

Beauties of the Truth

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Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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Melchizedek

“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God” (Genesis 14:18).

The identity of Melchizedek of Salem has been a subject of interest by many a commentator. He appears on the scene suddenly and vanishes just as quickly. Genesis, Psalms, and Hebrews mention him. So little is known of his life that we may not consider him a type if it were not for Paul's discussion about him in Hebrews.

The only historic account of Melchizedek is in Genesis 14:9-20 when Chedorlaomer, king of Elam (now southwestern Iran), headed an alliance of four kings that took captive inhabitants of Sodom, including Abram's nephew, Lot. Abram took a small force of 318 servants to rescue Lot. They succeeded in a battle at Hobah, sixty miles south of Damascus. On the group's return Melchizedek appeared, king of Salem (Jerusalem, Psalms 76:2), and “a priest of the most high God.”

Genesis 14:18, “And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. (19) And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: (20) And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all” (KJV).

Here we learn that Melchizedek was **king** of Salem who brought **bread** and **wine**, and was **priest** of the most high God. This is the first place in the Bible where the word “priest” is used. The name Melchizedek is made of two parts: *melchi*, “king” (H4427), and *zedek*, “righteousness,” or “justice” (H6663) — a king of righteousness, or a righteous king. Melchizedek combined the offices of priest and king.

The gift of bread and wine suggests a connection to Jesus, who used bread and wine at the last supper to represent his body and blood. Jesus also said, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever” (John 6:51). The miracle of Jesus in Cana was to provide wine (John 2:1-10), turning six large stone jars of water into the best wine.

Melchizedek said two things. (1) In Genesis 14:19, he blessed Abram: “Blessed be Abram of the most high God.” (2) In verse 20, Melchizedek blessed God for Abram: “And blessed be the most high God.” Melchizedek acknowledged that God had delivered the enemies into Abram's hand. This is the first time God intervened in a war to give a victory. In Genesis 14:14 Abram had only 318 trained men, yet he defeated the armies of four kings. It reminds us of Gideon's defeat of the Midianites with only 300 men in Judges 7:7.

Melchizedek blessed Abram with two gifts (bread and wine), and Abram in return “gave him tithes of all” of the spoils of war. Here we encounter another first, the precedent of the tithe, established long before the Mosaic law and the Levitical priesthood.

A THOUSAND YEARS LATER¹

Disappearing as suddenly as he came on the scene, Melchizedek is lost to the sacred writings for a thousand years. Then Psalms 110 picks up the name of Melchizedek. David's forecast of the Messiah adds that the order of Melchizedek in verse 4 is “**for ever**,” *owlam* (H5769), always, eternal, a perpetual priesthood. This Psalm talks of a victorious king, a triumphant priest, having power both to rule and to heal. He was a king of righteousness ruling the city of peace, an apt picture of our King and his kingdom.

The name Melchizedek fits the reign of King David. David was King, *melchi*, of Israel, ruling from Jerusalem, and the priest in David's time was Zadok (meaning

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righteous, H6659). Through Zadok the religious influence of David was exerted (2 Samuel 8:17, 15:24).

Melchizedek was an abiding priest in the sense that his death was not recorded. David was made a ruler “**for ever**” in the sense that God promised David that the power of the throne would always be vested in his family line. What a truly remarkable promise! Every king over Jerusalem for eighteen generations was descended from David. Ultimately, the right of rulership from King David vested in Jesus, a son of David who literally abides forever.

A THOUSAND YEARS LATER¹

A thousand years after David, Melchizedek reappears in the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Hebrews. He addressed the Jews that were familiar with the Scriptures who trusted in the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood. The Jews were challenged to learn that Jesus qualified as a priest, for he was not of the Levitical family, being from the tribe of Judah. But Paul points out that Jesus is a priest of a higher order.

Paul noted that the Melchizedek priesthood preceded, and was superior to, that of Levi. Melchizedek was honored by Levi, for while “yet in the loins” of his father Abraham, Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:9, 10). Paul also showed that this higher priesthood was different. Levitical priests were appointed to sacrifice for sins, but not Melchizedek.

