

# The Berean Ecclesial News

*A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial welfare, with the object of providing Ecclesial news, exhortations, articles and information of fraternal interest to the Brotherhood. Upholding the Truth since 1923.*

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God Willing, The Berean Ecclesial News will be published monthly as an avenue of providing information of Ecclesial interest to the Brotherhood. Ecclesial news and correspondence, Fraternal Gathering notices, special activities and up building exhortations are welcome. This is an effort to up build and prepare us in heart and mind for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

## Ecclesial News

**MISIKHU, Kenya, S.S. 8:30 am; Memorial, 10:30 am; New Life Class, 3pm; Lecture, Wed 3pm; Bible Study, Fri 3pm in homes; First Principles Class, Sat 3pm. Meeting at the home of Bro. and Sis. Shawn & Cynthia Tyler, Nakalira; Bro. Shawn Tyler, PO Box 180, Misikhu, Kenya, East Africa**

Hail, O favored Brethren and Sisters of Christ, the Lord is with you,

Since our previous news, we have had several visitors in letter form! These visitors together with two visits from our Bro John Simiyu, from Mayanja, have left us with much spiritual balance diet food encompassing three main areas of ecclesial service, (i.e. edifying the membership, seeking the lost and helping the needy).

Our letter-visitors included Brethren Sid Jones, and Ed Truelove, from the Richard Ecclesia, Bro. and Sis. Jerry and Kitty Connolly from Lampasas, Bro. Epaphras Wekati from Kimikungi, Sis. Kaye Yuen from Vancouver and of course the many Brethren we can never forget, who visited us regularly via their articles and exhortations in 'The Berean Ecclesial News Magazine.' We extract much from these visitors to help in our service and preparation for our Lord Jesus Christ. Brother John Simiyu especially after leading our class on two occasions on the book of Daniel (Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks first, and 4<sup>th</sup> Beast of Daniel and John's Beast afterwards) left us with a deep desire to study the other subjects in the book.

On the morning of the New Year, January 1<sup>55</sup>, 2000, we witnessed the baptisms of **Moses Wafula, Boaz Wafula and Eliud Simiyu** who had been under instruction for some time and after their giving of a good confession of the Faith. We welcome, pray and diligently encourage our new Brethren to walk the narrow path, and like King Josiah, not turn aside to the right hand or to the left and do what is right in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 22:2). These two extremes of evil are very common in the Brotherhood just as during the first coming of the Lord (depicted by Pharisees – right leaning – adding for doctrines the commandments of men and Sadducees – left leaning – lax and tolerating evil). And as the Lord after praying the third time in Gethsemane, he found them sleeping, *'for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer him.'* Surely the Lord is near and if we, after examining ourselves with the Spiritual Sword, are found in that class of those whose eyes are heavy with sleep, the question automatically and with force rests on us *"Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come; Rise, let us be going."*

Hoping to meet all of you in Zion, Bro. Shawn Tyler

## Ecclesial Correspondence

To My Brethren and Sisters,

Words cannot express how thankful we are for all the cards, letters, phone calls, flowers, and food we have received since Dottye found out she had cancer. We are humbled to realize there is so much love toward us and it has really helped.

82 We, like most Christadelphians, have had our trials in this life such as work, children, parents, and ecclesial problem's. We thought many of these were hard, especially the ecclesia problems we had lately, but this trial knocked us off our feet.

Sis. Susan Garvey sent us an e-mail that said Bro. Paul felt like someone got a 2x4 and knocked him off his feet to his knees, this is exactly how I felt. This trial was like when Satan told God to touch Job's flesh. After being married 37 years I felt we were one flesh. "They twain shall be one flesh".

What happened to Dottye happened to me also. Suddenly the things I thought were important were not, the only thing that was important was the Truth and Dottye getting better. Our greatest support has been from Bro. Gary and Sis. Brenda Smith and Bro. Paul and Sis. Susan Garvey, who both had a hard road ahead of them. They have hard trials themselves and it reminds us of Jesus who was tempted in all points like his brethren. He knows our pain and sorrow because He has been there being of our nature. Sis. Susan had her cup half full even though she had great trials. I always tended to have my cup half empty, so she has been a great lesson to us of how a real Christadelphian should be. May God bless her at the resurrection and Paul and his family now as He alone can. When you get right down to the bottom of the matter it is all up to God for the outcome of all our trials, He is our rock we lean on. One thing this trial really did was to show us what real Christadelphians are. They are not just people that believe certain doctrines but those that show love for their brethren. To love God with our whole heart, soul and mind and our neighbor as ourselves, on these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets.

An example of this was on Dottye's birthday. She learned on her birthday that she had cancer in her lymph nodes, this was quite a letdown to both of us, but that day Bro. & Sis. Raymond Connolly called her on the phone and sang "happy birthday" to her to try to cheer her up. This is the same as when Jesus said if a disciple gave someone a cup of cold water in His name they would not lose their reward. This cheered her up to know how much brethren and sisters care. My heart was touched also by receiving cards, letters, phone calls flowers and food from those that left us in fellowship in the past 3 years.

