

Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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Following the Battle of Ezekiel 38

Brethren have long studied the prophetic sequence of the invasion of Israel described in Ezekiel 38. God's purpose in allowing the land to be invaded is described in the closing verse. "And I will magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will make myself known in the eyes of many nations; and they shall know that I am Jehovah."

THE CONFLICT CONTINUES

Israel's final conflict then continues into Ezekiel 39. "And thou, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal: and I will turn thee about, and will lead thee on, and will cause thee to come up from the uttermost parts of the north; and I will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel; and I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy hordes, and the peoples that are with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. Thou shalt fall upon the open field; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will send a fire on Magog, and on them that dwell securely in the isles; and they shall know that I am Jehovah" (Ezekiel 39:1-6).

This destructive scene describes the forces of Gog falling on the mountains of Israel and being consumed by fowl, beasts, and fire. It is this overwhelming demonstration of power that causes the nations to learn that Jehovah is God. This sets the stage for the blessings to follow the destructive conflict. "And my holy name will I make known in the midst of my people Israel; neither will I suffer my holy name to be profaned any more: and the nations shall know that I am Jehovah, the Holy One in Israel" (Ezekiel 39:7).

The instruments of war are then repurposed. "And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven

years: So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord GOD" (Ezekiel 39:9, 10).

The burning of weapons is a symbolic description indicating that wars will cease and the resources and energy used for war redirected for beneficial purposes. Burning for seven years indicates the memories that will endure from the permission of evil. Mankind will benefit from its experience with war and senseless destruction. These memories will provide a needed resource as people learn to love and do good to one another.

The prophecy says, "those that spoiled" in this life will then be spoiled and those that "robbed" will be robbed themselves. In other words, those who previously hurt their fellow man must make amends and be a blessing to others. It will be a role reversal for all those who took unfair, often unscrupulous, advantage of others in this life.

A MEMORIAL PLACE

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place of memorial for burial in Israel in the Valley of the Travelers, east of the Dead Sea. It will block the travelers for there Gog and all his multitude will be buried; it will be called The valley of Hamongog [Multitude of Gog]. And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land" (Ezekiel 39:11, 12, NLV, Rotherham).

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The Valley of the Travelers refers to a highway east of the Dead Sea called The King's Highway. When journeying to the Promised Land, Israel requested permission from the Edomite king to travel the King's Highway. It was the main route that united Egypt to Assyria. It is referred to here as "The Valley of Travelers" and represents the Highway of Holiness (Isaiah 35:8-10).

A memorial burial ground for Gog will be created on that highway. But the burial site blocks (or stops) travelers on the highway. The destruction of Gog will cause those on the Highway of Holiness to stop and consider the events that transpired when Gog invaded the Promised Land. The memorial lessons for all traveling the highway will recall the consequences for those who fought against God. All rebellion will be a cause of remembrance as they also reflect on the dire effects of sin.

It is unlikely that this description of corpses being buried for seven months is literal. It may simply indicate that mankind will metaphorically bury everything personified by Gog, including hatred, pride, and selfishness. The act of burying does not remove the memories associated with that which was buried. The memories are important as they provide what was lacking in the Garden of Eden. Man will then "know" good and evil by experiencing the painful results of sin.

The prophecy indicates that seven months are required to bury the dead. Being scripturally connected to the Law, the seven lunar cycles here suggest that the New (Law) Covenant will be in operation. It will provide the righteous standard for measuring dead works and will explain why the events of the past ended in death. Its work will be to bury the desire for sin in the heart of man and leave only the memory.

"Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them; and it shall be to them a renown in the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord Jehovah" (Ezekiel 39:13).

THE LITTLE SEASON

"At the end of seven months, they will appoint men to search the land systematically; going through the country and searching for any left above ground that remain on the face of the earth, so as to cleanse it. And then these pass through the land and if any one sees a man's bones, then he shall set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-Gog (Multitude of Gog)" (Ezekiel 39:14, 15, NIV).