Then Paul appealed to David’s Psalm, which declares that Messiah would be of the Melchizedek priesthood, combining the office of both King and Priest. Furthermore, this was a blessing priesthood, rather than a sacrificing priesthood (Hebrews 7:12-17, 24-25).

PAUL’S WARNING

Earlier in Hebrews, Paul said respecting Melchizedek, “Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing (Hebrews 5:11-14). This word “dull” comes from the Greek word *nothros* (G3576), meaning lazy, slothful, or dull. It is rendered “slothful” in Hebrews 6:12. Apparently those brethren had not paid sufficient attention to grasp the deeper issues of faith. A similar affliction can easily occur today in our Laodicean period. There is always room for improvement and for avoiding complacency.

Should we become complacent, let us seek the cause and overcome it. If we lack time from pressing duties, then we should trim these wherever possible, redeeming the time, remembering Paul’s words to Timothy, “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life” (2 Timothy 2:4). If we seem to lack an interest for the Truth, then we need to refocus from earthly to spiritual values. For earthly interests can cloud our spiritual appetites and our vision.

A deficiency here will affect not only our own spiritual alertness, but also our brethren. When attending classes



Melchizedek blessed Abraham.

or conventions, come prepared with a point or two to share with the brethren, or a question to focus our spiritual energies on. If our conversations are filled with earthly affairs, then there is much room for improvement. If we do not have an appetite for spiritual food, possibly we have a spiritual virus.

We recall that silver trumpets were used to attract Israel’s attention when something important was about to occur. Only the priest and his sons were ordained to use these trumpets (Numbers 10:2,8, 1 Chronicles 15:24).

Every advance of the church throughout the age was heralded by the silver trumpets of truth. Those who were dull of hearing and lacked interest in the latest announced truths, missed the benefits. Shall we who have heard the blast of the seventh messenger announcing the second presence of our Lord, now lose our interest and hunger for the fresh beauties of God’s word? Shall we rest upon our attainments and grow slothful? Will the truth grow old and we lose our love for it? Or will we be energetic and anxious to pursue gems of truth that lie still before us, deep in the mine? Let us totally fall in love with the truth in our Christian walk.

JESUS IS LIKE MELCHIZEDEK

Aaron was of the Levitical priesthood, Jesus is of the Melchizedek priesthood, and both were called of God (Hebrews 5:4,5). In Hebrews 6:19, 20, Paul says Jesus, our forerunner, has ascended into heaven, entering “within the veil.” In verse 20 he focuses on a single expression, “**for ever,**” in Psalms 110:4.

Paul explains in Hebrews 7:3 that Melchizedek was “without father, mother, without descent, neither having beginning of days, nor end of life” — that is, having no record of parents or pedigree — whereas the Levitical priests had to demonstrate their pedigree from Aaron. The priesthood of Jesus, like the priesthood of Melchizedek, did not depend upon tracing its roots to Aaron.

Melchizedek as a priest had no predecessor in the Genesis record. He was a priest by God's appointment. Jesus, as a priest, has no predecessor in the heavenly office he attained. Jesus also became a priest by divine appointment.

The Apostle Paul noted that the record does not mention the passing of Melchizedek, yet the death of Aaron is recorded. This contrast represents that the antitypical Melchizedek will be without end of days. How beautifully this fits our Lord Jesus, who now has eternal spiritual life. Jesus' priesthood is perpetual, extending to the Messianic Age of blessing all the families of the earth.

WAS MELCHIZEDEK SHEM?

The Jewish people, in admitting the superiority of Melchizedek to Abraham, sought to account for it by alleging that the royal priest was no other than Shem, the most pious of Noah's sons. Recorded in several Qumran fragments (for example 11QMelch), most rabbinical writers concur that Melchizedek was Shem the son of Noah.

However, (1) We know Shem's father was Noah. (2) We have his genealogy going back to Adam. (3) Shem lived six hundred years (Genesis 11:10,11). (4) A name change from Shem to Melchizedek would surely be recorded in the Bible. (5) It would be surprising to find Shem ruling a city in an area controlled by the descendants of his brother Ham.



Christ will be a king and priest, as Melchizedek was.