When all is said and done, it is all up to God whether Dottye, Susan and Gary get better and stay that way, but this we know, He does hear our prayers. I remember years ago in Lampasas when Bro. Lee Smith had an accident we were asked to pray a special prayer for him. Bro. Pat Cassidy was asked to offer the prayer. I was glad they ask him, instead of me, because I remembered the words that the prayer of a righteous man avails much as in the case of Elijah, God heard our prayer and Bro. Lee got better. Thanks again for all the love shown to both of us in our trial. Our prayer is that Jesus will come soon to set up God's kingdom and deliver us from this veil of tears, even so come Lord Jesus.

With love in the truth, Bro. Charles & Sis. Dottye Banta

P.S. Since I wrote this, I learned of Sis. Susan's falling asleep in Christ on April 9th. Her trials and pain are over and the next conscious moment will be when she is raised on the glorious resurrection morning. It breaks our heart because we miss her and we ask the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to bless Paul, Sara, Jonathan, Joshua and Andrew and comfort them as He alone can. God bless and comfort you my brother.

## Idle Words

*"Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."*

This teaching of Christ in Matt. 12:36-37 focuses our attention on that little but powerful member, the tongue. The thought of v.37 is put to us in different words in Prov. 18:21 — *"death and life are in the power of the tongue."* Can there be any doubt about the importance of giving diligent attention to the way the tongue is used? It is not a question of good manners or social grace, but a question of obedience to God, and therefore a question of life or death.

Christ made special mention of *"idle"* words. Just what did he mean? The following is offered as one attempt to answer this question, and to review the lofty goals toward which it is critical that our efforts be directed.

The word *"idle"* is an accurate translation of the original Greek, which means *"inactive"* or *"unemployed."* The same word is used in the parable of Matt. 20:1-16, where we read of *"laborers ... standing idle;"* their energies were being wasted, rather than being employed in the vineyard. Idle words are like idle people; they are unemployed - that is, unemployed in the things of the Spirit; words with no productive function in the Lord's vineyard; words which are out of place in a life dedicated to the service of God. How do we stand on the matter of idle words? Honest answers to questions such as those following should help us to know.

Do we find it easier or more pleasant to serve the creature by talking about the things of the flesh than to serve the Creator by talking about the things of the Spirit? *"They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."* (Rom. 8:5)

Do we ever find ourselves wandering into idle talk simply because we talk too much? *"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few ... a fool's voice is known by multitude of words"* (Eccl. 5:2-3).

Are we ever guilty of trying to justify some form of *"foolish talking"* (which is *"not convenient,"* that is, not fit or becoming, not suited to our position and purpose in life) on the plea that we need moments of *"fleshly fun"* in order to be well-balanced? Paul wrote concerning *"foolish talking,"* *"let it not be ONCE named among you."* (Eph. 5:3-4)

84 Do we ever engage in idle talk just because everyone else is so engaged? Do we fear that others may take exception to our words if we speak according to the Spirit? Are we afraid of being *"different"* or of being called *"extreme"* if we refuse to join the group in its fleshly conversation? Fitting in with the group will

not save us in the day of judgment, "for many be called, but few chosen." (Matt. 20:16)

Words that will have a place in the Lord's vineyard require continual, diligent, prayerful thought and preparation; without this we will drift along on the natural, careless path to destruction. And let us never deceive ourselves - the required thought and preparation must be based upon the things of the Spirit, not the things of the flesh.

We may do some very thoughtful conversing, but if it is the mind of the flesh that is doing the thinking, the spiritual mind is idle. And no matter how careful the fleshly mind may be to make all that is said very nice and proper and pleasing according to the wisdom of men, the expressions of the mind of the flesh will nevertheless be idle and evil in the sight of God, having no place in the vineyard. Such words may sound very good on the surface, but underneath they are full of corruption (such as "flattery" or "smooth things"). What is required is not fleshly thought and preparation but spiritual.

Each individual must honestly search his own heart and mind - without rationalizing. In examining what we say, let us answer some more questions. Is this talk a product of the thinking of the spiritual mind? Does it have some legitimate purpose in God's work? Is it giving honor and glory to God? Can we conscientiously ask God's blessing upon our activity as we speak these words? Would we want Christ to stand beside us and listen? Or is this instead just idle talk, a product of the mind of the flesh? None of us would claim that he or she does not at times give utterance to idle words -- but we should, we must, be striving diligently to overcome.

We might be inclined to say that there are so many things to talk about that surely our words cannot always be expected to have a spiritual purpose. But that is the reasoning of the flesh. We have made a covenant with God to give Him our ALL - to love and serve Him with our whole hearts and minds and lives. And this includes every thought and every word. Paul wrote of "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5); can there be any valid exception to this rule in any aspect of our lives?

