the past week have shed an interesting light on the response that will be made by the nations who oppose the coming invasion of Israel.

Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?” (Ezekiel 38:13).

It sounds such a weak response, yet isn’t that what we have been witnessing over Libya? The nations are divided—who for instance speaks for Europe? Britain? Germany? Baroness Ashton (the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union)? The European Commission? We have been witnessing a lot of words but seeming impotence in the face of the dangers.

Let’s now look at some other interesting items since our last update.

Pope to Address the EU Parliament

“Pope Benedict XVI was invited to address the European Parliament after meeting with the parliament’s president, Jerzey Buzek, on Feb. 28.

“During his audience with the pontiff on Monday, President Buzek recalled the speech John Paul II gave before the European Parliament in 1988, and invited the Pope Benedict to visit and speak to the parliament as well.

“In their meeting, Pope Benedict and Poland native President Buzek discussed the protests currently underway in Arab nations, religious freedom issues and the need to protect Christian minorities.

“Conversation also touched on the cordial relations between the Catholic Church and the European Parliament.

“The parliament leader noted that during their talk, the two also “underlined that it’s very important to fight for the religious minority rights and that means Christian minority rights in this part of the world and also all over the world” (EWTN 03-Mar-11).

Jerzey Buzek’s position as the President of the European Parliament gives him a lot of influence. He is a devout Roman Catholic. No date has been set for the Pope to make this visit; there are many other EU leaders who would welcome such a visit. When Pope John Paul II addressed the European Parliament, his message was simple. “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” In other words, you politicians look after political matters and leave to the Church spiritual matters.

The National Secular Society (04-Mar-11) was quick to condemn this invitation.

“We consider that inviting the Vatican—Europe’s last remaining theocracy—to the heart of the European Parliament to be undesirable and unhealthy. The Catholic Church already exerts far too much influence in the EU. This should be discouraged and curtailed rather than encouraged in this way.”

An interesting testimony from the mouth of its critics as to the power the Vatican holds over the affairs of Europe.

The Pope is planning a visit to Germany from September 22nd-25th. He has emphasised that he wants to reach out to the evangelical Protestant Church in Germany. He met their leader at the Vatican during February and wants to have a further meeting during his trip. He is also scheduled to speak in the German Parliament (Bundestag)—a matter not entirely welcomed by all its members!

According to Catholic Culture (09-Mar-11),
Monarchists Unite Seeking Revival of Tsarist Russia

Over the years there have been various articles about reviving the monarchy in Russia. Such a step would be fitting for Russia’s last role in history as the great power that binds the nations together, sweeping down to Constantinople to avenge the overthrow of the Roman Emperor in 1453, and then onwards to take Jerusalem. It would indeed be the recreation of the little horn of the goat power of Daniel chapter 8. The above headline shows that things are moving. The new party is hoping to secure up to 20% of the votes at the next election!

“Monarchists have held a founding congress of their new party in Moscow. The Tsarist Russia party sees restoring the monarchy in the country as one of its main strategic purposes.

“On Sunday, 147 delegates from 46 Russian regions gathered in the capital to create the new party, reports Rossiyiskaya Gazeta daily. A black-yellow-white tricolor was chosen as its flag and a double-headed eagle as its emblem. The slogan for the gathering was “Tsar is coming to Russia and you should lead the people towards Tsar.”

“The new party also approved its charter, which was published on the Tsarist Russia’s website. Among its main purposes, the movement names moulding public opinion on the necessity to go back to “monarchist rule, as is traditional for Russia,” educating citizens in “monarchist spirit,” and, also, taking part in parliamentary and presidential elections. Foreign policy tasks include “restoring the Russian state within its natural borders” and actively seeking the voluntarily return of Ukraine and Belarus to a unified state; revival of close ties with Russia’s traditional partners, first of all Orthodox and Slavic. According to monarchists, Russia should minimize its membership in any kinds of international organizations” (Russian Times 14-Feb-11).

Watch this space!

Iran to Build permanent Naval Base in Syria

Iran sent two warships through the Suez Canal for the first time since the fall of the Shah in 1979. Under President Mubarak such movement would have been stopped. Ahmadinejad left no time following Mubarak’s downfall to test the waters. They were allowed through, but America put on a big show of strength by positioning some of her largest vessels along the route. The two ships arrived at Syria, but unexpectedly didn’t stop long, but retracted their route back through the Canal to Iran. However while they were in Syria a defence agreement was signed.

“Just two days after two Iranian warships reached the Syrian port of Latakia via the Suez Canal, Friday, Feb. 25, an Iranian-Syrian cooperation accord was signed providing for Iran to build its first Mediterranean naval base at the Syrian port, dekbafte’s military and Iranian sources reveal. It will include a large Iranian Revolutionary Guards weapons depot, anchorage for large warships and submarines and logistical infrastructure for incoming Iranian troops. The Syrian Navy chief said the move would ‘cripple Israel.’

