

# THE BEREAN CHRISTADELPHIAN 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. Defending the original, foundation principles upon which the Truth was uncovered from darkness, and upon which the Christadelphian movement was developed.*

*Opposed to the dogmas of papal and protestant christendom.  
Upholding the Truth as Bereans since 1923.*

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God Willing, The Berean Christadelphian 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

**HENGOED**, Wales, Breaking of Bread – 10.45am; Sunday School – 12.45pm; Lecture – 2.30pm; Bible Class and Elpis Israel Class – held alternately in the homes of the bre and sis in South and West Wales. Youth Evening – held every 2 weeks on Friday at the Aberdare Country Park at 6.30pm.

Beloved Brethren and Sisters in the bonds of the Abrahamic Covenant,

Once again we are able to share the great joy we have experienced recently in Hengoed with all of our brethren and sisters in the Berean Fellowship. On 6<sup>th</sup> May we witnessed the baptism of **Zara Tippins**. Zara had been attending our Sunday School, and we were delighted when she asked to be baptised. Zara gave a good confession of her faith and the baptism took place in the Aberfan Swimming pool where some of our young brethren and sisters have put on the Saving Name of the Lord Jesus Christ over the last few years. Zara was exhorted from the Daily Reading for that day where the Philippian Jailor had also obeyed the Gospel with his family (Acts 16), and the Berean attitude of searching the Scriptures in Acts 17 was also alluded to. Holding fast in times of trial and distress were also thoughts that were developed, and that resonated with us all as we examined how much we had grown since our own baptisms. Sister Zara was welcomed into the Berean Fellowship by Bro. Arthur Hughes on the following Sunday morning. Bro. Steve Male had provided sound words of exhortation for her that encouraged, amongst other things, the following of our Daily Readings as set out by Bro. Roberts. We pray that Yahweh will bless our young sister as she accompanies us on our walk Zionwards.

Our joy and comfort continued as two weeks later her parents, Bro. Gordon and Sis Vivienne Tippins were interviewed for fellowship on 20<sup>th</sup> May after withdrawing from another Group. Bro. Gordon and Sis. Vivienne had been looking into the Berean Fellowship for some time and they had come to realise the responsibility of being in a Group where error is tolerated. They gave unequivocal agreement to the Doctrine of Fellowship and Withdrawal and during the interview the brethren present from Hengoed thoroughly questioned them on the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ. Coupled with the teaching of walk and conduct there was complete unity of mind that brought great joy to all of the brethren and sisters of Hengoed. They were given the right hand of Fellowship by Bro. David Hughes after Bro. Andrew Ford provided an exhortation for them and for us all, reminding each one of us of the mutual blessing and comfort we have in one another.

The additions earlier in the year of Bro. and Sis. Ford (Junior and Senior) along with our new brother and sisters have enlarged the ecclesia and the Sunday school. We have been enjoying the company of the little

ones as well as the brethren and sisters. We feel a deep sense of responsibility in our altered circumstance. We have also been exhorted when we consider the zeal of those who have joined us. Their determination to keep separate from the world and to develop the principles of righteousness in their lives has been a great encouragement to us. We look forward to walking together in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace.

This year has also seen our Gathering which was held in Buckland Hall during the weekend of 17<sup>th</sup> March. The study was based on the Prophecy of Daniel and we listened to sound expositions and exhortations during the weekend. Our understanding of this great prophecy was enlarged as we considered the deep things that Daniel desired to understand. A public address was also given on the Sunday that had been advertised via a distribution of leaflets in the Brecon area. Sadly no-one turned in to listen to an excellent outline of the world events that culminate in the Stone Power smashing the Kingdom of Men into fragments, and leading to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. We would like to take this opportunity of thanking all the brethren who spent so much time preparing for these talks.

We would also like to thank everyone who attended the Gathering. Many miles were compassed to be able to attend and we appreciate the efforts extended by all. The opportunity to talk about the things of the Truth was a great blessing.

We also enjoyed the company of those who stayed after the Gathering. Bro. Ted and Sister Marguerite Mingham and Bro. Alexsey Matvejev extended their visit and we had the pleasure of their company in our homes and around the emblems of our absent Lord. We would like to thank Bro. Ted Mingham and Bro. Alexsey Matvejev for providing words of exhortation to help us in our warfare of faith.

With love in Elpis Israel and on behalf of the brethren and sisters of the Hengoed Ecclesia.  
Bro. Phillip Hughes

## FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

**HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING**..... Jul 24–30, 2006

Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1, Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868

Study Class Topic: 1Thessalonians; Daily Bible Readings; Discussion on Zech. 1-7

**NE FRATERNAL GATHERING – BOSTON**.....Sep 30–Oct 1, 2006

Bro. Len Naglieri, romans6@mac.com, USA. 1-603-598-1745

## Jeremiah – Prophet of Judgment and Glory

For the past few weeks we have been with the prophet Jeremiah in his trials and sufferings. His life was one of the loneliest and saddest in Scripture. His personal experiences were bitter. The message of disaster he had to proclaim was depressing and unwelcome. And the times in which he lived were of unparalleled national calamity. His efforts were foredoomed to failure. It was a lost cause from the beginning. He was everywhere hated and misunderstood. While intensely loving and grieving for his countrymen and his nation, he was despised and persecuted as an enemy and a traitor.

But amidst all this background of thick gloom, there shines in a few chapters in the center of the book the glorious picture of the eternal kingdom of righteousness that will finally triumph, and in which this rejected prophet will have an honored part.

*“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely”* – chapter 23.

Chapter 31 – *“He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.”*

Jeremiah was born in the closing years of the long evil reign of Manasseh. This king’s reign sealed the doom of the kingdom and brought to an end God’s much-tried longsuffering and patience. Jeremiah records, in chapter 15, God speaking, *“I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem...I am weary with repenting.”*

The evil Manasseh was born during the fifteen years that were added to Hezekiah’s life, when he pleaded with God. Far better for Hezekiah and for Israel, if Hezekiah had submitted to God’s wisdom and gone to his rest with his glorious record of faith unsullied, as God in His mercy had planned.

Jeremiah begins his ministry in the reign of the good king Josiah. It was a bright brief interlude of righteousness, but it did not last. Josiah began to reign when he was eight years old. When he was sixteen, he dedicated himself to serve God, and when he was twenty, he set about purging Judah from all their wickedness and idolatry. Jeremiah began his ministry in the next year—the thirteenth of Josiah’s reign. Jeremiah would be about the same age as Josiah—about twenty.

It is truly a touching picture of these two young men—king and prophet—laboring to turn the nation to righteousness, as the smoldering judgments of God hovered over the land, just as two young men—a prophet and a king, John 196—Berean 2006 and Jesus—did in the days of the nation’s final judgment.

It is notable that Jeremiah's ministry began just 40 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple by the Babylonians. We remember that Jesus began his ministry just 40 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple by the Romans. In each case a 40-year period of final probation was given to the city.

Jeremiah's mission was to witness for God against apostate and worldly Israel. The Jews today still jealously preserve and revere the prophecy of Jeremiah, though it contains their condemnation as a nation and the record of God pleading in vain with them to return and be saved.

Jeremiah's work was not only as a witness of condemnation. It had a far more glorious purpose. It was principally to encourage and strengthen the scattered faithful remnant of his own day and of all ages since. In this sad time of present crisis for the Truth, its message of comfort has great and sustaining power.

When the terrible judgments came, it would appear that God had completely repudiated Israel and that all hope was gone. But the lonely prophet with his message of eventual glory was a symbol that God was still concerned with them, though they were unfaithful. And his prophecies gave comforting assurance that those who held fast would never be forgotten. And that though these dreadful evils were to come, still the latter end would be blessing and peace.

The name Jeremiah has become in the world proverbial for a 'killjoy,' for one who foresees only doom and disaster. But we know Jeremiah better than that. The world hates those who call attention to its wickedness and folly, and who raise their voice to warn of the judgments that will come upon it. The Jews of Jeremiah's day are typical of human nature everywhere. Though they recognized that he was sent by God, still they blindly hated him for his faithful testimony and resented his foreboding of disaster.

The world powers at the beginning of Jeremiah's time were Assyria and Egypt. During his ministry the Assyrian Empire was completely obliterated, and its mighty and capital Nineveh, long the wonder and terror of the whole earth, was leveled to the ground so completely that it was soon forgotten and lost. Only in modern times have the ruins of Nineveh been found and identified. And during Jeremiah's time, Egypt was cast down from its age-old preeminence and has ever since been a base kingdom, enslaved and ruled by foreigners.