However, we do need to be sure that we consider the subject in a realistic, practical fashion. What is needed is not a sterile life of no conversation for fear of saying something wrong, but a positive, outgoing life in which real efforts are made to bring all the thoughts, and the words that go with them, ever closer to the perfect obedience of Christ. There are many situations calling for wholesome thoughts and words that are not directly connected with specifically spiritual subjects. The list is lengthy: duties at home and at other work outside the home, raising and educating children, life in the classroom, admiring and learning 85

about the marvels of creation, dealing with financial matters and the multitude of other temporal affairs of mortality, simple friendly conversation at home and abroad, etc., etc., etc. But in every single situation in which we find ourselves, without exception, our goal should always be to see to it that our motive, purpose, and manner of speaking ARE spiritual - to serve God. If such is not the case, then our words are idle. And we need to squarely face another question: how many times are there in our daily affairs when the subject matter could and should be specifically spiritual, but the appeal of temporal things unnecessarily rules the moment? *"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"* (Matt. 12:34).

Here is another problem that arises. Sometimes we are confronted with difficult, unexpected situations that call upon us to speak quickly, and if some of the words we utter under such circumstances turn out to be improper or spiritually useless, we may excuse ourselves by saying that we just "didn't have time to think." The teaching of Christ leaves no room for excuses: *"a good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things"* (Matt. 12:35). If our hearts are truly full of the things of the Spirit we will speak according to the Spirit with a motive, purpose, and manner of speaking dedicated always to serving God. We ought to take very seriously the responsibility which is ours to endeavor to speak "as the oracles of God" as Peter admonishes (1 Pet.4:11).

We have all encountered situations that surprised us, that caught us unprepared or at least uncertain as to how best to proceed. The wise course at such times may well be to graciously retreat to silence on the matter rather than take the chance of speaking words of harm or untruth. Any situation like this should be welcomed as a lesson in the classroom of life, and a stimulus to thought, study, seeking advice, etc., that we might be better prepared the next time.

Rather than discouraging personal expression in words, this exhortation is an attempt to encourage continual preparation of the heart and mind, so that what is spoken will not be idle. If the water which issues from our tongues is bitter and lacking in the things of the Spirit, then the fountain - the heart - must be bitter and lacking in spiritual preparation. Knowing what to say and when to say it is a very critical matter, for "death and life are in the power of the tongue." It is a matter that requires continual, diligent, prayerful thought and preparation, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." And when, in this process of preparation, we consider Christ's teaching concerning "idle" words, it may be very helpful to keep in mind a mental picture of laborers standing idle in the marketplace, their energies being wasted rather than being employed in the Lord's vineyard.

*Bro. David Burnett*

# The Condition of the Mortal Jews During the Millenium

This morning our bro. Jerry showed us the condition of the earth, on a worldwide scale, how it will be blessed in so many ways. But to concentrate on the subject before us, we have to turn our minds narrowly; we have to have a very small field of vision, because the Jews have a very unique position in the Kingdom Age. They have the same blessings, but on a much grander scale.

Our subject under consideration – The Mortal Jews in the Kingdom Age – may be, to our surprise, one of the more poorly understood subjects of all Christian doctrines. On the surface, as Christadelphians, we might think this would be one of the best-understood subjects. We are all aware of the powerful words of Jesus, which he spoke to the woman at the well. For, he said, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews." (John 4:22)

There are many reasons why a good understanding of this subject may escape one's attention: one might be one's own personal, natural bias toward the future. That bias is, perhaps, to be not too concerned about the matter. It may be easy to have the attitude toward the mortals in the kingdom – Jews and Gentiles alike – of second class citizens as compared to us who will be kings and priests. We may wrongly assume they will have to be concerned with us. Another reason, we may not fully appreciate the Jews of the Kingdom, is because of something that goes on around us every day (that can bend one's thinking if we're not paying particular attention) and that is this world's constant anti-Semitism. We may think anti-Semitism only happens in other countries (where the Jews are persecuted), after all, the-U.S. is a country that believes in "liberty and justice for all". If we believe that, we are completely in the dark as to how people in this country generally view the Jews.

For example, the so-called Christian churches, in direct opposition to all Scriptural passages concerning the re-gathering of the Jews to their land, at first denied it was to happen. Now that it has happened (only in part, of course) they say it has nothing to do with the Gospel. Today, if someone wants to say something nice about a Jew, they may actually capitulate and say, "Well, even Jesus was a Jew." The thinking should be, "Of course Jesus was a Jew. What could be grander?"

The world press constantly derides Israel for not working out its differences with its neighbors. I can remember, as a young boy, watching news reports of Jewish families – men, women, and children – trying to harvest their crops while the Arabs (with gun placements on the hills) surrounded them, shelling and terrorizing them at will. And the Jews normally responded in a limited way.

Then, in 1967, all of Israel's surrounding enemies attacked all at once, with total surprise and overwhelming forces. They attempted to push Israel into the sea. In the greatest military upset in modern history, Israel counter attacked, and in just six days drove her enemies back beyond their former borders.

