

Daniel 9:27

"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Dan. 9:27 is the completion of the prophesy of 70 Weeks. This was a period of 490 years, beginning in Artaxerxes 20th year (the 20th year of his life) in 464 BC and culminating in the crucifixion of Christ, 27 AD.

Those who subscribe to the futurist method of Bible Prophecy exposition reject the continuous run of the 490 years. They divide the 490 years different ways, generally into three separate and distinct time periods. The third period is the final week, and that itself is sometimes divided into either 3 ½ or 7 years of persecution, where, as the Futurists teach, Anti-Christ rules from Jerusalem, generally from the Temple mount.

It is this view which causes the world to reject Jesus at his return. What will really happen at the time of the end is this. At the time of the end, Jesus will cause the east winds to blow on Israel's protector, the Tarshish fleet, destroying it and creating a power void in the Middle East. Into that void will the King of the North rush, advancing on the mountains of Israel to take a spoil, or as some like to say, a spOIL.

Jesus and the saints then destroy the Russian army, take Jerusalem, and begin to reign from Mt. Zion before his saints, gloriously. The proclamation goes forth to the world to lay down their arms and submit to the righteous reign of the Son of David. But rather than understanding that this is Jesus Christ, the world, due to false interpretations of Bible prophesy, will see him as Anti-Christ.

While it is not particularly clear, the article referenced is looking for a mediator between the Jews and Palestinians and suggesting this mediator (antichrist) will confirm the covenant, and make the sacrifices and offerings to cease, as spoken of in Dan. 9:27.

As to the general discussion, Prime Minister Olmert has no chance of accomplishing his desired goal. He has tried this before, and failed miserably. He is over and done, as a politician in Israel. Part of his failure, is his willingness to deal Jerusalem back to the Arabs. His proposal to try to do this on his way out of office, is pretty hopeless, one might suggest pathetic.

Bro. Jim Phillips

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 The Berean Christadelphians 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

DALLAS-FT.WORTH, Texas. Sunday: Sunday School/First Principle Class, Memorial Meeting, Wednesday: Bible Study on Romans.

We are pleased to announce one of Adam's Race has heeded the call to come out of this present world and walk in newness of life. **Bro. Darin Anderson** was immersed in Houston on Sat. August 30th after giving a full confession of his faith, then on the Sunday he was given the right hand of Fellowship.

Bro. Darin will now become a member of the Dallas-Ft.Worth Berean Ecclesia along with Bro. John Lorquet, Bro. Bob Bent, Sis. Casey Burgamy. At present we now meet at various homes. We also have in regular attendance, several Sunday School scholars. We welcome any and all who are in the area to join us in fellowship around the table of our Lord until that day when he shall return to fulfill the promises made unto the fathers.

We are indeed encouraged by Bro. Darin's baptism and are remind that when we come together; that iron sharpeneth iron. As the days of man are quickly coming to an end and the times of gentiles are being fulfilled right before our very eyes let us continue to prepare ourselves and look for coming of our bridegroom, with our lamps trimmed and oiled. It is our hope that each and everyone of us today will hear those sweet words so eloquently put before us,

(Matt. 25:34) Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the
Love in bonds of Truth,
Bro. Bob Bent

MARLOW, Oklahoma.

Dear Brethren and Sister of the Household of Faith,

Greetings from Marlow, Oklahoma. Sis. Sharon and I, God willing, will be moving to Central Texas. Our stay in Oklahoma has been a very pleasant time in our lives. We have been here for nearly 29 years. Part of that time, we had a small ecclesia with bro. Harry, sis. Cindy Cassidy, and family plus our own family. For the last several years there have been only the two of us. In times past it was considered being in isolation, but with the communications of the times we were never truly in isolation. Nevertheless, it was always a joy when we had visiting brethren and sisters, and we would like to thank, very much, all those who have stopped by and those who have supported us with our Youth Campout Meetings.

We will be joining the Milam County Ecclesia just 15 miles southeast of Temple, TX.

Our new address will be: 495 Wolfe Field Rd., Rogers, TX. 76569 and the email address will be rwolfe@flyboysalvage.com. Our intentions, Lord willing, are to have our move completed by November 1, 2008.

We would like to take notice of the strengthening of Russia. They are a major oil producer, and now have the revenue to be a major power once again.

up," says he, "a coronal wreath of righteousness for all them who love his appearing;" and in another place he says, "to them who look for him he shall appear a second time without sin for salvation" — Heb. 9:28. Only those who are watching and prepared will share in this salvation.

"I Come Quickly"

"Behold, I come, *tachu*, quickly," or soon. This does not refer to the "coming in clouds" of ch. 1:7; but to the coming to execute the threatening of the previous verse. "I, the Spirit-man, will come soon to bring the hour of trial upon the whole habitable." In ch. 2:5, he threatened to come quickly to the Star-Angel of Ephesus, if they did not resume their original position, and take from them the gifts, by which their darkness would become complete. Nor is it the coming quickly, though it may be typical of it, indicated in Rev. 22:12. This has reference to our future, and not to a past time. I conclude thus, because in this text the time of the coming is marked by the bringing of the reward, and the giving every man according to his works. Then will be the time for the prostration of all the Satanists and spurious Jews at the feet of the Philadelphians. They will then know that these are the beloved whom they have long despised and abused. If it be a quick, or soon, coming at the fall of Babylon the Great, it was certainly a quick coming at "the hour of trial" in A.D. 248.

The Philadelphians were exhorted to "hold fast what they had." They had the word of the kingdom and name. They were to hold fast to this, or, if they did not, they would lose their crown. Every reader can understand this; and he may easily know if he have any claim upon this crown, by examining himself and seeing if he be in the faith. If he be ignorant of the doctrine of the kingdom and name, he has nothing worth holding on to; and, though he may know all mysteries, if he have not been immersed into Christ, he is not in the faith. This is the condition of "the religious world" at this day. In the time of the Philadelphian Star Angel the christian community, the religious world of that day, had the word of the patient waiting for the Spirit-Man; and was then in a position to hold fast or let go. Many now have a traditional idea that Christ will come again; but of "the word," which teaches how to wait, and how to be accepted of him as holy, un-blameable, and without rebuke at his appearing, the clergy and their peoples have not the least conception. They can not therefore "hold fast what the Angel in Philadelphia had;" and consequently have no right or title to the coronal.

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

atmosphere. No doubt, the effects were salutary in preventing the extinction of the truth, which was rapidly expiring. The storm proved fatal to many who could not stand the trial, but apostatized; and christianity was in that way, cleared of many false friends; who, in the time of peace, said “they were Jews, but were not, and did lie; but were of the synagogue of the Satan.”

“The Patient Waiting”

The ground of escape from “the hour of trial,” which was to be so terrible, was stated to be “the keeping of the word of the patient waiting for the Spirit.” The importance of this word may be estimated by the severity of the chastisement for its neglect. The coming of the Spirit-Man is the thing waited for; and the teaching which creates this expectation is “the word of the patient waiting for.” Wherever the truth was received as the result of divine teaching, the earnest and joyous expectation of the return of the glorified Jesus became a prime article of faith. This appears from many places in the New Testament.

When Paul went to Thessalonica he proclaimed the royalty of Jesus, and his return to rule the whole habitable — that there is another King than Caesar, even Jesus. Many of Caesar's subjects believed him; and, in consequence, threw away their idols, and waited for his coming. In writing to these in after years, Paul said, “Ye turned to the Deity from the idols to serve a living and true Deity; and to wait for his Son from the heavens, whom He raised from among the dead, even Jesus, who delivers us from the coming wrath.” This became to them a matter of hope. They waited for it, and were taught to do so with patience and endurance. It is, therefore, termed “the patient waiting of the hope of our Lord Jesus Anointed,” in 1 Thess. 1:3.

In both these epistles the apocalypse of Jesus occupies a prominent place. It is expressly mentioned at the end of all the chapters of the first with many important accompaniments; and, in 2 Epist. 3:5, he says, “the Lord direct your hearts into the love of the Deity, and into the patient waiting for the Anointed.” They had become impatient, supposing that the day of his appearing was at hand. But Paul corrected this error by telling them that it would not come to pass until the consummation of an Apostasy, which would be perfected under the Man of Sin: and that, when this power should be fully matured, then the Lord Jesus would be apocalypsed to destroy it, and be glorified in his saints. All who are “taught of God” understand this, and earnestly desire the event; because they know that there is no salvation till He appears. The promises are to those who love his appearing. Paul teaches this distinctly. “There is laid

As they increase their oil production, it will not only give them the revenue they lacked in the past, but will give them power over the non-producing countries of Europe; thus making them at Russia's beck and call.