The end of seven months may represent the end of the Mediatorial kingdom. All obvious sin will have been removed. But one last search will be required, a picture of the Little Season, described in Revelation 20:7-10. The burying of these last few vestiges of sin will be the final judgement of each individual by The Christ. A sign will be placed, indicating the exposure of all hidden sin. No one will be able to question the final judgments of The Christ. All will know that the judgments were fair and good.



The Prophet Ezekiel

A MEMORIAL CITY

"And Hamonah [i.e. Multitude] shall also be the name of a city. Thus shall they cleanse the land" (Ezekiel 39:16).

In the invasion of Gog, the dead were symbolically buried in a memorial burying ground. Here too, in the Little Season, after a final cleansing, the dead are buried in the same memorial place. It is now termed a city and named "Multitude." The word city (Strong's 5892) means, "a place guarded by a watch." It will be called "Multitude" because the multitude of God's enemies will have been destroyed. Sin and death will be vanquished forever.

The watchers of the city suggests that every individual will be on guard and will never again allow sin to enter the heart. Humanities experience will also serve as a witness to all future intelligent creations. It will be a repository for the lessons of sin for "a people not yet created" (Psalms 102:18, NIV) Verse 16 ends with the simple, yet remarkable prophetic words, "And so the land was finally cleansed" (NLT).

— Adapted from a 2021 discourse by Br. George Tabac

Joshua Crossing Jordan

"The waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the ... salt sea ... were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho" (Joshua 3:16).

The crossing of Jordan by the Israelites under Joshua was a remarkable miracle, recorded in Joshua chapters 3, 4, 5. This experience came at the close of 40 years of wilderness wandering. Those 40 years represented the Gospel Age sojourn of the Church. The close of that experience brings us in symbol to the opening of the Kingdom blessings for the world of mankind.

Already, 2½ tribes of Israel had been settled on the east side of the Jordan — Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh. In this case Reuben, the firstborn, represents the Bride class. As the firstborn class, they are the chief

inheritors, who rule with Christ from heavenly glory. The name Gad means a “troop,” or a large number. This tribe represents the Great Company class, associates of the Church to assist their service for mankind in the Kingdom. The tribe of Manasseh ultimately has inheritance on both sides of the Jordan, suggesting the class that will serve as the connecting element between the heavenly classes (east of Jordan) and the world of mankind on earth (west of Jordan). Thus, in this picture, we are at the threshold of the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth.

In all of this Joshua, the leader of all these Israelites, represents our Lord Jesus as the leader of the Kingdom. Moses had completed his service, as recorded in the closing chapter of Deuteronomy, representing that the service of Christ as leader of the saints during the Gospel Age has drawn to a close — Joshua representing Christ as the leader of the succeeding age.

JOSHUA CHAPTER THREE

The crossing of Jordan itself is recorded in chapter three. The priests, bearing the ark of the covenant, were to advance first, and the Israelites were to follow 2000 cubits after them (verses 4, 13). The number 2 sometimes represents the holy Spirit, as for example in Zechariah 4, where two olive trees are the Old and New Testaments, from which comes the oil of the holy Spirit that burns in a seven branched lampstand. So the numbers 20, 200, and 2000 sometimes are used to picture the first age of the Spirit, the Gospel Age — as in the 20 years of Samson’s judgeship, the 200 cubits of John 21:8, or in this case, Joshua 3:4, 2000 cubits representing the span of the Gospel Age. That is, the age that intervenes from the redemption of the church, the priests, until the redemption of the world, the remainder of Israel in this picture.

When the priests advanced with the ark, and their toes reached the edge of the River Jordan, immediately it began to recede. This was all the more miraculous because Jordan was at flood stage, which is normal for spring time (Joshua 3:15). As the priests carrying the ark, representing the presence of God, moved forward,



The Jordan receded as the priests approached, Nisan 10.

the Jordan further receded until the flow of water stopped entirely, allowing all the Israelites to pass over, while the priests stood firm in the center of the river bed.

The cause of the river flow stopping is mentioned in Joshua 3:16. “The water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan” (NIV). Evidently there was a landslide at “Adam” stopping the flow, allowing the Israelites to cross. The engaging name of the location cannot fail to remind us that the curse of death first imposed on mankind was because of the sin of Adam — and by God’s providence, just at the appropriate time, there was a stoppage of the Jordan, the curse of death, allowing the Israelites to pass into Canaan — allowing mankind to pass into the Kingdom.