Jeremiah's day marked the beginning of the great image of Nebuchadnezzar—the kingdom of men—just now running out.

Jeremiah prophesied during the reigns of Judah's last five kings—Josiah, Jehohaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. The chapters of the book of Jeremiah are not in chronological order. Unless this is noted and effort is made to get the right sequence of events, it would be **Berean 2006—197**

quite confusing to attempt to place these various kings in relation to each other.

When the zealous young men—Josiah and Jeremiah—set out together to bring Israel back to God, the picture looked very promising. In cleaning out the temple, which during Manasseh's long evil reign had become broken down and neglected, there was found the book of the law. It is hard to realize that the book of the law had been so completely forgotten that Josiah, though seeking God, was for years unaware of its content. How impressive is the lesson that this could happen in one generation! This was six years after he had begun his great reformation. And still, when this book was discovered and read to him, he rent his clothes and sent in haste to inquire of God what should be done to avert the evils therein prophesied.

God's answer to Josiah was that it was now too late! The evils were on their way and could not be turned aside, but because he was faithful and God-fearing, it would not come in his day.

It was testified of Josiah, 2 Chronicles 34, that "*all his days they* (the children of Israel) *departed not from following the LORD.*" What a wonderful tribute! What better record could any man leave behind him than that! That all his days, his zeal and example and influence were such that he had kept his people wholly in the right way.

As a result of finding the book of the law, Josiah kept a great passover in Jerusalem—the greatest and most solemn passover since the days of Samuel.

Did the people, who flocked joyfully to that celebration, realize that this was the end? They had received and taken for granted God's forbearance and mercy for so long. But this passover was terribly ominous in its seeming peacefulness and sense of endless blessing.

God had always been there to welcome and to forgive, whenever Israel tired of sin and its consequences. But this passover was different, as time was soon to prove. It was the final burst of divine glory and witness before the long Gentile night closed down upon them. They partook of this feast all unheeding that they were on the brink of the chasm into which they were soon to be cast.

The providential finding of the book of the law, the provision of a righteous king and a faithful prophet, and this great passover—all these combined to make God's last manifestation of mercy to them before their impending national destruction. But all this had no permanent effect. They seemed very enthusiastic and sincere while Josiah lived, but it was all on the surface. He did not reach to the transforming of their hearts. They were still just ordinary human people, like the countless millions that have come and gone. Though there was a great show of piety, they failed completely to make contact with the spirit of life.

Thirteen years after this passover, Josiah met his death in a strange and **198—Berean 2006** tragic way. He was still only 39. What caused Josiah to go out against the host of Egypt? And to persist in joining battle with Pharaoh, even when the latter warned him away and assured him he had no quarrel with him? It is very hard to fathom.

The record strongly gives the impression that God was warning Josiah through Pharaoh. This too is very strange, but perhaps in keeping with the circumstances.

We wonder why such a man as Josiah would not seek counsel of God before setting out to defeat a great empire. But there are other cases of very good men neglecting to follow divine guidance in matters of great importance, and while well meaning, bringing themselves and others much trouble. The incident seems to come under the heading of a tragic mistake, rather than a sin.

Pharaoh had entered God's land, though just to pass through, and Josiah, strong in faith, went out to oppose the invader. But God did not desire him at that time to set out to conquer his mighty neighbor. The defeat of Egypt by Judah did not fit into God's purpose. So apparently the time had come for Josiah to be removed, so that the determined course of history could proceed. The evil was not to come in his day.

It is recorded that Jeremiah lamented for Josiah. Well he might, for he above all would realize that with Josiah's death the last curtain fell on the happiness and well being of Judah. The nation now had 23 appointed years of existence left, and they were to be a terrible 23 years.

The most prominent part of Jeremiah's ministry would now begin. We know little of his life up to this time. But now he finds himself at increasing variance with his nation and its rulers, as they plunged down the path of destruction.

All Josiah's reforms and arrangements were soon swept away. The illusion of national righteousness that had been maintained by the king's zeal and influence dissolved before the ugly realities of hatred and bitterness. The people made Jehoahaz, Josiah's son, king, but he lasted only three months. The king of Egypt took him prisoner, and set up his brother Jehoiakim in his stead. A heathen presumed to designate the ruler of God's kingdom for the first time! Egypt was to pay dearly for this presumption. Foreigners were to set up her rulers – Ezekiel 30. So it has been for over 2000 years since.

Jehoiakim reigned eleven years, and Jeremiah had much to do with this ungodly man. In the first year of his reign, Jeremiah was commanded to stand in the court of the temple and proclaim to all the people that came to worship that unless they put away their wickedness, God would make the temple a desolation and the city a curse to all the nations of the earth.

Exactly the same charges were brought against Jeremiah by the priests and false prophets, as were brought against Christ that he had **Berean 2006—199** spoken against and threatened the temple of God. They said, "Thou shalt surely die." But at this time the princes and the people saved him from the priests. For in God's purpose, he had much work yet to do.

And this was just one year after Josiah's death—the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Jehoiakim. In the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years of Jehoiakim, a very significant chain of events occurred—one of the great turning points of history. We are told in Jeremiah 25 that the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim was the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Nebuchadnezzar. This, incidentally, is a very important connecting link between Scriptural and profane history. An indication of a great change in God's relationship to Judah, Jeremiah proclaims to the nation that he had now warned them for 23 years and that they had not hearkened, and that consequently, the long foretold evil is about to begin. Judah has now 18 years to go.

It is at this time that the Spirit reveals through Jeremiah that the captivity by Babylon will last 70 years. And, at the same time Jeremiah is commanded to write all his prophecies in a book, and to have it read before all the people as a solemn witness. This was completed in Jehoiakim's 5<sup>th</sup> year. The book was publicly read as commanded, and the princes who heard it immediately took the matter before the king, and began to read it to him. When two or three columns had been read, the king seized the book, cut it with a knife, and threw it into the fire.

That was the point at which the nation's doom was finally sealed. That event ranks in significance with the rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah. "*His blood be upon us and upon our children,*" they cried, as the living Word was cut asunder, and He was cast into the sacrificial fire.

Jeremiah records with sadness and wonder that when the roll of God's Holy Word was divisively cut and burned, "*Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words.*" They were all in it together.

At the same time, in this 5<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim, which was the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Nebuchadnezzar, another event of immense importance took place, which though a long way away and under very different circumstances and surroundings, we can see was directly connected with and dependent upon this final appeal and witness by God and His official rejection by the king and the Israelitish nation.

As Israel was rejecting God, God was revealing to an alien that He was rejecting Israel—the Kingdom of God was to be cast down and the kingdom of men to be given unrestricted sway for seven times—2520 long evil years.

For it was in this fateful year, we are told, Nebuchadnezzar received his dream of the great and terrible image. He is told that it represents the kingdom of men that is to rule the world in violence, bloodshed, and lust, until God's

rejected kingdom is reestablished. Measuring from this event—604 BC—it was **200—Berean 2006** exactly 2520 years to 1917, when the last desolator was driven out of the land.

Because of the proclamation of Jeremiah's book of prophecy, Jehoiakim sought to seize Jeremiah. But it is recorded that the LORD hid him.

He was commanded to write the book again and to add many words to it—make the judgment even greater. More evils were included, because of Jehoiakim's insolent rejection. And among them may well have been the prediction that this king, of all the long line of mostly evil kings, this one should have the crowning indignity of the burial of an ass—his body cast out to abuse and insult.

Jehoiakim doubtless felt he was quite a hero in daring to flaunt the Word of God, as is the custom of modern thought today, but *"God is not mocked."* The final end of the matter will show where wisdom lies.

All, who reject God's Word, will suffer the same end—the burial of an ass, or as David expresses it, *"Like sheep are they laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning."*

We can afford to wait in patience, seeking humbly to work out our own salvation in fear and trembling. Popular ideas of manliness are the direct opposite of godliness.

Now that this final written testimony of God has been nationally rejected, a new phase begins. Jeremiah is commanded to keep himself separate from this people as a witness of their rejection. He is forbidden to join with them either in mourning or in feasting. He found himself in the same isolated position as the faithful find themselves in the world today.

Much contention may stir up such feeling as to defeat its own purpose. But a silent, consistent, public course of action is a continual reminder that may eventually provoke sober thought and accomplish good. God often used the personal lives of the prophets in this way—living examples and object lessons. Like Jeremiah, God's people today are required to manifest a striking difference in their lives from the surrounding world, so that they will be unmistakable beacon lights of truth, for any seeking truth.