Another event seems to be note worthy. President Bush's action in Iraq has brought Israel much closer to having peace and safety (being a land of un-walled villages). At the same time President Bush has been a savior to Israel, it is possible he has weakened the U.S. and its people's will to be a super-power. The U.S.'s decline in power is necessary for the Northern Host to crush the King of the South. The next president of the U.S. may be the instrument for America's decline. Brethren and sisters, look up for your redemption draweth nigh.

Love to you all in the Bonds of the Truth,
Bro. Bob Wolfe

News received at printing from **Kamukuywa**, Kenya will be printed next month.

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

CANTON FRATERNAL GATHERING..... **Oct 11—12, 2008**
Bro. Don Miller, 6695 Carriage Lane, North Canton, OH 44721 1-330-494-7717

GOLDTHWAITE STUDY WEEKEND..... **Nov 28—30, 2008**
Bro. Curtis Hurst, 250 CR 517, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868

It Is for the Prince

“O worship Yahweh in the beauty of holiness: fear before Him, all the earth. Say among the nations that Yahweh reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved”—Psa. 96:9-10

THESE thoughts are based upon bro. Sulley's exposition of the last nine chapters of Ezekiel. Bro. Sulley's book is one of the few basic books on the Truth that we should study thoroughly. It was the product of many years of investigation and labor.

Ezekiel's Temple is a difficult subject. Many in the past had struggled to get a coherent picture from it, but none had succeeded. Bro. Sulley presents a consistent exposition. It fills all the required necessities, and it is in full harmony with the Truth. In fact, it very materially assists in giving body and substance and vividness to the Gospel.

There are today, unhappily, strong movements in other groups to try to break down and discredit this whole concept. A recent one applies it all to the days of Nehemiah: a pitiful, negative, dogmatic effort that at least does serve the useful purpose of emphasizing the beauty of the Truth by contrast. Another new theory thinks the service and worship of the nations of the world will be merely voluntary. More than ever it is important that we

study, and keep clear, and defend the basic scriptural picture as presented by our pioneers.

None of us has any time to waste on nonessential, worldly, passing things, on mere self-pleasing activities. There is infinitely too much to be learned, and to be faithfully defended. The strength of a fellowship depends on the depth of the intelligent scriptural understanding of all its members. Life is very, very brief. We have absolutely no time to waste on present things.

If we hope for salvation—a few saved from the billions cast away—we must devote our lives to making ourselves a prospective part of the Cherubim of Glory which underlie and give meaning to all Ezekiel's visions. It is of the deepest significance that they rest not day and night from saying—*"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!"* (Rev.4:8).

Holiness is the essence of the purpose of God—

"Without holiness shall NO MAN SEE THE LORD" (Heb. 12:14).

The common conception of holiness is that it is theoretically beautiful and desirable, but too high for humans, and inconsistent with pleasure and enjoyment and having a good time. Until we learn that holiness is the only happiness, the only true pleasure and enjoyment: until we, by diligent scriptural study, get out of babyhood and infancy, and mature to the realization that anything not related to God is empty folly, and that anything out of harmony with pure divine holiness is ugly and dirty and repulsive—until we learn this, we are no fit candidates for the Cherubim of Glory. They forever rejoice in God: they rejoice in nothing else. They have no time for anything else.

The quality of pleasure varies according to mental development. A baby enjoys a rattle, a young child enjoys playing in the mud and comic books. As we grow naturally, we advance a **little** beyond the rattle, mudpie and comic book stage, but not very much, as we see from the adult world's amusements. Most of mankind are content with this meager advance beyond puerility. But the Word of God studied and meditated upon can carry us to much higher and fuller levels of pleasure and satisfaction, related to the beauty of holiness.

* * *

Bro. Sulley's basic picture is very satisfying. He presents a building that is ideal for the purpose intended: a vast, open structure of massive but delicate masonry latticework and archways, filled in and canopied over by thick, verdant greenery—a vivid contrast to man's increasingly horrible and artificial monstrosities.

This building will have all the freedom and healthiness and beauty and freshness of open-air living, with none of its bareness or disadvantages.

by a great degree of lukewarmness and even of much religious in decorum. "Several," says he, "come to church only on solemn festivals; and then not so much for instruction as diversion. Some go out again as soon as they have heard the lecture, without conferring or asking the pastors any questions; others stay not till the lecture is ended; and others hear not so much as a single word, but entertain themselves in a corner of the church." But, "like priest like people." These were what their leaders had made them; for it is "the leaders of the people that cause them to err." The ability faithfully to dispense the truth had become rare, as well as the taste for such employment; and Origen complains of the ambitious and haughty manners of pastors, and of the improper steps which some took to obtain preferment.

During the trial frequent communications passed between the christians in Rome and Carthage to which Cyprian belonged. The Roman brethren represent the conflict as very important, and one which God had now permitted for the trial of his servants. They said, it was the express purpose of God to manifest both to angels and men, that the conqueror shall be crowned, and the conquered, that is, the faithless apostate, be self-condemned. This was doubtless an allusion to the testimony in the letters to Smyrna and Philadelphia; in the former of which, it is written, "Be faithful until death, and I will give thee the coronal wreath of the life;" and in the latter, "Hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy coronal wreath," *stephanon*, or "crown." In speaking of the effects of the trial, they say, "Behold, almost the whole world (or habitable) is laid waste: fragments of the fallen lie in every place. With one and the same counsel, with unanimous prayers and tears, let us — who seem hitherto to have escaped the ruins of this visitation, as well as those who have not stood entirely faithful during the persecution, entreat the Divine Majesty, and beg peace, in the name of the whole church."

"The management of this persecution," says Milner, "seems to have been the whole employment of the magistrates. Swords, wild beasts, pits, red hot chains, wheels for stretching human bodies, and talons of iron to tear them; these were at this time the instruments of pagan vengeance. Malice and covetousness in informing against christians were eagerly and powerfully set to work during this horrible reign: and the genius of men was never known to have had more of employment in aiding the savageness of the heart. Life was prolonged in torture, in order that impatience in suffering might effect at length, what surprise and terror could not." It was not a local or intermitting, but an universal and constant persecution. The lightning of the Decian rage refined and cleared the whole christian

declension from christianity, which had taken place before his conversion in A.D. 246, and which moved the Deity to chastise the body. "If the cause of our miseries," says he, "be investigated, the cure of the wound may be found. The Lord would have his family to be tried. And because long peace had corrupted the discipline divinely revealed to us, the heavenly chastisement hath raised up our faith, which had lain almost dormant; and when, by our sins, we had deserved to suffer still more, the merciful Lord so moderated all things, that the whole scene rather deserves the name of a trial than a persecution" — a *peirasmos* rather than a *thlipsis*, a distinction which obtains in Rev. 2:10, and ch. 3:10.

Cyprian then proceeds to narrate the manifest cause of this trial that was to try, or put the professions of the christians of previous peaceable and prosperous times to the proof. "Each," says he, "had been bent on improving his patrimony; and had forgotten what believers had done under the apostles, and what they ought always to do. They were brooding over the arts of amassing wealth. The pastors and their deacons each forgot their duty. Works of mercy were neglected, and discipline was at the lowest ebb. Luxury and effeminacy prevailed. Meretricious arts in dress were cultivated. Fraud and deceit were practiced among brethren. Christians could unite themselves in matrimony with unbelievers; and could swear, not only without reverence, but even without veracity. With haughty asperity they despised their ecclesiastical superiors; they railed against each other with outrageous acrimony, and conducted quarrels with determined malice. Even many bishops, who ought to be guides and patterns to the rest, neglecting the peculiar duties of their stations, gave themselves up to secular pursuits. They deserted their places of residence and their flocks. They travelled through distant provinces in quest of pleasure and gain; gave no assistance to the needy brethren, but were insatiable in their thirst for money. They possessed estates by fraud, and multiplied usury. What have we not deserved to suffer for such conduct? The Divine Word hath foretold us what we might expect, saying, 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, I will visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges.' These things had been denounced and foretold, but in vain: our sins had brought our affairs to that pass, that because we had despised the Lord's directions, we were obliged to undergo a correction of our multiplied evils and a trial of our faith by severe remedies."

Even Origen, as worldly a professor of the faith as any of his day, intimates that the long peace which the body — with only the short interruption of Maximin's persecution — had enjoyed, was followed

Trees purify the air naturally and noiselessly and effortlessly. This building will host a continuous flow of millions. Living greenery everywhere, ventilation everywhere, and pure, clear, running water everywhere—are its primary characteristics. A perfect site for the Feast of Tabernacles, or "Booths," to which all nations go (Zech. 14:16). The curse will be removed. The greenery will be free from all today's pests and problems. The weather will always be ideal.

Bro. Sulley gives the basic outline, but he is quick to point out that this is the most important building in all history, that it is designed directly by God's infinite wisdom unlike anything ever before, that Ezekiel's description is very limited and elementary: and that therefore while man can humbly suggest the general unrevealed details, as bro. Sulky does, to give us something to visualize as we picture the activities there, still man cannot possibly begin to imagine the building in its full divine beauty as it actually will be. Bro. Sulley cautions us that the details and decorations and much of the layout are merely suggestive, and that we must just take them as a faint hint of the real beauty to be revealed.

