

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.

VOL. 4, NO. 1

JANUARY, 2001

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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 upbuilding exhortations are encouraged. This is an effort to upbuild and prepare us in heart and mind for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

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Please advise us of changes or corrections to the
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Ecclesial News

DETROIT, Mich. — Memorial, 10am; S.S., 11:30am; Meetings held at 46093 Rex Ct, Chesterfield Twp, MI 48051. Bro. Fred Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, MI 48035 810-790-2156

Beloved Brethren and Sisters in our one hope,

Since we last wrote, we have been blessed with the company and visits from Bro. John and Sis. Mary Phillips, of the Canton Ecclesia; Bro. Paul and Sis. Jo Neely, of the Lampasas Ecclesia; and Bro. Stephen Male's parents, Bro. David and Sis. Christine Male, from Wales, on their way to and from the Canton Gathering and to attend Bro. Stephen's wedding to Sis. Elizabeth Phillips.

These visits and Bro. John's words of exhortation greatly encouraged us in these last days before Christ's return.

Our whole ecclesia was thankful to be able to attend the Northeast Gathering in Canton. We gained much Spiritual strength from the talks given, reminding us of the faithful that have gone before us and of the wonderful promises God has given them. We also can be receivers of these same promises, if we hold fast to our faith and continue to work in the Truth. May God bless us and help us to stick to the straight and narrow way.

I would like to thank all those who have sent their well wishes and prayers for me during my recent heart operations. Through God's mercy and kindness I have made it through the worst of the procedures and hope to gain strength to be able to resume the work ahead. We pray for a release from this mortal frail flesh and long for the day when all mortal, frail, flesh will be healed. We send our love to all of like precious faith.

On behalf of the Brethren and Sisters of the Detroit Berean Ecclesia,
Bro. Fred J. Higham

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING June 8 - 10, 2001

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

RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING June 29 – July 2, 2001

Bro. Ed Truelove, 2165 Douglas Ave, N.Battleford, Sask, Canada S9A 3N8, 306-445-3240

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING July 23 - 29, 2001

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

HOLLADAY FRATERNAL GATHERING October 10-12, 2001

Bro. Warren Rankin, 699 White Tail Rd, Holladay, TN 38341, 901-584-3925

GOD'S HAND IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

To consider this subject we must go back to a mountaintop overlooking Israel where an old widow woman stands at the border of Moab with a young woman at her side. The young woman says to her: *"Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."*

Little did she expect that her faithful act would bring about such wonders for the new country that she was coming to. But: *"Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David the king."* We see God uses individual's faithful acts to bring about His purpose. Ruth was not an isolated case. We must understand God's hand in our life; it does not mean a happy prosperous, problem free life. We could look at any number of people of the Bible; Jeremiah questioned God when he discovered a plot on his life. God's answer to him was: *"If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? "* In other words, Jeremiah, if you think this is bad you haven't experienced anything yet. You are still contending with footmen -what are you going to do when you are up against horses? If our expectations are different, Brothers and Sisters then we will be disappointed with God, but it is our understanding and expectation that is wrong, not God.

Providence was at work early in David's life. As a young child he was responsible for sheep. He knew them all by name, led them out and in, found pasture and water for them. He protected them with his own life against wild beasts and generally shared their life by night and day. Was this simple job as a youth providential? As an old man, looking upon the suffering of his people he would say:

"Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these SHEEP, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me,"

The age-old occupation worked upon his character and developed in his mind a sense of responsibility and compassion for others, a love and devotion, which remained with him to the end of his life.

With thoughts like these it is easy to look at the life of David and assume God was controlling it all. We may even tend to think that; *"If God 4 was that active in my life it would be easier for me to be more faithful."*

It is a sore mistake we make if we fail to realize how much of providence - how much of God's working in our own lives depends on OUR faith and courage. As we saw moments ago with Ruth, come what may her faith brought about providence. There are many examples we could use for this lesson from David's life; we will choose three.

David leaves the sheep and brings food to his brothers. There he sees Goliath defying the God of Israel. He could have talked with his brothers concerning what a terrible thing Goliath was doing, and he could have encouraged them with faith that God would deliver his people and vindicate His name. Having thus encouraged his brothers, he could have returned to the sheep to let the will of God be done. After all he was only a youth and he did have responsibilities at home - his brothers were away at war, he had to provide and keep the sheep. His brothers did not even think he should be there in the first place. But David was not a man of platitudes, but of action. And through his action the great victory was brought about. God used the only person in Israel that was willing to do the job! In spite of his age and size and inexperience! Do we see the point? Do we understand the exhortation?

Our second example is not so spectacular and is not viewed as an act of brave faith like the first. Saul was trying to kill David. He sent his men to watch his house at night to kill him. So many times in the history of Christianity we see, when individuals were faced with persecution or death, that they would appeal to heaven for protection, seat themselves in a heroic posture, and passively wait, with calm resignation for the will of the Lord to be done. David gives us no such example. We see him climbing through a window at night to get away, taking what action he could.

