

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 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

Ecclesial News

DETROIT, Mich. — Memorial, 10am; S.S., 11:30am; Meetings held at 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, MI 48035, Bro. Fred Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, MI 48035 586-790-2156

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

Loving Greetings in the hope of Israel,

We have been pleased to have visited, as an ecclesia, both the Hye Fraternal Gathering and the Canton Sunday School picnic. We have had the company and fellowship of Bro. John and Sis. Mary Phillips, of the Canton Ecclesia. Bro. John exhorted us with encouraging words on the Ministry of Christ.

Their visit came at a special time of comfort and consolation for us, as we had been saddened by the departure of our Bro. Tim Stinchcomb from the Berean Fellowship. The contact with those of like precious faith is dear to each one of us in these latter days.

With Love to all our Brothers and Sister,
Bro. Fred J. Higham

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING July 21 - 27, 2003

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

The Ministry of Christ

This morning we have been granted the privileged opportunity once more of meeting around the table of our Lord; to remember the greatness of our Lord and Master, Christ Jesus, but also to remember our awe-some responsibilities to him and to our Father. Our readings abound with concepts of God's attitude towards sin and how He looks at it verses the way Israel looked at it, in the sense of a total forgetting of past failures when one genuinely repents, but also total forgiveness. Forgetting of past accomplishments and goodness when one turns. God's position is, why will you die? I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. It is in no plan of God for us to fail. We have not been called out by accident, we have been called out to righteousness. The end result of that is primarily, through the grace of God, up to us. So we see in these readings his concept of God's view for a lifestyle – a lifestyle of goodness and a lifestyle of failure. In Luke we find the rejoicing of God when we overcome evil. He recognizes we are weak. He realizes our failure, but He provides a way of escape. He provides mercy and reconciliation with Him. He runs toward 282 us, He openly accepts our position. That we find, if only through one

way, as represented on the table before us - through a life in harmony with that of His son, Jesus Christ.

This morning we would like to remind ourselves of the great work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and to identify ourselves with him, to see if we fit the pattern. We must, it is not optional. We realize we will not achieve his greatness in that sense, but there must be a reflection of him in us. At the judgment seat – Christ must be able to see himself in us, in our characteristics, in our lifestyle or we will be rejected.

For the most part we want to consider an overview of his whole purpose of being. So much could be said about him, in so many different directions. How many Scriptures speak of the different facets of his life? So many things are revealed to us, of who he would be, who he was and who he will be.

In so many ways we know of him in different official capacities. These are designed to cause us to think deeply of his ministry and that being united with him in baptism; we are not only his friends and his brothers and sisters, but fellow ministers of the Gospel with him, carrying on his work in his absence. In our labours, we must humbly, yet forcefully, *"contend for the faith once delivered to the saints."* By supporting it in the Brotherhood and making it available to a lost world.

As we go about this work, we find the first order of business is the perfecting of ourselves, so that we are in the position to help others. The Apostle Paul mentioned this process to the Ephesians in Chapter 4 vs. 1-3 and 11-16: *"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edging of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of man, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edging of itself in love."*

As we attempt to improve ourselves in developing Christ-like characteristics, we are awe struck with his superiority in every

way. Rather than being discouraged by considering our own weaknesses, we should be inspired to try that much harder.

We must realize that we are not in this struggle alone. God is well aware of our abilities and inabilities. We have not been given the knowledge of the Truth by mistake.

When we fall short of our goals, it is usually because we sell ourselves short. In I Corinthians 11 the Apostle Paul commands a man to examine himself. If, on self examination, we find ourselves wanting in some way, the solution is probably very simple. Basically, we need to increase our dedication in the things of the Truth, what is called Zeal. Zeal is an interesting word. A Zealot is often considered an over enthusiastic person in whatever he stands for. Sometimes a person is even called overzealous. But how could someone really be too involved in the things of God?

In Isaiah Chapter 9, we are given a list of the names or titles of Jesus and his establishment as king in the future age. It is interesting that Isaiah says God's own zeal will bring this to pass. He states, *"The zeal of Yahweh of armies will perform this."* Isaiah Chapter 9 vs. 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."*

We also learn from the titles of Jesus that they are established by the will or work of God. If this is true, then we should have confidence that God will help us, if our hearts are in the right place. In other words, if we are truly trying our best.

We have an example of this when Abraham visited Abimelech and told him Sarah was only his sister and not his wife. Abimelech sent for her but never took her to be his wife, because God stopped him from sinning. Even though at the time he didn't even know about God's help. This also helped Abraham out of a tight spot he apparently created for himself, further showing the mercy of the Father. This incident is found in Genesis Chapter 20 vs. 1-6: *"And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country; and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife. But Abimelech 284 had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a*

righteous nation? Said he not unto me, She is my sister? And she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I knew that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her." Now, of course, there is a greater good at work here by God protecting Abraham's wife, but this incident should cause us to stop and think. If this man, who perhaps did not know Jehovah, was protected from himself by the providence of God and his family was then healed by God, when Abraham prayed for them, what should we think concerning ourselves? We, Spiritual Israel, who have entered into covenant relationship with God. Who hear those comforting words echoing in our heads. *"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."* How often has God perhaps helped us and to this day we have no idea about it.

When considering these things, we must stay focused and balanced, remembering our obedience depends on our attitude and our effort. For, we hear the words of Jesus echoing back, *"To whom much is given, much is required of"*

Now in considering the ministry of Christ, what was it that so motivated him? What caused him to live a life of zealotry for the things of God, to live in complete harmony with his Father? It could be summed up in one little word, joy. When anyone has the highest regard and appreciation for the ways of God, it is pure joy to live, then everything else only brings sorrow, confusion and suffering needlessly.

We might think that this idea is not quite right, for the Scriptures indicate an increase of sorrow with an increase in knowledge. It's found in Ecclesiastes Chapter 1: *"For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."* Jesus obviously knew more than any man.

Also we have the testimony of Isaiah Chapter 53, where it states concerning Jesus, *"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"* Surely he hath born our griefs and carried our sorrows.

But the chapter concludes by saying that Christ would be satisfied and the pleasure of the Lord would prosper through the redemptive work of his suffering. Isaiah Chapter 53 vs. 10-12. *"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant just many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him 285*

a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

The paradox is understood as the cross before the crown. It is the little scroll from Revelations that is sweet to the taste, but bitter on the stomach.

It is simple really, when we witness something disgusting that grieves us, we might say, "That makes me sick," but it also causes the Truth, as it is in Jesus, to be adored even more. Sorrow is the result of man's failures; joy is produced by God's victories.