“Iran has much to celebrate, dekbafte’s military sources report. It has acquired its first military foothold on a Mediterranean shore and its first permanent military presence on Syrian soil. Tehran will be setting in place the logistical infrastructure for accommodating incoming Iranian troops to fight in a potential Middle East war” (Debka 01-Mar-11).

Iran suffered a further setback to her nuclear ambitions, when the Russians made them remove the nuclear fuel rods from the Bushehr nuclear power station for “safety” reasons at the end of February. It is not clear whether this is a result of further damage by the Stuxnet computer worm.

How Israel could Revolutionize the Global Energy Sector

In a wonderful sign of our times Israel is set to be even more prosperous, preparing her to be an attractive spoil to her enemies. There have been several more developments since our last update.

Givot Olam Oil has been drilling in Israel for many years, searching for oil, in an area about 12 miles/20 km NE of Tel Aviv. In March they estimated that the Megetz oil well, which has produced quantities of oil, should be capable of yielding up to 1,400 barrels of oil a day—not a vast amount but better than nothing. Another off

SEE ARTICLE ON PAGE 33 BY GLENN BLAIRE FORD: “When Will Asher Dip His Foot in Oil?”

shore drilling site, Shamshon, off the coast of Ashkelon has been given a 20% chance of producing commercial quantities of gas—with estimated reserves of 43 billion cubic meters. There was a very interesting article on shale oil extraction. With higher oil prices and cleaner methods of oil extraction, many countries are looking afresh at extracting oil from shale.

“New data suggests Israel may not only have much larger gas resources than believed, but also the 3rd largest deposit of oil shale in the world.

“What is less well-known, but even more dramatic, is the work being done on this country’s oil shale. A new assessment was released late last year by Dr. Yuval Bartov, chief geologist for Israel Energy Initiatives. He presented data that our oil shale reserves are actually the equivalent of 250 billion barrels (that compares with 260 billion barrels in the proven reserves of Saudi Arabia).”

“New technologies being developed for Israeli shale, seek to separate the oil from the shale rock 300 meters underground: these techniques actually produce water, rather than use it up. The technology will be tested in a pilot project followed by a demonstration stage. The present goal is to produce commercial quantities of shale oil by the end of the decade.

“If Israel develops a unique method for separating oil from shale deep underground, that has none of the negative ecological side-effects of earlier oil shale efforts, that technology can be made available to the whole world, changing the entire global oil market. The effect of the spread of this technology would be to shift the center of gravity of world oil away from Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf to more stable states that have no history of backing terrorism or radical Islamic causes. (In the Arab world, Jordan and Morocco have the most significant oil shale deposits.)” (Jerusalem Post 11-Mar-11).

Here we must leave the storyline; it has been a very interesting time. At the start of the year who would have pictured the events of the Middle East; or the devastation in Christchurch or Japan? We live in truly amazing times, events cry out that the return of the Lord Jesus is at hand. Are we ready to meet him?

Richter Scale

For the technical this is a logarithmic scale, so going from 7.0 to 8.0 represents a 10-fold increase in strength, but a much greater amount of energy. One measure of energy is TNT equivalent. TNT is a popular explosive. The 6.3 Feb. 2011 Christchurch earthquake had the equivalent energy of some 42,000 tons of TNT. The 9.0 Sendai earthquake in Japan in March released the equivalent energy of 474,000,000 tons of TNT – 11,000 times stronger!

GAS FLOW FROM EGYPT TO ISRAEL RESUMES

The supply of gas was halted for six weeks after an explosion in the pipeline. 16 March 11 09:50. The flow of natural gas from Egypt to Israel resumed last night, after being cut off for six weeks. Earlier yesterday, at around 15:00, Egypt renewed the flow of gas to Jordan. The supply of gas to both countries was halted on February 5 after an explosion on the Egyptian side of the pipeline to Jordan.

Egypt has informed Jordan of its intention to raise the price of the gas it supplies from $3 per million btu to $6-7, which it claims reflects market prices. The price hike being demanded of Jordan raises the possibility that a similar demand will be made of Israeli consumers. The Egyptians are currently committed to supplying gas to Israeli Electric Corporation (IEC) and Israel Corporation (TASE: ILC) at $4.5-5 per million btu. EMG (Eastern Mediterranean Gas) signed a $15 billion gas supply agreement with IEC, Israel Corp., the private power producer Dorad, and smaller business customers.

Published by Globes (online), Israel business news—www.globes-online.com—on March 16, 2011.
And as for the future—that is a curiosity and a mystery about which one can be either optimistic or pessimistic!