Christ says, "*When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.*" Do what you can where you can! We see in David a man willing to act - not act in opposition to God's will — i.e. given the opportunity to take things into his own hands and kill Saul. He did not overstep what was right and proper, but neither did he hang around bemoaning the condition God placed him in. "Poor me: Why me?" **He acted, He did something about it and God delivered him out of Saul's hand.** Be careful Brethren and Sisters, the tendency is, that when we are in a problem situation to say well I must act, and this is my only way out and so we do something forbidden. David- could have killed Saul and solved the problem - we must act- but we must act faithfully!

The last example of God working with David's own initiative is when he was at Zilak and he sends his spoils of war to a long list of cities in Israel. David was not allowing himself to be "out of sight out of mind" 5

with those in authority in Israel. He discreetly paved the way for them to choose him as Saul's successor. Since this is what God had promised him in the first place, why should he bother? Because more depends on our attitude - on our actions - on what we do - than is commonly imagined.

We tend to think of the work of God as independent of our actions - that His will shall be done regardless of human action. This is true in the large picture. It will be accomplished whoever may fail, or even try to hinder. On the other hand, His work, in its individual application is markedly affected by the actions of that individual! If we are too busy for Him, His will still will be done - but it will be by someone else! Israel still went into the land as promised, but it was their children - not them! We must do our part faithfully and then God will work with us. The words are not idle words, which were uttered by James, "*Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.*"

God used David because he was a man of faithful actions. Is God using us? If not, is that God's fault or is it ours? An enlightened believer will not wait until he can do a great thing. If any waits until they can do great things, they will never do anything. Do little things faithfully, whatever those little things may be. We must not reenact the part of the servant that was given only one talent. Everybody else was given much more and the master was so much greater - reaping where he had not sown etc. He didn't loose the talent that he was given - he kept it laid up in a napkin, he just didn't do anything with it! No action was performed. And the verdict --- **THOU WICKED AND SLOTHFUL SERVENT!**

With this view of providence does it not give room for a person to look back and say, "See what I have done?" Sure it was with God's help, but it was because of my labors, my initiative, and my zeal! Where is boasting? **IT IS EXCLUDED** says Paul. God is not pleased to work with the proud and haughty. "*But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*"

Paul prayed for his problem to be removed and received the answer, "*My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*" How does Paul respond to this? "*Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities,*" - "*Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, WHAT?*"

Can we relate to that, Brethren and Sisters? Do we suppose that we must be strong and mighty in ourselves? "*I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, (needs) in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*" And how about all 6 those in Hebrews chapter 11 who, "*out of weakness where made*

strong?" If God is to work with us, He will bring us down to a dependency on Him. Where we can truly recognize, *"that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."* That it is **His will**, not our own; **His service** not our own, we are to do the best we can regardless of weakness or number of talents.

Have we failed to see what God is looking for in us? Yes, faithful actions without a doubt, but consider the following: Remember the parable of the lost sheep? There was one that was all alone! In grave danger - helpless - no assistance - no shepherd - no one to turn to - Really the 99 where all lost were they not? But it was the one that had no helper, that recognized its true state of utter dependency, that Christ directed his efforts toward. And what about the 10 coins - it was the one that was lost that caused the special attention and diligent search. Or the lost son, it wasn't until he was brought to starvation and longed to eat the husk that was fed to the pigs - but no man gave unto him - he was starving to death and had no one in the world to help him - it was then that he truly saw himself as he really was, and it was then that his father came to meet him - when he was still a great way off.

And then there was the man that fell among thieves, and they beat him and striped him and robbed him and left him half dead - with no help - with no hope - no strength in himself to do anything for himself. It was this man who received the help with the assurance, *"When I come again whatsoever is lacking I will make it up."*

David says, *"For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath **no helper.**"* Do we see the point? It is not with the self-sufficient, the ones that have it made, but the poor and needy and him that hath no helper. If we are to be used profitably by God we **MUST** be included in this category. *"For the lofty looks of man will be abased and the haughtiness of man brought low."* Many examples in David's life could be brought out where he was brought to this point. Once again I will choose three.

Things started out pretty good for David at first. He became a national hero by killing Goliath. He becomes the king's armor bearer, then the king's son-in-law, and he is promised that he is next in line for the throne. Then while playing his harp for the king, he catches the movement of Saul's hands and quickly side steps as a spear that is hurled at him crashes into the wall behind him. He is forced to flee. At home he has a loving wife but there would be no comfort or rest here. Saul sends men to surround the house to kill him. Have you ever felt unfairly treated? Not given the respect that you deserved? He worked for Saul; he worked 7

hard and faithfully for him. We know how he felt because he wrote a Psalm about it. *"Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men. For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD. They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold."*

His own strength and might is only useful to flee - so he does - through a window and escapes to Samuel. He then secretly meets with Jonathan - once again using connections he had to find out what was going on. He waits for his friend to feel out his father as he hides in the field. No doubt fervently praying that he can once again return home. When Jonathan arrives with the lad David's worst fears are realized, and he hears the dreaded message, *"Are not the arrows beyond thee? Make speed, haste, stay not."* And so the lad gathers up the arrows. Grief seized the two lone figures. He was forced to forsake his loving wife and his close companion and become a friendless outcast. A lonely outlaw and for no reason!