So just before his death, Jesus wept over Jerusalem, knowing they would rebel against God. But he could rejoice to send a positive message to John the Baptist *"The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them"*

Those Jesus healed and helped received immediate satisfaction, but Jesus could rejoice to look beyond, to a time when these things would have a further spiritual fulfillment in the Kingdom of God. When those blind to the Truth, walking out of the way of righteousness, who have closed their ears, will have the Gospel preached to them when the dead in Christ are raised up.

So, my dear brothers and sisters, the question for us is, will we be among those chosen few, who with Christ despise the current shame for what we hold dear? What shame is it when others who don't even know the Truth judge and condemn us?

Things are not always easy now. They are not designed to be. But, if we allow problems to develop us and not get the better of us, we can be built up to endure even greater things. Our results will be in relationship to our efforts. Jesus said, *"According to your faith, be it unto you."*

The Apostle Paul said in Hebrews Chapter 12, verse 11. *"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."* Will we allow ourselves to be exercised or motivated to do good works or otherwise?

We are all, right now, awaiting final inspection by the Captain of our salvation. Will we be found actively on duty, or absent without leave? We serve one referred to as "The second Adam, one like Moses, Abraham's seed, David's son, the King of the Jews, the King of Israel, the King of righteousness and peace, the King of Kings, The Son of God."

What an awesome privilege we have.

HEZEKIAH: HISTORICAL & EVENT OVERVIEW

This overview of historical and event data involves framing and matting of peripheral and connecting information, which, like the framing and matting of art, helps build and highlight the portrait - in this case king Hezekiah.

Historical and event matting is often more informational than hortatory. This short perspective will be a combination.

The record of Hezekiah is found in the Books of: II Kings 18-20; II Chronicles 29-32; and Isaiah 29-32. It all adds up to 11 chapters. These include his acts and his story. They do not include writings, like Jeremiah, and this is rare. It means we are to spend a little more time with him than most other Bible characters.

We become smarter and more educated by the study of others. Look at their story: observe their activities, their failures and successes, and reflect upon them.

There are 2 general categories under which all Bible characters (all people) fall.

Category #1: *Includes ones whose decision mechanism is based on scriptural FAITH.* They have inconsistencies and sin but, their philosophy in life (and for all practical purposes) - their mentality - revolves around scriptural faith.

Category #2: *Includes ones whose decision mechanism is based on anything else.*

The 2nd class, for all practical purposes, is also a way of life. They have a different agenda than those in Category #1. Scriptural faith is not really in the picture.

Compared to the rest of the human race Hezekiah is not only in the first class, but is in the top echelon of the faithful class. That is because his legacy was: "(He) trusted in the lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him." (NIV) II Kings 18: 5-6

Hezekiah's real Hebrew name is Khiz-kee-yaw. The sound and spelling, "Hezekiah," is the Greek form (Greek sound), which the translators used in our Bibles. In the Hebrew his spelling is CH (chayth) Z (zayin) Q (kaph) (pronounced like a K) Y (yod) & H (the Hebrew letter hay, making CH, Z, Q, Y, H. The l' letter chayth, CH is a hard sound like the German kh, khaaa.

Of course, the vowels are added and are not in the inspired MSS. 287

The vowels are often derived by the "sounding out" of the consonants: in this case *KHIZ-KEE- YAH.'*

But, like the name NebuchadNezzar / NebuchadRezzar, there are 3 additional spellings of Hezekiah's name in the Hebrew texts. In addition to KHIZ –KEE-YAW, there are:

1. KHIZ-KEE-YAW-HOO (additional *waw* or W on the end)
2. YEKH-IZ-KEE-YAW (additional *yode* or Y on the front)
3. YEKH-IZ-KEE-YAW-HOO (additional *yode* or Y on the front & *waw* or W on the end) [Psalm 119, at least, provides the suggestion and guidance we should spend a little time in the Hebrew language.]

Hezekiah's reign was in the early 8th to late 7th century B.C. About 728 to 699 B.C. The dominant, contemporary powers in this part of the habitable world, at the time, were Egypt and Ethiopia in the south and Assyria in the north. Egypt and Assyria play big parts through Biblical history, while all 3 powers are involved in this period of our subject.

In regard to Egypt: The Egyptians are the earliest people known to man as a nation. They were already in their 18th *dynasty* at the time of Israel's exodus, which was some 800 years earlier from our subject. While Egypt was certainly a recognizable military power at this time – (8th-7th century B.C.) they were not as formidable as they had been, or as they would be in about 100 years, which would go up to the time of Josiah (Hezekiah's great grandson). But it is true she (Egypt) was militarily worthy enough for Hoshea, (the last desperate King of the 10 Tribes) to seek her aid at Assyria's aggressive move toward the northern Kingdom of Israel around 728 B.C.

In regard to Ethiopia or Cush: Both Egypt and Ethiopia felt apprehensive of the threatening power of the Assyrians and consequently, at the time, these two countries probably had some alliance or league against Assyria. [In passing, remember there are 2 Cushes: the African Cush & the Palestinian Cush.]

Of Egypt and Ethiopia, Ethiopia (Cush) appears to have been the more powerful and warlike of the two, as we do not hear of Egypt marching an army against Assyria's Sennacherib or Assyria's Sargon. But we are told Tirhakah of Ethiopia marched out in military confrontation against Assyria. [Found in II Kings 19:9 "... *Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah, the Cushite ...was marching out to fight against him...*"] 288

In regard to Assyria: Assyria makes a considerable contribution in the Bible. The empire, anciently, is in Daniel's prophecy depicted by the wings of the Babylonian Lion. Its placement here indicates both its prominence before and its being succeeded by the Babylonian Lion, as Babylon later becomes the possessor of the territory of the Assyrian empire.

Assyria's capital, Ninevah, has its own prominence in the Scriptures: it is the subject of the book of Jonah, as Jonah's call was to go the Ninevah. It is the subject matter of the prophesies of the book of Nahum. The terms "Assyria(n).." and "Ninevah(ites)" combined occur some 150 different times, and are mentioned in some 18 different books of the Bible.

Assyria is not only an ancient player, but a latter-day *portrayer* also. Its historical territory, aggression and destruction to the Israelites portrays the antitypical latter-day northern invader, known as the *latter-day Assyrian* as we note:

"And this one will be our peace. When the Assyrian invades our land...we will raise against him 7 shepherds and 8 leaders of men..." Micah 5:5,6.