HIDDEN CONTRAST

In Hebrews 7:11 Paul asked, "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood ... what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec?" Perfection comes to us under the greater, more glorious Melchizedek priesthood — not from the Law, and its typical priests.

There is a contrast established in Hebrews 7:11, compared to Hebrews 8:6, that is helpful here. However, this contrast is hidden in most common versions. In the first text Paul speaks of the Levitical priesthood as a foundation upon which the Law functioned. Upon that foundation "it **has been legally set**" (The Kingdom Interlinear Translation).

Paul then compares the superiority of Jesus' Melchizedek priesthood, to the inferior Levitical priesthood, and summarizes some of this in chapter eight. "This is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Hebrews 8:1). This new and superior ministry is of a better arrangement, "which upon better promises **has been legally set**" (Hebrews 8:6, Kingdom Interlinear).

The expression "has been legally set," appearing in both texts, is from a single word in the Greek, *nomotheteo* (G3549). In all of the New Testament, the word appears only these two times. Strong's meaning is "to legislate, to have enactments enjoined, be sanctioned." Here there is a clear distinction between the age of Law, and the age of Grace. Both have been legislated, enacted, or sanctioned — but each upon a different kind of officiating priesthood. The age of Law was established upon the Levitical priesthood. The age of Grace was established upon the Melchizedek priesthood.

MELCHIZEDEK IS SUPERIOR TO THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

As Melchizedek was superior to Abram, so Christ is superior to Aaron. The Apostle Paul makes seven points in Hebrews chapter 7 that the Levitical priesthood is subservient to that of Melchizedek, and that it will be replaced.

(1) When God dictated arrangements for Israel, He separated the priestly functions from the kingly functions. The priest, in adjudging the law, had contact with God through the Urim and Thummim. The king exercised the executive role of law enforcement. However, Melchizedek was both a **king** and a **priest** (verse 1).

(2) Abram, and by extension his great-grandson Levi, paid tithes to Melchizedek (verses: 2-10). "Through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes" (Hebrews 7:9, NAS).

(3) Priests in ancient Israel were to be born of the ancestry of Aaron. But the Melchizedek priesthood was by **appointment**, not by heredity (verse 3).

(4) Melchizedek was the blesor of Abraham who had paid him tithes (verse 6). “Without [any] contradiction the less is blessed of the better” (verse 7).

(5) The Levitical priesthood failed to bring perfection, necessitating a new priesthood (verses 11 and 12). Thus the Mosaic law, with its priesthood, had to be set aside to allow for this new Melchizedek priesthood. In verse 26 Paul says our priest is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” Thus, he is far superior to the sinful and afflicted priests of the Old Testament.

(6) Aaron’s priesthood was temporary. The Melchizedek order is eternal (verses 14 to 16). Paul quotes Psalms 110:4 that, by God’s oath, Messiah, heir of this priesthood, was to be “**for ever.**”

(7) Hebrews 8:27 says the sacrifices offered by Aaronic priests were repeated, as they did not actually remove sin. Whereas our high priest offered once for all, because his sacrifice is ever efficacious.

SACRIFICES FOLLOWED BY BLESSING

When Aaron completed his work of sacrificing, he changed into garments of glory in order to bless the people. The higher priesthood of Melchizedek no longer wear robes of sacrifice, but those of glory and honor. Christ in glory blesses us presently. Christ together with the saints in glory will bless the world in the Millennium, dispensing the blessed results of the age of sacrifice.

In all of these particulars, the Melchizedek priesthood is superior to the old priests, who “serve unto the example and shadow” of the greater realities. Jesus has “obtained a more excellent ministry,” and the old covenant intertwined with the old priesthood “decayeth and waxeth old” (Hebrews 8:5, 6, 13).