Oh, yes, there was a reason Brethren and Sisters, but that is the work of the good Samaritan. We are told of David and Jonathan's feelings *"they kissed one another and wept one with another, until David exceeded."*

Here we see a man completely distraught who has just lost everything! Was God with him? How would we react? David broke down and wept. Weeping relieves feelings and inner emotions, but it does not solve problems. We can see another man brought to this same point of utter helplessness in the prostrate figure in Gethsemane, being in agony and sweating as it were great drops of his very life blood from his brow. Yet he reaches the moment of ultimate resolution, of final commitment. *"With gentle resignation still he yielded to his Father's will, in sad Gethsemane."* He gets up and says to his disciples, *"Arise, let us be going, he that betrayeth me is at hand."* Out of our tears finally, Brethren and Sisters, if they are to be of any value to us, there must emerge a resolve of spirit.

Perpetual and inconsolable grief is defeat and self-destruction. However great the burden, however irreplaceable the loss, however terrible the desolation which brings about our sorrow, the moment must come when, having poured all our tears into his bottle we must say, as Christ did, *"Arise, and let us be going."*

Thus Jonathan lifted David from the well of his grief. And Jonathan said to David,

"Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of 8 the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my

seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city."

As an outlaw David would miss his home life. He would long for the water from the well of Bethlehem while in the hot desert, but as much as home, and home life, are treasured by all they were not the blessing which David would miss most. *"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple."* Brethren and Sisters, never loose sight of the main goal, no matter what trials come upon us. And never cease to appreciate, or under value, what we have here with this association together around these emblems.

Our second example of God's hand in David's life; bringing him down and showing that man is utterly helpless to save himself, occurs while he is hiding from Saul. He is in the cave with 400 men; and Saul, who has come with his armies to kill him, come right to the cave and decide to spend the night there in that cave! I am sure David did not see providence in this. Why wouldn't God have him go to another cave in a different mountain? Did you ever play hide and seek? The person looking for you is getting very close to your hiding place - you get tense, very quiet - don't move a muscle. What if that person seeking you was going to kill you? How about if it wasn't just you that had to be still, but 400 men hiding with you? What if one of them had a cold and had to sneeze - or staying so still all night in one uncomfortable spot for so long developed a cramp in his leg? They were so close to death; and no way to get away or protect themselves! What would you be thinking? David tells us:

"The LORD will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: "

That is it Brethren and Sisters! *"And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee."* Not in something else, not in **ANYTHING** else!

David could write these words having experienced them first hand. Is God a refuge for us? Or is it our VCR, our TV or STERIO, maybe it is our co-workers, a neighbor, our jobs or a book or magazine. David, had none of these. Time after time he was brought right down to the point where there was nothing! Where there was no one to turn to. He said, *"Out of the depth have I cried unto thee Oh Lord."*

Our third example will be used in closing. After a time things got a little better for David. He was given his own city within the Philistine borders, where Saul would not dare to attack. Some of Saul's chief men deserted Saul, and joined with David. He and his men settled down 9

and built homes and had families. Upon being turned back from fighting against Israel, David and his men took the three-day journey back to Ziklag. Instead of being greeted by their wives and children, as they would have expected, they came to smoke on the horizon. The first glimpse of the town would reveal embers of what use to be their homes. Nothing remained, the whole town had been sacked and destroyed - there was absolutely no sign of life anywhere. Once again, David and his men had lost everything! They were reduced to nothing!

"Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. " Utterly distraught David says,

"I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. "

But Brethren and Sisters it gets worse. His 600 men that were so close to him, turned against him. They spoke of stoning David, *"because the soul of all the people was grieved every man for his sons and for his daughters."* David could turn to no one! *"And him that hath no helper."* Have you ever felt that way, with no one to turn to? We usually have a family member, a Brother or Sister in Christ, someone we can turn to. But I am talking about **no helper**. Right up against it with no where to turn, right up against it like the prodigals son, or the man that fell among thieves, or the lost sheep, or David or Christ.

Yes there was a reason for it all. The question to consider is why was a man after God's own heart - one who worked with God and God with him - why was he subject to such cruel banishment, and such dreadful, bitter treatment? The answer is to be found in David's own words in Psalms 119:71 *"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. "*

The thing revealed to us is this: *"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. "* It was of God that David was suddenly driven from a position of honor and comfort while yet a very young man, and set out among the rigorous life of an outlaw, for the perfecting of his character, for his preparation for the unbounded exaltation and blessedness that awaited him as the victorious wearer of Israel's crown. And so it was with Christ, and so it is with us Brethren and Sisters, for we are assured that *"if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him."*

Let us Brethren and Sisters understand the hand of God in our lives. Let us work with Him, faithfully, steadfastly, and firm until the end.