In other words, this represents the time when the value of the Ransom is paid over to stop the curse, represented here as stopping the downward flow of the Jordan which emptied into the Dead Sea. The second location name mentioned is not a familiar one, Zarethan. However, a cross reference shows that this location is mentioned also in 1 Kings 7:47, 48. That passage describes a time during the reign of King Solomon — another picture of the Millennial Kingdom — and the location “Zarthan” (Zaretan of Joshua) is a place where implements of “bright brass ... did the king cast ... in the clay ground.” The chief element of brass is copper, which represents either perfect or justified humanity. This also is a fitting connection to the Kingdom, when humanity will be recast into the image of God, freed from the curse, and sin purged from them.

JOSHUA CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter four tells us that the Israelites were to assign 12 men, “out of every tribe a man,” to “take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests’ feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night” (Joshua 4:2, 3). These stones were to serve as a reminder to the Israelites, from that time forward, of what God had done for them. They were taken from the midst of Jordan, where the priests stood with the ark, perhaps as a reminder that the presence of God with the Israelites, through the service of the priests, the Church class, is what brought deliverance to Israel. So mankind will remember their remarkable deliverance, forever, an everlasting memorial (Joshua 4:6, 7).

Joshua 4:9, as the King James version expresses it, might suggest a second set of 12 stones placed in the midst of Jordan as a remembrance: “And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day.”

This rendering is supported by others also, as for example the New Living Translation. “Joshua also set up another pile of twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan,

at the place where the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant were standing. And they are there to this day.” If this expresses the intent of the passage, then it seems there came to be an assembling of 12 stones visible on land, taken from the Jordan, and another assembling of 12 stones not visible, put into the Jordan — both as reminders of this event. In that case, perhaps the 12 stones on land could represent the 12 tribes of natural Israel who are God’s visible agency for assisting mankind — and the 12 stones in the Jordan, not visible, could represent the 12 tribes of spiritual Israel, the Church, who are God’s invisible agency for assisting mankind. This seems likely, and it is a nice picture.

There is some ambiguity, as not all versions render it this way. The NIV indicates that Joshua 4:9 is another reference to the removing 12 stones from the river. “Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day.” This rendering is favored also by the Lamsa version. However, this rendering is very much outnumbered by other versions, that favor the King James approach. (In either case, presumably the mention of Joshua doing this means that Joshua supervised this activity, probably done by strong young men.)

Joshua 4:12 mentions that of the 2½ tribes already having received their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan, “About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before Jehovah unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.” the Church class, the Great Company class, and the Ancient Worthies, though they have entered into a reward already for their devotion to God, will assist mankind in the Kingdom to overcome their enemies — sin and its propensities — in the Kingdom. Ultimately, as Zechariah 14:21 says of the outcome of the Millennial Kingdom, “there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts.” Forty often symbolizes testing, and perhaps the number here, 40 thousand, means that these represent ones who have previously proved faithful.



Gathering 12 stones from the Jordan, Nisan 10

Joshua 4:14, “On that day Jehovah magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.” Forty years earlier Moses led Israel across the Red Sea, here Joshua led Israel across the Jordan — two miracles the remind us one of the other. In this comparison, they would represent deliverance through Christ opening the Gospel Age, and deliverance through Christ opening the Kingdom, respectively.

Joshua 4:19 says that the Israelites camped at Gilgal, and here “those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.” The drying of the Jordan was a testimony, “that all the people of the earth might know the hand of Jehovah, that it is mighty: that ye might fear Jehovah your God for ever” (Joshua 4:24).

JOSHUA CHAPTER FIVE

Verses 2 and forward tell us that at this time the males among the Israelites were circumcised, for this had been neglected during their time in the wilderness. So Israel — and subsequently mankind — will become circumcised of heart, something they have not attended to during the previous Gospel Age (Jeremiah 9:26, Romans 2:29).