At times he gives alternate suggestions; and we can legitimately formulate our own, within the basic pattern. But until we have fully studied and mastered bro. Sulley's book, it would be presumption to question or discount individual details. Bro. Sulley, like bro. Thomas, took scriptural detail very seriously, neither ignoring anything, nor conveniently spiritualizing it away.

The Truth of God is a thing of realities: beautiful, satisfying, divinely-appointed realities: not like the vague and hazy vaporizings of the world's manmade religions. Truly, mortal man can never begin to conceive of the full glories of the immortal state, and we must wisely ever remind ourselves of this. But when God has graciously given revelation and a glimpse of things to come to build our faith upon, it is our wisdom to seek to comprehend them. This is vital food for the spiritual mind, without which it cannot grow, and become strong, and overcome and cast out the earth-groveling mind of the flesh within us all. We shall be what we fill our minds with.

Bro. Sulley's exposition both makes many scriptures more plain, and gives them deeper meaning and reality and beauty. Such as—

"I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever" (Psa.23:6).

This is not only a House of Prayer for all nations, but it is the central dwelling place and assembling place and working place of the Multitudinous Christ. *"They shall serve God day and night in His Temple"* (Rev. 7:15)

Note the night as well as the day. There will never be darkness here. It will be ever brilliant with the effulgence of the Glory of God. There will be

no weariness to those who serve Him in immortal strength. *“The 144,000 on Mt. Zion, who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth”* (Rev. 14).

The apex and holiest spot of this Temple is Mt. Zion, from which the Word of the Lord goes forth through the Multitudinous Christ to all the subservient, worshipping earth.

More and more, as we meditate on this subject, we perceive that this glorious building, this divine Workshop of the Spirit, this House of praise and worship and rejoicing, this University whose student body is the whole world and whose curriculum is Divine Truth—is the living heart-center of all millennial activity and purpose.

“The Lord shall inherit Judah, His Portion in the Holy Land” (Zech.2:12).

The Holy Oblation just about coincides with Judah's ancient area.

“I will give them the Valley of Achor (Trouble) for a door of hope” (Hos. 2:15).

This is where Achan sinned and was slain and brought trouble on Israel—the first and the typical troubler—profane, godless person—among them as they enter the Land of Promise. The way of the pilgrims to the Temple will follow the line of this valley, running west from the top of the Dead Sea, along the border between the Zadok portion and the Levite portion. In those pure and godly days to come, the Achans will be quickly singled out and destroyed.

“In this mountain—this Mt. Zion—shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow” (Isa.25:6).

This house will be a vast banqueting hall, serving 100s of 1000s at a sitting, joyful, honored guests at the table of the Lord. The peace offerings of grateful thanksgiving will furnish abundant flesh, the first fruits will provide the fullness of the fields and gardens, the greenery of the Temple walls will hang thick with grapes and figs, and the surrounding trees by the river will yield all manner of fruit.

So many prophecies similarly dovetail beautifully into this foundation picture of the House of Prayer, with all its rich blessings for redeemed mankind. These are the things to which we must give all our hearts and minds. We have no time for passing rubbish that perishes with the using, taking its empty-minded devotees with it.

* * *

The Waters. Water is the symbol of life, natural and spiritual. Men are probing for life on Mars, and all we hear is that water is the key. If they can find dampness in the soil, they can hope for signs of life.

testify that “a deep declension from Christian purity had taken place, not only in the East, where false philosophy aided its progress, but also in the West, where the operation of no peculiar cause can be traced beyond the common influence of prosperity on human depravity. This is completely evident from Cyprian's account; and it deserves to be remarked, that the first grand and general declension after the primary effusion of the Divine Spirit, should be fixed about the middle of the Third Century — Milner Eccl. Hist., p. 165.

As we have said, a hundred and fifty years had elapsed from the writing of this epistle to the Philadelphians, to the beginning of this judgment upon the House of God, for the ecclesias in general, or collectively, were still “his habitation through the Spirit,” inasmuch as he had not then as yet “spued” the delinquents “out of his mouth.” During this period of a century and a half, the state of things exhibited in the New Testament grew worse and worse; and it may be generally remarked, that the same opposition to the Name of the Spirit, termed by historians “the Deity of Christ or his manhood,” and the same insidious methods of depreciating or abusing “the word of the kingdom,” or “the word of the patient waiting for Christ,” continued in all this period, which had begun in the time of the apostles, with this difference, that they were now multiplied, varied, complicated, and refined by endless subtleties and fancies, in which the poverty of taste and genius, so common in a period when letters are declining, discovers itself no less than the christian doctrine. Nevertheless, in the midst of this wide-spread and general corruption of faith and practice, the faithful still kept themselves separate and distinct, and preserved their garments from defilement.

The elevation of Decius to supreme power was fatal to multitudes of professing christians, who were unable to stand the trial of their principles; and in their fall proved themselves to be of the synagogue of the Satan, and not Jews, but liars. The enmity of Decius to his predecessor Philip, (whom Eusebius styles a christian, although a murderer and profligate, who had not obeyed the truth,) conspired with his pagan prejudices to bring on the most dreadful persecution christianity had yet experienced. The Hour of the Trial had arrived, and it was evident to its contemporaries, that nothing less than the extermination of the christian name was intended. “The chronology,” says Milner, “is here remarkably embarrassed.” He therefore conjectures that the period extended to A.D. 260. The persecution raged with astonishing fury, beyond the example of former persecutions, both in the East and West, or, in the words of the Spirit, *epi tes oikoumenes holes*, upon the whole habitable. In a treatise by Cyprian concerning “The Lapsed,” there is an affecting account of the

SEE, discern! NATIONS HASTEN TO HIS CALL FROM EV'RY DISTANT SHORE; "The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall SEE the salvation of our God" (Isa. 52:10). ISLES, YET UNKNOWN, SHALL BOW TO HIM, AND ISRAEL'S GOD ADORE. "Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands" (Isa. 42:12).

WITH JOY AND PEACE SHALL THEN BE LED THE GLAD CONVERTED LANDS; "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace..." THE LOFTY MOUNTAINS THEN SHALL SING, THE FORESTS CLAP THEIR HANDS. "... the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." (Isa. 52:12).

WHERE BRIARS GREW MIDST BARREN WILDS, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them..." SHALL FIRS AND MYRTLES SPRING; "...and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose," AND NATURE, THROUGH ITS UTMOST BOUNDS, ETERNAL PRAISES SING; "It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing" (Isa. 35:1-2).

"Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off" (Isa. 55:13).

Analecta Apocalypticae (29) The Hour of Trial

But while they of the synagogue of the Satan were to be subjected to great calamity in all the Roman Habitable, the Star-Angel and ecclesia of Philadelphia, contemporary with the apostle John, together with all the ecclesias who "kept the word of the patient waiting for Christ," were to be preserved from it. The words of the Spirit to the ecclesias are, "Seeing that thou hast kept the word of the patient waiting for me, I also will keep thee from the hour of the trial being about to come upon the whole habitable to make proof of them who dwell upon the earth." This "hour of trial" was not to arrive in the lifetime of that generation of saints. It was an hour "being about to come;" that is, in their future, or, as the event proved, in A.D. 248; about one hundred and fifty years after the apocalypse was revealed. This afforded time for the Satanists to fill up the measure of their iniquity, and for the faithful to depart to their graves in peace; for a long peace of thirty-seven years preceded the outbreak of the fiery trial under the emperor Decius. During this tranquility, historians

In this great House of Prayer, water flows everywhere: a pure, special, divinely-provided stream. It issues forth in tremendous, copious abundance from under the holy Altar on the top of the central hill (D on bro. Sulley's Plate II), and flows "down" (47:11) to bring blessing and health and life to wherever it goes. Its flowing **down** from the Altar is one of the evidences that the Altar is on a central raised height. In describing the Altar, it is said that the—

"Top of the mountain . . . shall be most holy" (Ezekiel 43:12).

The details of the water's course within the Temple are not given. It will be so arranged that it will be available wherever it is needed, both to beautify and to fructify, and also for utility and convenience. Abundant water is an essential requisite for any great assembly. And running water in great quantities will be necessary for the priestly ablutions and the washing of the huge number of sacrifices.