Jeremiah was forbidden to marry. To the natural mind it may seem hard and unfair to impose this restriction on a faithful man through no fault of his own. But wisdom will realize that all pleasures and comforts are from God, and that He will surely see that none of His obedient servants will ever lose out because of their obedience. There was no fatted calf in Jeremiah's life to make merry with his friends. But he was among those few who live close to God, and of whom it is transcendently true that *"thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."* This was a far deeper and more satisfying bond between

Jeremiah and God than can ever have been conceived of in the natural relationship of human beings. **Berean 2006—201**

Jeremiah lamented, as have many other men of God, *"Thou hast borne me a man of strife and contention to the whole earth!"* It is not a pleasant course, but when things are not right, no other course is possible.

Would it have been a true kindness for Jeremiah to have gone along with them for the sake of peace and friendship, ignoring what was wrong, when his duty was to warn and to save them? As Paul had to exclaim to those for whom he had labored so hard, *"Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"* The truth is often not pleasant, but it must be spoken. Jeremiah was told they would not hearken, but would simply intensify their anger and resentment against him, because of his warning words.

The time came when he was forbidden to pray for them – Jeremiah 14, *"Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry."* Forbidden to pray! It had now come to that! *"I will not hear their cry."* Opportunity had finally past. This would apply nationally, not individually. As a nation, they were doomed—the calamities and the destruction would come. It was irreversible; nothing they could possibly do could avert them now. But, there would always be the remnant drawn out. So Jeremiah continued to preach and to warn.

A little while before Jeremiah's book of judgment was made public, as if to providentially create a background of urgent necessity for the message, Nebuchadnezzar had made his first invasion of Jerusalem—a shadow of what was to come. They were warned.

He had put them under tribute and had carried certain selected ones away, including Daniel. Though this would give a tremendous emphasis to Jeremiah's warning, still in the face of everything they stubbornly refused to even listen, let alone obey.

We are still in the 11-year reign of Jehoiakim, whom Necho, king of Egypt, had set up when he carried captive Jehoahaz, who had reigned three months following the death of Josiah. Jehoiakim's reign was troubled throughout by plundering raids from the surrounding nations, whom God was sending to gradually reduce Judah to misery and helplessness.

Jehoiakim died and, according to Jeremiah's prophecy, his carcass was dragged out through the gates of Jerusalem and cast upon the rubbish heap of Gehenna. It was an ominous symbol of what was about to happen to the throne and the kingdom. Eleven evil years had passed, since Josiah's death; eleven worse years were to follow, and then the end.

Jehoiachin, Jehoiakim's son who followed him, lasted only three months and was then carried prisoner into Babylon, spending the rest of his life in

captivity. But he managed in those three short months to leave behind a record that *“he did that which was evil in the sight of God.”*

Then came Zedekiah—weak, cowardly and evil, but not as bitter against **202—Berean 2006** Jeremiah as Jehoiakim had been. However, with the increasing disasters of the country, the general antagonism to Jeremiah grew. The better and more godly of the people had been carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar—those among whom Jeremiah could have found friends and supporters. This is shown in the vision of the two baskets of figs in chapter 24. The very good figs are those like Daniel, whom God had caused to be taken to Babylon to save them from the miseries of Jerusalem’s last dying days.

We see how strangely God works. Would the ones who were carried captive realize that they were the blessed and favored ones? Though torn away from their homes by these cruel invaders and marched off in chains to a foreign land? Very often, what seems to be most distressing circumstances are provisions of God for our own ultimate good. God’s beloved children are never at the whim of time and chance. *“All things work together for good for them,”* we are divinely assured – Romans 8.

With the good people removed from the city, we can picture the hardness of Jeremiah’s lonely position, left behind as a witness to this rejected and doomed remainder. It was his heavy lot to stay with them to the end, just as Ezekiel at the same time was chosen to proclaim God’s words to the captives in Babylon, and Daniel was placed where he could speak to and influence the Babylonian conquerors according to God’s purpose.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Zedekiah, Jeremiah came into contact with the false prophet Hananiah, who said that within two years Babylon would be broken and Judah freed. Jeremiah replied that, for speaking lies in the name of God, Hananiah would die within one year. This happened as foretold—a further divine confirmation of Jeremiah and warning to Israel. The warning was ignored and the hatred for Jeremiah intensified.

At this time Jeremiah sends a letter to the captives in Babylon. In it he says, Jeremiah 29, *“Seek the peace of the city whither I (God) have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.”*

It is always somewhat of a task to adjust our relationships to the countries of our pilgrimage. Complete separation is, of course, the primary requirement. And we must be very careful to maintain a strict aloofness, even in our sympathy, from all the politics and regional factions. We are citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel; to every other affiliation we are strangers and pilgrims. But our general attitude must be as Jeremiah cautioned—no bitterness, no antagonism, no deliberate provoking of the authorities, who are at their wits end in a crumbling world. But rather a detached, but not

unfeeling. kindness and goodwill, praying to the LORD for them, *“for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.”*

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In this letter Jeremiah tells the Babylonian captives, as he had previously proclaimed in Jerusalem that the captivity should last 70 years, so that the land might enjoy her sabbaths of rest, which the people had neglected to observe. There is a striking lesson here. We see from this that all down through their occupancy, God had been keeping an accurate record of all the years they had failed to rest the land according to His law, and now they were to be driven out, while this full time was to be measured off.

God may appear not to be noticing—someday the reckoning comes. *“The lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.”* As a man soweth, so shall he reap. It is inexpressibly sad that this often attested principle is so generally forgotten.

It is interesting and significant that God said for their final punishment that He would render to them double. He said, Jeremiah 16, *“First I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land.”* And Isaiah proclaims in the final call, chapter 40, *“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people...her warfare is accomplished...she hath received of the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.”*

Now it is difficult to determine the exact year, but the general periods are clear. From the call of Abraham to the destruction of the kingdom is in the very close neighborhood of 1260 years, or 3 ½ Scriptural times. This throws light on the 7 times—double 3 ½—of the scattering of Israel (Leviticus 26) and the 7 times of the Gentile tree (Daniel 4). Seven times is 2520 years.

We are today living near the end of the 70-year time-of-the-end period, measured 2520 years from the beginning and the ending of this 70-year Babylonian ascendancy. It runs from 1917 to 1987. In this 70-year period at the latter end of the great 2520-year arch of time, we are in exile, waiting as the captives were waiting for Cyrus to destroy Babylon and issue the proclamation for all God’s people to go up to Jerusalem.

The events of the years that have passed since 1917 make it very clear that the time of redemption is at hand.

There is another statement in this letter of Jeremiah’s that stands out from its immediate context with eternal beauty and power. *“Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”*

We have now come to the final years of the kingdom. Zedekiah plotted and intrigued with Egypt against Babylon, until Nebuchadnezzar decided that the only solution was the complete destruction of Judah. And we are to read in Jeremiah to see how this finally came upon them.

Bro.

G.V.Growcott

## Our Ecclesial Relationships

What does the word “fellowship” mean to you? Well, according to Strong’s concordance, it means becoming a partner; a partaker; a sharer or as this hymn 161 proclaims – a walking together. This ecclesia of ours has gone through quite a lot of turmoil, trials and challenges the last year or two, and doubtless **204—Berean 2006** will experience conflict in the future if the Lord delay His return. But as with individuals, so also do ecclesias go through character building exercises in the form of trials and challenges as it goes through its probation as the bride of Christ.

In our readings this week in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians, The apostle Paul, in 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 1:4-5 says “*So we ourselves glory in you in the ecclesias of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.*” A commendation of their patience and faith in the face of trials and tribulations.

But during this process, it is easy to lose the basics that we learned because our attention was focused on the issues of the ongoing controversy. Basic things this Hymn 161 implores us to do. I wonder do we really listen to the words we sing?

Brethren, let us **walk together**  
In the bonds of **love and peace**  
Can it be a question whether  
‘Tis in union,  
Brethren should from conflict cease?

While we journey homeward, let us  
**Help each other** on the road;  
Foes on every side beset us,  
Snares through all the way are strew’d;  
It behoves us  
Each to **bear a brother’s load.**

When we think how much our Father  
Has forgiven and does forgive,  
Brethren, we should learn the rather  
**Free from wrath and strife to live**  
Far removing  
All that might offend or grieve

Then let each esteem his brother  
**Better than himself to be;**  
**And let each prefer another**  
**Full of love, from envy free**

**Happy are we**  
**When in this we all agree**

We intend this morning, to use the words of this hymn as the basis of what we hope will be a profound and thought-provoking exhortation.