Joshua 5:9 says, “Jehovah said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.” The margin gives the meaning of “Gilgal” to be “rolling.” The word is given in Strong’s Concordance as H1537, “the same as 1536,” which is rendered “wheel.” Thus the place is reminiscent of God’s rolling back the curse of previous times, “the reproach of Egypt” — and in the larger picture, the curse afflicting mankind for 6000 years. Perhaps also the 12 stones, a reminder of this deliverance, were assembled in a circular heap, round as a wheel.

Joshua 5:10 tell us that then “the children of Israel ... kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month.” Evidently this pictures the time when Israel, delivered through Armageddon by God, come to appreciate what Jesus, their Messiah, has done for them. This is the time of Zechariah 12:10,11 “I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem.”

This is the time of Israel’s introspective appreciation, national repentance, and contrition. However, it is not necessarily the time of the first information respecting Jesus that comes to their national attention. Joshua 4:19 earlier noted that the crossing of Jordan was on the 10th of the month (Abib, later called Nisan).

Under the Jewish Law, Nisan 10 was the day Israel was to select their passover lamb, to be offered on the 14th day. The crossing of Jordan marks the time when God lifts



Israel kept passover at Gilgal on 14 Nisan.

the curse. This comes during the time of Israel's national extremity. When Israel prays to God for deliverance, then God intervenes on their behalf, and raises the Ancient Worthies to point Israel to their redeemer, the source of their deliverance. The raising of the Ancient Worthies comes after the curse is lifted.

What will be Israel's response when the Ancient Worthies point Israel toward their redeemer? As most things in human nature, their response may be apprehensive at first. We all are anticipating the return of the Ancient Worthies, and their message to Israel, but Israel is not. Some hesitation, some doubt, may be anticipated.

This is suggested in Acts 28:1-6. Here, as discussed among brethren in recent years, seems to be a picture of the opening of the Kingdom. Here Paul is symbolic of the Ancient Worthies, who represent God at the outset of the Kingdom. In Acts 28, shipwrecked refugees alight upon the shore of Melita, representing the island state of Israel, where the final judgments against the nations assembled at Israel will unfold.

The inhabitants of the island "shewed us no little kindness" (verse 2), kindling a fire and assisting as they were able. Paul then "gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire — the Ancient Worthies gathering the "sticks" of the Law for disposal, advising Israel instead to look upon the "tree" of the ransom given by Jesus Christ. When Paul did this, "there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand." Here is represented Satan's last attack on Israel.

When the islanders observed this, they thought Paul must be not a noble person after all, but someone unworthy. "Though he hath escaped from the sea, yet vengeance suffereth [him] not to live" (Acts 28:4). But Paul simply shook the viper off into the fire, and was unharmed. So the Ancient Worthies will shake off the last attack of Satan, the attack of Gog and his forces, successfully, by God's providence. Whereupon the islanders "changed their minds, and said that he was a god" (Acts 28:6).

Antotypically — Israel's doubts are removed by the great victory following the appearance of the Ancient Worthies. Then Israel will recognize them as having godly authority, representatives of God Himself. Following this Paul healed the leadership of the island, then all the afflicted of the island, as the Ancient Worthies will spiritually bring healing to Israel. After the passing of winter, Paul then continued on to Rome, just as the Ancient Worthies, after bringing Israel into God's Kingdom, will extend their influence outward to the remainder of the world.

Perhaps, therefore, the crossing of Israel on the 10th of Nisan represents their initial experience — when the Ancient Worthies first point them to their true Redeemer, when Jesus is "selected" for their attention — and the 14th of Nisan, the time when Israel accepts their Messiah of promise with full repentance, contrition, weeping — and yet everlasting joy.

— *Class Studies in San Diego*

Israel, the Sand of the Seashore

(Romans 9-11)

Many Christians miss the point respecting "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth." We know that when the kingdom comes, Israel is to be a blessing to the nations, not only one of the nations being blessed.

We might ask the question, "Who first preached the Gospel of the kingdom?" It was neither Jesus, nor was it the apostles. It was preached by God, "God, foreseeing that he would justify the heathen through faith, preached the Gospel unto Abraham saying, "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed" (Genesis 22:17-18, Galatians 3:8).