Partly the water runs underground, for it issues from the Temple from under the gateways. Bro. Sulky's conclusion was that it comes out on the north, west, and south sides, under all the gates, though the main flow of it is on the north and south sides. As it issues forth, it flows eastward, deepening as it goes. Ezekiel measures successively from the west end. At 1000 cubits it is ankle-deep; at 2000 knee-deep; at 3000 (the east end of the building) it is to the loins; 1000 cubits east of the building it is too deep to ford, requiring swimming. This last measurement would seem to show that it is augmented after it leaves the building, indicating it possibly issues from the east gates also. To enter the building, all must pass through the cleansing waters: the deeper for preliminary baptism, the shallower for the necessary repeated washing of the feet, the cleansing of the daily walk. In this, the waters will serve both a natural and a spiritual use. We can be sure feet-washing will be convenient and pleasant, dress in those wiser days being completely different from today's foolish and artificial styles and fashions.

From the building, the water continues to flow east to and even somewhat beyond the Jordan valley, for Joel (3:18) says it will water the valley of Shittim, which is east of the Jordan at the north end of the Dead Sea, where Israel encamped for the final months before entering the land. Here Moses delivered the farewell speeches to Israel that comprise Deuteronomy.

Eze. 47:9 clearly says in the original "two rivers" (see margin). This is north and south of the Temple—a mile apart. The wording of that verse seems to indicate they stay separate in their course eastward—perhaps diverging from each other somewhat to north and south. And Zech 14:8 appears to give the same picture that they stay separate—

“In that day living waters shall go out from Jerusalem: half of them toward the former sea (the Dead Sea: east: front); and half of them toward the hinder sea (Mediterranean: west: back).”

The most natural meaning of this would seem to be two separate rivers, one reaching the Dead Sea, and one reaching the Mediterranean by flowing east to the Jordan, then north up the Jordan valley, then west to the Mediterranean somewhere in the north of the land. Whether there is a water connection between in what is now the Jordan valley we are not told. There would automatically be such if the land stayed the same as now; but we are told there will be great physical convulsions in the land, so the present geography is not a dependable guide. The whole 50-mile-square area of the Holy Oblation is to be lifted up with a valley surrounding it north, east, and south (Zech.14:10).

The word for “oblation” all through these chapters in speaking of the Holy Oblation of the land, is that which in Leviticus is translated “heave-offering” as applied to sacrifices—something “lifted-up” as an offering to God. So there is a deeper meaning to this lifting up of the land than mere geography. It is lifted up from the surrounding territory as a special offering to God.

The northern waters find their way to the Mediterranean, so the water level will be at least just a little above that of the Mediterranean. If we look at a map of Palestine that shows land levels in different colors, we shall see that with present geography that would create a lake averaging about 10 miles wide from a point north of the Sea of Galilee to well south of the Dead Sea. This would be a pleasant and beneficial transformation of the present hot Jordan valley and the stagnant, lifeless Dead Sea. The slope of the Jordan bed would have to be reversed by the south end being raised when the Oblation is raised, so the water would flow north. It could be raised enough so the two rivers would stay separate, with an open land passage to the east.

It is a question whether the southern waters will flow beyond the Dead Sea right through to the Red Sea. Bro. Thomas suggests they will. Bro. Sulley did not think so, mainly on the basis of the fact that the marshes around the south part of the Dead Sea will not be healed, but be given to salt (Eze.47:11). This, however, could easily be accomplished by raising a land ridge that would cut off the marshes from the through flow of the water. Bro.Sulley also felt Isaiah's words:

“Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities. Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation,

“There the glorious Lord (Yahweh) will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby” (Isa. 33:20-21).

Ecclesial Work

If more than one obey the truth together, the weekly breaking of bread will be an enjoyable exercise, and the nucleus of an ecclesia will have been formed. A first necessity in such a case will be a room to meet in. It will probably be sufficient at first for a company of two or three to meet in the house of one of them. But this ought not to be continued longer than necessary. It is better for brethren to have to leave their houses and repair to a neutral place, as regards the effect on themselves; and it certainly enables them more effectually to discharge their function as witnesses of the truth than when their meetings are in a private house.

The objects of ecclesial operations are two-fold:

1. "The edification (or refreshment, encouragement, strengthening, or building up) of its individual constituents in the faith" the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4: 16); and
2. "The exhibition of the light of truth to those that are without".

In this two-fold capacity, the ecclesia is *"the pillar (that which upholds) and ground (that which gives standing room) of the truth"* (1 Tim. 3:15). These two objects will always be carefully pursued by enlightened and earnest men. Neither is to be lost sight of, and neither sacrificed to the other. Edification is the more agreeable: but the testimony of the truth is equally a dutiful function. We must, therefore, resist the tendency to exalt the former over the latter; and, at the same time, be equally on our guard that we pursue not the latter to the sacrifice of the former. There is a tendency in young ecclesias to give the public testimony the more prominent place; and in older bodies, perhaps the tendency is to prefer that which is individually profitable to that which may seem to them a fruitless exhibition of divine matters to a heedless public. A right condition of things gives both an equal place. Duty to Christ will sustain older ecclesias in a course from which their individual preferences would withdraw them: and the need of comfort, and the luxury and service of worship, will help the younger bodies to give due place to breaking of bread and exhortation. —*Bro. Robert Roberts*

HYMN 86

BEHOLD HE COMES! YOUR LEADER COMES, Our Master is coming again, WITH MIGHT, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, AND HONOUR CROWN'D, victorious; A WITNESS WHO SHALL SPREAD MY NAME—the Name of Yahweh—TO EARTH'S REMOTEST BOUND. "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

various phases of the truth, provided...that 'the music always be kept subservient to the words.'”

—*Christadelphian*—1880

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING

AGES ago in the Eastern lands
They watched for him,
List'ning oft for his chariot wheels
As the day grew dim,
Expecting that he would come again
To Olivet.
On the strength of the parting promise, they looked—
And he tarries yet.

Every year across the winter snows,
With wistful eyes,
Eager disciples have watched for him
Who mounted the skies;
Every year under summer suns
They have sung his praise,
And cried for him from their yearning hearts—
But he still delays.

They have died at their watch on the beacon heights,
And we take their place;
We long, as they longed in the olden days,
For the sight of his face;
The sad earth wants him in her deep woe
To give her rest.
But the years pass on and he comes not yet;
God's time is best.

Courage, ye watchers! we have his word,
And he will not fail;
Let us be patient, and watch and wait
Till the times prevail.
He will surely come, as he said he would;
He cannot forget.
When we see his face, this preparing time
We shall not regret.

A clipping, amended—1880

—rule out the idea of Jerusalem being a busy crossroads of commerce. Truly they do. Such would not be fitting. But the context seems to refer the expression more to a guarantee against any alien armed intrusion, such as Jerusalem had known for so long. There will be a waterway via the Mediterranean to the West: it would seem appropriate there be a similar one via the Dead Sea and the Arabah to the East. Though it will be a quiet headquarters of worship and authority, rather than a busy center of merchandise, still vast hosts must continually come there from both East and West; and water always has been, and doubtless will continue to be, the world's best highway for mass transport and transportation.

At present, mountains ring Jerusalem on the east, obstructing any potential waterway, but when Christ stands upon the Mt. of Olives on his way to relieve the city from the Gogian hosts, that mountain cleaves in the midst on an east-west line, half of it moving north and half south (Zec.14:4), and—*“There shall be a very great valley.”*

The expression “a very great valley” indicates a tremendous movement of the mountain halves, and consequent disturbance of the surrounding land. It would seem that the lifting-up of the 50-mile-square Holy Oblation will occur in this same convulsion, and will, in the providence of God, be greatly destructive of the enemy hosts, swallowing them up like Dathan and Abiram. It is in the valley of Jehoshaphat beside Jerusalem that Joel (3:11-14) says God will assemble the hosts of the nations to judge them. And the King of the North, when he hears troubling tidings, rushes back from Egypt and sets his headquarters in the glorious holy mountain. He is there destroyed, and all his hosts (Dan.11:43-45).

Certainly a great “shaking” of this area will be necessary to clear it of all the superstitious rubbish that now pollutes: Moslem, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish.

It would appear, too, most likely that this tremendous upheaval and disturbance in the land of Israel will be the occasion and inauguration of the convulsions throughout the earth that will bring down “every high tower” and all the proud and lofty works of men. Certainly such dreadful monstrosities of man's pride and folly as the ugly, useless Toronto Tower and the dark, towering steel money-grubbing canyons of New York must be swept away, to be replaced by sound, sensible, God-glorifying structures. Most of the large buildings of Detroit, the dazzling pride of a mere 50 years ago, are now decaying, outmoded and tarnished eyesores. So will it be with all man's ugly creations when the new, clean, pure, wholesome order of living begins, every man under his own vine and fig tree (Mic.4:4).

The Temple is an entirely different kind of building: of health, beauty, and true utility, in harmony with the environment. It will doubtless be the foundation pattern for the wise architecture of the future.

The Kingdom Age will be ushered in by cataclysmic, worldwide destruction of life and property. This is sad but necessary, as it was in the time of the Flood, so that all human filth and corruption can be swept away, and an entirely new, clean, fresh order can begin. The Kingdom of righteousness cannot be built on rotten, shaky, corrupt human foundations. Psa.46 declares—

“The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted. Come, behold what desolations He hath made in the earth.”