But, open the Bible!

Listen to the one who says this:

“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isaiah 46:9-10).

So the apostle Peter writes:

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?”

Peter continues to tell his readers about the approaching “day of judgment,” when the world of that time would be dissolved—an event that came to pass in the destruction of the Jewish system when the Roman armies brought it to an end. The “sure word of prophecy” had instructed believers about this coming catastrophe—so Peter says (verse 17),

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.”

Just as Peter’s first century readers knew what to expect, so we today are informed of a future day of judgment. In his book *Elpis Israel* (1849) John Thomas wrote the following:

“From these premises we may conclude that, as the Lord has also revealed what is to come to pass in these latter days, it is both our duty and privilege to make ourselves acquainted with it, that our faith may grow and be strengthened; that our affections be detached from the fleeting present, and set more firmly on things to come; that our minds may be fortified against error; and that we may be prepared to meet the Lord as those who have kept their garments, and shall not be put to shame. It is our own fault if we are not “light in the Lord.” He has plainly set before us what is happening in our day, and what is yet to occur.”

We must recognize that at least two thirds of the Bible contains prophecy, and there must be reason for this. That reason is the need to impress upon our minds the fact that this is indeed *The Living Word of God.*

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.

2 Peter 1:19

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.

Isaiah 46:9,10

And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORd hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORd, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORd hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Deuteronomy 18:21,22

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Proverbs 14:12
Henry the Eighth, king of England, is remembered for his six wives, and for his part in separating the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church. His reign saw the first steps of a series of events which would transform religion in England, and provide access to the Bible for every one of his subjects. Henry was the third son of Henry the Seventh, and expected his older brother Arthur to succeed his father on the throne. Well-educated, he was fluent in several languages and was prepared for a life in the church. When Arthur died at the age of fifteen, Henry became Prince of Wales. In 1509, at the age of seventeen, he became king and married Catherine of Aragon, his brother’s widow. Both an author and a composer, Henry was commended by Pope Leo X in 1521, for his writings in defence of the church, and received a title he proudly advertised—that of Defender of the Faith (Latin—Fidei Defensor). The king’s pamphlet was entitled “Declaration of the Seven Sacraments Against Martin Luther.” He lost his new title when he broke with Rome, but Parliament restored it to him in 1544. The title continues to be used today, and appears on the coinage of Great Britain and the countries of the Commonwealth.

Henry was obsessed with the need for a male heir to consolidate the power of the Tudor dynasty. His wives were quickly divorced, executed or disposed of as they failed to produce a male heir. Only Jane Seymour had a son who survived infancy, although she died soon after his birth. The Act of Succession of 1536 declared Henry’s children by Jane to be next in the line of succession. Mary and Elizabeth, his older children, were declared illegitimate and excluded from the throne.

The reform of the English church involved more than Henry’s dispute over the divorce issue with the pope. He introduced several statutes in England that dealt with the relationship of the King of England with the pope, and the structure of the Church of England. The English court, headed by Henry, felt that the pope was simply an Italian prince who was intruding in English secular matters. Henry undertook many reform projects, such as suppressing monasteries, during these years, in an attempt to reorganize the Church. In 1534, he instituted the Act of Supremacy, which made him the head of the Church of England. Catholics in England moved quietly into the background. In 1539, the Great Bible was published with Henry’s approval. He made a number of radical changes to traditional religious practices. Images, relics, and shrines were done away with, and Latin rituals were replaced with English. Henry denied the authority of the pope in his realm where it conflicted with his own. Parliament forbade all appeals to Rome, as well as the introduction of Papal Bulls. About this time, Henry and Cranmer were excommunicated.

In 1530, William Tyndale wrote “The Practyse of Prelates” which opposed Henry’s divorce. He fled to the continent, but was arrested in 1535, and put to death for heresy in 1536. Many opposed Henry for his religious policies. The Great Bible, ironically, published with Henry’s approval, and therefore the first authorized version, was prepared by Miles Coverdale, but contained much of the work of Tyndale. As resistance to Henry for any reason was considered treason, a number died for their convictions.