— *Br. Adam Kopczyk*

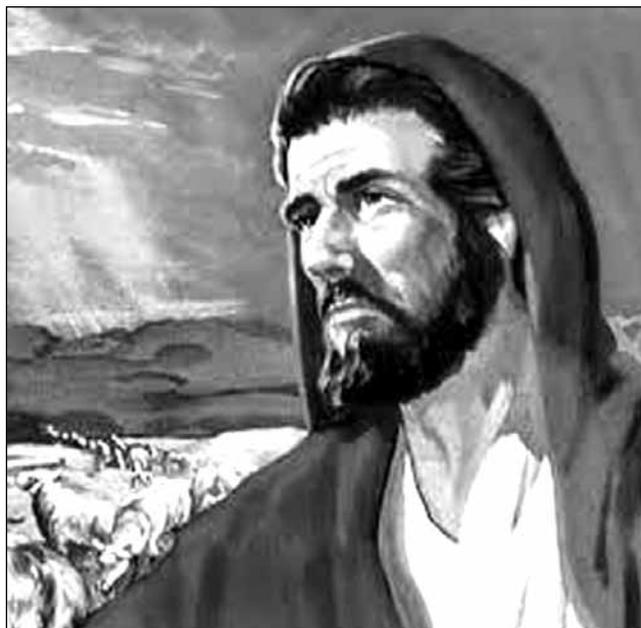
(1) An approximate period, not intended to be specific.

A Lion, a Bear, and a Serpent

“Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it? ... the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light. (19) As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him” (Amos 5:18, 19).

The writings of the prophets often had a meaning to the Israelites of old, and another meaning to modern times. Perhaps this is the case with the passage quoted above, also.

(1) As this prophecy applied to Israel in the Old Testament, the first two empires that would dominate



The Prophet Amos

the Israelites, in Daniel chapter seven, were Babylon (represented as a Lion), and Medo- Persia (represented as a Bear). Subsequently, during the first advent of Christ, many of the Israelites were back in the land of promise, in their “house” again. However, because they did not receive Christ as Messiah, they were subsequently struck by Rome, the agency of the serpent, Satan, and greatly afflicted.

(2) At our end of the age, the power that took control of the land of Israel from the Ottoman Empire was England, whose national symbol is a Lion. This was helpful to Israel, and the Balfour Declaration expressed England’s intent to make of it a national homeland for the Jewish people. However, as time proceeded, England at times became an impediment to the national hopes of Israel. Nevertheless, by God’s grace Israel was re-established as an independent nation in 1948, seventy years after the beginning of their return in 1878.

Another place where many Israelites had difficulty was Russia, whose national symbol is a Bear. When at last the Soviet Union was disbanded late in 1991, in a process beginning with the release of various countries in Eastern Europe in 1989, a large influx of Russian Israelites were able to flee to Israel.

But now that many Israelites have gone back “into the house,” inhabiting the homeland again, another threat looms from the serpent Satan. Israel leans “his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.” Israel, depending on their national strength, will have another attack to endure. This one will turn their eyes heavenward, and at last, advised by the Ancient Worthies, Israel will “look unto him whom they pierced,” and embrace their Messiah by faith (Zechariah 12:10).

— *Extracted from studies by brethren in India*

Dividing the Land

“By lot was their inheritance, as Jehovah commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half tribe” (Joshua 14:2).

Joshua and the Israelites had spent six years conquering Canaan west of the Jordan River. Two large coalitions had been overcome, one in the south, and a larger one in the north. The cities involved in these two campaigns are listed in Joshua 12, whose last verse, 24, says “All the kings [were] thirty and one” that Israel had subdued. Perhaps the two coalitions have something to do prophetically with the two world wars that led to refounding the nation of Israel. World War I began in 1914, World War II ended in 1945, and there are 31 years from one date to the other.

Joshua 13:1 then says, “Jehovah said unto him [Joshua], Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.” Nevertheless, the time had come to divide the land among the tribes of Israel, and the remaining efforts to secure unresolved areas would proceed thereafter.

Joshua chapter 13 reminds us that 2½ tribes had already received their inheritance on the east side of Jordan, before the passing of Moses. As long as 50 years ago, a lesson by Br. Stuart Sowers, at the Jersey City Convention, interpreted the meaning of those 2½ tribes.¹ He suggested that they represented the Church class (Reuben, the firstborn), the Great Company class (Gad, “a troop,” the larger number of spiritual Israel), and the Ancient Worthies (Manasseh). One half of Manasseh received land east of Jordan, and the other half would settle west of Jordan, depicting the Ancient Worthies as a class connecting the heavenly and earthly phases of the Millennial Kingdom. We think this is correct.