The context of this Psalm clearly shows it to be millennial. And Isa. 30:25 speaks of—*“The day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.”*

And Is. 66:16, again in an unmistakably Last Day context—*“By fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many.”*

Again, Isa. 2, the Lord shall—*“Arise to shake terribly the earth.”*

And so says Haggai (2:6-7). We must think of these events on the universal scale of the convulsions of the Flood.

Bro. Sulley thought that the drying up of the marshes of the Dead Sea for salt would in all probability bring Sodom and Gomorrha, now covered by shallow water at the south end of the Dead Sea, to the surface again. Similarly, the waters flowing north, and the lake thereby formed, would completely submerge Bethsaida, Capernaum and Chorazin under 100s of feet of water, in judicial fulfillment of the words of Jesus (Matt. 11: 21-24). And to complete the picture Jesus gives there, bro. Sulley felt it likely the northern stream would enter the Mediterranean at Tyre, restoring it to its ancient importance as the “entry of the seas.” Isaiah prophesies (23:18) that in the last days the merchandise and hire (labor) of Tyre shall be for them that dwell before the Lord. This would be so if Tyre were the Temple’s seaport.

Geographically, Tyre would be the logical place for the waters to enter the Mediterranean. There is a valley to it, and it is just about in line with the northern end of the lake that would be formed by filling the Jordan valley to the level of the Mediterranean.

* * *

Now, the Prince and the Eastern Court: the most interesting and significant part of the subject. The Prince is unquestionably Christ. Sound brethren have had no doubt on this from the beginning. It is obvious beyond question to all who understand the Truth. Bro. Thomas so applies it in Elpis Israel as a self-evident fact (p. 297, 1910 edition).

First of all, if the Prince isn’t Christ, then Christ—who is the heart and center of the whole picture—doesn’t appear at all. This is impossible.

Like the Bible, those parts which relate to the glories of the kingdom are, doubtless, in the first instance, the most attractive. But, after a time, when the shadows of the spiritual picture presented in the word of life, arrest attention, the other portions are proportionately appreciated. The power and goodness of God, His Fatherly protection, the vanity of this life, and the past and present position of Jesus Christ, strike chords in the mind which were previously more or less dormant. Thus preference for the different parts of the *Hymn Book* is to some extent an index of the strength of the new man in divine things. The power which hymnal compositions exert over believers of religious lies is well known. The power which, in their case, too frequently operates banefully, is capable of being directed to a good end when utilised by believers of the truth. And the greater the familiarity with both words and music, the greater is the facility for using it.

When tunes are thoroughly learned, they have a tendency to come into mind at times when the thoughts are not otherwise engrossed. And when each tune is associated with a set form of words (as in our *Hymn Book*), the ideas which they convey are at the same time brought into remembrance, thereby inviting reflection on the works and ways of God. Hence the advantage of knowing the words as well as the music. There are probably few who have not intervals, more or less brief, amid the varied duties of life, of vocally or mentally ‘singing and making melody in their heart to the Lord’—(Eph. 5:19). To all such the power of reproducing from memory some of the hymns and anthems, will be found a great relief to the tedium of their probationary pilgrimage. The most perfect ‘spiritual songs’ are certainly anthems in which the words consist of extracts from the inspired word. In addition to the invigorating effect of words whose purity is unquestionable, they have the advantage of applying to those words appropriate music; whereas a hymn, by the necessity of its construction, often unites words and ideas of a totally different character to the same tune or its parts. The more nearly the music is adapted to the words the greater is the force with which they come home to the mind. The chief advantage of hymns is that both words and tunes are more easily learnt, and, on the whole, perhaps, more easily remembered, than are anthems.

Moreover, by their number and variety they present greater scope for the tastes and degrees of ability existing among the children of God. There is, therefore, every inducement for all to use their vocal organs to the praise and glory of their Heavenly Father. Singing, by quickening the circulation of the blood impresses the mind more forcibly than at other times, with the ideas to which expression is given; the imagination when moderately excited, receives more vivid conceptions than in its moral condition; and as the right exercise of the imagination is a powerful aid to the profitable occupation of the mind, it is obviously a great advantage, individually and collectively, to make frequent use of the musical faculty in singing about the

commands, repent and be baptized; and the promises, remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. This is the latest edition of error. The statement should be promises, facts, and doctrine to be believed, and obedience of faith to be rendered, for repentance and justification unto life in the kingdom of God. He that is the subject of this, and walks worthy of his high angelic destiny (Luke 20:36), cannot fail of obtaining an illustrious position in the age to come.
—*Christadelphian*—1879

The Hymn Book

Like other embodiments of the Truth, the more it is used the better is it appreciated. Facility in its use, however, depends on a practical knowledge of and familiarity with, that which it contains. In this, as in other matters, first comes the natural and then the spiritual. The tunes must be learned before the inspired and uninspired compositions which they accompany can be sung. There are few so deficient in the sense of sound and harmony who cannot do this. The labour in attaining proficiency is greater in some cases than others, but probably the law of compensation gives to them a more solid appreciation of the results when once attained. That which comes easily is often treated as of little value.

The existence of the musical faculty clearly shows that the vocal organs were not given merely for speech, and the scriptural illustrations are sufficiently numerous to encourage imitation by those who are exhorted to be 'followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises'—(Heb. 6:12). When Moses and the children of Israel had safely crossed the Red Sea, they gave vent to their joy by the song of victory recorded in Exod. 15. When Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi, they 'prayed and sang praises unto God'—(Acts 16:25). And at a later date another apostle wrote to his brethren—'Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing Psalms'—(James 5:13). Thus the Truth provides for both despondent and exultant moods.

The Psalms, which probably constituted the chief basis for musical compositions among the Jews and the early Christians, contain words suited for nearly every circumstance and condition of those who 'keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ'—(Rev. 12:17). Praise, petition, and thanksgiving there find their appropriate place. To be able to sing the greater portion of the Psalms, each to an appropriate tune, would, indeed, be a most valuable spiritual accomplishment. Perhaps this will form one of the aids to righteousness in the age to come. In its absence, in the present dark day, the hungering and thirsting ones will make the best use they can of the varied and comprehensive book of 'Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs' provided for the present generation of those who are exhorted to 'rejoice in the Lord always'—(Phil. 4:4).

Secondly, of itself, and even more so in the light of other Scriptures, an individual introduced into the center of the Temple picture without any explanation, as "THE Prince," cannot be other than Jesus. Modern usage of the term "prince" may take some of the force away. Scripturally used, "prince" meant the Supreme Ruler, the Principal, the Head, the Chief—of whatever was being considered. It was not a secondary title, as it is today.

Christ is "*Messiah the Prince*" (Dan. 9:25). He is "*Prince of the kings of the earth*" (Rev.1:5)—the superior of all kings. He is "*Michael the great Prince*" who stands up to deliver Israel at the Last Day (Dan. 12:1). He it is whom God hath exalted to His right hand—the place of highest majesty—to be a "*Prince and a Savior*" (Acts 5:31).

And thirdly, the very first mention of the Prince in Ezekiel's Temple chapters is in itself conclusive (44:2-3)—

"The East gate shall be shut ... no man shall enter by it, because Yahweh Elohim of Israel hath entered by it ... It is for the Prince."

For 'hath entered,' Rotherham has 'doth enter,' which is both more accurate and more significant. The East gate is that by which Yahweh Elohim doth enter, it is for the Prince, no man shall use it.

The fact, too, that the East Portion of the Temple is associated with the Prince, both here and later, and not with the people generally, is another proof he is Christ, the High Priest. (His brethren, of course, are included with him in all). The Mosaic Tabernacle and the Temples all faced east. East was the front, the side of honor and preeminence. Here originally dwelt Moses the great Mediator, and Aaron the first High Priest. Here, in Tabernacle and Temple, was the main entrance—the only entrance—into God's House. East is Sun's Rising.

On every sabbath and new moon, the worship is centered around the Prince, who leads it (46:1-7). Likewise he leads the worship on the great yearly festivals of Passover and Tabernacles (45:21-25). Mosaically, this was the work of the High Priest, and none else. There can be no High Priest but Christ.

The Prince possesses the central royal portion of the land, the site of the Throne of David. The Holy Oblation and the Temple are IN his Portion. His portion is the same as God's: Judah, "*His portion in the Holy Land*" (Zec. 2:12).

The highest priesthood in this Temple, the heart-center of the rulership of the Kingdom, must be immortal (1 Cor. 15:50). Where are they in all this service, if they be not the Prince and the Sons of Zadok?

Let us then briefly consider what we are told concerning Ezekiel's Prince. The first reference is 44:2-3, already quoted—

“No man shall enter by the East Gate because Yahweh Elohim of Israel doth enter by it. It is for the Prince.”