There is a long recorded line of Assyrian kings. Assyrians, in fact, are lauded by many as not only record keepers, but accurate ancient record keepers. And it is true, there are ancient records giving details of this period with Israel and Judah. But they are given more credit than they deserve.

The two most notable Assyrian kings in Biblical history are Shalmaneser and Sennacherib. Shalmaneser is known for playing the great, infamous role of overturning the 10 tribes of Israel and carrying them away. "Shalmaneser" is a name used more than once among Assyrian royalty. He was probably Shalmaneser IV.

The most commonly used date for this lamentable event of Samaria's demise is 722 B.C. It is at least clear from Biblical accounts. Hezekiah had been in power over Judah 6 years when the Assyrians finished the assault. Dr. Thomas believed the end came not in 722 B.C., but that the 10 tribes collapsed in 697 B.C. - a considerable difference.

The primary adversary in Hezekiah's time was the Assyrian king Sennacharib, who followed his father Sargon. The latest records show this Sargon to be Sargon II. Sargon II succeeded Shalmaneser. (The falls of Nineveh 612 B.C., Haran 610 B.C. and Carchemish 605 B.C. is the ascent of the Babylonian empire as they begin to overshadow and pluck 289

the feathers of the Assyrian wings.) But, in Hezekiah's time, Sennacherib was the great adversary, and truly a terror to the Middle Eastern world.

To get some picture of where Hezekiah comes in the line of Judah's kings, we can look back about 80 years before his tenure and start at Amaziah. Amaziah was Hezekiah's great, great grandfather. [The Judah royal line was at the time then, Amaziah, then Uzziah. We won't detail their real Hebrew names here.] Jotham came next, and then Hezekiah's father rose to power – that being Ahaz - Ahaz was an idolater.

As Hezekiah (in the Judah royal line) relates to the 10-Tribe (the northern Kingdom's) royal line, we note that contemporary with Amaziah's reign and onward were: Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, Pekahiah, and then contemporary with Ahaz and Hezekiah, was the last and final king Hoshea.

None of these 10-Tribe kings had any backbone for Scriptural faith. They were all category 2's. Their passion seems to have been solely about the possession of political power.

Although Isaiah is not mentioned until the later years of Hezekiah's reign, he was a very active participant in assisting Hezekiah in the national reform and clean-up. He had already been ministering during the 3 previous reigns. Isaiah 1:1 -

"The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." (NIV) Isaiah's prophesy recordings in his own book, details his dealings with Ahaz. It is in fact to Ahaz in Isaiah 7:14, - the prophesy of the virgin bearing Emmanuel is given.

Contemporary was the prophet Micah. Micah 1:1-

"The word of the Lord given to Micah of Moresheth, during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah – the vision he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem."

It undoubtedly got attention and effect when Micah warned, because of national idolatry; Zion would be plowed as a field. In Micah 3:12.

Also contemporary with the period was the prophet Hoshea.

Hoshea 1:1, *"The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, 290 and during the reign of Jeroboam son Jehoash king of Israel."*

But Hoshea concentrated his prophecies toward the 10-Tribe northern Kingdom.

In reviewing the leaders of Israel's history it must be remembered the country's national Constitution was the Mosaic Law. The land laws were framed with the religious laws. There was no separation of church and state. The two were co-fused.

Hezekiah, like all other kings before him, had to make a decision as to what path his administration was going: uphold the national, historical, divine constitution, or go by another agenda?

Hezekiah became a great man because - as we would say in modern language - he 'bucked the system.' He 'bucked the system' his father had taken the nation for the previous 20 years of his idolatrous reign. And Hezekiah didn't seem to waste any time making changes. Category #1 is rarely ever about staying in a 'comfort zone.' One is rarely, if ever, in the majority in the scenario with which Hezekiah was working. He chose to take on the task of waking the sleeping giant of his nation that was wallowing in idolatry.

1. He began removing the high places, or the elevated places (the Hebrew *bamoth*, which denotes elevated spots dedicated to false worship) II Kings 18:4.

2. He destroyed the idol images. II Kings 18:4

3. He broke up the brazen serpent, (named Nehustan) Moses had made, since the people had turned its intent and purpose from good to bad.

4. He opened up the Temple, as II Chronicles 29 states (v.3). His father had shut up the building, stopped the offerings, turned out the lamps, and for all practical purposes, had made the temple null and void (II Chronicles 28:24; 29:7).

5. Hezekiah began encouraging, exhorting and instructing the priests and Levites back to the essential, religious work for which they were responsible.

6. He warned what chronic neglect of worship had brought the country: i.e. violent death to many by their enemies, and a multitude (including women and children) had been taken captive both by Edom & Damascus (Syria). And, they had been trampled by their neighbors. They were under tribute and virtual vassalage to the Assyrians. (II Chronicles 29: 9,10).

As Hezekiah began to lead and inspire, things began to happen:

1. The priests and Levites sanctified themselves.
2. They cleaned up the Temple, the court and the furnishings, taking only 16 days (II Chronicles 29: 16-19).
3. They made a great sin-offering for the nation (II Chron. 29:20-24).
4. And Hezekiah did something quite noteworthy: It was made clear the great offering was for the whole 12 tribes, not just for Judah, but for all Israel. II Chronicles 29:24 – "...to *make atonement for all Israel...*," and then again, "*and the sin offering should be made for all Israel.*"
5. They restored the musical and vocal departments which David had set up, and which had become an important part of the Israel's worship service, and which is the back ground setting for the delivery of Psalms.
6. They began regular, systematic offerings and sacrifices. (v.27-30)"... *the whole assembly worshiped, the singers sang and the trumpeters played...*" [The emphasis is the nation endorsed it. And it is evidenced again, that a few, or sometimes, one individual, can make a difference of influencing the many.
7. The people began bringing offerings – so many, in fact, there were not enough priests in a prepared and ready state to take care of the task and the Levites had to help do the work. This may have meant the priests may have drug their feet in the very beginning of the reformation.

(The great Passover was held. The Passover was a very important, solemn, and meaningful event for the nation. The Passover was one of the three great feasts of the whole Divine Law. (This Passover story is found only in the II Chronicles account)

It says Ephraim and Manasseh were invited to the Passover: meaning the northern tribes on both the west side of the Jordan River; the northern tribes on east side of the Jordan --- the whole 10-Tribes -- were invited. The couriers (NN) went from town to town relaying the message.

Some came... it says most laughed the invitation to scorn. (II Chronicles 30:10)

But Judah made the effort of the invitation. The message to us is *that we292 invite*. The response we get is irrelevant.