Aside from Levi, who would have 48 Levitical cities sprinkled among all the tribes of Israel, this left 9½ tribes remaining to receive their portions west of the Jordan, after the opening six year campaign to dispossess the Canaanites. Dividing the land west of the Jordan among these 9½ tribes is the subject of Joshua chapters 14-19.

JOSHUA 14

This chapter begins the narrative with assigning Caleb, of the tribe of Judah, a special portion. Caleb and Joshua were the two spies sent out 45 years earlier who brought back a good report, encouraging Israel to trust God for victory and take possession of the land of promise. Ten

other spies discouraged the people, and as a consequence God mandated that Israel would wander another 39 years (40 total) before again authorizing them to take the land. In Joshua 14:7,10, Caleb remembered that he was 40 years old when sent as a spy, that 45 years had passed since then, and that he was now 85 years of age, but still robust and willing to secure his inheritance. For Caleb's fidelity, Moses had committed to Caleb that “the land

whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance” (verse 9), and so it turned out. “Joshua blessed him and gave unto Caleb ... Hebron for an inheritance” (verse 13). Caleb successfully secured the land and settled in his inheritance (verse 15).

JOSHUA 15

Joshua 15 then describes the land possessed by the whole of Judah, the tribe of which Caleb was part. Notice on the map that Judah was given the southland. Simeon obtained a portion of land within Judah, and more on this will follow later.

Beginning with Joshua 15:21, the remainder of this lengthy chapter specifies 120 cities included in the large tribal allotment of the tribe of Judah.² If the land divisions east of Jordan have meaning symbolically relating to the Plan of God, perhaps the division of land west of Jordan does also. We think it is so, and this meaning is explored in this study.

However, the two pictures are distinct. In the first case the Church, Great Company, and Ancient Worthies are pictured as receiving a reward for faithfulness at the outset of the Kingdom, before mankind. West of Jordan we have a picture of how things are structured during the Kingdom respecting mankind. Included here is another view of the Church, shown in the tribe of Judah, representing that the Church will govern mankind for their blessing.

Judah was the royal tribe. King David and his successors were from Judah, as was King Jesus, and the saints are promised to share the throne of Christ during the Millennium (Revelation 3:21, 20:6).

Zechariah 14:4 is a well known prophecy that speaks of the Kingdom of God pictured by the Mount of Olives, divided into two portions, north and south, representing the heavenly and earthly phases of the Kingdom. In Judah, with its large southern territory, we have a picture of the church reigning over earth for the uplift of mankind in the Kingdom.

Caleb, one of the two faithful spies, was from Judah, enhancing the view that the faithful of the Gospel Age are represented here as ruling earth during the kingdom. The other faithful spy was Joshua himself, of Ephraim, who



was from Joseph, and Joseph's heirs are the next tribe to receive an inheritance. This is described in chapters 16 and 17.

The 120 cities given in the portion of Judah are numerically the product of 12 x 10. Twelve is the spiritual number of scripture, as in the 12 tribes of spiritual Israel (Revelation 7), the 12 x 12 thousand of the Bride class (Revelation 14:1), the 12,000 x 12,000 furlong layout of New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:16), and the 12 x 12 dimension of walls of New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:17).³ Ten is an earthly number. Thus, the product of these two suggest the Church as the spiritual governing force over earth in the Kingdom.

JOSHUA 16, 17

Joshua 16:1 says, "and the lot of the children of Joseph fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto the water of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout mount Bethel," and much more, through verse 3. "So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance."