They took the Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula, and the West Bank. They have enjoyed relative peace for decades. But now the world wants them to give up all that land – for the sake of peace. They say, "Why not give up a little land for peace ... perhaps those hills over there." This, of course, was another David and Goliath type victory for Israel – obviously directed by the hand of God.

It also gives us a modern day insight into the events awaiting the Jews on a much larger scale at the time of the end. Although God still fights their battles, the Jews have become complete Atheists. They have returned to their land in complete ignorance of the true God of Israel, and their true Messiah. The prophets of Israel tell us this is all about to change.

As we think about the condition of the mortal Jews during the millennium, when we read the Scriptures, it may be easy to think that because we are adopted Jews all the future blessings regarding the Jews always applies to us as well; but, this is not so. David, in the Psalms, often speaks of how God has blessed and will bless Israel as a nation – her people and children particularly. David speaks of this in Psa. 147, saying, *"The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.... Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders and filleth thee with the finest of wheat. He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them."*

Those of us in Christ share a great unity in the Hope of Israel with the Jews. As Paul tells us in Gal. 3:26-29: *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

88 But there is a great contrast with the oneness that exists with those of the first resurrection (ourselves) and those of the second during their mortal lifetime. During the Kingdom Age, the Jews and Gentiles will **not** be equal at all. The Jews and their land and nation will be superior in every way. In Acts

*first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem" "Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make their hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth." (Micah 4:6-8; 11-13)*

Jeremiah and Zechariah spoke of Israel the same way — as God's military presence in the earth, saying, *"Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms:"* (Jer. 51:20) *"Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee; When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man. And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south."* (Zech.9:12-14)

Now we may wonder why God will use a Saint-led natural Israeli army to conquer the world. Why not have a few all-powerful saints just force it into immediate submission? We find that God carries out His will through a process of developments where natural man is intimately involved. God will turn the world to the worship of Himself by means of persuasion. They must learn to serve God in love: fear cannot be their only motivation, and free will cannot be abolished. It must be done in such a manner that no flesh shall glory in God's presence.

Two things must happen simultaneously: Israel must have victory over her enemies, and the Jews must return to their land in a humbled condition. The Jewish people will be assembled and brought back to Israel after the manner of their exodus from Egypt. They return an organized, obedient people — prepared to be an example to the world.

Zephaniah testifies to this in chapter 3, verses 18-20. *"I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame."* What a powerful statement! We have seen how they have been mistreated throughout the world; then to have praise in those lands... *"At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD."*

Once the Gentile nations of the earth have been defeated, they will realize they have backed the wrong cause. Jeremiah says, "...the *Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.*" (Jer. 16:19) The nations of the world will, then, have a change of heart – just as Israel will.

Zechariah informs us that the nations will willingly come to Jerusalem, to entreat the God of Israel. They will do so by taking hold of the skirt of a Jew. It is pictorial language of the Gentiles bowing to the Jews and asking, "May we go with you?" *"Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."*

When we come to the boundaries of Israel, we find that as a nation they will be much broader than they are today. The land will span the area from the northeast corner of the Mediterranean Sea, southward to the Sinai Peninsula, west from the River Nile in Egypt, eastward to the Euphrates. Situated in the midst of the tribes, lies an area called the Holy Oblation. It contains the Temple itself, where the Levites (natural Jews) will administer to the Lord in a two-fold capacity.

These mortal priests operate on behalf of the mortal people of the earth. The Levites are, and will be, a testimony of one of God's principles we all must learn: Responsibilities we undertake cannot be taken lightly. Originally, the Levites were to be the spiritual leaders of the nation; instead, they were often the first to lead the people astray. As a result, the Levites will be relegated to a lower position of slaying the sacrifices, although they will have other duties. They will have to change their garments – to go into the Temple. These garments will be of linen and will be for glory and beauty. The Levites fell from grace; but, they will be elevated again to positions in the Temple service. This will, however, be of a lower status than before.

These future events were prophesied through an allegory at the time of Christ's arrest. Jesus was arrested by a band of men directed by the chief priests. We see how this relates to the future position of the Levites. When Jesus identifies himself to the arresting band, they (like the Levites will) fell down before him. The Levites had refused to believe Jesus was the Messiah. In like manner, when Steven was killed, they stopped their ears and ran upon him ... they wouldn't listen.

92 Under the Law of Moses, blood was put upon the right ear of the priest to symbolize understanding. When they failed to recognize Jesus, Peter severed the right ear of Malchus – the servant of the high priest. Malchus means kingly. Therefore, the allegory goes, we see the royal authority of the Levites. It was taken from them, for no priest with a blemish was permitted to serve. But Jesus chose to exercise compassion on Malchus and heals his ear. This

demonstrated the Levites will be restored to the priesthood, although in the capacity of servants.