Henry was succeeded by his only surviving son, Edward VI, who was crowned at the age of nine. Henry’s will provided for a Council of Regents who were to help him govern until he reached the age of 18. He was the first ruler of England to be raised as a Protestant. It was under Edward that the Church of England was transformed into a Protestant institution. He took a great interest in religious matters, although only in his early teenage years, and during his reign celibacy was abolished, as was the Mass, and services in English became compulsory. Edward’s tutor was John Cheke, the first Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge. Edward,
The largest congregation was to be found in Geneva, Switzerland. The English Church in Geneva was responsible for the production of the Geneva Bible, the most popular English version of the era, and the most notorious for its Calvinist annotations. William Whittingham supervised the work of creating a new Bible for the exiles and the people of England. The exiles saw the need for a Bible in English to which anyone who wished could have access. He published his New Testament in 1557, and the complete Bible was printed in 1560. Although the exile ended with the death of Queen Mary in 1558, the complete Geneva Bible was not printed in England until 1576. The first Bible printed in Scotland was a Geneva Bible. More than 80 percent of the language of the Bible was the work of William Tyndale, and it was the first Bible to have the entire Old Testament translated from the original Hebrew. Over 150 editions were printed between 1560 and 1644. Both the Bishops’ Bible and the King James Bible owe their existence in part, to the annotations which offended some of those in power in the English Church under both Elizabeth and James. With its verse numbers, commentary, maps, indexes, book introductions and marginal notes, it became the first English study Bible.

When Mary died in 1558, the English Reformation resumed, and most of the reforms under Edward were reinstated in the Elizabethan Religious Settlement. Many of Elizabeth’s councillors and bishops were ex-Educationalists, and many had been in exile in Europe during Mary’s reign. The King James Authorized version of 1611 was instigated by the Puritan elements of the English church with their background in the exile communities of Europe. The feelings of Henry in combating foreign—and especially papal—influences in his kingdom, led to the development of an English Bible which was to help shape the nation for the next 400 years.

Although she was a Catholic, Mary came to the throne with great popular support, as Henry’s eldest child. Despite her belief in the supremacy of the pope, she was now the Supreme Head of the English Church. At the very beginning of her reign, Mary issued an “inhibition” against preaching, reading, or teaching any Scriptures in the Churches, but it was about a year and a half before her campaign of active persecution began. Before the flight of Protestants into exile began, many foreigners who had flocked to England during the reign of Edward, returned to the continent. Mary gathered to her those who would enforce her will, and during her reign more than 300 were burned for their beliefs and their opposition. Many hundreds fled the persecution and we know them as the Marian Exiles. John Foxe, in his “Actes and Monuments” which we call his Book of Martyrs, records for us the names of those who stayed behind and suffered for their beliefs. There was a spirited discussion at the time as to whether or not it was right to flee the country, to avoid persecution. Matthew 10:23 was the exiles favourite text: But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come.

Most exiles fled to the Low Countries, Germany, Switzerland or France. Depending on their circumstances and the reception they received, they either formed their own congregations, or joined with other reformed churches. Frankfurt, Strasbourg, Zurich and Geneva were major centres. Thomas Eton, a London merchant acted as the host of all the exiles, while other merchants provided financial backing. Support on the continent came from such men as the King of Denmark, and the Prince Palatine of the Rhine, as well as reformed religious leaders such as Heinrich Bullinger and Zwingli. Many of the leading exiles were later to become important English Protestant leaders during Elizabeth’s reign. Future archbishops Grindal and Sandys, and men like Miles Coverdale, John Bale, John Knox, William Whittingham and John Jewel came together to work and worship in cities throughout Europe. There were numerous disputes among them over the organization of their services, and the prayer book to be used.

A Protestant is led to his execution

unfortunately, died after reigning only 6 years in power, and Lady Jane Grey, his cousin, was named his heir, in an attempt to prevent England returning to Catholicism. Jane, however, was queen for only nine days before Mary—Henry’s eldest daughter, and Edward’s half-sister—was proclaimed as queen. Cheke held the office of secretary of state for Lady Jane Grey, before Mary threw him into the Tower and confiscated his property. On his release he went to the continent and settled in Strasbourg among the exiles, where he taught Greek for a living. During his time at Cambridge, Cheke began the translation of the New Testament into English. He attempted to eliminate any foreign words, and ended up with a uniquely English scriptural work.

When Mary died in 1558, the English Reformation resumed, and most of the reforms under Edward were reinstated in the Elizabethan Religious Settlement. Many of Elizabeth’s councillors and bishops were ex-Educationalists, and many had been in exile in Europe during Mary’s reign. The King James Authorized version of 1611 was instigated by the Puritan elements of the English church with their background in the exile communities of Europe. The feelings of Henry in combating foreign—and especially papal—influences in his kingdom, led to the development of an English Bible which was to help shape the nation for the next 400 years.
To Germany, Luther was sent; Geneva and France had Calvin given to them; but England received a yet greater Reformer—the Bible. Its Reformation was more immediate and direct, no great individuality being interposed between it and the source of Divine knowledge. Luther had given Germany his Thesis; Calvin had given to France the Institutes; but to England was given the Word of God. Within the sea-girt isle, in prospect of the storms that were to devastate the outer world, was placed this Divine Light—the world’s Lamp—surely a blessed augury of what England’s function was to be in days to come...

Wylie: History of Protestantism