As the reader can see from the map, Ephraim, and the remainder of Manasseh, received their inheritance in portions adjoining each other, somewhat north of Judah. Judah and Joseph shared something in common. As a result of an infraction by Reuben, Judah and Joseph each received part of the favor that Reuben would have been due. This matter is explained in 1 Chronicles 5:1,2. "Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn; but ... his birthright was given unto the sons of **Joseph** the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For **Judah** prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the **chief ruler**; but the **birthright** was Joseph's)." ⁴

The two tribes from Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, express the firstborn portion, which was always a double portion compared to other heirs. Thus Judah in the south expresses the earthly dominion of the saints during the Kingdom, but Ephraim and Manasseh express the remarkable heavenly inheritance of the saints, the firstborn class, whose glory will continue in the everlasting ages beyond the Millennium.⁵

Describing the portions for Joseph's sons take two chapters. In part of this, Joshua 17:3, there is mention of the five daughters of Zelophehad. These are referred to earlier in the Book of Numbers (26:33, 27:1, and 36:2) where they seem to represent the church.⁶ That meaning is consistent with their appearance in this context.

Notably, in these two chapters no tally of a number of cities is given for Ephraim or Manasseh, unlike what is common for other tribes. This suggests also that these two tribes represent the heavenly inheritance of the saints, rather than one relating to earth.⁷



Joshua viewing the land

JOSHUA 18

"And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them." This statement comes after Judah and Joseph received their inheritance, as though to divide these two from the seven tribes remaining. "And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance" (verse 2).

Shiloh is where the tabernacle would reside for many years. It was the location that represented the presence of God among the Israelites, and now God would overrule the allotments for the seven remaining tribes. Verses 4 and 5 explain that three men of each tribe were to search out the remaining land and divide it into seven portions, without knowing which portions would be assigned which tribes. Thereafter the seven portions were to be assigned by casting lots, which, as Proverbs 16:33 says, is determined by Jehovah.

The first lot fell to Benjamin. "And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families: and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph" (Joshua 18:11).

Benjamin sometimes represents the Great Company class, as for example in Genesis 35:16-19, which recounts the passing of Rachel after the troubled birth of Benjamin. So, when the Great Company is delivered, the spiritual part of the Abrahamic Covenant will have completed its role, and will pass away.

Here also, in Joshua 18:11, Benjamin represents the Great Company class. Notice that their inheritance is directly between the two depictions of the heavenly church, "between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph." The Great Company will share a heavenly reward with the saints in the heavenly sphere. They will not be on the throne, and will not receive the firstborn blessing. But they will be in company with, and assisting, the Church during the Kingdom.

JOSHUA 19

The second lot came to Simeon. “Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon ... the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them” (verse 1). This odd location can be observed on the map included in this article.

Simeon perhaps represents natural Israel, the people and nation that will become the center of the Kingdom on earth, that is ruled by the saints, pictured by Judah. Thus Simeon’s portion within Judah expresses Israel’s position as the earthly representative of the heavenly kingdom.

Israel, as a nation, lost the privilege of embracing Messiah at the first advent. Other than the remnant of faith, the bulk of the nation was brutalized by the Romans and driven from their land, for their sin of rejecting and crucifying Messiah. Recall that Joseph in Egypt, a picture of Christ, chose Simeon to be imprisoned while the other sons went free, associating Simeon, in particular, with the guilt of Israel in rejecting Jesus (Genesis 42:24).

Another link of Simeon as Israel may be indicated in Luke 2:25. There an aged Israelite named Simeon, presumably of the tribe reflected by his name, “was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel.” When Mary approached with her infant son, Simeon, with “the holy Spirit ... upon him,” took the babe into his arms “and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace ... for mine eyes have seen thy salvation ... A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” (Luke 2:28-32). Perhaps Simeon here represents Israel as the first people to see Messiah, as distinguished from the Gentiles whose appreciation would be deferred a number of years.

The cities numbered to Simeon were 17 (Joshua 19:6,7). This reminds us that when Jeremiah predicted that Israel would be removed from their land, God instructed Jeremiah to purchase a portion of land as a token that Israel would later return. Jeremiah was to secure the deed and preserve it for many years to come, as a sign that God would regather Israel at a later time. The price Jeremiah paid was 17 shekels of silver (Jeremiah 32:9). Thus, Simeon’s 17 cities may represent regathered Israel at the outset of the Kingdom.