DANIEL — The IMAGE and the LATTER DAYS

"The phrase "the latter days" occurs twice in the prophecy of Daniel ...in chapter 2:28, where Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that what he saw in his dream was a representation of "what shall be in the latter days" ...and chapter 10:14, where a messenger from God tells the prophet that he had come to make him understand "whatshall befall thy people (Judah) in the latter days" ... The occurrence of the phrase in these two places established a connection between the breaking of the image and the things pertaining to the JewsThe latter days are the latter years or "the time of the end"; and will be the most remarkable of any in the history of our post-deluvian world. They are denominated in Daniel, "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation to that same time".....The Empire symbolized by the political Image is to be broken to pieces in the latter days; Gog is to come against the mountains of Israel in the latter days; the twelve tribes are to return to the Holy Land in the latter days; Israel shall do valiantly in the latter days. In short, the latter days are "the Hour of Judgment" in which many of the dead are to arise, and the full measure of divine indignation shall be made manifest against "Christendom," which has so long triumphed over God's righteousness and truth." (Exposition of Daniel – Bro. John Thomas)

The exciting thing about the prophecy contained in Daniel chapter 2, is that it makes history live. Henry Ford apparently once said "History is bunk!". That's probably an extreme view, even if history was not one of your favorite subjects at school! Even so, studying the kings of England may not be the most interesting way to spend a few hours! However, history as seen from the perspective of the prophetic Word, is exciting and stimulating. The "finger of God" can be clearly seen in the development of nations and the wars in which they are engaged. The Napoleonic wars, the French Revolution, the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, suddenly take on an interest, when viewed from the platform of Yahweh's plan and purpose. We have seen history come alive, as we followed the successive kingdoms from the days of Nebuchadnezzar, to the present. "_

Our last article brought us through many centuries, right down to our own day, when we can discern the latter day divided phase of the Roman power. Europe is certainly "a rickety, disjointed, system of nations," as Bro. Roberts said. The problems experienced by politicians trying to adhere to a common European policy are "legion." The differences which exist in the European countries (and which at this time include Britain), underlines the fact time and time again that "they shall not cleave one 11

to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." (Daniel 2:43) For us, we see the wonderful fulfillment of Scripture, and it reminds us that the next event (as recorded in the chapter we have been looking at), is the setting up of the kingdom of God.

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." (verse 44)

We are living in exciting times. Times of great wickedness – yes- but on the eve of the greatest event the world will have experienced; when the brittle feet of the Image will receive the crushing blow from the Stone Power, and the Image itself will be broken to pieces, "and the fragments ground to powder."

That brings us to another interesting point in relation to the Image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, which we did not consider in our last article. As well as describing the chronological events of the world empires, the complete image also presents us with a picture of the political system as it will exist at the Return of Christ. In answering a correspondent on this subject in *The Christadelphian* for 1873, Bro. Roberts wrote:

"It is without doubt that the image of Nebuchadnezzar not only represents a course of historical events since the days of Nebuchadnezzar, but also the form of the political system that receives its death-blow at the hands of Jesus when he returnsthe vision requires that the whole geographical area within which the four empires have successively risen and fallen, shall be under the dominion of one Head, at the crisis of the destruction of the image in the latter day; which head Ezekiel reveals to be "Gog of the land of Magog, and the Prince of Rhosh, Meshech, and Tubal," or the Emperor of All the Russias." (January, 1873)

Bro. Thomas gives a beautiful exposition upon this chapter in Daniel in the *Herald* for January, 1852, and we would like to follow his explanation from that article to see the full significance of this aspect. He makes the same point as Bro. Roberts (quoted above):

"The Image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, the Assyrian, in his dream, was a gigantic statue in the form of a man. It appeared to be composed of four different metals from the head to the feet...As it was one entire image it represented one entire dominion ...As a whole, it was a great Assyrian dominion, for the Assyrian Dynasty is declared to be represented by the Head of goldthe head of the Image Empire is neither silver, brass, nor iron: it is the Assyrian. "

In other words, the metals in their order represent a succession of 12 Empires, but not the Image as a whole as it will stand in the latter days.

Bro. Thomas also refers to it as an Assyrian dominion. He then goes on to emphasize that this "one dominion" has not existed at any time as a whole:

In the days of Nebuchadnezzar, although a great dominion, his rule did not extend over Asia Minor, Greece, Italy and the West: therefore the Image which comprehends these, did not represent to him an existing dominion, but only an empire that should "hereafter" exist, of which his dynasty, the Assyrian, should be the head."

The question then arises, when would the dominion exist? Daniel supplies the answer in this second chapter:

"But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." (verse 28)

The dynasty, or kings actually descended from Nebuchadnezzar therefore, would not reign over Assyria to the end of its dominion. He had to learn that his particular empire would not always exist; that mankind would not be ruled over for ever by a succession of Assyrian kings. However, the extent of the empire would grow and a power would exist at the time of the end, or "latter days," comprehending the areas occupied by the previous empires. To return to the article by Bro. Thomas:

"(the) Empire will be enlarged, and thy throne shall be occupied by the Medes, Persians and Macedonians. After these, the Romans shall incorporate much of Assyria in their kingdom, which shall be divided; but in the latter days an Assyrian King from the north shall overflow and pass over their territory, and overthrow them. His dominion shall be great; for he shall rule over the West, Asia Minor, Egypt, Libya, Khushistan, Persia and the Land of Israel, besides his own hereditary estate. Then shall the Assyrian have attained the full extent of its dominion; and like Belshazzar, the Golden Head, will lift "himself against the Lord of heaven," and "sit upon the Mount of the Congregation in the sides of the north."