We begin with the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans, which **Berean 2006—205** tells us....

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a LIVING SACRIFICE, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD: but BE YE TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, NOT TO THINK OF HIMSELF MORE HIGHLY THAN HE OUGHT TO THINK; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in ONE BODY, and all members have not the same office: So we, BEING MANY, are ONE IN CHRIST, and EVERY ONE MEMBERS OF ANOTHER.”*

Now following our compliance with these verses, and especially after our mental transformation through the spirit Word, what is our attitude, obligations, interaction, and responsibilities to our brothers and sisters in the ecclesia? Do we realize to what extent we are our Brother’s keeper?—Do we understand that all our actions are an exercising influence upon others for good or bad? — Is our attitude toward all our brothers and sisters all the scriptures says it should be?

We, Brothers and sisters are the ecclesia of Christ.—We are the called out ones! We compose and make up individually the body of Christ. But how do we know that this is true? Because when we turn to Ephesians 1:19-23 we read these words.. “*And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the ECCLESIA, Which is HIS BODY, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*”

Now, we brothers and sisters have been baptized into Christ, and have put on Christ, and have become a member of the BODY OF Christ.

This is what 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12 verse 27 tells us— “*Now ye are the BODY OF CHRIST and MEMBERS in particular.*” So, collectively, we are the body of Christ, but individually I am one member of that body that goes to make up the whole.

We are also informed in Colossians 1 verse 18— “*And he (Christ) is the HEAD of the BODY, the ECCLESIA.*”

So what has our investigation revealed so far? Christ is the HEAD; The ECCLESIA is the BODY; Those baptized into Christ are MEMBERS of the **206—Berean 2006 BODY.**

Now that we understand composition of the ecclesia, just how is this body of Christ supposed to function? Well, the Apostle Paul in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12: 12-21 gives us a good outline of how we are to act and interact with each other as members of that ONE BODY. He does this in parabolic form by comparing the actions, reactions and inter-workings of the members of the physical body to that of the body of Christ. He informs us that the physical body is one unit, but it has many members which make up that unit. So also is the body of Christ. He goes on to tell us that God is no respecter of persons because by one spirit we have all been baptized into that one body.

Paul emphasizes that the physical body has many members – the ear – the foot – the hand – the eye – the head. Because the body is not one member, but many!! So if our bodies were nothing but eyes, we could not hear, run, wave the hand nor think. And the same is true if it were all ears, feet, hand or head. So he poses the question – If they were all the same member, where is the body? But he answers his own question by saying “*But now hath God set the members everyone of them in the body AS IT PLEASETH HIM.*”

All the above applies to the ecclesia, the body of Christ. Each member can not function independently of other members of the body. Just as our physical body can not function completely without the eye and ear doing its part neither can the body of Christ without the cooperation of all its members with their various talents. For as verse 27 tells us “*Now ye are the BODY OF CHRIST, and members in particular.*”

We all make up different parts of the body. All have inter-action and inter-dependence on other members of the body. No member is of less value or importance than any other member. We all have a role or function, no matter how insignificant it may appear – it contributes to the functioning of the whole body. Some of us are exhorters, office holders, singers, Sunday school teachers, presiders, cooks, maintenance workers, dish washers, good at visiting the sick or elderly or whatever may be our talent, job, duty or chore. We all have our strengths and weaknesses which go to make up the body. All fill a part, a need, and a void in some capacity to help the ecclesia function. Our uncomely parts, or our less attractive duties are just as important and vital to the health and strength of the body as any other duty we may esteem to be more desirable.

In another letter that Paul wrote to the Ephesians in chapter 4 verses 15 and 16 he says “*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 (united) by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, (member) maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”* And so in the 26<sup>th</sup> verse of this 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians. The body is so compact in unity so that when one member suffers, all suffer. Or when one member be honored, all rejoice. **Berean 2006—207**

But, as members of that one body, we have been given certain commands concerning our association and relationships with each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. One of which is found in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:5 “*Likewise ye younger submit yourselves to the elder. Yea ALL OF YOU BE SUBJECT ONE TO THE OTHER, and be CLOTHED with HUMILITY: for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.*”

We have two words that we do well to consider in this verse – SUBMIT and SUBJECT – both come from the Greek word *hupotasso* means to subordinate, to obey, be under obedience, subdue unto, subject unto, in subjection to, and submit self unto.

We are given several instances in the Scriptures where we are admonished to be a submissive people.

1. Subject to principalities
2. Subject to Higher powers
3. Subject to masters
4. Subject to Gospel of Christ
5. Wives in subjection to husbands
6. Children in subjection to parents
7. Submit to God
8. Submit to ordinance of man

All from the same word that means humble, meek, loving submission to one another. So let us take a look at some of the COMMANDMENTS we are given concerning our association and relationships with our brothers and sisters who make up the body of Christ. First, we will stay in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter at 3:8-9 “*Finally, be ye ALL of ONE MIND, having COMPASSION one of another, LOVE as brethren, be pitiful, (sympathetic) BE COURTEOUS: not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing: but contrariwise BLESSING: knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*”

In 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:14-16

“*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we LOVE THE BRETHREN. He that loveth not his brother Abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him, Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to LAY DOWN OUR LIVES FOR THE BRETHREN.*”



Paul instructs us in Hebrews 13, “*Let BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE.*” How many times are we told that LOVE is the fulfilling of the Law?

Again the Apostle Paul instructs us in Galatians 6 verse 9 – “*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, ESPECIALLY unto THEM who are of the HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.*”

**208—Berean 2006** After all, our brothers and sisters are fellow heirs – fellow servants – fellow laborers in the Truth – fellow soldiers in the fight against the flesh. We all have problems – we all have weaknesses – we all have strengths. And because we as individuals combine to make up the body, we rely on each other for guidance – spiritual uplifting — support in areas where we may be found lacking – and most of all inner-strength in areas where we may be weak. We are united together by the works which every member supplieth, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Galatians Paul tells us – “*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST.*”

Earlier, in Galatians 5 at verse 13 Paul tells us the manner in which we are to carry out our duty to one another – “*For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, BUT BY LOVE SERVE ONE ANOTHER.*” Now the apostle Peter tells us how and to what extent we should carry out this duty to each other in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:22 – “*Seeing ye have purified your souls in OBEYING the TRUTH through the spirit unto unfeigned (open and sincere) love of the brethren, see that ye LOVE ONE ANOTHER WITH A PURE HEART FEVERENTLY.*” –not just half heartedly – not grudgingly or reluctantly – But our service and loving submission to each other MUST be performed WILLINGLY – OPENLY – and FERVENTLY.

The apostle Paul instructs us in Hebrews 10:25 “*Not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.*” And as a body we are to “*speak to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for ALL THINGS unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. SUBMITTING ONE TO ANOTHER in the fear of God.*” Eph. 5:19-21.

This submission or subjection to each other must be done with “*brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.*” So, we must be “*of the same mind one toward another.*” A unity and oneness of the body is imperative if all the parts are to work smoothly, effectively and in harmony. The psalmist David tells us “*How good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.*”

Another aspect for us to consider in our endeavor to keep the body a functioning unit unto Christ our head, is our FORBEARANCE of each other. The apostle Paul once again is our instructor from the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Ephesians “*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; endeavoring to keep the UNITY of the spirit in the bond of peace.*”

The main thought in this passage is the apostle’s plea for a walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. The words “*Forbearing one another in love*” are added as an explanation of how to conduct **Berean 2006—209** such a walk. The Greek word from which we get the word “*forbearing*” is only so translated in one other passage in the new testament – “*Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; FORBEARING ONE ANOTHER, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; — even as Christ forgave you; so also do ye.*” (Col. 3:12-13)

In the other 13 places where this same original word occurs, it is translated “*bear with*” four times, “*endure*” two times and “*suffer*” seven times. The meaning given to this original word from which “*FORBEARANCE*” has been translated in the two passages quoted is literally “*TO HOLD SELF BACK.*” That is true forbearance: holding back ourselves, so that we may each esteem our brother better than ourselves to be.