THE REMAINDER OF JOSHUA 19

Joshua 19:10-51 then quickly itemizes the distribution of the remaining tribes. Zebulun would have 12 cities, Issachar 16 cities (from verse 17), Asher 22 cities (from verse 24), Naphtali 19 cities (from verse 32), Dan 17 cities (from verse 40). This segment closes out with a record of five tribes, apparently representing mankind in the kingdom. However, if we add to this number Simeon, natural Israel, as part of the earthly kingdom, we have six tribes. This is an appropriate number to represent the earthly kingdom, for the six sons of Keturah, in Genesis, also represent the world to be blessed in the Kingdom.

Before Abraham died he sent the six sons of Keturah “eastward, unto the east country” (Genesis 25:6). That direction reminds us of the location of the original home of man, “eastward in Eden” (Genesis 2:8).

Joshua 19:47, however, adds something peculiar about the tribe of Dan. Quoting from the King James version, but omitting the two italicized (supplied) words, “And the coast of the children of Dan went out ... for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it ... and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.”

This refers to the experience recorded at greater length in Judges chapter 18, explaining that the Danites (or some portion of them) left their original inheritance in the southwest, relocating to a lush portion northward and inland, adjacent to Naphtali. These Danites did not retain the inheritance of their first opportunity, but found another more to their liking.

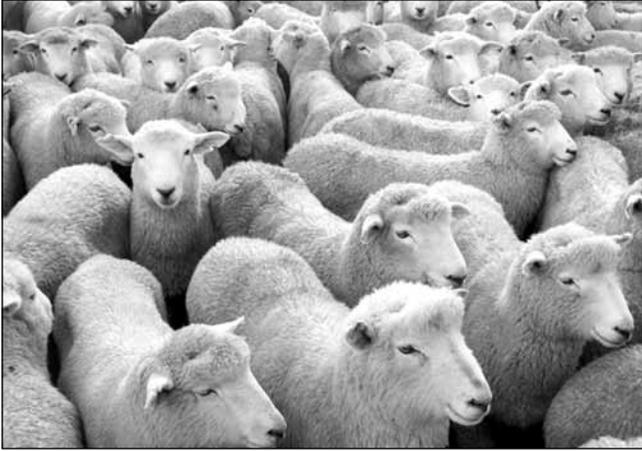
Notice on the accompanying map that Dan’s original allotment was next to Benjamin. As with Benjamin, it was nestled between Judah and Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh). Perhaps Dan here represents a large number of the Christian world who had an opportunity for the heavenly kingdom, but failing to appreciate the opportunity, find themselves in the earthly kingdom, a place of their liking. In the distribution geographically, they became adjacent to the other tribes that represent mankind in the kingdom.

AGGREGATE CITIES

The aggregate number of cities listed for these tribes representing mankind is the sum of the following numbers, given in the text — 12, 16, 22, 19, 17 — which is 86. As the numbers are specific, perhaps there is meaning intended here. The number 86 can be divided into 43 plus 43, but not further, as 43 is a prime number. So, the digits come into play, 4 and 3 sum to seven — the two 43s in this way yield **14.8**



The six portions of land refer to mankind, as do Keturah’s six sons.



14 Lambs were offered each day on the Feast of Tabernacles.

If this is the intention, and as this is about mankind in the earthly phase of the Kingdom, then we observe that the number **14** elsewhere is associated with the Millennial Kingdom in a number of cases. For example, on each day of the Feast of Tabernacles (the Kingdom), **14** lambs were to be offered. Whereas on each day of the Feast of Unleavened bread (the Gospel Age), 7 lambs were to be offered. The first age of redemption is associated with 7, the **second** age of redemption with **double** seven, **14**.⁹

In Isaiah 36-38 Israel was attacked by Sennacherib, but delivered as a miracle from God. This event is often considered to represent God's deliverance of Israel at the outset of the Kingdom. The date of this episode was the **14th** year of Hezekiah (Isaiah 36:1). Another example: Ezekiel 40:1 begins Ezekiel's vision of the Kingdom, in "the **14th** year after that the city was smitten."