Although servants to the immortals, the Levites will still be in positions of high authority to the other mortals. Ezekiel 44:23-24 lists some of the important duties they will perform: *"And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths."*

The Queen of Sheba visited the nation of Israel when Solomon reigned in peace. She witnessed a type of the Kingdom that is to come. She noticed (then) what will prove to be one of the greatest attributes of the Kingdom of God. The people will rejoice in their work. It will not be merely mechanical service. What is said of Solomon, will certainly be said even more so of Jesus. She said, *"Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom."*

We often think of Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords, or as the ruler of the whole earth. Although this will be exactly right, we might easily overlook that he is just and foremost King of the Jews- the Jews he will come to deliver. All the other nations, he will conquer. Jesus will reign in Jerusalem, and the Jews, therefore, are his immediate subjects. From the Jewish point of view, he is an actual relative — as they said to David, "Thou art our bone and our flesh." To the Jews, he will be the long-looked for Son of David: by the Gentiles, he will be considered the Son of man — the Redeemer of the whole earth.

Throughout the entire history of the earth, every nation which has come and gone (including the nations that exist today) have tried, or are trying, every different form of government imaginable; only to find they all eventually fail. Man cannot successfully rule himself. Because greed, special interests, and aggrandizement of its leaders (no matter what system is employed) eventually every nation will be brought to ruin. Only a Theocracy - a government by God, dedicated to the furtherance of Yahweh's honor and glory by its leaders and subjects will bring unending prosperity.

The Kingdom of God will produce, for the natural Jew, a relationship with Christ and the Saints that will be desired by every nation of the world. Blessed by God, Israel will be the most favored nation on earth. As the nations of the earth come up to Jerusalem, they will (like the Queen of Sheba) take home with them wonderful stories of Israel. As these reports filter back to countries devastated by a world war (encouraged by the Saints), they will want to see 93

the beauty of holiness in Israel. Then the Gentile nations will willingly give up their cultures, languages, and systems of religion to embrace the Hope of Israel.

As Jeremiah said, "... *Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee....*" Instead of being looked down upon, Jewish companionship will be cherished; for they have the privilege of welcoming all people to the Capitol of the world throughout the millennium.

*Bro. John Phillips*

## **As Ye See The Day Approaching**

Events in the Middle East, Russia and Uganda are the focus of this month's article. Events such as these indicate that the day of Christ's second coming cannot be far off in time. We are, in light of rapidly developing situations and conditions, heading inexorably toward a ***time of trouble such as has never been since there has been a nation upon earth.*** (Dan. 12:1) Israel is at the vortex of the developing crisis. It is situated in Palestine on the natural land bridge between Africa, Asia and Europe. Jerusalem has been, as it were, a bone of contention between warring factions down through its long and troubled history and has changed hands many times through invasion. The city and land of Israel has been considered sacred to Jew, Christian and Moslem. It is written of the city in the prophecy of Zechariah in his 12th chapter at verses 2 and 3: ***"Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it."***

The day is rapidly approaching when this, as well as the remainder of the prophecy shall be completely fulfilled. Already, however, in a preliminary sense, the city has indeed been a ***"cup of trembling"*** and a ***"burdensome stone"*** to those meddling and concerning themselves with it. We see this especially since 1948 through the wars waged upon Israel by its surrounding neighbors. They not only have been humiliated in defeat several times by Israel, but have spent and have had to continue to spend vast sums to maintain their armies and weaponry in a constant state of readiness and continual upgrade. Tremendous amounts of money have also been spent on diplomatic efforts to bring about peace. The problems between the Israelis and their surrounding neighbors have been and continue to be extremely complex and thorny; and have (for the most part) been unresolved.

94 Diplomats last month were disappointed when the talks between US President, Bill Clinton and Syrian President, Hafes Assad failed at the Geneva

Summit. Talks between Israel and Syria had broken down in January and this most recent attempt has failed to get them back on track. Syria is demanding the return of all the land in the Golan captured in the June '67, Six Day War before any kind of a peace treaty can be signed with Israel. Not only is the Golan Heights of strategic importance militarily, but it is the source of the Banyas Springs. The Banyas Springs and river flow into the Jordan: and the Jordan, in turn, flows into the Sea of Galilee. Israel gets nearly one third of its water supply from the Sea of Galilee. The other two thirds of its water supply come from an underground aquifer under the West Bank. That water then flows under Israel proper. Israeli wells siphon off eighty percent of that take. The average Israeli consumes four times as much water as the average Palestinian. Clearly, water is a real source of strife between the warring factions and has become a political and military weapon. The Middle East is experiencing the worst drought in six decades. The Banyas (normally flowing strongly during this time of year) is calm. The Sea of Galilee is at dangerously low levels. This past year agricultural water usage was cut by forty percent in Israel. If President Assad got his full request, he would be again in control of the whole of the Golan Heights, as well as have access again to the Northeastern shores of the Sea of Galilee. He would then be in control of almost all of the sources of water flowing into that vital body of water. The water problems are truly severe and have the potential to bring on war.

