

Beauties of the Truth

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Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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Ezekiel's Temple and the Solar Year

"In the 25th year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the 10th day of the month, in the 14th year after that the city was smitten ... there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed" (Ezekiel 40:1, 3).

The temple described in Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 40:1-43:17) contains both similarities and differences when compared to the arrangements of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness and Solomon's Temple. The similarities between all of these structures provide a basis for deciphering Ezekiel's Temple. On the other hand, the differences offer insight into the changed circumstances of the Messianic Age that Ezekiel's Temple illustrates.

One of the most striking differences is found in the contents of the holy (or nave) and most holy compartments. In Ezekiel's Temple these compartments are completely empty of the furniture found in the tabernacle and temple except for the addition of an altar described as "the table that is before the Lord" (Ezekiel 41:22).

John Meggison in his notes gives an excellent suggestion for the absence of the furnishings that are found in the previous tabernacle and temple but missing from Ezekiel's Temple:

"Ezekiel's Temple represented God's finished work. There was no furniture in either the Holy or the Most Holy, except a small table near the door into the Most Holy. The Holy no longer types the spirit begotten condition, but [in its place only] the memory of those experiences."¹

LOCATION OF THE WEST BUILDING

Another difference between Ezekiel's Temple and the previous sanctuaries is the existence of an additional building **beyond** the temple building itself. Behind the holy (or nave) and most holy is another building to the west. It is at the furthest point from any entrance to the temple and from the entrances to the inner court. Commentators commonly designate this building as simply the "West Building" since it is never given a name in scripture.

The West Building clearly extends the illustration of God's plan given in Ezekiel's Temple further in time than the previous two similar incarnations (the tabernacle and the temple). While the Most Holy of Ezekiel's Temple is empty, yet now another structure exists beyond it.

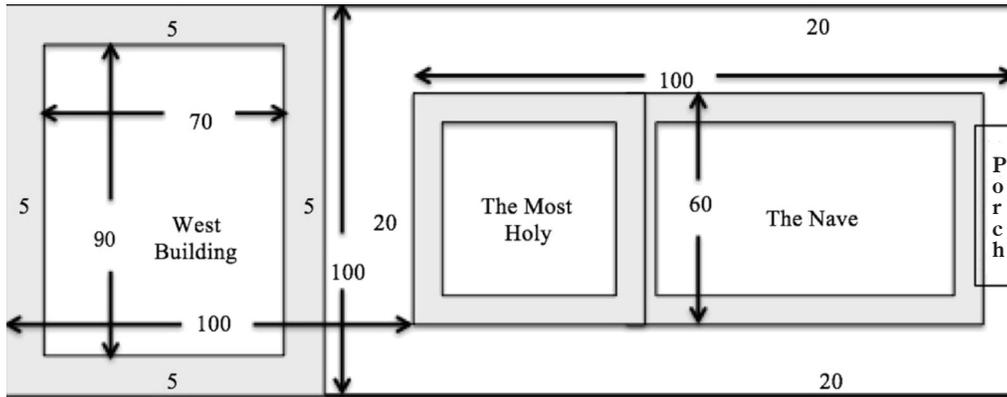
There is no description of the West Building other than location and dimensions. However, as the building is beyond even the Most Holy, interpreting this building as a typical picture of heaven itself seems a likely possibility. Several aspects of the West Building including its location suggest this interpretation:

- It is beyond the most holy of the temple building. The holy and most holy of the temple building itself are now empty of all furniture except a wooden table or altar. Thus the work of the Gospel Age is complete. All of the members of the church have finished their course, and the hope of heaven — as represented in the most holy (Hebrews 6:19) — is now a reality. Now the church no longer needs the development pictured in the holy and the hope pictured in the most holy of the tabernacle and previous temples. Hope is complete in reality and the church has a final eternal home in heaven pictured by the West Building.
- No doors or descriptions of the building are given other than dimensions. Perhaps this illustrates the difficulty of describing heaven.
- The stated dimensions of the building are the only description other than location. The dimensions of the building also combine to point to the final home of the

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Ezekiel's Temple Diagram Outline of the Temple Building and the West Building (not to scale)

church, and that will be the subject of the remainder of this article.