The lesson, here, is that we are to take time and energy to share the way of salvation. Our obligation in this role has no contingencies. Do we fabricate contingencies? We are supposed to be doing it. But do we? It says, couriers, the runners -- went from town to town -- the runners ran from town to town announcing the invitation (GOOD NEWS/GLAD TIDINGS), just as the disciples and apostles. They went to the lost. They didn't wait for the lost to come to them. *We seem to have it turned around.*

It seems (in our dispensation of the Body) we have consumed a lot of energy, or at least a lot more energy on controversies and divisions. As a whole, we have expended very little energy on courier-ing/running the invitation to others – sharing the gospel to the lost everywhere around us. Is it that we're baptized and in our comfort zones? And that's all that counts?

8. The restored Passover went over with great success. It says there was great rejoicing, much singing, much instrumental music, and there was gladness. All this being a description of the multitude of participants having their heart in the rebirth!

It's surprising (and noteworthy) there are several incidences in this story where the divine, exacting and stringent Mosaic Law was bent/crossed by Hezekiah and the nation. Yet, clearly accepted by the Deity.

1. The Mosaic Law ordered the Passover to be held in the 1st month. Because they didn't have time to prepare everything, they held it in the 2nd month. This was an initiative taken by *Hezekiah* and the people. But there was a big difference in that *they had their hearts in this effort v.12-unity of mind;v.21great rejoicing; hearts sought...*)

2. Another infraction came when some of the participants of the Passover had not been properly cleansed and purified, according to the Law, before partaking. Yet, on this occasion the Deity accepted their act. But, they had their hearts in this effort.

3. A 3rd infraction came when the Levites participated in the work of the sacrificial offerings – the Levites actually taking the offerings of those unclean participants in #2. But a work and responsibility of the priests alone. *But they had their hearts in the effort. And the Deity accepted it.*

What is the lesson here? Faltering while having heart and love in this work of the Truth is more important than exacting every jot and tittle of the New Testament Law. Quite a contrast to "being in a state of mindless and loveless *going-through- the- motions.*"

Hezekiah's greatest test of trust was a circumstance of life and death, which came at the hands of the invading Assyrians. The career events laid out in probable chronological order, coming up to this test, seem most likely to be as follows:

First the reformation of the country, and then:

1. The siege and fall of the 10 Tribes (722 B.C.?)
2. Assyria's 1st invasion of Judah in Hezekiah's 14th year, II Kings 18:13-16.
3. Although the Isaiah account and the II Chronicles account do not first seem to concur, the next probable event is Hezekiah's sickness and recovery and 15 years of life & reign added.
4. Then the embassy from Babylon comes, where Hezekiah gloats and shows them the wealth of the national treasury. Crazy.
5. Subsequent, and finally the great trial of the 2nd Assyrian presence at their door, some 12 years later. The envoy of Rabshakeh came with taunting and persuasive words to the people on the wall.

Decision making here was a matter of life and death.

There could appear to be strong arguments for surrender:

- Had not Israel's Deity assigned the Assyrians to destroy the Northern Kingdom, because of their miserable state of idolatry? And had not Judah also been in such an idolatrous state?
- Had not this Assyrian power already overrun city after city through the habitable world?

Were they serious when they said, 'We'll give you 2,000 horses if you can find 2,000 riders....' That's like saying, 'we'll give you the weapons, if you've got the guts to fight us.'

- Had not Judah already had to "buy them off" once because they couldn't do anything else?
- Was not Sennacherib's army already just outside the city?
- To resist – and lose? The fate was clear.

Hezekiah's personal life was in the balance, his personal family's life, 294 his relatives and everyone else in his kingdom. It was notoriously on

record what the Assyrians did to resistors. Their infliction of cruelty and torture is as horrible as any recorded in human history.

But the message came from God – *RESIST. RESIST!!*

Some in his cabinet probably shuttered! (In today's modern statement-of- speech and reaction, they probably said, "*He's got to be kidding!!* ")

The test of faith that makes this king one of the greatest of men in history was - *HE DID JUST THAT! HE RESISTED. HE DEFIED THE INSURMOUNTABLE, IMPOSSIBLE ODDS BECAUSE OF HIS TRUST IN GOD.*

Very few in this particular, or type of test, would have made the decisions Hezekiah did - Even though we say we would.

We know the rest of the story. An angel came in the night and slew 185,000 of these invaders. The nation enjoyed another 100 years of independence.
Bro. Carwyn Smith

TRUTH'S SIDE

The truth creates "sides;" the for-it side, and the against-it side; and between these two sides there is no neutral ground. He that is for me, saith Jesus, is against me; and he styled himself "the truth." If we are for the truth, we cannot encamp with the enemy, and co-operate with them. Being for the truth, it will place us in the minority, and identify us with those who suffer tribulation for the truth's sake. He that runs with the hare, but holds with the hounds, will never save the fugitive from being worried to death. There were men in the days of Jesus who would preach his doctrine, and not speak lightly of him, but would also carefully avoid identification with his unsavoury name. This is referable to the pride of life, love of popularity, or to some other equally unworthy thing. It is certainly a course not prompted by a devotion to the truth, or a love of righteousness. Moses acted not thus. He renounced the throne and treasures of Egypt for the society of enslaved brick makers. Such a course evinces indecision of character which cannot be approved of the Lord when he appears

.....Let these hints be ingenuously considered by those who admit the right, but still the wrong pursue.

DANIEL - THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LITTLE HORN

"The Little Horn's character has been more obvious to interpreters than its constitution. In certain respects it is like the other Ten Horns. These were all SECULAR dynasties. If they had individually possessed "eyes and a mouth," they would all have been episcopal and speaking Horns, like the little Horn. But they possessed neither. They were simple horns, evincing power, secular, and not spiritual, in their operations. When eyes look more stout than existences around them; and their mouth speaks blasphemies against God, angels, and the saints, they become symbolical of ecclesiastical power; and inserted into a horn, they present a symbol which represents a CONJUNCT DYNASTY; that is, a dominion whose executive is imperial, and which is constituted, either of an imperial pontiff and a secular emperor, or of one Head in whom is vested the imperial administration both of secular and ecclesiastical affairs, as was the case with the pagan Roman Emperors. (Elpis Israel p.337)