Bro. Thomas has connected the Image prophecy with Ezekiel 38 — the destruction of Russia, and the "many people" with them, on the mountains of Israel. We should also note that the prophecy in Daniel is remarkable in the way it describes the judicial blow upon the Kingdom of men. When Nebuchadnezzar saw the Stone smite the Image, he saw it smiting the feet:

"Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces." (Daniel 2:34)

The Scriptures are careful in describing where the Image is initially smitten, and not without significance. This not only indicates to us the time period of its smiting, when considered chronologically, but helps us to pinpoint the power that will enable the Image to stand up in the latter days, (which we know to be Gog). The smiting of the feet, is the same as the judgment that will befall the latter day Assyrian, as we shall see.

Now our previous article concluded with the quotation from Bro. Roberts pointing out that *"the present political arrangements on the continent of Europe are..... the last stage of the fourth kingdom"*, i.e. the feet of "iron and clay." Now Bro. Thomas makes some very interesting remarks upon the feet and toes of the Image, enabling us to pinpoint the power making the Image stand on its feet.

"At present the Toes are indeed in being; but they are not yet conjoined to the feet. They require to be daubed with some "miry potter's clay" to connect them to the iron. This uniting of them, by at best a brittle union, will be, we conceive, the result of the king of the north's overthrowing many counties (Daniel 11:40-41), and so establishing his dominion over "Gomer and his bands" who now possess the territory of the Ten Toes."

The ten toes we recall, are the ten kingdoms (or ten horns of the Apocalypse, see Apoc.13:1). These were the barbarian nations that forced their way into the Roman Empire, but which did not unite themselves under one government. This is present day Europe, and in that sense we can see the toes. What is required in the time of the end however, is that

"they should all be united as kingdoms of one imperality, that one policy may actuate them all; so that if "things come into the mind" (Ezekiel 38:10) of their Emperor, "and he conceive a mischievous purpose," they may co-operate with him to carry his will into effect." (JT)

We will make further comment specifically upon the feet below, which are not yet "conjoined" with the toes, because as Bro. Thomas again points out, "the Legs of the Image are not yet conjoined to the feet" either! We again recall from our last article that the legs (of iron) refer to the Eastern and Western division of the (once united) Roman Empire. In our days, we can clearly see this also, in the division in the Greek Orthodox Churches of the East, and the Roman Catholic Churches of the West. These have no bond between them at present, (although we are able to observe signs which indicate a desire to be united), but they will be united 14 for the Image to stand complete.

What we are observing today therefore, is the visible existence of two separate iron legs, and the ten toe kingdoms of Europe. The question that next arises therefore is, where are the feet? As Bro. Thomas remarked, "the *tibia* is the leg bone, the *tarsal bones* are the toes; but where are the *metatarsal* which make the foot of the skeleton, and which unite the toes to the leg?" Something must happen, some power must be manifested, to unite the legs to the feet, and indeed the toes to the feet. As Bro. Thomas indicates, parts of the Image have appeared and disappeared, but the feet have never existed, and that they need to be before the image can stand, and to be subsequently smitten by the Stone Power.

The answer to the question then ("Where are the feet?"), is connected with the King of the North, of Daniel 11, or Gog of Ezekiel 38, as referred to above. Again, the article from Bro. Thomas expresses the position in a lucid way:

"The proposition we affirm is that a power must appear upon the territory of the Legs, which shall effect such a change in the political relations of things that the Legs and Toes shall be no longer antagonistic and disjointed, but 'e pluribus unum,' united into one. The power that shall accomplish this is symbolized by the Feet of the Image; and the agent by which it is effected is styled the Potter; as it is written, "thou sawest the feet and toes part of clay of the Potter, and part of iron." The clay represents the power incarnated in those who "shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; " and the Potter, the Chieftain who shall mould them into a vessel to suit his own viewsThey will mingle themselves with the Iron men,' and blend their kingdoms into one clayey dominion, but the union will not last sufficiently long for them to cleave together under a permanently new constitution of things not contemplated in the Image".

To further consolidate our thoughts, the prophet Habakkuk saw at the time of the end this same proud and rapacious "chief," who would:

"enlarge his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people:

Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! How long? And to him that ladeth himself with thick clay" (i.e. by gathering all nations unto him). (chapter 2:5-6)

This is the latter day Assyrian, Gog, or the King of the North, and Habakkuk also describes the destruction of this power in verses 7-13:

"Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them?"

Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee: because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein... ..

For THE STONE shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it"

The molding of the feet out of the iron and clay is the mission then of Russia, for Gog smitten on the mountains of Israel is the Feet smitten by the Stone. *We are* privileged to witness the development of these things, for *"the Adonai Yahweh will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets"* (Amos 3:7). Having these wonderful things revealed to us, are we going to neglect the consideration of them? What fools we would be if we did. Let us realize the times we are living in; the nearness of Christ; and in consequence, lift up our heads, watch and be sober, and give diligence to make our calling and election sure. God Willing, we will conclude our thoughts on Daniel chapter 2 in the next article.