DIMENSIONS OF THE WEST BUILDING

The dimensions of both the Temple Building and the West Building are given in Ezekiel 41:12-15. "The building fronting a restricted area on the west was 70 cubits wide; there was a wall round it 5 cubits thick, while its length was 90 cubits. Next he measured the temple, which was 100 cubits long, and the restricted area plus the building, including its walls, which in all were 100 cubits deep. The breadth of the front of the temple plus the restricted area to the east was 100 cubits. He then measured the length of the building that lay alongside, i.e., behind, the [other] restricted area, and it was 100 cubits."²

The dimensions of the Temple Building, the West Building, and the surrounding "restricted area" are mixed together and a bit difficult to parse without close examination. Without entering into a detailed discussion on these dimensions,³ the most common and probable

interpretation for the dimensions given in these verses is illustrated in the diagram at the left.

THE WEST BUILDING AND THE SOLAR YEAR

At this point the dimensions of the West Building can be collated into a summary and while at the same time segregated from the dimensions for the Temple Building. See the inset below, "Dimensions

of the Temple Building and the West Building." When the dimensions of the West Building are added in the same manner as they are listed in Ezekiel, they sum to 365 cubits, or the same number of cubits as days in a solar year.

— Br. Jeff Hausmann

(The 2019 September/October Herald of Christ's Kingdom magazine also has an article on Ezekiel's Temple based on the notes of Brs. Edmund Jezuit and Frank Shalieu.)

(1) Meggison, J.A. (2005). *Notes from the Bible of John A. Meggison*, second edition, page 320. Chicago Book Republishing Committee.

(2) Translation from the Word Biblical Commentary. See Allen, Leslie C. (1990). *Word Biblical Commentary* (Volume 29, Ezekiel 20-48, first edition, page 218). Word: Dallas.

(3) The dimensions are rendered differently as to "width," "depth," and "length" in various translations because the original words are imprecise. The structure of the verses that makes the most sense of the dimensions is: (1) the length or depth of both buildings is given together in verse 13, and (2) the width is given in verses 14 and 15. This is clearly the sense of verses 13 and 14, so verse 15 must conform to the only dimension left (the distance across the front of the building).

Dimensions of the Temple Building and the West Building

The sun is always associated with powerful truth and particularly with the light of the New Testament teachings and with Jesus and the church (Psalms 19:4-9, Romans 10:17-18, Matthew 13:43, Revelation 12:1, etc.). The number of days in a solar year is an appropriate description for the farthest building of Ezekiel's Temple, a building that represents the light of heaven poured out onto all of mankind in the Messianic Kingdom by God through the agency of Jesus and the church.

Area Measured	Ezek.	Cubits
Inside "West" Building	41:12	Width — 70
Inside "West" Building	41:12	Length — 90
Inside "West" Building	41:12	Wall — 5
Temple Length / Depth (100 cubits)	41:13a	
Exterior "West Building" and "Restricted Area"	41:13b	Depth — 100
Temple Width and "separate area" (100 cubits)	41:14	
Exterior "West Building"	41:15	Width — 100
Total Given Dimensions of "West Building"	365 cubits (Solar Year)	

Prophecy — A Light that Shines in a Dark Place

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place” (2 Peter 1:19).

The Apostle Peter’s appeal to the church was passionate. His second epistle held his final words and it was to be circulated throughout all the churches. Peter knew that his martyrdom was close at hand, as he writes in guarded terms (2 Peter 1:14-15). How would we feel were we to learn that one of our most beloved leaders was soon to be brutally executed?

Peter begins by urging the brethren to make their calling and election sure. He details the step-by-step growth that will culminate in fully developed love. The development of Christ-like character linked to continued study results in growth not only in knowledge, but in grace. He entreated the brethren “be established *in the Present Truth*” (2 Peter 1:12). What this means will be considered later.