To help our understanding of the development of the Little Horn power, our last article briefly set out some dates that first of all traced the growth of the pagan Roman Empire, and then specifically concentrated on the reign of Constantine. The reason for drawing attention to this Emperor was to show how he became the champion of the Catholic Church. The early zeal for the purity of the One Faith was by this time, no longer in evidence. Only relatively few held fast. The greater part of the "Christians" had succumbed to the numbing influences of the world, and the Church (as opposed to the ecclesias of the Lord Jesus Christ) sought power and influence in the world. In remarking on the 6th Seal of Apocalypse 6 verses 12-16, Bro. Thomas remarked that it "opened A.D.311-313, and closed A.D.324....It opened with the Roman Empire subject to four emperors, Licinius, Maximin, Maxentius, and Constantine; and paganism the religion of the state; it closed with the battle of Chrysopolis, the result of which was the reunion of the Empire under Constantine as the sole emperor; and the establishment of the Catholic Apostasy as the Lunar Bride of the Roman Sun." (Eureka vol. 2 p.278)

The power of the Church was greatly enhanced by the victories of this, so called Christian Emperor, who became actively involved with the running of Church affairs. The true brethren and sisters of Christ now became the persecuted community, and fled "into the wilderness" (Apocalypse 12:14) of Roman Africa. Here history makes reference to the Donatists, who Bro. Thomas quotes as being a "proscribed sect 296 ...frequently the subjects of severe and sanguinary persecution from

the Catholic rulers" (an earnest of Daniel 7:21). He states that "they must have been energised by an enlightened faith, which gave them an intellectual and moral superiority over the imbecile and drowsy sacramentalists of the time... When it was urged upon them that it was their duty to study the peace of the Church and to avoid schism, they said "What hath the emperor to do with the Church? What have Christians to do with kings, or what have bishops to do at court?...They held with James, that *"the friendship of the world is enmity against the Deity; and that whosoever therefore is a friend of the world is the enemy of the Deity"*. (Eureka Volume 2:332)

We can see how much Constantine was involved in the Church from the following quote from Eureka. "The nucleus of this (Man of Sin) power had just been born, as the Man-child of the Catholic Woman; and, although an unbaptised emperor, sat in the temple and exhibited himself there as the supreme power, or god. He presided in the Nicene and other Councils, and made laws for his church; and punished with severe pains and penalties those who conscientiously refused submission to his decrees. He was constituted "Head of the Church," and determined all matters of discipline; and acted in all respects as the spiritual vicegerent of the Deity." (Eureka 12 p350)

While the true brethren and sisters of Christ, therefore, "kept the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ (Apocalypse 12:17)," the apostate Church continued to seek power and influence in the new sphere of her exalted position. We will therefore continue to review these historical developments which led to the Little Horn of Daniel's fourth beast reaching its maturity.

A.D.330. The Empire at this early date saw the seeds of division being sown, when Constantine removed the civil and military capital to the Greek seaport of Byzantium, (present day Turkey). It was called "Nova Rome" (New Rome), and was later named Constantinople (present Istanbul). Subsequent Roman Emperors were crowned here. Thus an eastern and western section of the Empire was being created. (This was the development of the 2 legs of the Image – Daniel chapter 2). One capital was therefore left in Rome, while another was created in Constantinople. Not surprisingly, jealousy developed between these cities of the east and west accompanied by mutual suspicion between local Church leaders. The west in time also became less strongly defended, and fell before the barbarian hordes.

A.D.392-395. The division made by Constantine was consolidated by the Emperor Theodosius who drew a dividing line across what has become known as Yugoslavia, roughly where today's Catholic Croatia is divided from Orthodox Serbia. From that time onwards, the two basic spheres of religious influence started to grow. (In A.D.1054 the conflict had 297

become so great that a division occurred in the Church. This great schism resulted in the formation of the Greek Catholic Church which to this day is in opposition to the Roman Catholic Church.)

A.D.395 Theodosius the Great dies, "and the division into East and West definitely and permanently asserted itself. Honorius, one of the sons of Theodosius, took the West, making his capital Ravenna (as did subsequent Emperors); Arcadius, another son, ruling the East from Constantinoplethe political unity was observed in the vague suzerainty which the Eastern emperor claimed over the West." (Apocalypse and History p.26)

(The making of Ravenna the capital "gave opportunity to the Bishop of Rome to attach to himself "the glory that was Rome", and to exercise those secular powers which developed into the ecclesiasticism of the Middle Ages" (ibid p49). Note how the power of the apostate church had opportunity to develop further, and the Church was not slow to capitalise upon events.)

A.D.410 The Goths under Alaric invade the west and capture Rome. (First Wind trumpet – Apocalypse 8:7)

A.D.429 Onwards – the Vandals under Genseric seize on the Roman provinces in North Africa. (Second Wind trumpet – Apocalypse 8:8)

A.D.433 The Huns under Attila, invade Italy, and spread devastation. (Third Wind trumpet – Apocalypse 8:10)

A.D.476 The Empire of the West came to an end when Rome fell to Odoacer-a Goth (The Fourth Wind trumpet – Apocalypse 8:12. This was also the 7th Head of the "great red dragon" – Apocalypse 12:3). It had been weakened by the tribes of barbarians that poured over the border of the Empire (the 10 horns).

("At the same time the pre-occupation of the Eastern Emperor with his own affairs, and the political chaos in the west, enabled the Bishop of Rome to arrogate to himself enormous secular powers in Rome and the neighbouring districts." (ibid p.53)

By A.D.520 - The Roman Empire of the west had entirely disappeared. "In its place 5 barbaric kingdoms had been established (Francia; Burgundy; Visigothia; Vandalia; Ostrogothia). Although the Germanic tribes overthrew Roman rule in the west, they had no desire to overthrow Roman customs and traditions. They loved to bear titles bestowed on them by the Emperor of the east." (Apocalypse and History p.52)

A.D.527 Justinian, an Emperor of Constantinople, defeated the Goths and was proclaimed sole Emperor.

A.D.529 Justinian collected and condensed Roman law, which he 298 promulgated in one Code, known as the Justinian Code, in which he

supported the Roman Bishop.

A.D.533 Justinian in what was known as his Decretal Epistles proclaimed and sanctioned the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Pope.

(These gave the Pope control of Municipal and Provincial Government – the eyes and mouth of Daniel 7:8)

A.D.608-610 The Emperor Phocas came to power after a revolution in the east. He proclaimed that the Bishop of Rome was the "head of all the churches".

(Thus we see the power of the Roman Catholic system increasing, with the aid of the Emperors who reigned from Constantinople, the military seat of the Byzantine Empire. The Bishop of Rome was unrivalled by any other Bishop).