Just try to think of the word JOY when we contemplate our relationship with our brothers and sisters –

Jesus first  
Others in between  
Yourself last

Such a relationship between brothers and sisters in Christ is a direct command that forms the basis of all our activities in the truth and the body of Christ. Philippians 2:3-4 tells us this — “*Let **nothing** be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each **ESTEEM OTHERS BETTER THAN THEMSELVES.** Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*”

Now Paul says this forbearance MUST be done in love, — not just as a matter of duty. If love is in our hearts – the kind of love the first commandment enjoins upon us toward God – with all of our strength, soul, mind, and body, then this love will then extend to all things pertaining to God — and His people.

John tells us if we can’t love our brother whom we have seen— how can we love God whom we have not seen? You see, it is easy to put our brother ahead of ourselves — to hold back ourselves – IF we love him; but it cannot be done any other way. The super-structure of that building of God for the habitation of himself through the spirit that we are called upon to build by the indwelling influence of the spirit Word, is based upon love of God and for our brothers and sisters.

When Jesus was asked which is the great commandment in the law? He replied *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy HEART; and with all thy MIND. – this is the first and great commandment and the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the Prophets.”*

**210—Berean 2006** But one may ask, can I not come to the meetings on Sunday morning and partake of the emblems of the Lord’s sacrifice as an individual, apart from any relationship of love and compassion for those about me in the meeting?

The answer I found out of course is NO! – Simply partaking of the bread and wine in a cold and ritualistic fashion is not desirable. For as with all commandments, I can not simply go through the motion – But I MUST exercise it with EMOTION!!

God wants my heart, my love, my trust, my confidence and my reverence. He wants my heart and mind stayed upon Him as the great source of all love, mercy, life, wisdom and power. He wants us to have a feeling of oneness, of fellowship, of love and compassion among ourselves. For we are all the children of God by the faith we have in Christ Jesus.

So I ask, who am I to withhold from God’s elect that feeling of love and tenderness which HE himself holds toward them, as well as toward ourselves? – Without this as the underlying principle of all my actions, I may go through the routine of following in detail, in a cold, detached and formal way many of the commandments that have to do with our walk in the truth, only to find out that I have missed the GREATEST requirement of all – THE FORBEARANCE OF ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE.

We, brothers and sisters are part of a whole — members of a body — closely knit together with Christ at the head and God over all. As such, we cannot act independently without regard to the rest of the body any more than our hand or foot, or our eyes or ears can perform their function without co-ordination and sympathy of the rest of the body.

We are co-dependent upon each other and must interact with each other in a united, cooperative, coordinated, thoughtful and sympathetic manner if we are to be like that one body Paul describes in Ephesians — *“But speaking the truth in LOVE, may grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted (or united) by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto edifying of itself in love.”*

The state of our hearts in relation to our brethren MUST be such as we hold toward Christ himself: For he identifies himself with his disciples — So what we do to them, we do to him as he himself tells us – *“whoso shall receive one such a little child in my name, receiveth me.”*

Brother Roberts in his writing of the Epitome of the commandments of Christ gives us his thoughts on how a brother or sister should live in the truth and attributes they should possess. He tells us a brother or sister should be *“Holy in all manner of conversation, Gentle – Meek – Kindhearted – Compassionate – Merciful – Forgiving – Sober – Grave – Sincere – Temperate – Hearty in everything – Watchful – Brave – Berean 2006—211 Joyful – Courteous – Sympathetic with others, both in their sorrows and in their Joys – Clothed with Humility – Patient toward all – Following after those things that are true; honest; pure; lovely; and of good report.”*

Christ demonstrated to us how our service and submission to each member of the household should be — when he washed the apostle’s feet. It should be with love – compassion and caring for each other as a family member of a MOST SPECIAL FAMILY.

Not COMPELLED RELUCTANTLY to JUST perform our duty — But willingly; wholeheartedly; fervently; and anxiously awaiting our service in the body – and if we do that, then our Christ-like submissiveness by *“being subject to one another”* will manifest itself in the true manner required. Anything short of this will not be acceptable or pleasing in the eyes of God,

I am thankful to be a part of the body of Christ in the Lampasas Berean Christadelphian Ecclesia. We function as closely as possible according to the commandments and precepts given us by Christ and his Apostles. We realize that *“two cannot walk together except they be agreed.”*

We know that in Christ (that is his body) there is neither Jew nor Greek – Bond or Free – Male nor Female – Black or White – Rich or Poor – Yankee or Texan – Canadian or American – For we are all ONE in Christ Jesus – God has no respect of persons, boundaries, labels, social status or nationality. We are all EQUAL in the Body or Ecclesia. We have no preeminence or degrees of rank in the ecclesia – but only lowly servants to God, Christ and each other.

As the Apostle Paul again tells us — *“I have planted, Apollos watered; But it was God that gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything – neither he that watereth; But God that giveth the increase.”* Paul also tells us in Phillipians chapter 2 verses 13 and 15 – *“It is GOD which worketh in us both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights of the world.”*

In conclusion, our subjection to each other should not be out of a sense of dreary duty or a task we reluctantly perform; but rather a loving commitment to the Brotherhood and a whole hearted willingness to serve each other with love, humility, compassion, sincerity and joy. This has to be uppermost in our hearts and minds if we want all the parts of the body to function efficiently,

effectively and smoothly without any hitches or schisms as Christ and Paul implored us to do.

I would leave you now with this thought of the Apostle Paul – *“Be ye kind one to another; tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”*

Jerry Connolly

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## Bible Reading Notes —July

*“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope”* (Rom. 15:4). These words of Paul indicate that the far-reaching benefits obtainable from the Scriptures are dependent upon knowledge. Vital information, warning, exhortation, and lessons are contained in every part of God’s Word, both Old and New Testaments. The knowledge of these matters is best acquired by systematic reading, and the accompanying table, which is part of a complete compilation, will greatly help in this direction. The daily readings for July are 1 Sam. 13 to 31, 2 Sam. 1 to 17, Isaiah 56 to 66, Jeremiah 1 to 21, Matthew, and Romans 1 to 8.

### 1 AND 2 SAMUEL

These two books recount the histories of Saul and David. Notice the continual disobedience of Saul, for which God finally rejected him. It is seen in his unlawful sacrifice (**chap. 13**), his failure to slay the Amalekites (**chap. 15**), his persecution of David (**chap. 18**), and his recourse to the witch at Endor (**chap. 28**). His outward professions of piety were valueless, being unaccompanied by genuine concern for God’s requirements. Samuel told him, *“To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”* The same lesson holds good for all who would serve God. Jesus is *“the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him,”* and to none other (Heb. 5:9). Some find it difficult to harmonize God’s unqualified command to Saul to slay the Amalekites, *“both man and woman, infant and suckling,”* and the divine attributes of love and mercy. The difficulty disappears when the treacherous, loathsome character of the Amalekites is understood (Deut. 25:17; Lev. 18:24). Another apparent difficulty is presented by Saul’s visit to the witch at Endor. Some use this incident to support spiritualistic theories. Whatever explanation is offered concerning this incident, it must harmonize with the oft-repeated declaration of Scripture, *“The dead know not anything”* (Eccles. 9:5). Samuel had died, and was therefore unconscious. It is quite likely that the spectral figure purported to be seen by the witch was a reflection from Saul’s own brain. Alternatively, it is possible that God brought Samuel from the dead to deliver the final denunciation (**chap. 28:18**). This view is supported by the fact that the woman greatly feared the unexpected development (**verse 12**), and by the prophetic character of the message (**verse**

**19**). The godly disposition of David stands out in marked contrast to the unfaithfulness of Saul. Notice his humble origin (**chap. 16:11**), his faith in challenging Goliath (**chap. 17:45**), his discretion (chap. 18. 5), his mercy towards Saul (**chap. 24**), his prayerful attitude (**chap. 30**), his desire to build the temple (**2 Sam. 7**), his contrition (**chap. 12**). These qualities gained for him the title, *“The man after God’s own heart.”* David’s shortcomings are recorded in common with his virtues, a fact which testifies **Berean 2006—213** to the inspiration of the Scriptures. The tragic incident resulting in the death of Uzzah (**2 Sam. 6**), contains a warning against the danger of careless forgetfulness in regard to divine laws. The ark was set upon a new cart. This act was contrary to the command that it should be carried by means of staves upon the shoulders of the Kohathites (Num. 4:15). Not even they were allowed to touch it upon pain of death. Uzzah’s disobedience was visited with instant death, and David afterwards recognized the cause of the disaster (1 Chron. 15:12). The lesson of implicit obedience to all that God has commanded is of paramount importance. **2 Sam. 7** contains the covenant made with David. He was promised a seed who should reign upon his throne for ever before him. The seed was Christ (Luke 1:32). He will reign upon David’s restored throne at his second coming (Isaiah 9:7). David will then be resurrected and immortalized in fulfillment of the covenant (2 Tim. 4:1). All true believers will participate in the *“sure mercies of David”* (Isaiah 55. 3). David’s sin in the matter of Bathsheba should be considered in the light of Psalm 51, which reveals his repentance and contrition. David was pardoned (**2 Sam. 12:13**), but the bitter experiences which followed his act were a warning to all Israel of the gravity of the offence. These experiences, recorded in **chap 13** and onwards, should be studied with reference to Nathan’s words found in **chapter 12:11**.