PROPHECY SUPERIOR TO PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Peter addresses what was possibly the grandest of his experience with Jesus. Along with James and John he had traveled apart from the other apostles while in the north. There they saw the vision of the kingdom in glory (Luke 9:26-36). “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Peter 1:16).

James and Paul had been martyred, beyond this, accounts of the apostles’ death are known only by imperfect tradition. Soon John would be the last living apostle. The church was not to expect continued visions or prophetic revelations throughout the Gospel Age. “When that which is perfect [or, “complete”] is come [the testimony of the full New Testament], then that which is in part [apostolic miracles] shall be done away” (1 Corinthians 13:10). Soon, all the apostles, except John, and all upon whom they had laid hands to give special gifts, would be gone. But the New Testament would supplement and stand on an equal footing with the Old Testament to provide spiritual guidance for the church throughout the Gospel Age.

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place” (2 Peter 1:19). The importance of what the Apostle Peter is saying here should be a lesson even today. There have always been claims made that the spirit of prophecy rested upon various church leaders both men and women. Pentecostalism claims this continued outpouring of the spirit and the apostolic gifts.

As strong as Peter’s credentials were and as important as his personal experiences were, Peter directs us to the superiority of the Old Testament. This is the “more sure word of prophecy.” Some expositors believe that the

sense of the Apostle Peter’s words are that the heavenly vision makes the words of prophecy *more sure*. While not favoring this thought, the lesson for the church in either case is that *applying* prophecy is important.

This word “sure” (G949 *Bebaios*) is a technical term meaning “permanence,” or “enduring.” For example, the Septuagint Greek New Testament uses *Bebaios* for Leviticus 25:23; “The land shall not be sold *forever*: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.” Leviticus 25:30 also uses the thought of *forever*. To set these “*forever*,” or “*sure*” writings of the prophets ahead of your direct life experience with Jesus, as Peter writes, is a testimony that comes only from a fully crystallized Christian character. This word is a light that shines in a dark place and will direct your lives.

THE DAY STAR ARISING

Peter then refers to the *Day Star*. Most of us in this modern light-polluted world would be hard pressed to identify the planet Venus shining near the horizon before dawn. This is the *Day Star*.¹ Venus was one of the planets recognized from the most ancient times. Because the orbit of Venus is between the earth and the sun, we only see Venus near the horizon in the pre-Dawn early morning, and at other times of the year in the early evening.

Over the millennia before electric lighting, people got an early start on the day’s labor. They were up while it was still dark. Their early rising would mean that they could take advantage of every minute of daylight. The bright and beautiful Day Star was the happy indicator that within the next hour or two the full sunrise would come.

The “Present Truth” for those brethren receiving Peter’s second epistle was that they were in the pre-dawn hours before the Kingdom. They had no idea how long the intervening period would be until the Kingdom, *but their thinking was surely it would be short*. We know this was their belief, because the rumor had spread among the brethren that the beloved Apostle John would “tarry” until



Venus, the Morning Star, symbolizes the return of Christ.

the Lord's return in power and glory (John 21:21-23). In answer to this error, John essentially tells the brethren to use their critical thinking skills and reason out what the Lord said, and what he did not say.

A LONG GOSPEL AGE

As his ministry was closing, the Apostle Peter appears to have had special insight into how long the Gospel Age would be. There are several reasons for suggesting this.

(1) Study Required. Peter opens by telling the brethren, "You need to study prophecy" (2 Peter 1:16-21). A review of the wide-range of prophetic texts still needing fulfillment would require a long time.

(2) Epistle of Jude. Nearly the entire Epistle of Jude, with its strong, practical prophetic lessons, is transcribed and emended in Peter's epistle. No doubt, for this reason, in the mid 4th century when the accepted books of the New Testament were being settled, this second letter of Peter created some controversy.²

There appears to be a logical explanation. Peter no doubt had received Jude's short epistle and recognized its value. However, Jude's epistle may not have had wide circulation. Peter knew that by including the lessons from Jude and elaborating on them, Jude's words would receive the wide circulation they deserved. But, there is a notable difference between Jude and 2 Peter. Jude, like the Apostle Paul, spoke of the false teachers *already* entering the church (Jude 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:7). Peter points to a yet greater future fulfillment during the long period of the Gospel Age. Because of the changes Peter made to Jude's epistle, perhaps he held back on citing Jude as the author. It is even possible that Jude was sharing lessons that he had learned from Peter.