Syria has always been an implacable foe to Israel, both past and present. We know this from the historical record of scripture. Currently Syria has the most medium range ballistic missiles of any country in the Middle East. They are capable of inflicting terrible damage upon Israel, as they have deployed chemical weapons (CW's) such as Sarin and VX into their military arsenals, meaning they are ready for use in the event of conflict. Armed chemical weapons this close to Israel are a seriously dangerous threat! Sarin is a colorless and odorless gas. Only 0.5 milligram is a lethal dosage for an adult! It is 26 times more deadly than cyanide gas and 20 times more lethal than potassium cyanide! Remember the deadly sarin terrorist attack by the sect in Japan in the Tokyo subway system? Eleven died and more than 5,500 were injured. The nerve agent VX is approximately ten-fold more deadly than sarin.

Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya and Syria either are developing or have stockpiled, deployed or have used chemical weapons. Tiny Israel - the size of New Jersey - is surrounded with these deadly enemies. The formerly weak nations of the world are now stating that they are strong, in fulfillment of Joel 3:10. These countries (known as third world or developing countries) formerly could not project their political thinking or military power into or upon the developed or industrialized nations (spoken of as first world nations). However, that is now rapidly changing. Nations such as North Korea and formerly technologically backward China are now flexing new muscle, having acquired missile technology. This is what has happened in the Middle East.

Proliferation of ballistic missiles is greatly increasing the likelihood of deadly chemical, biological and perhaps even nuclear war. What is even more frightening is the spread of cruise missile technology. There are nineteen countries that currently produce cruise missiles and fifty-four that have some type of cruise missiles in their arsenals! These missiles carry generally smaller warheads than the ballistic missiles, but are far more accurate and are much less expensive to build. This makes them more easily attainable.

Israel is not without its defenses, though. Estimates run anywhere from 100 to 200 nuclear weapons in their arsenal. One reliable analyst concludes that Israel's nuclear arsenal contains as many as 400 nuclear and thermonuclear weapons. Israel also has the ability to produce large quantities of chemical and biological weapons. In speaking of his intention to withdraw from Lebanon by July, Ehud Barak (Israel's Prim Minister) said: ***"I don't think there's an immediate danger of any sort of conflagration. We are deploying on the border and we will know how to defend ourselves. Israel is the strongest country in the region, and I doubt whether any party would want to consider DARE TAKING US ON MILITARILY TODAY. I don't think we can expect fa conflagration.*"**

In light of the fact that the weak nations are arming themselves to the teeth (and many of them with weapons of mass destruction); can we not see that the day is rapidly approaching. It is stated in the scripture: ***"When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory."*** Clearly Zion has been built up. The people have returned to the land in unbelief, as the scriptures show they would. They have gotten silver and gold, cattle and goods. They are dwelling (they think) securely. We must be getting very close to the time when the Russian Gog will come onto the scene and will think the evil thought in his mind, also observing that Israel dwells securely. Of course, we are not quite there yet. However, we must be on our guard. Things can move very quickly, as they often do with lightning velocity. We know not at just what point the Master will appear.

Russia must recover to some extent from the abysmal depths to which it has sunk after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The past ten years have been very difficult on the Russian people, financially, socially, politically and psychologically. Vladimir Putin was elected President of the Russian Federation on March 26th, receiving 53 percent of the vote. He will be inaugurated on May 7th into the top Kremlin job. He has made this meteoric rise to power in just nine months. He was appointed Prime Minister by Yeltsin before he resigned due to failing health. Putin has enjoyed popularity because of his tough stance in Chechnya. He is young - only forty-seven! That is very young by Russian standards for the man at the top. He wants to lead Russia back to super-power status and to the glory it enjoyed in the old days of empire. Is he the man who will do the things recorded in Ezekiel chapters 38 96 and 39?

Only time will tell. We must be vigilant and astute to our responsibilities, as we know not the day nor the hour of Christ's return.

Meanwhile, we see the same sad fleecing and destruction of ignorant and vulnerable people in the mass murders committed by leaders of a cult in Uganda. The cult was of the doomsday variety, named The Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God. In all, 924 died at the hands of the leaders. Five hundred and thirty had been sealed in the cult's chapel and burned to death. The others were found at various locations, many having been strangled or stabbed to death. These leaders were clearly wolves in sheep's clothing. The cultists had been deceived by their leaders into thinking that the world was to have ended as of December 31, 1999. The leaders committed these awful acts after members had demanded restoration of property surrendered in order to join the movement.

*How thankful we should be, Brethren and Sisters, that we have been given an accurate understanding of the Truth as it is in Jesus Christ our Lord Let us hold fast the profession of the faith unto the day of his coming.*

*Bro. David VanPelt*

## **THOUGHTS GLEANED BY THE WAY**

### **By a Wayfarer**

*"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil"  
(1 Timothy 6:9-10).*

Let us note here that the apostle is not speaking of the effect of the possession of riches, but the effect of the pursuit of riches. The possession of great riches, as Jesus taught, is an almost certain bar to faithful service to God.