### ISAIAH 56 TO 66

The outstanding feature of these chapters is the continual reference to the glories of the coming Kingdom of God. **Chapter 56** alludes to the house of prayer for all people to be erected in Jerusalem when Israel are re-gathered to their own land. **Chapter 58** depicts the blessings to come upon Israel when God causes them *“to ride upon the high places of the earth”* (**verse 14**). **Chapter 59** speaks of the Redeemer who shall come to Zion, and **chapter 60** describes the manifestation of the Light of the World who will dispel the darkness which covers the earth and the gross darkness the people. It foretells the prosperity of Christ’s Kingdom and the future mission of Britain (Tarshish, **verse 9**) in bringing Israel and their wealth back to the land of their fathers. Christ’s rulership will be unchallengeable (**verse 12**), and will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations (**chap. 61:11**). **Chapter 65** describes the new heavens and earth, characterized by joy, longevity of life, prosperity, peace, and security, and **chapter 66** the universal worship of the Only True and Living God. These are the features of the

Kingdom which Christ will shortly set up on earth, and which he bade his followers to seek above every other object in life (Matt. 6:33).

## JEREMIAH 1 TO 21

Jeremiah prophesied during the reigns of Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, kings of Judah. He witnessed the captivity of his people at the hands of the Babylonians. His message fell on unresponsive ears, but he never failed in his lonely mission. He was one of those *“holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”* (2 Peter 1:21). The power of the **214—Berean 2006** Spirit is strikingly described in **chap. 20:9**: *“His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.”* Jeremiah's message contained evil tidings for Judah. *“An evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land”* (**chap. 1:14**). The nation had become corrupt (**chap. 2:19**), it had turned to idols (**chap. 3:6**), and had not profited from the retribution which followed the sins of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel (**chap. 3:8**). Even at this late hour the prophet was sent to the people with pleading messages from God to turn to Him and receive His mercy (**chap. 4:3; 7:3; 13:16**). Jeremiah aptly illustrates the long-suffering of God described in 2 Chron. 36. 15: *“The Lord God of their Fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes and sending but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words.”* The language is descriptive of the earnestness of the divine entreaty and explains the gravity of Israel's offence in spurning it. Little wonder that the judgments of God fell with such severity upon this privileged people. The principle is equally applicable today to Gentiles who have God's Word among them. *“How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?”* (Heb. 2:3). The first twenty-one chapters of the prophecy describe many of Israel's sins, for which they were punished. Their rebellion (**chap. 5:5**), immorality (**chap. 5:7**), impiety (**chap. 5:10**), contempt of God (**chap. 5:19**), hatred of His Word (**chap. 6:10**), abominable idolatries (**chap. 7:31**), lack of valiance for the truth (**chap. 9:3**), lying prophets (**chap. 14:14**), and trust in man (**chap. 17:5**), are a few of the transgressions named. God determined to punish them by taking them off their land and scattering them among all the kingdoms of the earth (**chap. 15:4**). The literal fulfilment of the threatened punishment is the guarantee of the promise concerning future restoration. Jeremiah foretold the re-gathering of Israel (**chap. 16:15**), and their future prosperity when Israel and Judah are joined together as one nation in the land of their fathers (**chap. 3:18**). *“At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all nations shall be gathered unto it, to the Name of the Lord, to Jerusalem”* (**chap. 3:17**). This prophecy will receive its fulfillment at the second coming of Christ to the earth. Jeremiah had many exhortations for the faithful remnant in Judah. *“Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth”* (**chap. 9:24**). The prophet showed the way of obtaining this knowledge. *“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart”* (**chap. 15:16**). All who follow

these divine injunctions can confidently say with Jeremiah, *“Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for thou art my praise”* (**chap. 17:14**).

## MATTHEW

The opening chapter gives the genealogy of Jesus, *“the son of David, the son of Abraham.”* The information is given, doubtless, to demonstrate that Jesus was the *“seed”* promised to both these patriarchs, through whom *“all families of the earth should be blessed”* (**Gen. 12:3**). It further shows that Jesus was of sinful, human nature, though he was born by divine begetting as narrated in **chapter 1:18 to 25**. There is no suggestion **Berean 2006—215** in the record of any pre-existence of Christ. God was his father, the Holy Spirit was the power employed to beget him, and the child born was *“the Son of God”* (**Matt. 3:17**). The Gospel record by Matthew continually stresses the mission of Jesus as the future King of the world. **Chapter 2** records the visit of the wise men to worship the child *“born to be King of the Jews”* (**verse 2**). They came to Bethlehem, the city fore-ordained to be the birthplace of the *“ruler in Israel”* (Micah 5:2). Herod's ruthless decree illustrated the literal meaning applied to these sayings, for he saw in Jesus a rival claimant to his throne. John the Baptist heralded the appearance of Christ in the words *“the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* He meant that the life and work of Jesus would pave the way for the subsequent establishment of the long promised kingdom of God upon earth, when Christ should reappear to rule therein. This kingdom was the theme of Christ's preaching (**chap. 4:23**). He bade his disciples to seek it above every other object in life (**chap. 6:33**). Its glory was foreshadowed in the transfiguration (**chap. 16:28**). Jesus promised his twelve apostles co-rulership therein (**chap. 19:28**), and extended the same promise to all his followers (**verse 29**). He foretold the signs which would herald its approach (**chap. 24**), and described in parable the characteristics of those who should inherit it (**chap. 25**). At his trial before Pilate he publicly declared that he was the destined King (**chap. 27:11**), and among his last recorded sayings is a reference to the power vested in him (**chap. 28:18**). The Sermon on the Mount recorded in **chapters 5 to 7** is an epitome of Christ's commands, without an observance of which there can be no salvation. *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father”* (**chap. 7:21**). In the last two verses of Matthew's Gospel the conditions of salvation are clearly set forth. They comprise an understanding and observance of all things commanded, including baptism (**chap. 28:19**).

## ROMANS 1 TO 8

This epistle was written to expound the great truth that salvation could be obtained only by faith in and obedience to the Gospel of Christ. Its keynote is found in **chap. 1:16**: *“The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”* The apostle demonstrates, firstly, the inability of the Gentiles to attain to righteousness. His description of their unholy practices (**chap. 1:20-32**) is a

standing indictment of the depravity of human nature unenlightened by the Truth of God. Paul then shows that the Jews, notwithstanding their possession of the Mosaic Law, were no better than the Gentiles (**chap. 3**). But forgiveness of sins and justification before God had been made possible through the redemptive work of Christ (**chap. 3:25**). The argument is next developed by a reference to Abraham, the Father of the faithful, who was justified by faith without the Law of Moses, and whose example is commended to all who believe in Jesus (**chap. 4**). In **chap. 5** the apostle shows the far-reaching benefits obtainable through Christ. By nature all are without hope. “*Death passed upon all men*” (**chap. 5:12**). “*By one man's disobedience many were made sinners*” **216—Berean 2006 (chap. 5:19)**. But through Christ's obedience “*grace reigned through righteousness unto eternal life*” (**chap. 5:21**). **Chapters 6 to 8** are devoted to exhortations to believers to renounce sin, and become servants of righteousness. Baptism represents a death of the “old man of sin,” and the birth of the new man in Christ Jesus. A life devoted to the service of God will bring forth “*fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life*” (**chap. 6:22**). This glorious reward, available to Jews and Gentiles upon the principle of faith and obedience, is an expression of the “*love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (**chap. 8:39**). An appreciation of this sublime truth will engender hope (**chap. 8:24**), and a disposition to endure tribulation, distress, persecution and sword in the effort to attain the promised reward.

## Signs of the Times

“*And I will bring thee forth, and all thine army...Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them...*” Ezekiel 38:4-5

The world is facing an energy crisis, and in a world so dependent on energy, this has the potential for a catastrophic outcome.