(3) False Prophets Coming. Peter warns the brethren about coming false prophets and teachers who would mislead the church after his execution (2 Peter 2:1-22). This would surely require some time. It is impossible to distinguish good prophetic interpretation from poor prophetic interpretation without personal study and understanding of prophecy. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in [i.e. in the future] damnable heresies, even denying the Lord" (2 Peter 2:1).

(4) Scoffers in the last days. As Peter closes in Chapter 3 he warns the brethren that there are yet *future* "last days." Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of his presence? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:3).

(5) One day as 1,000 years. In order to reinforce the point that a long time period would be involved Peter writes: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and



Reverent Study of God's Word is required.

a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8). Clearly, this a warning that from God's perspective, 1,000 years is a short time. This knowledge would be needed if, in fact, the brethren were not thinking in terms of a long period. What human reckoning considers a long period of time is short from the perspective of God whose existence is from eternity to eternity.

(6) A new heavens and a new earth. The brethren would yet need to see the *dissolution* of both the existing heavens and the existing earth - that is the order of things in the political and spiritual realm (2 Peter 3:11-13). This process would take a long yet unfulfilled period of time.

(7) Reference to Paul's writings. As Peter closes his letter, he makes a special point of commending the epistles of the already martyred Apostle Paul. Paul's letters spoke of long periods of suffering for the church before the dawn of Christ's Kingdom. He wrote this to the Thessalonians: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is *at hand*. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" (2 Thessalonians 2:1-5).

Apparently, the brethren were not remembering these things.

Peter observes, that Paul's writings are "hard to be understood" and that already, unwise interpreters seeking leadership in the churches were wresting them "to their own destruction." So, for all these reasons Peter knew that the need to study Prophecy would be essential for the church.

So many in the church of Peter's day may have asked, "Why is Prophecy needed at all? Had not our Lord Jesus

come and closed out the last week of special favor to the nation of Israel? Were not all the promises of prophecy rapidly coming to fulfillment?”

PROPHECY GIVES HOPE

Hope for mankind began with the earliest prophetic promise. God’s promise to mother Eve said that her seed would someday, “bruise the serpent’s head” (Genesis 3:15). This surely is “a more sure word of prophecy.”

The Apostle Paul wrote directly about this. “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Romans 16:20). It is also essential to understand the promise to Abraham. “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 22:16-18). This also is “a more sure word of prophecy.” Paul also referred to the Abrahamic promise in Galatians, “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, ‘In thee shall all nations be blessed’” (Galatians 3:8).

PROPHECY ANSWERS PERPLEXING QUESTIONS

The Prophet Habakkuk asked the perplexing question that so many have asked. “Why does God permit evil?”

Habakkuk sets this question before God, “Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and you cannot look on wickedness with favor. Why do you look with favor on those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they? And [you] make men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them? They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net” (Habakkuk 1:13-15 NASB).

Such words are a direct challenge to God. Surely God does not look with favor on those who deal treacherously. We read a similar observation in Psalms, “The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming” (Psalm 37:12-13).

But, God is not silent when the wicked swallow up the righteous, His words, spoken through the prophets, are sure. “For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait

upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Psalm 37:9-11).

Nor has God made men like the fish of the sea. Many people may choose to follow the crowd and to live like fish, but this is not God’s doing. Certainly, God does not make men as the creeping things that have no ruler over them.

Habakkuk was distraught, unhappy, and perplexed. He wanted some answers and wanted them right then.

PROPHECY HELPS US “SEE THE VISION”

Habakkuk expected to be reproved by God. What a bold prophet! “I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will look out to see what He will speak by me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the LORD answered me, and said: ‘Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that a man may read it swiftly. For the vision is yet for the appointed time, And it declareth of the end, and doth not lie; Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not delay’ “ (Habakkuk 2:1-3).