Bro. Phillip Hughes

Signs of The Times

These are interesting views to indulge in: but whatever view we may take, it remains that Christ is nearer with every day's flight. Every European event must tend more and more to pave the way for the event of events on which our hearts have been fixed by the Gospel — the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. Apart from that event, the affairs of the nations would be of little interest to us. When that event occurs, the politics of the world will suddenly and completely lose their interest. The signs of the times will have lost their significance when the event they are pointing to is no longer a matter of expectation. Their value and their importance are very limited and short lived. We ought to think of this in a midst of all our watchings of them. It is better to be interested in the coming of Christ than to be interested in the signs of the times. It is possible to be interested in the signs of the times and not interested in that to which they stand related. It is better to see a man much in love with Christ and the hope of the kingdom, and in much zeal for his service in the obedience of His commandments, even if he have little understanding of the signs of the times, than to see a man well up in the politics of the time of the end but of a callous heart towards the person and work and principles of Christ. Of course, it is **better** to see both aspects combined, but if there must be extremes, it is better to love Christ and be ready for him, knowing little of the political indications of his approaching, than to be abreast of all the signs of the times with but feeble attainments in that saintship which alone will qualify for companionship with Christ in the day of his glory.

Rulers in The Kingdoms of Men

As all the nations of the world watch the American Presidential elections, it is hard for us as Christadelphians, not to become caught up in these things. Our human nature naturally prefers one group of individuals over the other. Both sides have an uncanny ability to influence one group of people or another, or they wouldn't be where they are in the first place. Some might say that they are not extraordinary men, simply men born to wealth and power. It is true that modern day leaders are men born to wealth and power, but there are literally millions of such men born to wealth and power who never achieve what these men have achieved. These men are unique, and have the ability to arouse various emotions within us (positively and negatively,) and that is where the danger lies for those who would be true Christadelphians.

True Christadelphians can side with no political group in the world, nor should they want to. Christadelphians themselves are their own political party. Absolutely fundamental to our belief system is that we oppose all principles of democracy for the governance of the world. The espoused political position of all Christadelphians is that the world can only experience true peace, and true equity, when it is ruled by a Righteous King, Jesus Christ, sitting on a throne in Jerusalem. And his servants must be entirely subject - and willingly so - to that King. The political hopes of all Christadelphians is summed up in those verses so often repeated - though so poorly understood--at this time of the year:

Isaiah 9:6-7, *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."*

Through our faith, we must forget the politics of our individual nations, and we must become married to our Lord. If we can't do this, we have no hope of hearing the following words:

Psalms 45:10-11, *"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him."*

The principles of democracy in the 19th through 21st century, which we observe the world around us so engulfed in - and so enamored with - were brought into force by God. When God did this, he did not do it because 17

it was a peaceful thing to do, but rather because it would ultimately bring the nations together to war. When God caused this spirit to be developed in the earth, He called it an "*unclean spirit*."

Revelation 16:13-15, *"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."*

The frogs symbolized the French, which is a common term or symbol of reference for the French, even today. In their early days, the French kings used the frog on their war banners, a symbol of themselves rising from the French swampy lowlands. Eventually, as aristocracy replaced the lowland barbarians, the frog was replaced by the lily, the flower of the swamp. But John didn't prophesy to us that the unclean spirits would be as the lily. Rather, he said, as frogs, a direct result of the revolution of France brought on by the common man. Such was the French revolution of 1789 that gave birth to the three unclean spirits that dominate world politics today - fraternity, equality, and liberty.

The purpose of God for doing this is expressly stated in the Scriptures. It was to bring the whole world together in that battle of the Great Day of God Almighty. (Rev. 16:14) How is this so? How can these noble concepts, (liberty, equality, and fraternity) result in universal war? And the answer is that this will occur because what these concepts truly generate is selfishness, the flesh's favorite vice. It is selfishness which defines the flesh's understanding of these terms.

"Liberty," to the modern societies, means the right to do what "I" want, no matter what the consequences to others or to their nations. "Equality" has come to mean the right to take from those who have more than "I" and give it to "me." Rarely do we see the principles of equality embraced by the wealthy classes, except in an effort to generate votes which would result in their own further enrichment. (After all, the US government hands out over a trillion dollars in contracts annually, and the people who win the elections, control who gets those contracts. Is there any other reason why 10 billions of dollars was just spent, in advertising, and another 12 million dollars spent on legal fees, to obtain a job which will pay \$400,000 per year?) And finally, "brotherhood" is quickly relegated to a term limited to only those who agree with "myself." If a man carries any other political view, then "brotherhood" is quickly forgotten and each political party rivals its opponent in developing

new ways to describe the "enemy" in the most abominable of epithets, in an effort to make themselves more attractive to the voter.