Yahweh Elohim is God manifested in Christ and the Saints. The East Court is exclusively for them. Verse 3—

“The Prince shall eat in it (the East Gate, or Gates) before Yahweh.”

There is no difficulty in Christ as Yahweh eating *before* Yahweh. He is both the manifestation of God, and the Son of God. Before men, he bears the Name of God: before God, he is the ever submissive Son. Similarly, the Christ-Priest offered the Christ-Sacrifice on the Christ-Altar. There is no difficulty in his simultaneous fulfillment of many different types and shadows, for all converge in him.

He certainly does not eat bread in the East Court alone. Apart from the fact that he does nothing alone, we have his specific promise that he would partake of the Memorials anew with his brethren in his Kingdom (Matt. 26:29), and that the faithful should eat bread there.

In this first reference to the Prince in the Temple, we have the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The Memorials terminate with this joyful reunion, for their purpose is to keep in memory "until he come," but the Marriage Supper is but the beginning of an endless companionship of never-diminishing bliss.

The next reference to the Prince is 45:7—the Prince's portion is the land to the west and east of the Holy Oblation. Actually, as a later reference shows (48:21-22 RV), the Holy Oblation is considered as part of, or taken from, the Prince's portion.

In 45:13-15, the people of the land (Israel) give a percentage of the grain, oil and flocks—between ½% and 1½%—to the Prince *“to make reconciliation for them,”* and (v.17) *“It shall be the Prince's part”* to prepare and offer the established periodic sacrifices for Israel. He will not of course actually do all the work himself: no leader ever does: but he will head, lead and supervise the immortal priesthood who alone may approach unto God's holy Altar with the offerings.

Some have trouble accepting the fact there will be sacrifices in the Kingdom, and with an immortal Christ having anything to do with them. There should be no difficulty. First of all, there is abundant scriptural testimony, not just in Ezekiel, that there will be sacrifice.

Sacrifice has always been prominent in God's plan of redemption for man. From the Garden of Eden, sacrifices pointed forward for 4000 years. Then for 2000 years the Memorial Bread and Wine—a very similar institution (but suited to a different dispensation)—have been pointing backward, memorializing, keeping in memory.

THE GREAT SALVATION

The Kingdom of God founded by Yahweh and his Christ is to establish this great salvation in the earth ——— a thorough and complete social regeneration of the world. The kingdom is the cause, the great salvation the result of its institution in the land promised to the fathers. But the greatness of the salvation is not restricted to the future generations of the nations only; it comprehends in the magnitude of the deliverance it vouchsafes, the generations of the righteous among the dead from Abel to the coming of Israel's king in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory. It saves the cloud of witnesses of whom the world was never worthy with an everlasting salvation in the kingdom; and saves nations from their temporal miseries and degradation with a joyous and glorious redemption of a thousand years. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation” as this? Impossible; escape there is none for who are not included in it.

—John Thomas—1852

In conclusion then, the great salvation which is exhibited in the gospel of the kingdom is both national and individual. As a national salvation it delivers the nations from those that oppress them; suppresses vice, superstition, and crime; restrains evil; abolishes war; establishes justice and righteousness in the earth; and consummates a social regeneration of the world which shall be “glory in the highest heavens to God, on earth peace, and goodwill among men.”

As an individual salvation it saves believers of the gospel promises, facts, and mystery, from sin, sins, and the wages of sin, which is death. It saves them from sins which are past when they become the subject of repentance and remission in the name of Jesus; and it saves them from sin in the flesh, and the consequences of it, when they arise from the death state to possess the kingdom of God. This is a great and wonderful deliverance—a salvation from all the ills of flesh, personal and relative. What possibility is there of escape if this be neglected? We know of none. The Bible reveals none; and a salvation doctrine not inscribed in light upon its sacred page is unworthy of a wise man's consideration.

We trust we have made this great subject plain to our correspondent's mind, as well as to the minds of all our readers. He asks for “a few lines stating the facts of the gospel.” The gospel cannot be stated in this way. The facts are few, as we have seen; the promises great and many. The gospel is more a matter of promise and doctrine than a matter of fact. A man may believe all its facts, and still be very far from believing the gospel. Leave out the hope and the mystery, and the gospel is destroyed. There is a statement of the gospel preached as “the ancient gospel,” which makes it consist of “facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, and promises to be enjoyed”—the facts, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the

Question: When the subject of Syria and Russia comes up we are always mindful of Isaiah 17 and the somewhat puzzling nature of the prophecy. Is it pre-adventual? Post-adventual? A possible scenario might be this:

The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap. [Judah levels Damascus.] The fortress [defense] also shall cease from Ephraim [the Diaspora], and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the [faded] glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts. And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob [both Judah and Diaspora] shall be made thin [enfeebled or weak], and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.

Once the Lord is in the Land, the glory of Jacob (or at the very first, the Tents of Judah) cannot become enfeebled. Therefore, Isaiah 17 seems to indicate one last Arab-Israeli war wherein the latter secures her borders establishing a false sense of peace and safety. However, this proves to be temporary. As Isaiah indicates, the defense shall cease from the Diaspora. How so? One possible scenario is Judah's action against Damascus is so horrific that world opinion turns against her to such an extent that not even the Diaspora – those who have bankrolled her for decades – can help. Consequently, the Diaspora is made weak. Judah is not only made weak, but lean also as the Russian invader subsequently overruns her, and the Diaspora, particularly in the Beast nations, suffers as well.

Then, the multitudinous-Christ appears in the Land, and defeats the Russian confederation. Would appreciate your thoughts. – *Bro. Bob*

Answer: I do not know if the destruction of Damascus is pre or post Advential. I lean towards post advential. I personally believe Christ and the Saints at this time, will be in the Arabian desert. I can say with a degree of confidence, that it is before or commensurate with the east wind blowing against the ships of Tarshish, and Russia ascends like a cloud to cover the land. I can easily see (as in chapter 18) Tarshish and Gog fighting over Damascus, as exhibited in, and at the same time that they war over southern Lebanon.

I do not believe it will be at the hand of natural Israel, or spiritual Israel that destroys Damascus. I believe it will be at the hand of Russia. It will be because of Israel, but not by Israel. Like Tyre and Sidon, Damascus was destroyed through God's use of Babylon, for rejoicing over the fall of Jerusalem. There is a justice in the nation they supported to destroy Israel, coming back to destroy them. I believe these things work in patterns. Damascus was destroyed by Babylon commensurate with the destruction of Tyre and Sidon (Zech 9). I believe Russia will repeat this historical prophecy when she ascends like a cloud to cover the land.

At this time, the glory of Israel is faded. Damascus being as the glory of the children of Israel, is therefore, also faded. —*Bro. Jim Phillips*

Clearly therefore God's wisdom has determined that a periodic observance is beneficial and necessary for weak mortal man. Sacrifices were best suited to the national dispensation of the Law of Moses, and the Kingdom is a similar economy—political, national, compulsory and universal: not individual and selective, as at present.

Modern man's chief objection to sacrifice is that he thinks he has developed and matured beyond that kind of ordinance and instruction. The idea humiliates him. He looks down on it as a relic of an earlier, more childish age. But in truth, there has never been an age more spiritually juvenile and retarded, and more in need of being taught simple, basic elementals, than the present. Man is today a little more clever with his Tinker Toys than previous generations, but there is far less wisdom, and very little spiritual understanding. Even untutored savages have had the discernment to recognize the evidence all around them of a power and knowledge greater than themselves: but what benighted superstition was ever more utterly ridiculous than the modern religion of mindless, purposeless, moralless Evolution as the great Creator of all things? What terrible blasphemy to see all the wisdom and beauty of God's glorious handiwork—the evidence He appeals to of His power and divinity (Rom. 1:20)—and to create an idiot god of blind chance to explain it all!

The re-institution of sacrifice, with rigidly-enforced judgments, is exactly what debased and degenerate mankind needs to slowly lead it back to the first glimmerings of holiness and wisdom and spiritual awareness. It will be a long, hard process, because of man's dulled senses, but God will lead him back to cleanness and holiness and spirituality. The sacrifices of the Kingdom will point back, as the ancient ones pointed forward. Those foreshadowed; these memorialize.

Even harder for many to accept is that (45:22)—

“The Prince shall prepare a bullock FOR HIMSELF, and for all the people of the land.”

That large number using the name Christadelphian who have never been able to comprehend the central truth of the Gospel that Christ's great victory was over the sin-defiled and sin-motivated flesh he shared with his brethren, have consequently never been able to accept this fact of the Christ-Prince memorially offering for himself in type, as he once actually did. Here is the worm at the core of the modern theories that seek to do away with millennial sacrifice and the Messiah-Prince of Ezekiel. But perceive the Truth as taught by our pioneers, and the picture is both beautiful and necessary.