Paul in Romans begins with a focus on the spiritual seed in this promise, leaving open the question, Where is the place for Abraham in this promise? Part of the promise was to inherit the land, yet according to Steven, Acts 7:5 (NAS) "And he gave him [Abraham] no inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground." The promise to Abraham was repeated several times, but what does it mean that Abraham's seed would be multiplied as the stars of heaven and the sand of the seashore? Is this promise talking only about the great number of the promised seed, or is it saying that part of the seed would be in heaven and part on earth? Or is it both?

The promise will include both, not only the multiplying number, but also the two portions to the heavenly and earthly seed. When God repeated this promise to Jacob, in Genesis 28:14, He said, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Through the angel, God renamed Jacob "Israel," and the promise of this blessing was also to his posterity. If

we incorrectly assume that this promise to Jacob is only a “bridge,” with the intention of bringing in the spiritual seed, where does Jacob fit in? He was also to be a blesser.

When God was speaking to Moses about entering Canaan, He said, “you are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude” Deuteronomy 1:10. In this case “stars of heaven” describes the multitude of the children of Israel as they were ready to enter the Promised Land. But this description may also refer to spiritual Israel about to enter into a spiritual rest, the spiritual Canaan.

Jesus was pictured by Moses in the “baptism” through the Red Sea (R5963). Israel in a sense had a veiled suggestion respecting the first call to be a spiritual seed when they were mentioned as “a kingdom of priests” (Exodus 19:5-6).

The Apostle Paul specifically referred to the resurrection of the church members as “one star differing from another in glory.” But we might ask, “Is a star considered a great multitude, especially if the church is a specified number of 144,000 — a smaller number?”

Brother Russell (R2067) addresses this question setting out that the great multitude, the Great Company (Revelation 7:9), are part of the “stars of heaven” in the Abrahamic promise, comprising this multitude. This Great Company is not a restitution earthly class, but a spiritual class. So the promise to Abraham was that his seed, his posterity, would be not only like the stars of heaven, spiritual, but also like the sand of the seashore, earthly.

ISRAEL “CAST OFF”

In the New Testament, natural Israel is “cast off.” The Apostle Paul argues effectively in Galatians 4:10, “You observe days and months, seasons and years, and then you go down and you want to be under the law. Do you not listen to the law?”

He uses Hagar, the bondwoman, the mother of Ishmael, who was cast out by Sarah, who was cast off by Abraham, as an illustration to describe how Israel was cast off.

Paul’s point was that the Jewish Christians could not come to Christ or gain salvation by trying to keep the law covenant, and neither could Gentiles benefit by coming into Christ if they tried to keep or observe the law. This is the whole point of Galatians.

Paul was not negating the promises to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob. Rather, he was showing that the law once profited Israel in bringing them to Messiah, but it could no longer profit. Once Jews are in Christ, they could not benefit from keeping the details of the law to improve their relationship with God. This is not to suggest that keeping the Ten Commandments is no longer required. Rather the Apostle Paul is referring to the details of observing the Sabbaths, holy days, months, seasons, and years.

YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT UNTO YOU DESOLATE

What did Jesus mean when he said, “Behold, your house



Stars of Heaven and Sand of the Seashore, Heavenly and Earthly

has been left unto you desolate?” (Matthew 23:38). The fulfillment is evident, but that is not the end of the story. Jesus then said, “For I say unto you, you shall not see me henceforth until you say, ‘Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.’ ”

Clearly, there is an implication in this that Israel is going to have an opportunity to respond positively, to be blessed. Not only that they are going to again be a people of God, but their words, “Blessed is he” implies that they are also going to be a blesser. Israel will be received again, and brought back into favor under a New Covenant and a better mediator.

Paul expands on this in Romans 11. He opens by saying that God has not totally cast off his people. He says, “I am also in Israel, and of the seed of Abraham.” Later he uses the analogy of the root of the Abrahamic promise with its branches. Israel did not obtain the spiritual opportunity as a nation (Romans 11:7). Only the “election” has received it. The rest were “blinded” or “hardened.”