Acts 27 describes a storm of **14** days that is often understood to represent the final turmoils that take us into the Kingdom. The generations counting from Abraham to Jesus, who is to rule the world in the Kingdom, is given in three parts of **14** generations each (Matthew 1:17).¹⁰

GOD'S MASTERY

The many details in this lesson, and what they may represent, illustrate our Heavenly Father's mastery of human history. When God's plan is discerned by the world, the depth and evidence that He has prepared a wonderful destiny for mankind, will reveal His love and care for them. How we thank Him for the blessings He has prepared for the human family.

— *Class Studies in San Diego*

(1) We are told that even earlier, Br. Edward Fay had a similar view.

(2) The first number of this 120 total is given in Joshua 15:22 as "29," but this number is often considered to be an error, as it does not reflect the itemized names of the cities listed in verses 21-32, which tally to 37. The remainder of the reported subtotals in chapter 15 are correct. These are given as 14, 16, 9, 11, 9, 10, 6, 2, and 6, which sum to 83 cities. Adding this to the 37 named cities in the first segment yields the sum of 120.

(3) The number 12 (a spiritual number), 10 (an earthly number), and 6 (a number for imperfection) are all three derived from the core number 7. For the number 7 is the sum of 3 + 4, 2 + 5, and 1 + 6, and the product of each pair gives 12, 10, 6, respectively. Six being 1 deficient of the perfect number seven represents imperfection. The two other numbers represent wholeness or completion of things spiritual or earthly, respectively.

(4) Judah was the fourth born of Leah. When Reuben was disqualified, one might suppose the genealogical blessing would pass to the second born, Simeon, or the third born, Levi, but both of these were disqualified because of the intensity of their anger and vengeance in the matter of Dinah (Genesis 34:25). "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations" (Genesis 49:5). Thus that part of the blessing passed them by and came to Judah, and thus the descent of Jesus came through Judah.

For the offense of Simeon and Levi, God would "scatter them in Israel" (Genesis 49:7). Subsequently Levi redeemed himself by standing with Moses in the matter of the golden calf, so Levi was scattered in a good way. They were distributed in 48 Levitical cities to be a spiritual influence among the tribes of Israel. Simeon ultimately was scattered also, apparently further north, for they became associated with the 10 tribe kingdom when Israel split following the reign of Solomon. Later in this article we suggest that Simeon represents Israel, and Israel collectively was taken from their land and scattered among the nations.

(5) Zechariah 14:4, "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." This well known prophecy expresses the two phases of the kingdom, the heavenly and the earthly, by the northern and southern divisions of the Mount of Olives. This is compatible with Judah representing the earthly dominion of the saints in the Kingdom, and Ephraim and Manasseh representing the everlasting heavenly reward of the saints.

(6) See the article "Numbers," November 2019, page 8, paragraph 4.

(7) Some may wonder whether Manasseh in this case is intended to represent the Ancient Worthies, rather than, together with Ephraim, the heavenly Bride class — remembering that when Moses divided the land east of Jordan, Manasseh, split on both sides of the Jordan, represents the Ancient Worthies. Of course interpretation is involved, and we do not wish to be insistent. However, the two divisions of the land form distinct pictures. On the east side, the Church is represented by Reuben, on the west side by Judah and Joseph. On the east side the Great Company is represented by Gad, on the west side by Benjamin. In dividing the land west of Jordan, Ephraim and Manasseh are joined in the name "Joseph" in Joshua 14:4. Joseph and Benjamin were sons of Rachel who, like Sarah, represents the spiritual part of the Abraham covenant. Thus our inclination to recognize the inheritance given "Joseph" as heavenly.

(8) Nebuchadnezzar's reign also involved the number 43, as that was the period of his reign, and his kingdom of Babylon was the first of four kingdoms to rule Israel for "seven times" — suggesting an intended connection between 43 and the number 7.

(9) An editor observes that *sheba*, seven, is the number of an oath. The seven for the Gospel Age, and double seven for the Millennial Age, reminds us that in these two ages God's oath bound covenant is fulfilled.

(10) Genesis 14:5 speaks of "The fourteenth year" of Chedorlaomer, the time of Abraham's victory over a coalition from the east. If this has some meaning symbolically to the close of this age, as for example the judgment of Sodom does, then we have another testimony connecting **14** to the Kingdom.