At this end of the age we have special helps, a feast of “meat in due season.” One of the best ways to approach our Bible studies is with the Chart of the Ages. This wonderful tool helps organize and quickly put in perspective the “more sure word of prophecy.” The outline of *The Divine Plan of the Ages* lays out this vision in brief:

“The Title of this series of Studies — *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, suggests a progression in the Divine arrangement, foreknown to our God and orderly. We believe the teachings of Divine revelation can be seen to be both beautiful and harmonious from this standpoint and from no other. The period in which sin is permitted has been a dark night to humanity, never to be forgotten; but the glorious day of righteousness and divine favor, to be ushered in by Messiah, who, as the Sun of Righteousness, shall arise and shine fully and clearly into and upon all, bringing healing and blessing, that will more than counterbalance the dreadful night of weeping, sighing, pain, sickness and death, in which the groaning creation has been so long. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the MORNING (Psalms 30:5).”

We might think that the shining light of prophecy is only of value in our own day, but this would be a mistake. While it is true that the understanding of prophecy is greater today than in the past “Dark Ages,” to be “established in the Present Truth” also describes the truth revealed during each of the seven stages of the church. It has been necessary throughout the Gospel Age.

— Br. Richard Doctor



The Prophet Habakkuk

(1) Van der Sluijs, Marinus Anthony, Who Are the “Attendants of Helios?”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Volume 129, Number 2 (April-June 2009), pages 169-177.

(2) Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 6, Chapter 25.

Numbers

“Jehovah spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt” (Numbers 1:1).

What Christians refer to as the Old Testament, Jewish believers refer to as the Tanakh — a word assembled from the letters TNK, signifying the Torah (law), Neviim (prophets), and Kethuvim (writings). The of Numbers in the Hebrew Tanakh “In the Wilderness” or desert.

We refer to it as “Numbers” because it opens with a census of Israelites, setting the stage for the wilderness wanderings. In symbol, this sets the stage for the opening of the Gospel Age sojourn of the Church through the “wilderness” of their trial and testing as disciples of Christ. Another census comes later in Numbers, representing a “reset” of the Christian effort at the Reformation.

If we look at the symbolism of the experiences of Israel in this book, there are four main divisions. These mostly cover the Gospel Age, but also take us into the Kingdom. The four divisions are:

(1) Chapters 1-9. The first five chapters give an overview of the Gospel Age, the next four picture four classes of faith: the Church, Ancient Worthies, Great Company, and the World in the Kingdom.

(2) Chapters 10-21. Chapters 10-17 of this section give us seven narratives outlining the seven stages of the Church through the Gospel Age. The next four chapters pertain to the same four classes as above: the Church, Ancient Worthies, Great Company, and the World.

(3) Chapters 22-27 — another pass through the seven stages of the Gospel Age, leading toward the Kingdom with the appointment of Joshua (Christ) in Numbers 27:18.

(4) Chapters 28-36 — nine chapters referring to the transition between the Gospel Age and the Millennial Age.

SECTION ONE — CHAPTERS 1-9

Exodus 40 begins a picture of the Gospel Age with a new year. Numbers begins a similar picture with the beginning of a new month. In the first case it is year two, in the second case month two, an appropriate number as it represents the holy Spirit which comes to us through the two olive trees, two parts of holy writ, the Old and New Testaments (Revelation 11:3, Zechariah 4:3, 14).

In the opening chapters there is a distinction between the Israelites and the Levites. The Levites, in chapter three, are a special tribe for godly service, exchanged for the Firstborn. At the Passover supper in Egypt, the Firstborn represented the Church class during the Gospel Age (Hebrews 12:23). The other Israelites feasting on the passover lamb that night represented believers in Jesus. They all had come through the door displaying the blood of the lamb. The unbelieving Egyptians outside represented



On Jesus were laid our sins.

the world of mankind. So here in the Book of Numbers — the Israelites are Christian believers, the Levites are consecrated saints.