* * * *

(At this point in our historical analysis, it will assist our review to refer to the Franks, and their association with the papacy. The development of the Mohammedan power (A.D.622) began to challenge the Eastern Empire, and Constantinople was threatened (although it did not actually fall until 1453). The Papal power, challenged by the Moslems east and west of Europe, had therefore to look elsewhere for military support. This support came (1) with the rise of the power of The Franks, and (2) the establishment of the empire of Charlemagne, which became known to history as The Holy Roman Empire.

What follows is mostly taken from "The Apocalypse and History."

"Though free from the political and ecclesiastical supremacy of Constantinople, the papacy was threatened by dangers at home. The Lombards, who overran Italy on the extermination of the Ostrogoths, were Arian Christians like the Visigoths and Burgundians, and the bishop of Rome in his extremity turned to the Franks. These were Germanic people who crossed the Rhine... The first war-lord of whom we have any record is Childeric, who conquered Gaul. Clovis, who succeeded later, was converted to Roman Christianity..... At the close of the reign of Clovis (A.D.511) the Frankish Empire had become firmly established..... Early in the seventh century Count Pippin, of Hersthal and Landen, one of the chief advisers of a young king (Dagobert), strengthened his own power, and made his office hereditary, preparing the way for the deposition of the reigning power.

On the death of Pippin, Charles Martel, his son (Charles the Hammer), became mayor of the Palace of Neustria and Austria... The crowning moment of his life was when he defeated the Saracens at the battle of Tours in A.D.732. He drove the Moslems out of France into Spain. 299

Pippin of Heristal, the son of Charles Martel, decided to become a king, and a national council of the Franks approved the accession of Pippin...He was a clever diplomat and staged an elaborate ceremony at which Boniface (the Pope at the time), anointed him as "king by the grace of God". It was claimed that any who opposed such a king opposed God whose representative on earth the Pope claimed to be. The sanction of the Pope to the accession of Pippin had really been given because the bishop of Rome desired the aid of the Franks against the Lombards. The latter had taken Ravenna and approached Rome. The Pope fled to Pippin, who avowed to assist him.

In A.D.754 Pippin invaded Italy and subdued the king of the Lombards.

A.D.758 Pippin invaded Italy which was still dominated by Arians (the barbarians who had accepted an apostate form of Christianity based upon an "Arian" theory of the unity of God, and who were bitterly opposed to the Trinitarianism of the Catholics).

Pippin conquered the principalities of the country, and gave to the Pope what became known as "the States of the Church", the three kingdoms of Italy, (1) the Exarchate of Ravenna, (2) the kingdom of the Lombards, and (3) the State of Rome. (The three plucked up horns of Daniel 7:8).

(The Pope now enjoyed Temporal Power, and the "Little Horn" had grown to its full height.)

(The States of the Church granted by Pippin, were confirmed by Charlemagne (Charles the Great), (his son), and were represented by the triple crown worn by the Pope. These States remained under papal control until 1870 when the Temporal Power was lost).

(In the conquests of Charlemagne through which the Papal power was further extended, three of the major independent "horns" or kingdoms were uprooted, namely (1) the Heruli, (2) the Ostrogoths, and (3) the Vandals.)

In A.D.800 an incident occurred which demonstrated the power the Papacy arrogated to itself. Charlemagne was attending a service in the ancient Church of "St" Peter. When he arose from prayer, the Pope placed a crown upon his head, called him Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, and hailed him with the title of "Augustus" which had not been heard for hundreds of years. From then on, the Emperors of Germany were also crowned Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire. The coronation of Charles by the Pope was a great advance in the prestige and influence of the Church.

Further historical details could be adduced, but sufficient has been cited to show the development of the Little Horn of this Fourth Beast, and its "constitution" (see quote from Elpis Israel at the commencement of this article). We will conclude this part of Daniel chapter 7 next time (God Willing), by making reference to the Little Horn's character.

Signs and Events

Signs of Christ's Return

"And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee"(Deuteronomy 28:37).

Some may think that with all the liberal thinking and struggle for human rights, in today's society, that anti-Semitism is a thing of the past. We know from the Scriptures that it will never be forgotten, and we only have to listen to a news report or read a newspaper to see that the Jews are as hated now, as they have ever been. We hear of suicide attack after suicide attack on innocent Israel civilians, but we never hear any details about these people. However, what we are constantly hearing and seeing in the media is how hard done by are Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian people.

Five Israelis were killed in a suicide attack a few weeks ago, but what did the BBC focus it's report on? The terrible devastation on Yasser Arafat's compound and the decimation of his troops.

When ten month old Shalhevet Pass was shot in the head and killed while lying in his mother's arms, by a Palestinian sniper, the headline of the *Washington Post* reads: "Jewish Toddler Dies in West Bank".

When twenty Israeli teenagers were murdered, and many more injured by a suicide attack on a Disco, the associated press reported: "Explosion kills Bomber in Tel-Aviv".

It is no secret that if you wish to be a successful journalist, you must be pro-Palestinian. Fiamma Nirenstein, a reporter for the daily *La Stampa* and the weekly *Panorama* writing on the apparent bias said: "They tend, they are expected, to place those clashes within an agreed-upon framework: the framework, roughly of David (the Palestinians) versus Goliath (the Israelis).

"It is not just that we are talking about a profession, the world press, that is almost entirely uniform in it's attitudes. The truth is that Israel, as the Jewish state, is also the object of a contemporary form of anti-Semitism..."

So who is at the root of this anti-Semitic climate in the media? None other than the Mother of Harlots, the Catholic church. Apparently, the very best universities in Canada from which one can get a degree in public relations are Catholic run institutions. The Pope was even quoted in 1975 as having said to members of the church: "Lay people, whose

particular vocation places them in the midst of the world and in charge of the most varied temporal tasks, must...exercise a very special form of evangelisation. Their primary and immediate task is not to establish and develop the ecclesial community- this is the specific role of the pastors- but to put to use every Christian and evangelical possibility latent but already present and active in the affairs of the world. Their own field of evangelising activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, but also the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts, or international life, of the *mass media*." It's not surprising that Yasser Arafat is a frequent visitor to the Vatican and has even signed a covenant with them!

The media may have a big influence on society now, but we know it will have no affect on God's ultimate plan with the Jews and the rest of mankind. Isaiah tells us in chapter 60:16, "Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." This is the time we look forward to, and we must realise that the present hostile attitude toward Israel will divide and unite nations according to prophecy, which will lead up to the great battle of Armageddon.