Christ will reign on earth in supreme, visible power and glory: the benevolent benefactor of all mankind—showering good on all.

Therefore, in the light of mankind's historic tendencies and spiritual limitations, what is obviously and absolutely necessary?

It is this: repeated, open, public acts on the part of Christ attributing all glory and honor and power to the Father-Creator. And sacrifice, as it is set up in this world center of authority and worship and pilgrimage, is the ideal method of keeping this clear.

God is supreme. HE must be kept in the foreground. The past redemption of the race at Calvary must be continually kept in memory. Christ must publicly worship God. He must offer sacrifices as a token of submission and dependence, and to memorialize the way in which the Eternal Father was pleased to redeem the world by him.

When we see how the Trinity theory—an almost universal delusion as far as Christendom is concerned—has confused Christ with God, even in his mortal days and now in his absence, we see how vitally necessary it will be to keep the issues clear at a time of his glorious visible power and presence. Man tends to worship what he can see.

And indeed Christ is to be worshiped: but in his proper place in the divine scheme. Therefore sacrifice, and Christ offering it. Sacrifice exalts God, and abases man. Sacrifice accepted gives joy and comfort and assurance to the righteous. Sacrifice rejected—as it will on occasion be—brings exposure of the Achans and Ananias, and swift justice to the wicked. It is a glorious millennial provision that the righteous will rejoice in the wisdom of, and the wicked will rail at.

In a Psalm clearly Millennial and Messianic, Christ says—
“*I will give Thee thanks in the Great Congregation*” (Psa.35:18).

We can trace this pattern of Christ publicly worshiping God in the Age to Come in many Psalms. Christ, as we have seen—
“*Prepares a bullock for himself and for all the people*” (45:22).

Does it seem fitting that the supreme, immortal Christ offer a joint sacrifice for himself and the mortal people? It will be seen fitting as a beautiful act of Christ's love and God's wisdom, if we see the true picture. These people are now Christ's devoted and loving brethren, even as we consider ourselves today. (We do not here take into account the wicked among them: they are passing and incidental, not part of the true eternal picture. All today are not faithful, either).

How better could Christ manifest his oneness with them, his love for them, and his example-giving submission to God, in leading them in all righteousness, even as he submitted to baptism?

Eze.45:21-25 very interestingly reinstitutes the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles, but not Pentecost—the other of the three great feasts of the year. The foundation Passover sacrifice, typifying Christ's great offering,

Signs Notes:

In the news daily are the renewed militant activities of Russia - The King of the North. “*Gog of the land of Magog: The Chief Prince.*” As we approach the general time wherein the Advent to the Household is greatly anticipated, the prophecies of these days are falling into place as revealed in Scripture and as “rightly divided” in *Eureka* by brother Thomas.

It is unfortunate that at such a momentous period, some are still out and about wasting both time and energy chasing rabbits. These critters have names: Islamic Image, Israeli Harlot, Preterist Ghost, Futurist Bogeyman, and the list goes on. [The present false interpretations of the Apocolypse in vogue in other fellowships.]

This excerpt is just one of several which provides us with every indication that Russia is on the move and about to fulfill her role in the final Apocalyptic drama:

Russia's military presence seems likely to further weaken Georgia, a Western ally in the Caucasus region, a major transit corridor for energy supplies to Europe and a strategic crossroads close to the Middle East, Iran, Afghanistan, Russia and energy-rich Central Asia...

But it marked an initial step toward what could become modern Russia's first push for territorial expansion...

In London, British oil company BP PLC announced Monday it has reopened the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, which runs through Georgia.

The pipeline, which provides some 1 million barrels per day of Caspian Sea crude to international markets, had been closed for more than two weeks after a fire on its Turkish stretch. Kurdish rebels claimed responsibility for the blaze.

BP's ability to export Caspian oil had been seriously curtailed by both the fire on the Turkish stretch of the BTC line and the fighting with Russia in Georgia.

The London-based company shut down its Baku-Supsa oil pipeline — which runs through the center of Georgia from Baku in Azerbaijan to Supsa on Georgia's Black Sea coast — on August 12 because of security concerns. That line, which had been pumping about 90,000 barrels a day, remains closed. (AP)

Russia is now in a key position to place a stranglehold on Europe whenever she so chooses. She need only move just a bit south into Turkey to do the same in the Middle East. — Then, Armageddon.

—Bro. Bob Widding

* * *

Hitler's holocaust will not be the last of Rachel's weeping. Ezekiel tells of Yahweh using the Russian host against His people. And in Zechariah 14: "*Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, . . . For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity . . .*"

So devastating will be the destruction that Isaiah 49 records, "*But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.*" That will be the way it appears to Israel. They have just gotten established in peace in the land and are destroyed, and once again childless—barren. But God does not have Isaiah stop there; he asks in the next verse – "*Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*" He then goes on to show the true hope for Rachel, Sarah, Rebecca, for you and for me—the true Israel, the true bride—v. 20 – "*The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?*"

A nation appears out of the Sinai, the children of Israel, not by natural causes or by law, but sons and daughters of the barren, of Rachel, Sarah and Rebecca, unknown to natural Israel and the world. Listen to what Isaiah says in ch. 66 – "*Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.*"

Brethren and Sisters, do we have the faith and patience to wait for this? The lessons of Leah and Rachel must be learned. It will not be by law nor by natural circumstances, but by faith. Soon we will hear the words: "*Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him.*" May we all be ready and accounted worthy as his beloved bride. —*Bro. Jim Sommerville*

and the joyful, yearend harvest Feast of Tabernacles, typifying the final millennial ingathering, are still both relevant to the peoples of the earth. But Pentecost is the Firstfruits, and has already been fulfilled in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Ch.46 brings us back to the East Gate, or rather focuses our attention on it anew, for we have been there all the time. It is where the Prince meets the people, and officiates on their behalf.

It shall he shut (v.1) the six working days, and opened on the weekly Sabbath and monthly new moon (as also clearly on the great yearly feasts). There the Prince shall stand and worship God before all the assembled people in the Tabernacle, who fill the Separate Place with their eyes all turned to this East Gate. (We urge a familiarity with the illustrations in bro. Sulley's book, in order to visualize these scenes. The Separate Place is the four triangular corners between the square and the round buildings.)

The Ascent to the Altar (AV: stairs 43:17) on the top of the mountain is directly facing the middle East Gate. Up this Ascent all the sacrifices must be conveyed to be consumed by the fire of God upon the summit. Whether the Prince himself ascends the mountain to the Altar on special occasions, we do not know. We are not told. It would seem fitting he should, in sight of the hushed and worshipping multitude. It is the holiest place of all (43:12)—

"This is the law of the house. Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the House."

An ascent thereto would, like a greater antitypical Moses, be a beautiful and impressive enactment of that glorious promise to all who have the wisdom to perceive the beauty of holiness—

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?

Or who shall stand in His Holy Place?

He that hath clean hands and a pure heart"

—G.V.Growcott

Rachel & Leah

"Now Laban had two daughters, the elder named Leah (Weary) and the younger Rachel (A lamb). There was no sparkle in Leah's eyes, but Rachel was shapely and beautiful!" Gen:29:16 (Jerusalem Bible). The KJV describes Leah as "*tender eyed*" but others have it as dull-eyed, stupid; as opposed to her younger sister who was "*beautiful and well favored.*" Rachel it seemed had both the personality and the appearance.

So there you have them—the awkward, dull one, and little sister—a vivacious, dazzling beauty, bubbling over with charm and a merry self-confidence. Jacob was struck with her as soon as he met her. Poor Leah charmed no one! We may see ourselves in one or the other. We would really

need to be one of the plain ones, lacking that basic natural charm before we can really appreciate Leah's pain to the full.

Jacob arrived having nothing but his staff in his hand and the clothes on his back. Having no worldly goods as a dowry, he proposed to serve Laban seven years for Rachel. Think of the price he paid for her, seven years of labor—what would that be worth in today's market? Laban, being the greedy self-interested person that he was, readily took the deal. Verse 20 says: *“And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.”* It seemed like no price at all—a real bargain—only a few days labor instead of seven years, so intense was Jacob's love for Rachel.

“And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her . . . And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah.”

How must have Jacob felt that morning, after seven years of patient anticipation and hard work, to awaken in the morning to his amazement, horror, bitter disappointment, and anger to find Leah there along side of him! But have you ever wondered how Leah felt?

Those seven years that Jacob lived with them, did she envy her younger sister? Did she have the romantic hope that all would work out well, and she and Jacob could grow in love together? Can you imagine her feelings at that most vulnerable time of waking on the first day of married life to your husband's shock, anger and revulsion? What would be her feeling of shame and humiliation? We are not told what he said to her, but she must have blamed her father, and Jacob immediately goes to him. *“What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?”*

If he wanted Rachel another deal had to be struck. He had to *“fulfill her week.”* Marriage ceremonies lasted one week. At the end of the celebrations he could have Rachel, provided he then serve another seven years for Rachel. How would Leah feel during this week long honeymoon period, knowing that her husband was just waiting for the week to get over so he could get the one he really wanted? We are told, *“And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also.”*

Brothers and Sisters, there is no happy ending for Leah—we see her life continued to follow the same pattern to the end. We read: *“Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated (less loved), he opened her womb . . . and Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, (Listen to what she says, she tells*

thy stakes; For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.”