Today, Israel is broken off from the root of the Abrahamic promise (Romans 11:17). Today, Gentiles are being grafted into this relationship. Verse 18 shows that you and I, who are Gentiles, should not boast against the branches, for God is able to re-graft natural Israel (Romans 11:22, 23). The Jewish people had advantages, and while Gentiles are now coming in, the Gentiles have to be careful that they do not think of themselves too highly above the Jewish people because the Jewish people could easily be re-grafted in. Paul concludes by writing about a “fullness of the Gentiles,” (Romans 11:25) marking a time limit to Israel’s blindness.

A DELIVERER OUT OF ZION

“There will come a deliverer out of Zion who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” Romans 11:25 tells us that partial blindness, or hardness, has happened to Israel until “the fullness of the Gentiles” be come in. Then Romans 11:26 promises that all Israel shall be saved. This suggests that the church, part of the deliver, has a unique relationship with the nation of Israel, as well as the

Ancient Worthies.

What is our relationship? The word we could choose for this is co-laborers. We will see both the nation of Israel, and the Ancient Worthies, as co-laborers on behalf of God's work through Christ for the world (Romans 11:20, 29). Israel is beloved for their father's sake, for the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable.

The prophet Isaiah said, "and it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain (kingdom) of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills and all nations shall flow unto it for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-4). The capital of the earthly phase of God's kingdom is identified as Jerusalem, and the nations will learn about the God of Jacob. By teaching the nations about their God, Israel will be blessing them. That will be their privilege.

"THEY ARE NOT ALL ISRAEL"

Paul's purpose in writing Romans 9 and 10 was to explain that a portion, though not all, of fleshly Israel now were dissociated from the promises, "for they are not all Israel which are of Israel" (Romans 9:6, 7). Israel as a nation stumbled and only a remnant would be saved (Romans 9:27).

"Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved ... for they being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God ... [for] Christ is an end of the law" (Romans 10:1-4). Furthermore, quoting Deuteronomy 32, God will make Israel jealous by that which is not a nation, i.e. by the Gentiles (Romans 10:19).

But notice how Paul concludes Romans 10, and then opens Romans 11, "I say then God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew ... Israel is beloved for the sake of their fathers, for the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable" (See also R4624).

In Galatians, Paul focuses on Sarah (with the seed of promise) and Hagar. Sarah is the main source of blessing. One cannot come into Christ as a result of the old Law Covenant, pictured by Hagar. "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made, He saith not into seeds of many, but as of one, to thy seed which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16). The seed of Abraham has two channels, the heavenly stars and the earthly sands.

Sarah is the main feature of the promise through which the stars are developed. The Abrahamic covenant will bless the world through the New Covenant. Natural Israel will also be developed under the New Covenant and help the rest of the world. "Hagar" was added to lead Israel to

the Messiah, to Christ. This was a temporary arrangement that was not going to carry Israel into the kingdom.

The law was added 430 years after the promise to Abraham, but it does not annul the promise made to Abraham (Galatians 3:17). The law brought only a remnant to Christ. The New Covenant will replace the Law Covenant with better sacrifices, and a better mediator. It will accomplish what the law failed to do. (See Overland Monthly, page 89, where Brother Russell has a series of 12 articles dealing with the nation of Israel.)

EASIER FOR TYRE, SIDON, AND SODOM

Jesus said, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" (Matthew 11:20-24). He added that it would be easier for Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom than these cities of Galilee where Jesus had performed miracles, and yet the people rejected him. He said, "You know, if this was done in Sodom, they would be here to this day, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes if they saw what you saw. It will be more tolerable for them in the Day of Judgment."

Does this mean that these degraded Gentiles will be above Israel in the kingdom? Will they be blessed first, perhaps even blessers in some way? The answer is, "No."

Jesus was speaking about specific individuals in those cities of Galilee where he personally preached and performed miracles. He was not speaking about the entire nation. Some of these ones who personally heard Jesus hardened their hearts. They will be correspondingly at a disadvantage in the kingdom.