It was interesting to note in the media this week that President Putin declared that Germany was his "chief ally" and both countries remain unconvinced of Britain's and America's position in relation to Iraq. Poland has announced that it has a desire to join the EU in the near future, which would provide a gateway to Germany and Russia. We can see that Europe is becoming stronger and more confident, at the same time as Britain (and her young lions) is becoming alienated and increasingly unpopular with her neighbours. We plan, God willing, to develop these ideas in the next few issues.

Events at Christ's Return

"These refractions are the brilliancies, splendours, or glorious vestments of the dew. Before the dawn, the dew-drops are all in the womb of night; from which both they and the dawn receive their birth, begotten by the orb of day. No figure can be more beautiful, no resemblance, more complete (Anastasis).

In the last issue, we expressed our desire to produce a series of articles on events in connection with the return of Christ.

We would like to start the series with the subject of the resurrection. There are many different personal views on this subject, opinions on whether or not graves will literally be opened, whether the dust of perished 302 bodies will be used in the resurrected body, will we be raised with

the same imperfections in our bodies that exist now? Etc. However, we don't wish to deal with opinions but Scriptural facts, under the following headings: -

1. The resurrection call;
2. The meaning of resurrection;
3. Who will be resurrected?
4. What is the difference between responsibility and accountability?

Anyone studying the subject of resurrection will be aware that it is a huge subject, and as such, these four headings will form part one of an overview article on the subject.

- 1. The resurrection call.** There is no clear testimony in Scripture to explain the way in which the resurrected shall be called. Bro. Thomas says concerning the call: "It is the power of this period for the resurrection of the saints, which will be loud enough for them to hear; for they respond to it and come forth (John 5:28, 29). An angel's whisper can wake the dead, when breathed by the command of Him, who is the resurrection and the life. This would be a "*great sound*," though inaudible to ears of flesh." What Power and Command the Deity has to execute His Will!
- 2. The meaning of resurrection.** Resurrection is a rising again. Paul, in his address to Felix, declares that he entertains the hope that there shall be a "resurrection of dead ones, both of just ones and also of unjust ones." The word *anastasis* signifies a rising up, a standing up; to stand up, or again, to cause to rise, etc. Therefore, the dead bodies of the responsible ones will be rebuilt and caused to stand up again. At present, those dead responsible ones are historical characters, without any existence. We know that the dead ones will not sleep in the dust perpetually. The Psalmist says: "The wicked shall be turned unto sheol, all the nations that forget God; but the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever" (Psalm 9 v 17-18). Also, in the book of Job we read of the hope of Job in the resurrection. Job says: "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand In the latter day upon the earth; and, after I shall awake, though this body be destroyed, yet from out of my flesh shall I see Eloah; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not a stranger" (19 v 25).
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- 3. Who will be resurrected?** Scriptural testimony is clear. Only the responsible will be resurrected from the dust of the earth. Daniel 12 v

2: "And many of them (this shows that not all will be resurrected) that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." The Gospel of John shows us that light (knowledge) is the basis of responsibility. John 9 v 41: "Jesus said unto them, if ye were **blind**, ye should have **no sin**: but now ye say, we **see**; therefore your sin **remaineth**." Also, John 15 v 22, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin." This shows that the Word spoken by Christ rendered them responsible.

There are three classes of those responsible. First, those who are baptised and righteous. Second, those who are baptised and who do not follow the commandments of our Lord (the unrighteous). Third, the responsible unbaptised. All of these classes will be resurrected from the dead, the first class to 'everlasting life' and the last two, to 'everlasting death'.

4. The difference between 'responsibility' and 'accountability'. Bro. Thomas in Anastasis draws our attention to the Scriptural idea expressed in these words. Responsibility is the state of being answerable for something entrusted to one's care. This is the position of those who enjoy covenant status, or 'saints'. They must answer for the way they deal with the charge delivered to them and for the way they discharge the responsibilities which covenant status confers upon them.

Accountability is liability to give an account. Those "sinners" who have been enlightened by the Truth, but have refused to accept its responsibilities will nevertheless have to give an account of why they so refused. They will be held accountable to, but not responsible for the Truth they have ignored.

"Sinners" are justified by faith by responding to the teaching that is delivered to them, thus those who reject it must give **account** as to why they rejected the Word - John 12:46-48.

"Saints" are justified by works by living the Word, hence they will be held responsible for the sacred deposit of the Truth delivered to them and must answer for the way they have used it. Thus it will be that they will either be godly or ungodly according to their actions.

In our next article, God willing, our desire is to look more closely at the process of resurrection based on Daniel and 1 Corinthians, as expounded in the pioneer writings. Let us hope and pray that Christ's return will interfere with my intention, and that those dead in Christ shall rise before I am permitted to write of those things.

Thoughts Gleaned By The Way

By A Wayfarer

"For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted" (Heb. 2:18 R.S.V.)

God is fitting "the poor of this world, rich in faith" as the future rulers of this world when it is changed from its present sinful state to one – *"wherein dwelleth righteousness."*

It is not only scriptural (1 Cor. 6:2-3), but reasonable, that he is not fit to rule who has not first conquered HIMSELF and has experienced the things which those he rules over have experienced. Before one is permitted to rule, he must first prove himself qualified to rule in whatever capacity he seeks to rule.

Christ is the great example of those who will be qualified to rule in the Kingdom of God.

"He made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant ... He humbled himself and became obedient unto death... wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:7-9).

Since the kingdom which God is to establish on earth is a kingdom "wherein dwelleth righteousness," it is fitting, yea, necessary that those who are chosen to rule in that kingdom shall be righteous in the lives which they now live.

In the characters which they now build must be exemplified the principles of righteousness upon which the kingdom will be established and ruled.