Can we learn to take a step back and patiently wait for the Lord, truly saying, *“God willing?”* Can we grasp the exhortation in our marriage, our family, our ecclesia? We see these examples of barren woman—Rachel, Sarah, Rebecca, and Elizabeth. Examples where children are not even a possibility, in order to emphasize the principle advanced by Paul in Romans 9 – *“They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”* It is naturally impossible for man to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit to the glory of God: but Yahweh makes it possible through the motive power of faith.

In due time Rachael was to have a son. And because Leah's oldest son proved unworthy and a man of the flesh, the birthright and blessing went to Rachael's son Joseph. But Rachel would not live to see Leah's sons reject him, attempt to kill him and throw him into the pit out of hatred and jealousies. Nor would she see his rise to power over his brothers, as the world ruler and their salvation.

“Give me children, else I die,” is Rachel's desperate, heartfelt desire for children. It is noted again in both the Old and New Testaments. It is ironic that she died in childbirth with her second son Benoni, *“son of my sorrows.”*

Matthew uses Rachel as a figure for the mothers in Bethlehem when Herod killed the children. *“Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.”* Rachel, that barren woman that wanted children more than she wanted life itself, now sees those children being slaughtered. She is also used by Jeremiah in chapter 31:15 – *“Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.”*

Rachel again is introduced as representing the Jewish women in those parts mourning for their slaughtered children. In Ramah was there a voice heard, at the time there was, nothing but lamentation, and bitter weeping, because there Nebuzaradan killed the bulk of the Israelites that had been left in the land.

And there would be further crisis for Israel, which would cause that voice of lamentation to rend the heavens with piercing cries. It's echoes would sound from one end of the world to the other under the conquering hand of the armies of Rome. Scattered in Europe they had no rest, and

reservoir of power that we can tap into in time of need, if we have the faith and patience.

Sometimes we wonder why God does not act to solve our problem. It may be that we have not turned it over to him in faithful prayer, or if we have that we are too impatient. We like Rachel and Sarah come up with our own solutions—solutions that didn't work. What is it going to take for us? How long before we can walk by faith and not by sight?

Psa. 27:14 says: “*Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.*” James tells us in 1:2 – “*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. (DOES IT? OR IS IT IMPATIENCE?) But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*”

Let us not become bitter or eaten up and consumed with problems that we cannot solve. The attitude of “*Give me children, else I die,*” does not solve the problem no more than the mandrakes, the Hagar or Bilhahs. David advises, “*Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself...*”

Isaiah chapter 53: We know it well – “*A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.*” I want to look at the end of that chapter at v.10 – “*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.*” Remember that Christ was not married and had no natural seed, yet “*he shall see his seed.*” The chapter ends: “*He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied . . . Therefore will I divide him 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 bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*”

And look what Isaiah says next; remember there were no chapter breaks in his original manuscripts. Isa. 54:1 – “*Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.*” Rachel, Sarah, Rebecca, Elizabeth—there was a message there all along. It was a type, an allegory, a symbol of God's ultimate plan. It was not the natural seed—Ishmael, Reuben, or Dan—but the spiritual seed of the barren—Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

Back to Isaiah 54 – “*Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen*

us exactly how she is feeling.) Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; NOW therefore my husband will love me.”

But her wishes were never fulfilled. Time passes but we see the same Leah. “*And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon.*” We continue on in her life, but we see no change. “*And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi.*” She thought and hoped that bearing three healthy sons to her husband would be the thing that would unite him to her, but he never was. That did not do it. It was not to be.

We will move ahead a few years to after the births of Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher. We are once again permitted into the inner thoughts of these two sisters. The young Reuben found some mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel was still barren and mandrakes were believed to induce fertility. “*Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.*”

“*And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also?*” In Leah's mind, Rachel was the problem, Rachel was the reason her husband was not so attracted to her.

“*And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy son's mandrakes.*” The deal is made—Rachel gets the mandrakes and Leah will get Jacob for the night. There is no question who has the upper hand and where Jacob usually spends his nights.

“*And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes.*”

Even after bearing six sons to Jacob, Leah was still the outsider. We see the same hope that she expressed with the first child, she says: “*Now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun.*”

But after 21 years nothing in the relationships had changed. “*And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost.*”

To the end, it was no secret the value Jacob held for each person. It was not that he did not love Leah—he placed her and her children next after Rachel and before the maids. He did treat her as a wife and had seven

children by her, but there was a difference between Leah and Rachel. I think the answer to the way Jacob loved his two brides lies in Laban's reply to Jacob's question, why was he given Leah instead of Rachel from the start. Leah had to become his bride first, not according to love, but according to Law. Bride via law first, then bride via love.

Law can produce love—"Oh how love I thy law." The problem was, Law compelled people whether they wanted to or not. Jacob's desire for Rachel had nothing to do with law; it was his heart; it was deep, true, undying, self-sacrificing (14 years which seemed as nothing to him). Although the bride by law produced many children in Israel, and was good, Law could not compete with the beautiful bride espoused from the beginning. They could never be on an equal footing, no matter how much one struggled under the law to obtain it.

We considered the affliction of Leah's life and may suppose that Rachael's was far better off. With her status in the family and the love Jacob had for her, we may expect all went well for her, and she was able to lead a happy prosperous life. If we expect things to go smoothly because she was the beloved bride, then we don't understand God's plan very well. Of those accounted worthy of the kingdom, there will be one person there that never sinned; but there will not be any there, that has not been tried and come through their sufferings. No one gets an easy pass. We are told that we must "through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God."

Rachael had a problem. We read in Gen.29:31 – "And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated (loved less), he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren." How this ate away at Rachel! Every woman wanted children. If a woman could produce children for her husband, then she was very valuable to the tribe and family, and if she produced sons then she was even more valuable. For the godly woman who hoped to produce the "promised seed," being barren was even more troubling. Leah produced four sons, one after another, while Rachael had none. She in desperation makes the deal with her sister over the mandrakes. Leah gets Jacob and Rachael gets the mandrakes; and Leah has a fifth son.

In desperation Rachel goes to Jacob as if it is his problem. "Give me children, else I die!" She is not thinking clearly; it is all emotions. She is suicidal; she sees herself as good as dead if she does not have a child. "Give me children, else I die!" Brethren and Sisters, how many times do we allow our problems to overwhelm us? We focus on them, fret over them, and they become the most important thing in life, nothing else can be thought about or focused upon. We become so passionate, so caught up, so emotional that we cannot think clearly. We become unreasonable. Her husband had received the promises from God concerning that "seed," and she was barren! She was the one Jacob choose as his wife, his bride, yet her sister is the fruitful one. This can't be. Brethren and Sisters, we must learn the fact that

God does not necessarily work the way we want, or think that He should or must.

Look at the patriarchs of Israel. Gen 16:1 – "Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children." Sarai was barren! Gen 25:21 – "And Isaac entreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren." Rebecca was barren also! Now Rachel is barren! The three matriarchs of Israel whose husbands had received the promises concerning that seed—all barren. Is this coincidence, or is there a message to us? Rachel, like Sarah before her, assumes it was her problem to solve. When mandrakes failed she comes up with the same solution as Sarah—her handmaid, Bilhah. How many times do we feel that we must come up with a solution, instead of patiently waiting for God? Sarah thought that a foreigner, an Egyptian, could solve the problem of the promised seed. Instead of solving "her" problem, she made her problems far worse! Brothers and Sisters, can't we learn to wait on the Lord? Do we always have to rush in to deal with a perceived problem? We feel that WE need to do something NOW, and cannot wait for it to be dealt with properly. We must learn patience and trust. Our own fleshly solutions are usually wrong. We often say, "If the Lord wills," or "God willing," but do we really mean it?

In Luke 1:5 we read of a priest Zacharias – "And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years . . . And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son." Note what he said, "For thy prayer is heard . . . And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stands in the presence of God . . . And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season."

We are not given the ages of Zacharias and Elisabeth. Some commentators place them in their 80's. We know that they were very old and had no children. The fact that he did not believe the message shows that he had long ago given up any hope of a child. Where was Gabriel 50 years ago, when they were praying for a son? Gabriel said "Thy prayer is heard!" Sarah at 90 had those same kinds of doubts, and the angel said to her, "Is anything too hard for Yahweh?"

The same lesson was brought home to Mary, when Gabriel said to her, "For with God nothing shall be impossible." What a comforting fact that should be to us! Paul makes the same point when he says, "God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). It is this