In Ezekiel 16 Jerusalem is compared with Sodom and Samaria. Ezekiel 16:49 refers to the iniquity of thy "sister" Sodom. They were sisters in crime. But this is not the end. Ezekiel 16:60-63 says, "Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you for then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you receive your sisters and I will give them to you as daughters but not because of your covenant, [your Old Law Covenant]. And thus I will establish my covenant [the New Covenant] with you and you shall know that I am the Lord" (NAS.)

This describes the relationship of Jerusalem to a destroyed city. It calls them "sisters." God says he is going to give that sister, or those sisters, to Jerusalem, to the people of Judah. In other words, Sodom will be like a daughter to Jerusalem when under the New Covenant. Jerusalem will do what mothers do for their daughters, bless and help them.

YE SHALL BE COMFORTED IN JERUSALEM

As a mother blesses, Israel will benefit and bless the world in a wider sense,



Sarah, the Spiritual part of the covenant

nurturing, teaching, and feeding. In Isaiah 66 the prophecies about Jerusalem focus on how she will nurse the Gentiles and therefore bless them (see R5574).

Zechariah 8:13 says, “It shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong.” Israel has been scattered among the nations of Christendom, but in the kingdom, as the sand of the seashore, Israel will be able to bless those nations.

God has scattered Israel, and when the world comes back in the kingdom, many Israelites will be sympathetic to the lands where they lived. They will know how to work with those people.

“At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart” (Jeremiah 3:17). This applies to the Gentiles, as the world’s capital, Jerusalem, will be the official center for the blessing of the world.

“The Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Isaiah 60:3). Bringing the light of truth to the world will truly be a blessing. The Gentiles who desire to have a blessing will have to come to Israel. “Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, ‘We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you’ ” (Zechariah 8:22, 23).

They will come to Israel and ask, “Why are they so successful?” The answer will be that the Ancient Worthies will guide them. The Ancient Worthies will help to guide the entire world.

OUR PRESENT RESPONSIBILITY

When will Israel be ready to bless the world? What is our relationship? We aspire to be a part of the stars of heaven and we will be working with Israel, the sand of the seashore. Paul says, “through your mercy they also may obtain mercy” (Romans 11:31).

What is our present responsibility to the natural seed of Abraham? Isaiah 40:1, 2 is helpful. It applies to the church in offering comfort to Israel after their double of disfavor ended in 1878, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.” We can now speak encouragingly to Israel, “Believe your prophets, follow the call back to the land.”



Abraham, a man of faith

We are not only to preach the Gospel of Christ, the Harvest Message, and plant seeds for the kingdom. We are also to guide Israel in giving them the scriptural teachings of their prophets that they do not know. Secular Zionists built the land, but today there are also Biblical Zionists who offer opportunities for witnessing.

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.

Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing” (Isaiah 52:7-8).

We do not pray for the artificial peace of the Oslo and other accords. Someday we may need to stand up on behalf of the Jewish people against renewed anti-Semitism. As watchmen we must be committed to comforting the Lord’s people.

CONCLUSION

The Abrahamic covenant produces a blessing in two parts, the heavenly and earthly, the stars of heaven, and the sands of the seashore. As faithful watchman, we are to pray and speak tenderly to Israel. We are to encourage the Jewish people to have faith in their irrevocable promise from the Almighty.

The Old Law Covenant was added to the Abrahamic promise, but failed to prepare Israel to bless the world as the New Law Covenant will. It will be the means for Israel’s blessing of the world as the sand of the seashore.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let him that heareth say, ‘Come.’ And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17). As these receive the water of life themselves, they will say to others, “Come! Drink also of the water of life.” Such an attitude will enhance the growth of this sands group.

Someday soon they will be a light to the Gentiles and the whole world will become part of the sand of the seashore. Let us hope and pray that we will be shining above the sands as the stars of heaven!

— Adapted from a 2006 discourse by Br. Robert Gray

Financial Report

14,851.80	Balance January 1, 2021
6,289.86	Donations
-2,663.17	Expenses
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18,478.49	Balance January 1, 2022
590	Mail subscribers, Email subscribers 341