Chapter two describes the camp of the Israelites. They are arranged as three tribes each on the east, south, west, and north of the tabernacle. Each group of three was led by a firstborn of a sort. Judah

had the favored position on the east. He was actually the fourth born of Leah, but because of deficiencies in Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, Judah became a leader among the tribes (1 Chronicles 5:2). His group of three included Issachar and Zebulun, sons of Leah following Judah.

To the south Reuben, the natural firstborn of Leah, was leader of Simeon, the second born of Leah, and Gad. Levi might be expected here, as the next born of Leah, but the Levites will be separately arranged around the Tabernacle, so Gad appears here instead. Gad was the firstborn of Leah’s handmaid, Zilpah.

On the East side were the children of Rachel, Ephraim and Manasseh, both of Joseph, then Benjamin, Rachel’s second born. This group is headed by Ephraim, whom Jacob had blessed above his older brother Manasseh.

On the north are the remaining children of the handmaids — Dan, Asher, and Naphtali. Dan was the firstborn of Rachel’s handmaid, Bilhah, Asher was the second born of Leah’s handmaid, and Naphtali was the second born of Rachel’s handmaid, presumably born after Asher.

Around the Tabernacle, between it and the camp of the outer 12 tribes, were four camps of Levites. Moses, Aaron, and their families were on the favored east side. The other families of their clan, Kohath, were on the south, Merari on the north, and Gershon on the west.

In Volume 6, page 128, Br. Russell suggests that these four camps of Levites represent four classes of devoted ones that ultimately spring from the Divine Plan. The families of Moses and Aaron on the east represent the Church. Kohath, “ally,” represents the Ancient Worthies, Old Testament companions to the Church. Merari, “bitter,” suggests the cleansing experiences of the Great Company. Gershon, “refugee,” fits mankind in the Kingdom.

We had some reserve about this application, thinking of the wilderness experiences as primarily a Gospel Age picture. However, the suggestions are strengthened when we see that in chapters **6, 7, 8, 9** we have the same four classes again — and yet again in chapters **18, 19, 20, 21**.

Other than this glimpse into the final results of the Divine Plan, **chapters 1 to 4** set the scene for the wanderings of the Israelites, a picture of Christians — believers and consecrated — ready to travel through the Gospel Age. **Chapter five** then adds a test of fidelity that applies

to the saints during this age. Will we prove faithful to our betrothed, Jesus?

In this case a woman suspected of infidelity was tested. Some of the dust of the holy was mixed with water, and the woman was to drink of this mixture. If she was pure, there would be no harm — but if she was impure, she would lose the fruit of her unfaithfulness (Numbers 5:27, NIV). The Church, spiritually, dwells in the holy. We are justified, but we still are in contact with the “dust” of the floor, the things of this world. This may be mixed with the water of truth in our experiences here. If we are faithful to Christ, the mixture will not harm us. But if we are wayward in our affections, we will suffer loss.

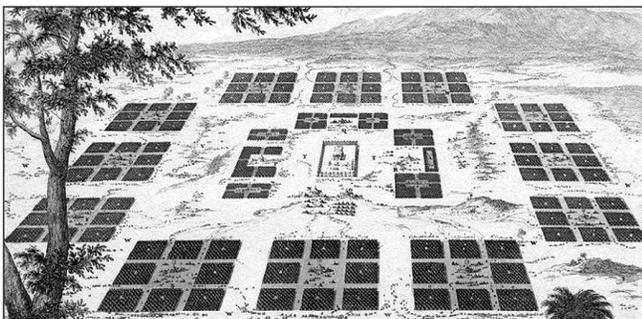
Chapter 6 is about the vow of the Nazirite, representing the Church class. **Chapter 7** introduces the princes of Israel who step forward with a commitment on behalf of Israel to commit them to the service of God. We think this represents the Ancient Worthies, who after the Gospel Age, step forward to lead Israel in commitment to God.

In **Chapter 8** the Levites are distinguished from the priests. The Levites wash their robes and are given to the Priests as a helper class, representing the Great Company class who wash their robes in the closing experiences of this age before assisting the Church in glory.