Just as the kingdom is eternal, and those who inherit it must be of incorruptible nature (I Cor. 15:50), the principles of the kingdom are immutable and those who inherit it must be guided by that *"hidden man of the heart, which is not corruptible."*

An incorrupt character must precede incorrupt nature. A character based upon, and patterned after the *"lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life"* will have no place in the Kingdom of God. 305

The Covenant of the Holy Land Explained

Bro. Oscar Beauchamp -Nov. 64

. . . the blessings of the covenant are by no means confined to Israel; for the gospel of the covenant reads, *"In thee, Abraham, and in thy seed, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"* (Genesis 12: 3), and again, *"A father, O Abraham, of many nations have I constituted thee."* (Genesis 17:5) This shows that the nations as well as Israel will be the sons of Abraham, and consequently brethren of Christ their King; for even he is descended from a Gentile, that is, from Abram. From the promises is revealed the purpose of God, which is this, that from the beginning, He has determined at a certain period of the world's history to organise *a confraternity of nations*, of which Israel's should be the first-born, which of course, would make the father of the Jewish nation the father of all the rest, and the King of Israel and his nobles, the king and princes of the earth. . . . The nations will be Christ's when they are brought into federal relationship to Abraham, after his resurrection from the dead. Gentile settlers may then inherit the land with the Jews, as it written:

"Ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, who shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel: they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. And it shall be, that in what tribe the stranger (or Gentile) sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord God" (Ezekiel 47: 2 -23)

. . . If the covenant had related only to Israel, Abraham would not have been constituted *a father of nations*; and the gospel would have been announced only to the Jews. . . . seeing that the nations are eligible to the blessings of the covenant in national association with Israel are the nobles and governors of the Abrahamic World to be of the Jewish nation only? Or will Gentiles be admitted to equality and fraternity with them as the immortal associates of the King? This was the mystery which for several years after the day of Pentecost no man, no, not even the apostles, could solve. The prophets plainly teach Jewish and Gentile national confraternity in the Age to Come; but the fellowship of believing men from all nations with believing Israelites in an everlasting possession of the power, glory, and honour of the kingdom to be set up on the covenant-land through faith in it and in the name of its King *"was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is revealed to the holy apostles and prophets by the spirit"* in the days of Paul (Ephesians 3: 5). The gospel of the kingdom, which for the first few years was preached only to the Jew, was announced to the nations by Peter at Cornelius's house, and thenceforth to the present time, and hereafter until the door is shut at the appearing of Christ for the purpose of taking out from among them a people for the Lord's name (Acts 15: 14), who shall become a Jew by adoption, that they might inherit Yahweh's Israelitish Kingdom, and be associated with the "King of the Jews" in everlasting dominion over the dwellers upon earth. . . . "The flesh profits nothing" in the kingdom of God. . . . Even a Jew must become a son of Abraham by faith, and his circumcision be of the heart, before he can inherit the kingdom; how much more necessary in the case of Gentiles, seeing they have no hereditary claim on Abraham at all.

Deep Things of God: Old Demon of Puritanism

The principle of judgment has been on my mind of late. This month we invite a guest writer to address one aspect of this difficult subject. Brother Thomas really cuts to the quick in the following excerpt from one of his letters. Much ecclesial controversy could be avoided if we would only heed the Biblically based thoughts of our wise elder Brother.

"Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you. What is it? Are any of your number possessed of the old demon of Puritanism, that would not permit a woman to kiss her child on 'the Sabbath day,' because it broke the Sabbath, and savored of the flesh? And that would not allow a man to work a ferry boat unless he were a member of the church or 'in the Lord'? A demon that burned witches and hanged Quakers, because they did not pronounce Shibboleth aright?

"Beloved Brethren, human nature is always tending to extremes, and transcending what is written. As the saying is, it will strain out gnats, and swallow camels by the herd. It set up the Inquisition, and is essentially and always inquisitorial, and incessantly prying into matters beyond its jurisdiction. It is very fond of playing the judge, and of executing its own decrees. It has a zeal, but not according to knowledge, and therefore, its zeal is intemperate, and not the zeal of wisdom, or knowledge rightly used. It professes great zeal for the purity of the ecclesia, and would purge out everything that offends its sensitive imagination. But is it not a good thing to have an ecclesia without tares, without black sheep, or spotted heifer? Yea, verily, it is an excellent thing. But, then, it is a thing the Holy Spirit has never yet developed; and cannot now be developed by any human judiciary in the administration of spiritual affairs.

"There are certain things that must be left to the Lord's own adjudication when he comes; as it is written: 'He that judgeth is the Lord. Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to light hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have the praise of the Deity' -- (1 Corinthians 4:5; Revelation 11:18) -- 'every man,' whose hidden things and heart-counsels when brought to light will be accounted worthy much of praise. Does this not teach us how more important it is that brethren be more diligent in examining themselves than in examining other brethren; and that the Lord expects them to leave something for him to do in the way of judging, condemning, excommunicating, cutting off, and casting out, in 'the time of the dead that they should be judged'? *"Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit, in malice ye be children, but in understanding be perfect. "* (1 Corinthians 14:20) 307

"Do not suppose that I write these things to shame you; no, but as beloved brethren, to warn you."

Bro. Bob Widding

What Does That Mean?

"Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil?" Ezekiel 38:13

From this and other verses, it appears that the King of the South is stationed in Arabia when Gog comes against Israel. If we are living in the time of the end, why don't we see the Arab world as more friendly and cooperative with the western powers?

Two points must be kept in mind when looking at these prophecies. First: Christ must have returned, raised the dead and separated the sheep from the goats before he can march with his redeemed against the Gogian host. How much time-- and just how much of the final positioning of the nations we will witness before we are called away-- is uncertain. Christ's warning is to be prepared at all times.

Second: One thing that is clear is that we cannot look at the nations and say, "we have a while yet because..." We have all seen enough in our lifetime to know that it only takes one man and a few days to change the course of history. One man, Adolf Hitler, drove the Jews who were living in Europe to demand--and obtain-- a homeland for the Jews. When the Shah of Iran became ill and came to the U.S. for cancer treatment, it took one week for a radical Muslim, Ayatollah Khomeini, to take over the government. In that short period we saw Iran move from being our biggest ally in the area to our number one enemy! One man's action and one week on our calendar put Persia in the camp where the Bible says it will be. Things can change literally overnight!

Just days before the Gulf War in the early 90s, U.S. Senator Sam Nunn (Chairman of The Armed Services Committee) was questioned about our presence in the Arab world. He assured everyone that we had no desire to maintain a major presence in Arab Lands--we had no need to be there, and the Arabs did not want us there. No sooner had he given the world that assurance than Saddam Hussein moved against Kuwait. Saudi Arabia was afraid they would be next, and a few days later U.S., British, Canadian, Australian and other Allied powers were in Arab land in full force. Within a few weeks we had over 500,000 troops in the Arab's lands with full U.N. and Arab support. The "Merchants of Tarshish with all the young lions thereof," were sitting in the South of the Middle East just as prophesied --and at the time, I thought this had established the King of the South.

Today we watch with great interest as our welcome has once again been worn out in that region. As I write this, the U.S. and Britain have placed the U.N. on notice, and have threatened to take over Iraq. We cannot say that these actions will now establish the king of the South in its position. They may - or may not - it does not matter! World events will bring about the necessary positioning of the nations, and it's interesting to see the charges as they occur. However, it is our position relative to God that we should be most concerned about!

Bro. Jim Sommerville