It is this selfishness which God will use to cause the nations to come together in Jerusalem. One group, the Russian/European Group, when firmly committed to the frog spirits will perceive their "rights" as having been infringed by another group, the British/American Group of frog spirits; and they will come to avenge themselves and to set the course of the world right for their own selfish means, in opposition to the selfish means of the western nations. Hence we see the language of Ezekiel 38:10-12,

Ezekiel 38:10-12, *"Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land."*

The prey, the spoil, and the cattle and goods are the motivating issues bringing Russia into the Middle east setting up the Great Day of God Almighty. And the spirit that brings them is the selfishness born out of the principles of democracy.

To listen to the various American candidates, each feels that they should be elected because each feels they are the best man to preserve these qualities for the lives of the people. They have identically the same goals, though they think that this end can best be achieved through slightly different means. But neither they, nor their supporters take any care or even thought for the fact that God has labeled these qualities they vow to uphold as "unclean." And certainly, both these men will be very willing to defend these principles against God and His Christ, Jesus, when Jesus comes to expose to the world the inherent corruptness that is in it.

All the world's governments since Jesus walked the earth have been regarded in the Scriptures as the enemy of the faithful. Writing in Revelations to the ecclesia at Smyrna Jesus wrote:

Revelation 2:10, *"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."*

Here we are explicitly told that while we await the return of Christ the devil will throw some of us into prison. Who is the devil in this verse? 19

Obviously that power which at times has had the authority to bind the servants of God in the prisons of the earth. The devil then, in these verses, is the government. So regardless of which political force is supported, the end result is that any support given to a national government is support for the devil--which is God's estimation of the politics of this world.

Modern man values the esteemed opinion of the high and mighty of men of the government, but the True High and Mighty One takes an altogether different approach. Of the political devil and his cohorts God wrote to Isaiah,

Isaiah 40:18, *"To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? "*

Isaiah 40:21-24, *"Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble."*

The leaders of this world will not be planted, nor sown, but shall be consumed as stubble before the Great and Dreadful Day of God Almighty. And when we add to that the fact that most of the popular issues in the world today are fundamentally ungodly and it becomes even a worse thing for Christadelphians to involve themselves in these things.

Consider the leading issues surrounding politics today. Freedom for deviant and immoral life styles is first and foremost among the political issues, whether we consider the immorality of man in a general sense of homosexuality, or the abortion issue which at its root, was principally intended to allow for immorality without consequences.

And there are other forces, clothed in a sheep skin of the best of intentions, which are just as ungodly. Can we imagine how acceptable it will be in the eyes of the world when the Great High Priest institutes animal sacrifice again, as we are told He will in the last few chapters of Ezekiel? Will this not throw the current world into a boiling pot of controversy and complaint about the cruelty to animals?

Or how about another seemingly well intentioned political issue, the protecting of the environment? Certainly God intended us to respect and admire what He has created. We are told that it is even a proof of His very existence that no reasonable person can deny. But what arrogance does

man display when he supposes he can destroy what God created - unless God intended it to be so to bring about His purpose?

We remember recent arguments from the politicians about global warming that claimed that we would already be experiencing global warming had it not been for a recent (geologically speaking) increase in the number of volcanoes world wide which tend to cool the earth due to the cloud cover they create. To the world, these things are just dumb luck. It has never occurred to them that He who created the earth to be inhabited also created the volcanoes to cool the earth when necessary. And how lucky for man that the green house gases which so many politicians complain about, are removed through the colder ocean waters brought on by what is called the La Nina affect. Was this just luck, or was this simply a part of the original design by God that the earth should be inhabited? And animals species which are believed lost to the modern world through extinction because they believe these species evolved through chance, are known by us to not be lost at all, and can be easily recreated by God who created them all from the beginning. All these concerns are valid to those who deny God, but irrelevant to us who know God has a plan, and is working it out in the earth.

And what if these things predicted in the doom and gloom scenarios ultimately occur? Well, God has often used seemingly natural means to bring about his goals. The seven vials of Revelation were poured out on the earth entirely due to famines in 18th century France which brought about an uprising of the people against an insensitive devil/government. God uses such tragedies to accomplish His goals. Should we ever make any effort to work against the plans of God?

It is God's intent that the return of Christ will be brought about in "a time of trouble such as never was." It requires faith on our part to observe the difficulties for mankind which are prophesied in the Scriptures, and stand faithfully by, knowing that God has promised we will not be tempted above our ability to endure. We will live through this time, and we will be able, through faith, to endure whatever events God has in store for the world and its devil/governments.

The conclusion of the matter is precisely stated by Daniel in his prophesy:

Daniel 4:17 *"This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."*

It is God which brings the basest of men into power, not us, and not the voters of any nation. God has a time plan for the execution of his 21

7,000 year plan for the earth. Nothing we can do will help or hinder it. We can only prepare ourselves to be strong in faith against that day. This is not done by advancing political causes, but by studying and identifying with the faithful men of old who lived through other tragic times which were necessary for God's ultimate goal, the ruling of the whole earth in righteousness. We have a hymn which states the matter very beautifully for all who would walk in true faith.

"What though none on earth assist Him, God requires not help from man. What though all the earth resist Him, God will realize His plan."