Chapter 9 raises the question about those who were unclean, or away on a journey, and so missed the Passover, in the first month of year two. The answer is that they must keep the Passover in month two, at full moon. This represents mankind who are unclean, or away from God, during the Gospel Age. If they are to have life, they must eat the passover lamb, in this case at the second opportunity, at the next time Israel’s favor is full, during the Kingdom. So, chapter nine is about the World of mankind.

SECTION TWO — CHAPTERS 10-21

Chapters 10-17 give seven narratives, each pertaining to one of the seven stages of the Gospel Age. **Chapter 10** introduces two silver trumpets, representing the two parts of the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, the second one now provided by the Gospels and Epistles of the Apostles. **Chapter 11** speaks of murmuring, stimulated by the “mixt multitude” (Numbers 11:4), reminding us of the tare class becoming notable in the second stage of the Church (Matthew 13:25, Revelation 2:9). **Chapter 12** speaks of



Camp of the Israelites

a leadership challenge, as the leaders of Christendom in the Pergamos phase turned toward worldly, political goals. In **chapters 13** and **14** the Israelites refused to enter the promised land, afraid of the struggle, as in the dark days of the Thyatira period, many gave up on spiritual things, misled by Jezebel’s influence (Revelation 2:20).

Chapter 15 speaks of a man picking up sticks on the Sabbath day, reminding us spiritually of those who turn away from the cross to imitation sources, “sticks,” rather than resting by faith in the finished work of Christ (Hebrews 4:11). These “sticks” may represent penances, indulgences, and rituals, promoted by Papacy, rather than trusting in the redemption Christ provided at Calvary. Martin Luther and other reformers stepped out boldly in the 1500s, affirming that faith in Christ’s sacrifice was the only sure foundation for our heavenly hopes.

Chapter 16 speaks of a rebellion overturned by an earthquake, reminding us of the earthquake of the French Revolution, in church period number six. It was a strong judgment against rebellious Papacy. In **Chapter 17** Aaron’s rod that budded showed God’s true choice of the sacred priesthood. This seems fulfilled in the budding of the saints beyond the veil, in the first resurrection, during the seventh phase of the Church.

Chapters 18-21 then refer to the same four classes as in chapters 6-9. **Chapter 18** is about the duties of the priests, representing the Church in the Kingdom. **Chapter 19** is about the Red Heifer, which *Tabernacle Shadows* applies to the Ancient Worthies. The ashes, or residual experiences, of the Ancient Worthies, applied to the world in the Kingdom, help cleanse them from the residual effects of sin. In **chapter 20** Moses smites the rock to issue the water of life, the second occasion of this kind, representing when Jesus, the rock of our salvation, will issue forth the river of life in the Kingdom. The chapter closes with the death of Aaron at Mount Hor, representing the end of the service of Jesus as high priest of the Gospel Age. The close of that ministry is marked by the completion of the Great Company class. In **chapter 21** the copper serpent on a pole heals all who look to it — the rescue of the world in the Kingdom. (John 3:14).

OTHER DETAILS

Our summary of these chapters is brief, sometimes only a mention of lessons contained. Many details merit fuller explanation. We pause here to give one suggestion from Numbers **chapter 21**. We think that the opening verses of this chapter refer to Israel as they approach the kingdom, during the present Harvest time, before they acclaim Christ as their Savior.

In Numbers 21:1, in the last year of their wilderness experience, Israel suffered a blow from the king of Arad. He fought Israel and took many prisoners. Prison elsewhere is symbolic of the prison house of death (Revelation 2:10, Isaiah 42:7). We think that this experience represents the

holocaust that Israel experienced. As a result, Arad was turned into “Hormah,” desolation. After the holocaust, Germany was turned to ruin by carpet bombing from the west and Russian forces from the east, and the country was split, before it gradually recovered.

More years would follow, and Israel, though blessed with statehood again, would have cause for more difficulties. In Numbers 21:4-6 the Israelites were discouraged, complained, and suffered bites of venomous serpents, until recognizing deliverance by the serpent on the pole, symbolizing Israel’s yet future appreciation of Jesus.