And what two countries are posing the greatest threat to the stability in the energy world? Who, but Russia and Iran — Russia squeezing the world with its gas supplies, and Iran by threatening to place embargoes on its oil exports should the UN insist on Iran halting its nuclear programme.

The EU3 (Britain, Germany and France) have all agreed that Iran must be reported to the UN Security Council if Iran insists on continuing its nuclear programme and refuses to resume talks to resolve the matter.

Many countries have voted to report Iran to the Security Council, including the US, Australia, Canada, India and most European countries. Need we be surprised that of the few countries who have abstained from supporting this move Russia and China are amongst them?

Both countries have vested interest in Iran, Russia being more or less the sole supplier of arms and equipment to the state since the fall of the Shah in the 1970's. China having signed an agreement with Iran in 2004 to buy oil and gas over a number of years, also agreed to help develop an Iranian oil field.

Most of the governments see Russia and China as a potential stumbling block to resolving the issue.

But what is the issue really? Why do the Western nations oppose a nuclear Iran, and Russia and China not? Well firstly to operate a nuclear power station, Uranium enrichment facilities must be set up, facilities which can then be used equally good in the construction of nuclear war heads. The US, Britain, Canada, Australia, India etc. see this as a major threat to peace in the Middle East, given that Iran would like nothing more than for Israel to be wiped from the face of the map. Russia, however, being a strongly anti-semitic race, and being naturally allied with Iran, it has no problem with a nuclear Iran, and would probably be quite happy to see an Iran with nuclear capability. **Berean 2006—217**

What does this mean for us? It certainly indicates that Israel is still a “byword among all nations” (Deut. 28:37, but it also indicates yet again, that the forces mentioned by Ezekiel (ch. 38:5) are lining up.

How much longer it is before these forces come under the complete control of the latter day Assyrian, we cannot say. We do know however, that it is not far away, and that soon Russia will make her grand move to put an end to the Middle East problem and set herself in a position for world domination. We will probably not see this great invasion, but if we are faithful we will be part of that force that will smash the image upon the feet (Dan. 2:45), and bring to an end his haughty plans for the domination of the Holy Land.

Bro. Stephen

Male

## Death of Queen Victoria

It may be remembered by many that on the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee, in 1887, a large banner was displayed outside the office of the *Christadelphian* in Edmund Street, bearing the following inscription: “AN OPEN BIBLE THE GLORY OF VICTORIA'S REIGN.” It was the happy idea of a brother to unearth this, and make further use of it, as a testimony to the truth, on the occasion of the demonstration in connection with the Queen's death. Brethren were surprised, on Sunday, January 27th, to see it floating across the street in silent eloquence opposite the Temperance Hall. Its message was still appropriate, drawing attention to a matter that scarcely receives any attention in the reflections on the reign that has just closed. When the Kingdom comes, it will be seen what a remarkable work was the disentanglement of the one faith in the close of the Gentile times. *Christadelphian — 1901*

## Thoughts On Prayer

We do not always realise how much help there is to be deprived of prayer. We are promised help if we ask it. But in these dark Gentile days, when everything is explained without reference to the God of Heaven, we are apt to be unconsciously influenced by the surrounding unbelief — the more especially as God's hand is veiled at present. We cannot point to direct answer to prayer openly seen and recognisable by everyone as in the days when the

Spirit of God was visibly present as a witness, working with and confirming the words of the disciples.

You must not be moved from the steadfastness of your faith and hope in God. Faith can see what the natural eye cannot. You know that God cannot lie. He has promised to hear and answer your prayers if presented by faith in the name of Christ. You must not conclude that because your prayer is not answered just as you wished or expected, therefore it is not heard and answered. God's ways are not as our ways. He takes everything into account. This you cannot do, because you do not know what lies before you, and you may be mistaken as to what is best for you. He will not, cannot make any mistake, and you may rest satisfied that what he permits or appoints for you is right, though at present it may seem very wrong. Faith holds on in the dark, in strong assurance that in the end all will come out right. Never **218—Berean 2006** give up the great privilege of constant prayer. You will find it a source of strength, of comfort and peace. and in the close communion with the Father you will yet find the sweetest, the most satisfying and soul rejoicing experience that human heart can reach.

Sis. Jane Roberts

## Do What is right

The Ambassador, I believe, gives satisfaction to the subscribers in America. Do what is right, be valiant for the truth, teach it without compromise, and all the lovers of the truth will approve you: for all others, you need not care a rush. Bro. John Thomas — *1866 The Ambassador*

## Analecta Apocalypcticae (3)

### *The Ecclesia is Not the Church* **Church Etymologically and Historically Defined**

In the rendering of the original before us I have not translated the word *ekklesiai*, but simply transferred it. It is generally rendered *churches*; but this word does not express the ideas of *ecclesia*. Church is a corruption of *kuriake*, which signifies “pertaining to a lord.” The Anglo-Saxons took the first and last syllables of the Greek word, as *kur-ke*, which they spelled *Circe*; but which is more obviously shown in the Scotch *kirke*; both of which are equivalent to the modern English *Chur-ch*. “Something pertaining to a lord” is the etymological signification of the word; and although, in a certain sense, an *ecclesia*

is something pertaining to a lord, and that lord the Lord of heaven and earth, yet the ideas of property and lordship are not contained in the word *ecclesia*. This is one reason why in this exposition of the Apocalypse we *reject* the word church as the representative of *ecclesia*.

Another reason is, that ideas are conventionally associated with the word which are altogether unscriptural. *Ecclesia* never signifies in the Bible “the place which Christians consecrate to the worship of God;” nor does it signify such collective bodies of “professors of religion” as pass current for Christians in and with the world, under the various “names and denominations” of “Christendom.” These, and many other ideas associated with the word church, such as **Berean 2006—219** churchman, church-warden, church-attire, churchyard, churching of women, and all such Papistical foolishness, are altogether foreign from the Scriptural use of *ecclesia*. In order, therefore, to get quit of all the rubbish we exclude church from our apocalyptic vocabulary, and hold on to the word used by the apostles. We have therefore transferred it in our rendering without translation.

Still, as an expounder of the word of truth, it is our duty to make the word *ecclesia* perfectly intelligible to the unlearned reader; for we write principally for the benefit of such.

### **Ecclesia Etymologically and Scripturally Defined**

*Ecclesia*, then, is a word compounded of *ek*, “out of,” and *klesis*, “a call, or invitation.” Hence an *ekklesis*, is “an invitation to come out;” and the assembly of people convened in consequence of their acceptance of the invitation is an *ecclesia*. This is the etymology of the word, which is also in agreement with its scriptural constitution, which we shall briefly explain.

The mission of the apostles was to the Jews first, and afterwards to the Gentiles, for the purpose of announcing to them an *invitation* from the Deity to certain things, which, when accepted, became to the invited “the Hope of the Calling.” In delivering this message, or invitation, they distinctly defined the things to which their hearers were invited. In doing this, they informed them of the purpose of Deity — that He had appointed a day in the which the whole inhabited earth should be ruled in righteousness by the Anointed Jesus, whom he had raised from among the dead — Dan. 2:44; 7:14; Acts 17:31. But that, before that “day” of the administration of the world's affairs in righteousness

should be introduced, He had, in his great mercy and goodness, determined to invite all Jews and Gentiles to share in that kingdom and glory with eternal life, upon certain specified and indispensable conditions. Hence the twelve apostles, constituting “the Apostleship of the Circumcision,” were sent to the circumcised; and Paul to the uncircumcised, to invite all ranks and degrees of all nations “to God's Kingdom and Glory” — 1Thess. 2:12.

The result proposed by this invitation was not the converting of the “immortal souls” of mankind, and the saving of them from eternal conflagration in the apocalyptic “Lake of Fire and Brimstone;” it was not **220—Berean 2006** that they might “get religion,” and by its efficacy obtain a right and title to mansions in the skies: no such clerical result as these were proposed by the invitation. The invitation was designed, in the words of James, “to take out of the nations a people for His Name.” The expected consummation was not the conversion of nations by the apostles and their successors in the faith, but the separation of a class from the general body of mankind, which class should constitute the “One Yahweh-Name;” and that by this Almighty Name the world should be ruled in righteousness. When this name is completed, — that is, when the last believer shall be inducted into it, and all its elements shall be glorified, — it will constitute the ecclesia in its largest sense. When glorified, its members will occupy “the heavens,” not the skies, but the apocalyptic heavens, to which the kingdoms of this world belong — Rev. 11:15; Dan. 7:18, 27. In the present state, they are “an ecclesia of Chiefborns, who have been enrolled for heavens” — Heb. 12:23. The apostles were engaged in enrolling men and women for the future administration of the world's affairs; so that when they shall attain to dominion they will be “the Heavens that rule.” The gospel invites men to enrolment for becoming in due time the stars and constellations of the New Heavens, in which dwells righteousness, that they may shine as such in the kingdom of their Father — Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43.