But Paul is speaking of that desire for wealth and the love of money which may dominate the life of a person whether they actually possess it or not. It is a craving for money and the things money can buy, the pursuit of which may occupy the time, energy, and affections of the disciple as to dwarf, and even to destroy his interest in divine things, causing him to *"err from the faith."*

*"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon,"* is just as true today as when spoken by the Lord. How much idleness in the Lord's vineyard; how much lack of interest in the study of the truth; how much carelessness and unconcern about preserving the Truth in its purity; how much spiritual weakness in general is attributable to a greater desire for material wealth than for the true riches!

When anyone loves the Truth will all his heart, loves it because it is the word of God, he suits his actions to his words and is willing and ready to make any sacrifice – stand alone, or even die, rather than make one compromise with error or surrender to the influences, the "good words and fair speeches," of those who would corrupt the faith.

The Truth to such an one is a precious gem, a priceless treasure which he guards jealously, lest he lose it or allow it to become stained or marred by careless handling. Any other attitude, whatever the excuse for doing otherwise, is in itself evidence of shallow soil and weak faith, or the presence of the briars and thorns of fleshly influences having a stronger hold upon one than the Truth of the gospel. And the test is in the actions, not in the professions of those who claim to be true disciples of Him who chose us to be his soldiers.

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"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom 15:4).

Divine principles never change because they are founded upon the wisdom of the eternal and unchanging Creator of all things. Therefore, good is good and bad is bad in every age and generation. Changing human thought and customs do not alter divine principles. The teaching of Jesus Christ and his apostles was based upon the teaching of divine principles "written aforetime" in the Old Testament.

The Word of God "liveth and abideth forever;" unchanging and unvarying, it has been and still is, the only reliable source of information in every age on what is right and what is wrong; what is moral and what is immoral; what will lead to eternal life and that which leads to eternal death. Man can neither change it nor add to it, neither depart from its teaching except at his own peril.

It teaches us patience and gives us comfort and hope that we in these latter days can, by living in accordance with these same age-old principles, reap the same reward promised to Abraham and all the ancient worthies whose salvation have been made sure.

\* \* \* \* \*

*"Ye shall know them by their fruits"* – Jesus.

When any person expresses a firm conviction in any doctrine or course of conduct, it is right and proper that his word be accepted as it was expressed. But, having been put to the test, and one fails to abide by such convictions; such failure to do so cannot be harmonized with honesty, sincerity, and courage of convictions. There is a wide difference between one who says and does, and one who says and does not.

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chapter 17, the believers were referred to as *"those that have turned the world upside down"*.

The Jews, as a nation, have been under duress ever since they became a nation. We live in a country where there is relative peace, and it's hard for us to realize how the Jews have been so persecuted for thousands of years. They were driven from their land for their disobedience, but they have also been looked down on and abused by practically every nation to which they fled. They are yet to face one final conflict, when the Russian armies invade and conquer their land. Until Christ and the Saints come to their defense, they will have no other hope of survival. When all hope seems lost, they will come to realize and recognize that it is Jesus who has come to defend them, and drive the invaders from their land.

As a nation, they will be overcome with sorrow and regret for having rejected Jesus as their Messiah. There will be a great national mourning as they do put their trust in him and are given a heart of flesh for their hearts of stone. Zechariah describes this great event this way: (Zech. 12:7-11) *"The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom; they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem..."*

When Israel repents, although still mortal, they will live righteously under the umbrella of the rulership of Jesus. They will, therefore, receive the blessings promised them long before in Deut. Chapter 28. To the other nations of the earth, it will be as if the world has been turned upside down. The list of blessings in Deut. 28 begins with this powerful declaration: "... *The LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth...*" and goes on to say they will be blessed in all aspects of life. We can compare it with today, for it says, *"blessed in the city and in the field"* Both city and country will rebound to the glory of God, instead of what we see of urban and rural squalor and destitute people. *"Blessed shall be the fruit of their body..."* What a contrast to today, when birth defects and other problems are so rampant. The Jews will be blessed with an abundance of fruits, flocks, and store-houses. Their whole economy will be blessed when they go out and when they come in. *"The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way and flee before thee seven ways. The 89*

*LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his way. And all the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath: ..."* All these blessings are conditional, but when Israel accepts and serves Christ, the conditions will have been met.

The beautiful picture of Israel, spoken by Zechariah in chapter 8, will be a reality. *"Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? Saith the LORD of hosts. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness."*

Zechariah's picture of peace is, of course, tempered by sorrow. As we see at the beginning of the time of peace for Jerusalem, there is only a remnant of Jews left who have survived the Russian attack. We also see the Jews brought back from the east and west; from all over the world. And we know this is to be a refining process for them, as they fight their way back to Israel.