SECTION THREE — CHAPTERS 22-27

Next follows another sequence taking us through seven parts of the Gospel Age. **Chapter 22** introduces Balaam, who tried to bring a curse on the Israelites. Revelation 2:14 refers to this episode, connecting it to the Pergamos church. Balak, the leader of this effort, perhaps represents Satan in his effort to curse the people of God.

Balak, of Moab, endeavored to bribe Balaam to curse Israel. At first Balaam stood firm and rejected the inducement of worldly goods — as leaders in the early church stood pure and even suffered for their faith. In the second part of **Numbers 22**, Balaam weakened — as some did also in the second stage of the Church. In **chapters 23** and **24**, Balaam yielded to the appeal of Mammon and assisted Balak — as some church leaders in the Pergamos phase cooperated with earthly rulers for earthly gain. In **chapter 25** the Israelites succumbed to whoredom with women from Moab, induced by Balaam (Numbers 31:8,16) — as during Thyatira, many lost their spiritual lives for spiritual fornication (Revelation 2:22,23).

In **Numbers 26** there is a new census, suggesting a new beginning of the work of the Gospel Age from the Reformation forward. In **Chapter 27** five virgins, daughters of Zelophehad, inquire about their inheritance. In the sixth period of the church, before the return of Christ, the saints are depicted as five wise virgins waiting for the Lord in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. In **Numbers 27:18** a new leader is appointed. Joshua here pictures Jesus, appointed to lead people into and through the Kingdom. This may picture Jesus leading us through the transition period of church seven, and across the Jordan into the Kingdom.

SECTION FOUR — CHAPTERS 28-36

These nine chapters symbolically cover a transition of the ages, from the Gospel Age into the Millennial Age. **Chapters 28** and **29** review the holy days of Israel, which pertain to both ages. **Chapter 30** speaks of vows of a woman that need to be affirmed either by one’s husband or one’s father, or they may be cancelled. Here the woman represents all of us who make commitments for our faith. In the Christian world, those who are not full-hearted about their commitments will not be recognized by Christ.



Five daughters of Zelophehad (representing the Church)

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord ... then will I profess unto them, I never knew you” (Matthew 7:22, 23). If vows and commitments are not recognized by our heavenly bridegroom, Jesus, or our Father, Jehovah, then they may be set aside. Apparently this will pertain to many in the Christian world who have not been true. This will become apparent at the change of ages, for many who considered themselves headed for above will instead find themselves here, on earth.

Chapter 31 speaks of a battle against Midian, perhaps representing the final turmoils bringing us into the Kingdom, from Armageddon forward. In **chapter 32** two tribes, and part of another, receive their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan river before Israel crossed the Jordan into Canaan. This has long been seen as the Church (Reuben, the firstborn class), the Great Company (Gad, a troop), and the Ancient Worthies (Manasseh, half on either side of the Jordan). Thus two spiritual classes receive their reward before mankind in the Kingdom, and the Ancient Worthies are depicted as a class connecting the heavenly phase of the Kingdom with the earthly phase.

Chapters 33 and **34** give us a retrospective and prospective view. **Chapter 33** reviews the history of 40 years in the wilderness, a gaze back upon the completed Gospel Age. **Chapter 34** gives the borders of the land of promise that the Israelites were ready to conquer; a look forward to the opportunity for mankind in the Kingdom.

Chapter 35 speaks of the Cities of Refuge, three on each side of the Jordan, showing how the saints in the Gospel Age presently, and the world in the Kingdom future, have refuge in Christ. The cities of refuge are for people unintentionally guilty of a capital crime. This pertains to all of Adam’s race, for we are all worthy of the penalty sin brings, but it has been an unintentional connection with sin, inherited from our forefathers. Those who flee to a city of refuge must remain there until the death of the then current high priest — showing that we now, and the world in the Kingdom, need to abide in Christ until our high priest completes his work for either respective age in which we are involved.

Chapter 36 gives regulations to assure that one’s family heritage is secure. This probably represents that the heritage of all the redeemed — the Church presently, and the world in the Kingdom — will be secure and sealed as an everlasting inheritance.

— Br. David Rice