Bro. Jim Phillips

Thoughts Gleaned by the Way By A Wayfarer

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law," Gal. 5:22.

Christ-like character does not consist in mere legal correctness, but the possession and manifestation of the "nine graces" as given in Paul's divinely-inspired words. These are the things which are in direct opposition to the thinking of the flesh, and against such there is no law, because they are in complete harmony with divine precepts. One might scrupulously keep the letter of the law and yet be devoid of the inward state described in the nine graces, lacking in the fruit of the Spirit; outwardly correct, but inwardly a barren tree.

"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word"
Psalm 119:67.

The things which the natural man craves and seeks after are the things gratifying to the flesh – prosperity, plentifully supplied with the material things of this life, ease, comfort, and freedom from trouble or affliction. Yet, from a spiritual standpoint, these things may be the worst thing that could happen to him. This is true if material, prosperity, and the gratification of the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life lead him to give these things a prominent place in his desires and affections, and detracts from his love of God and His Word and constant study and meditation upon the Holy Oracles.

Therefore, the Psalmist exclaims:

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn from thy statutes" (v. 71).

It is only in affliction and humility that the mind of the flesh is subdued and the need for divine instruction and the help of God is fully realized. Happy is the man who not only submits himself to God in

affliction, but who realizes that affliction is necessary chastisement for his spiritual welfare, as the Psalmist further says in Ps. 119:75: *"I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."*

"Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Mal. 3:18).

Malachi's prophecy was written during the return from Babylon, when the great proportion of the people of Israel was in a state of apostasy. Only a small remnant *"feared the Lord, and thought upon His name."* A crowning characteristic of this faithful remnant was the ability to discern between the righteous and the wicked, which would only be made manifest to *"all Israel"* in the day when the Lord will *"make up his jewels,"* when *"there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob"* Romans 11:26.

Spiritual discernment is to see and understand, and evaluate character in relation to divine service; to be able to tell the difference between service to God and flesh-pleasing ways. The Apostle Paul gives the divine discernment based solely upon spiritual understanding: *"Which things also we speak, not in the words, which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"* (1 Cor. 2:13-14).

To judge the acts and character of one according to worldly standards is to fail to *"discern between the righteous and the wicked,"* for, *"My thoughts are not your thoughts, saith the Lord,"* and, *"that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight 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).

It is a more sure word of prophecy because it is made "more sure" by fulfillment in part. Peter doubtless had specific reference to prophecies concerning Christ's first coming and mission as an earnest of his second coming and mission. But the scriptures teem with prophecies which have been either partially or wholly fulfilled so minutely and specifically, that no reasonable mind can doubt that *"holy men of God spake* (these prophecies) *as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."* Therefore these prophecies shine like a light in a dark place; - giving confidence to the believer in a word of doubt and indecision.

What Does That Mean?

"And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!" (John 19:14)

At what hour was Jesus crucified?

There is an apparent discrepancy between John's account and that of the other gospel writers. It is universally agreed that in the Jewish system, hours were numbered from sunrise, approximately 6:00A.M., and divided into twelve equal parts. Thus there were twelve hours in a day and twelve hours in a night.

Accepting this as true, Mark says that Jesus was crucified at the "third hour" (9:00 A.M.). This agrees with both Matthew's and Luke's statement, that while Jesus hung on the cross there was darkness from the "sixth hour" (12 noon) lasting until the "ninth hour" (3 P.M.), when he breathed his last and died. But the verse quoted above says that Pilate brought Jesus out from the trial at the sixth hour, which would be 12 noon by this standard.

Ancient commentators through textual correction have made unsuccessful attempts to handle this apparent contradiction. They say that six should have been a three, and although many may favor this "textual-error" theory, it does not solve the problem and is basically unsound and completely unnecessary. If John *did* mean three instead of six, we still have Mark stating that Jesus was crucified at the third hour, and John telling us that this was the time that his trial was finished. We know that several events occurred after the trial, which would have taken up some time. Jesus was delivered to the Jews: they mocked him, put the purple robe on him and the crown of thorns, and then had him carry his cross to Golgotha where they crucified him. So a discrepancy remains. How can this be rectified?

If John was following the official numbering system of the *Roman day*, there is no difficulty at all in accepting exactly what is written. We currently follow the Roman system by beginning our day at the sixth hour of the night (12 midnight). It is evident that John used this same system in other instances, as he tells us in John 20 :19 that Jesus came to the disciples "...the same day at evening, being the first day of the week...". " If he had used the Jewish system in this situation, the evening would not be the same day, but the beginning of a new day.

I conclude, therefore, that John was using the Roman system as we do today. You may ask why would John use the official Roman system, when he had the same cultural background as the others who used the Jewish system. **The answer lies in the time and location of the writing.** John wrote his gospel in Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia. It is also accepted that this is the latest of the gospels to be written A.D. 80 – 95, which would have been after the overthrow of Jerusalem and the Commonwealth of Judah. **The Jewish system of keeping time would have been replaced by the Roman system, which eliminates the apparent "discrepancies" in the text.**