The Prophets tell us how Christ and the Saints develop this small remnant of Jews into an increasingly powerful, natural army. Isaiah says, *"A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time."* (Isa. 60:22) And Micah tells us, *"In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, O tower of the flock, 90 the strong hold of the daughter. of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the*

In contending earnestly for the faith, let us keep in mind that discouragement and disappointment will often be our lot. For, the stronger we set forth truth, the stronger and more vigorous will be the opposition from those who hate the truth and love pleasing lies; and the more vigorous and active we are in exposing error, the more we will be hated and despised by those who are seeking to teach or conceal error. The most hated of all men were the greatest preachers of truth and the most outspoken expositors of error – Jesus and his apostles.

The only way we can make the Truth pleasing to some people is to water it down and mix it with flesh-pleasing ideas. But in doing this, we would not be contending earnestly for the faith.

*Bro. Oscar Beauchamp*

## Essential To Effectual Prayer

*"And when ye stand praying, FORGIVE, if have ought against any; THAT your Father also may forgive you."*

There is a form of forgiveness – cold, patronizing and self-righteous – that is worse than no forgiveness at all.

True forgiveness, as Jesus makes clear, is that kind we ourselves hope to get from God. It is not a matter of writing off the offense, and letting the barrier remain – unless WE are quite content to be so treated by God.

There is a proud and evil human saying – *"I forgive, but I do not forget,"*

....a selfish attitude that seeks the personal gratification of granting forgiveness without assuming any of its humility or burden. Here again – would we ask Him to blot out our failures from His memory?

Speaking of the fate of the unmerciful debtor, Jesus says (Matt. 18:35)

*"SO LIKEWISE shall my Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother. " FROM YOUR HEARTS — there is the key. We must get resentment and irritation clean out of our hearts, or they will poison us and bring us down to death."*

*Bro. Gilbert Growcott*

## FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

**CANTON SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM.....May 21, 2000**

Bro. Don Miller, 6695 Carriage Lane, N.Canton, OH 44721, 330-494-7717

**LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING .....June 9 thru 11, 2000**

Bro. Rusty Stephen, HC3 Box 16A, Lampasas, TX 76550,,512-556-6771

**HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING .....July 24 thru 30, 2000**

Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt. 1 Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, 915-985-3868

**CANTON BAYLOR BEACH PICNIC .....August 26 & 27, 2000**

Bro. Don Miller, 6695 Carriage Lane, N.Canton, OH 44721, 330-494-7717

**CANTON FRATERNAL GATHERING.....October 7 & 8, 2000**

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Bro. Beryl Snyder, 4095 Prosway SW, Massillon, OH 44646, 330-837-1956

## WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

*"...over Edom will I cast out my shoe..." (Psa. 60:8)*

What does God mean when He states " ...I will cast out my shoe...", and why would He do that over Edom, specifically? Even though the exact meaning of this phrase is open to speculation, the message conveyed is very clear.

First of all, we must examine the symbolic use of shoes in the scriptures. To go barefoot was a sign of distress and humiliation—thus David left Jerusalem when he fled from Absalom (2Sam. 15:30). When Ezekiel was directed to cease his mourning, he was told to put on his shoes (Ezek 24:17). *Lack* of shoes also signified a man who had sold everything - a spendthrift and a bankrupt man. In this way, the man who refused to marry his brother's childless widow was considered a worthless fellow, *"His name shall be called in Israel, the house of him that hath his shoe loosed"* (Deut. 25:10).

One who possessed sandals or shoes used them to symbolize his prosperity. We see this in Ruth 4:7, *"Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel."* The right to tread the soil belonged only to the owner of it, and hence the transfer of a sandal was a very appropriate representation of the transfer of property. So, In Psalms 60 when God states that, *"...Over Edom will I cast out my shoe..."*, He is stating that He will transfer this property—Edom - to Himself.

Others see another symbolic use of the shoe in this verse. When Joshua took the kings of the land he had his captains place their feet on the necks of those conquered (Jos. 10:24). Some see God casting His shoe over the land of Edom in this light; i.e., conquering and taking position.

Whichever way we understand the "shoe" reference, we see that it signifies victory and power; possession, and control.

But what of the reference to casting the shoe over Edom, specifically? From their birth – no, before they were even born, God said, *"Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated"* (Romans 9:9). The enmity that existed between these two brothers is perpetual. It will only end with the destruction of Esau, *his land (i.e., Edom)*, and all he stands for.

Ezekiel 35:3-4 states, *"And say unto it, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate. I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate, and thou shalt know that I am the LORD."*

When we think of the kingdom age we think of the wilderness blooming and the waste places reclaimed. Let us never forget the other side of the picture. The land of Edom is not to share in this blessing but will be an example of those who, like Esau, turned from God to do his own thing.

*"Thus saith the Lord GOD; When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate. As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and they shall know that I am the LORD"* (Eze. 35:14-15).

Once again brethren and sisters we are given the clear choice. We can live like Esau and suffer his end, or live like Jacob and obtain the reward with him.