But men and women become elements of this people of the Name upon certain specified and indispensable conditions. They are invited to God's kingdom and glory; and they accept the invitation in believing the gospel of the kingdom and name, and subjecting themselves to “the obedience of faith.” What Paul styles “the wholesome words of the Lord Jesus,” are these: “He having believed and been baptized shall be saved; but he having not believed shall be condemned.” If it be asked, what is a man required to believe? The Lord Jesus replies in

the previous verse, “The Gospel” — Mark 16:15, 16. There is no salvation without belief of, and obedience to this. Hence when Philip, one of the seven deacons, preached to the Samaritans, it is stated in Acts 8:12, that “when they believed Philip evangelizing the things concerning the Kingdom of the Deity, and of the Name of the Anointed Jesus, they were immersed, both men and women.” The things of the Kingdom and the Name are the great subject-matter of the Gospel of God, “promised before,” says Paul, “through the Prophets in holy writings” — Rom. 1:2: and “*the power of God for salvation to every one who believes.*” Without this power none can be saved; hence the immense importance of “the gospel of the kingdom,” which is totally different to anything preached for salvation **Berean 2006—221** by the clergy. “The things” must be known, understood, believed, and obeyed, with an honest and good heart. This is indispensable. But the work before me is not the exposition of the gospel; but the exposition of the Apocalypse for the benefit of those who have already comprehended and obeyed the gospel. Nevertheless, for the benefit of any sincere reader who is ignorant, we refer him to the Covenants made with Abraham and David, and to the testimony concerning Jesus in the writings of the apostles, and to the preaching by these as illustrated in the Acts, for an answer to the question, “*What are the things to be believed for salvation?*” — See Gen. 12:1-3, 7; 13:14, 15; 15:6, 7, 8-21; 17; 22; 1 Chron. 17:11-15; Matt. 16; Acts 2; 3; 8; 10; 26:6-7; 28:20-23.

Now when men and women became Christians after the apostolic fashion, (and this is the only way of any account), they became members of “the Ecclesia of Chiefborns.” They were addressed in the apostolic epistles as *klhtoi kletoi*, “the called,” or invited, “of Jesus Anointed;” as “made holy in Jesus Anointed, called Saints,” or holy ones; as “the faithful in the Anointed Jesus;” as “the faithful brethren in an Anointed One;” and as “the Ecclesia in God the Father, and in the Lord, Jesus Anointed.” They, being in the Deity and in the Anointed One, and the anointing being in them, were a manifestation of Deity in flesh; and were addressed by Paul, saying thus, “Ye are all Sons of Deity in the Anointed Jesus through the faith: for as many as have been immersed into the Anointed, have put on the Anointed. There is (in him) neither Jew nor Greek; there is (in him) neither slave nor freeman; nor is there (in him) male and female: for ye are all one in the Anointed Jesus: and if ye be the Anointed's, then are ye the seed of Abraham, and Heirs according to the promise” — Gal. 3:26-29.

From these premises, then, it is evident that an Ecclesia is a community of men and women, who have accepted an invitation to the kingdom and glory of the Deity; in believing the promises and testimonies concerning the kingdom and name of Jesus Anointed; and in being immersed into him: by which faith and obedience they have been “washed from their sins in his blood; and made kings and priests to the Deity, even to the Father;” and so separated from the body of mankind for the Age to Come. The Ecclesia of Chiefborns is, therefore, not the Kingdom of God, as church, in the clerical sense, is styled; but it is the community of the Heirs of the Kingdom; and every one knows, or ought to know, the difference between the heirs of an estate, and the estate itself.

**222—Berean 2006** From these premises, the reader will readily perceive that the distinction existing between church in the usual acceptation, and ecclesia as defined above, is not fanciful, but real and important. The churches of the Gentiles are not ecclesia. They make no pretensions to be such, according to the definition I have demonstrated. The members of the churches, judging from their prayers, extemporized and printed, are not saints, but “miserable sinners.” This is the designation imposed upon themselves by the most pious of the most exquisitely orthodox establishments. Thus the Evangelical Divines, who lead the stereotyped devotions of the Fabers, the Flemmings, the Elliots, the Crolys, the Bickersteths, and McNeils, send up their voices to heaven, saying, “*Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners!*” Now, if the most pious and orthodox denominate themselves thus, what must the schismatics of the heterodox conventicles be! They all, doubtless, know themselves; and as they one and all proclaim themselves to be miserable sinners, who have gone astray like lost sheep, it would be presumption in me to dispute it. I accept, therefore, their condemnation of themselves; and am, consequently, justified in saying that a church, as distinguished from an Ecclesia, is a community of miserable sinners, possessed by a lord commonly known as “the god of this world.” It is not wonderful, then, that “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,” should reign in the pulpits and all the pews. Churchmen, since the days of Eusebius, to go no further back, will have it that the church is the kingdom of God. Well, we grant it, with the understanding, that the God whose kingdom it is claimed to be is Sin, the great god, or power, or the world.

There is nothing like understanding, and being understood, so that we may be able to call things by their right names. Here we have the line of demarcation broadly and distinctly drawn. The Ecclesias of the Scriptures are “the Heritages,” or *kleroi*, the true clergies of the Deity,

(1 Pet. 5:3, ) who shall possess the earth and all that it contains; while the churches are the Kingdom of Sin, possessed and administered by his clergy for their own glory and behalf. This being indisputable, the reader will understand that the Apocalypse is not addressed to the churches of “Christendom;” neither is the salutation of joy and peace to them. Joy and peace are only for the Saints in the Anointed Jesus, who know, and have obeyed the truth, having been purified thereby — 1 Pet. 1:22. The salutations of the scriptures are only for these; never for “miserable sinners,” whose case we dismiss for the present with the remark, that the apostles never commenced their epistles with “joy and peace to you, miserable sinners, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Anointed; but on the contrary, “to you, the Saints and faithful.” God is the Father, and Jesus the Lord, only of the enlightened and obedient; hence to these only did they send greeting. **Berean 2006—223**

*Arranged from the writings of Bro. Thomas by Bro. Bob Widding.*



## What Does That Mean?

*“And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?”* (Matthew 9:15)

Why are the disciples called “*children of the bride-chamber*”?

When confronted with controversy Jesus always evaluated the motives behind the question and answered accordingly. In this case the disciples of John question why they fast and his disciples do not. Jesus is careful not to condemn John or his own disciples, but offers an illustration which would easily explain the discrepancy in the behaviors.

It was accepted that the bridal party, both friends of the bride and that of the bridegroom, were free from many of the ritual observances which would be inconsistent with the joy and rejoicing during the week of marriage solemnities; when all instances of melancholy and sorrow are looked upon as improper and absurd. (Note Samson's wedding, Judges 14:17) Thus they could understand the differences of practice between his and John's disciples.

The expression “children” is a form of speech, and is designed to show some relation between the person to whom it is applied and certain qualities existent in that person as a result of the relationship. When any passion or influence, good or bad, gets control of a person, they are said to be children of that passion or influence. We find this used often in the Scriptures. Thus we have “*children of wickedness*,” 2Sam.7:10; “*children of pride*,” Job 41:34; “*children of the kingdom*,” and “*children of the wicked one*,” Matt.13:38; “*children of this world*,” and “*children of light*,” Luke 16:8; “*children of disobedience*,” Eph. 2:2; etc.

After the wedding, instead of the bride and groom retreating to the bride chamber alone, they spend time celebrating with their friends. These men and woman who are brought together on this occasion to celebrate the marriage-feast are “*children of the bride chamber*”.

Christ thus explains how inconsistent it would be for his disciples to take the time to participate in the ritual fasts that were being observed by the nation at that time because they were “*children of the bride-chamber*.”

This should cause us to ask ourselves, whose “children” are we?

*“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”* (Gal. 3:26)

*“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.”* (Eph. 5:1)

*“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”* (1John 3:10)

*“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”*  
(1John 2:28)

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Bro. James Sommerville