

Beauties of the Truth

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Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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The Mountain of the Lord
The Silent Years
Chronology Lessons from Ezekiel
From A Reader
A Prophecy Nearing Fulfillment

BEAUTIES OF THE TRUTH is published as a service to the brethren to stimulate their consideration and appreciation of the boundless riches of Gods Word. It is published free of charge. Subscriptions will be entered for all who request it. Address all correspondence to: Beauties of the Truth, 10034 S.W. 52nd Avenue, Portland, OR 97219. Editorial board: Brs. Jerry Leslie (Editor-in-Chief), David Doran, Carl Hagensick, Michael Nekora, David Rice, David Stein.

The Mountain of the Lord

Beginning in Micah 4:1 we read: "In the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways ... And we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem' "

In the same context Psalms 72:8, 11 declares: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. ... Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him."

Let us examine these two texts by asking three main questions:

1. How will the law go forth from Zion?
2. How will the word of the Lord go forth from Jerusalem?
3. How are the kings and nations going to submit to the Lord?

THE LAW FROM ZION

It is clear that Zion is not synonymous with Jerusalem. Originally Zion was the fortress of the Jebusites, and later was also called the city of David. King David conquered the mountain of Zion and then lived there. (See 2 Samuel 5:6, 7, 9.) Zion became a holy place for God. Later the temple on Mount Moriah was included in the meaning of "Zion," and here the ark of the covenant was found during the reign of Solomon. It was also a typical picture of the reign of the entire Christ. The ark of the covenant indicated the presence of God, and through its presence Zion also became the dwelling place of God. (Psalms 9:11)

Spiritual Israel hopes for the antitypical "Zion," the heavenly Jerusalem. The Apostle Paul writes in Hebrews 12:18, 22, "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched ... but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, and heavenly Jerusalem' " So it is upon this Mount Zion that the lamb of God and the 144,000 stand. (Rev. 14:1) Zion therefore pictures the heavenly phase of the kingdom.

So how will the law go forth from Zion? Instead of the word "law," the New English translation uses the word "instruction." And in Micah 4:2 we find the word "teach." Instruction and teaching will be the responsibility of the ancient heroes of faith: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the other ancient worthies. They will help mankind at the time the New Covenant is established. They will be the living witnesses of the love and power of God who will have delivered His people from the trouble of the last days.

And so it will "come to pass in the last days that ... the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains." Instruction will not go directly to the people, but will first go to the ancient worthies. Brother Russell thought direct communication between the ancient worthies and body of Christ could be the channel of conveyance of instruction, laws, and information. (See Volume 4, pp. 626-627) These faithful men and women will be the mouthpiece of The Christ, head and body. Instruction goes forth from Zion, heavenly Jerusalem, to these faithful ones who in turn will have many helpers and co-workers in Israel, and most likely other nations.

THE WORD FROM JERUSALEM

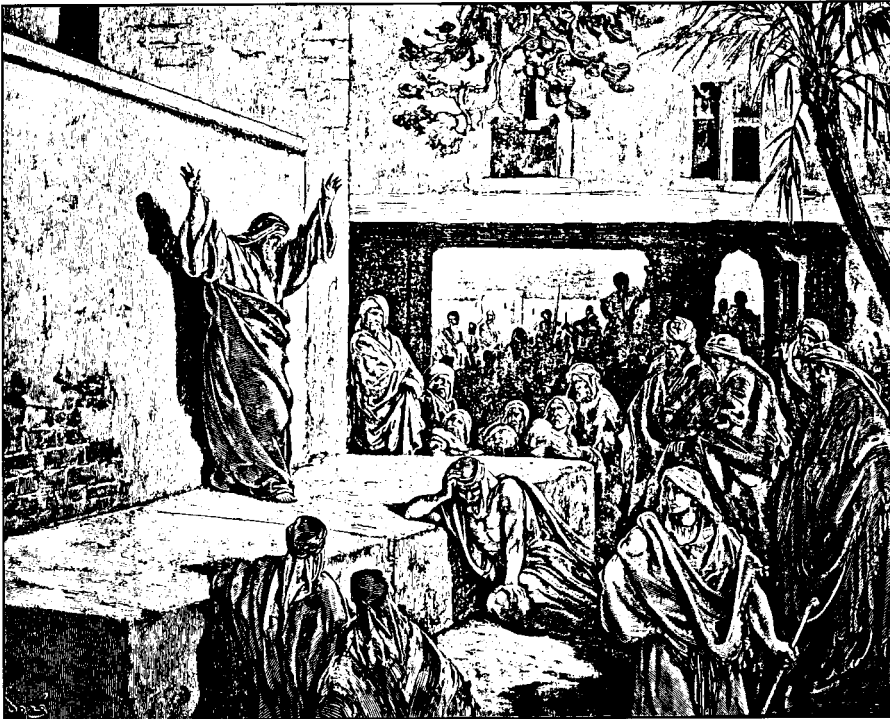
Jerusalem is a symbol for the earthly kingdom because it isn't called Zion or New Jerusalem (a symbol for the bride of Christ -see Revelation 21:2; 3:12; R5189). It will be the seat of the kingdoms earthly representatives. Brother Russell even thought that literal Jerusalem would become the "world capital"

So the word goes forth from Zion as instruction to the kingdom's personal representatives. In Jerusalem these ancient worthies will teach that word of instruction to the people. The word of God is also characterized as the bread of heaven. How wonderful will this time be when all people will enjoy nourishment from The Christ glorified. Yes, it will come to pass that the mountain of the Lord will be on top of the mountains. The nations will say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord."

KINGS WILL SUBMIT

From Micah 4 and Psalm 72 we see four steps in this submission:

1. The acceptance of God and the recognition of his Anointed including the ancient worthies. (Micah 4:2)
2. The offering of the gold of Sheba and the presents of Tarshish. (Psalms 72:10, 15)
3. The beating of swords into plowshares. (Micah 4:3)
4. The cultivating of one's own vine and fig tree, the abundance of grain: the acceptance of righteousness. (Psalms 72:16)



The Prophet Micah. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks."

As we look at these points we must remember that (1) The law goes forth from Zion (from the church in heaven), and (2) The word of the Lord from Jerusalem (earth's capital). This means that the instructions go forth from earth's sole ruler, The Christ head and body. And earth's nations and kings will recognize this as the only right way.

The acceptance of God and His anointed, The Christ, will be the result of Jacob's great trouble. In this

tribulation, God will reveal himself to His people Israel. This will be the time of the Lord's appearing, his revelation to the world with the church in glory.

The Lord will reveal God's plan to mankind. He will give instructions "out of Zion" (Rev. 14: 1) These instructions will go forth from Jerusalem as the word of the Lord. The resurrected ancient worthies will spread the word. Thus enlightened, the people will enter a new path, one which many today do not consider. The time of the opening of the "highway of holiness" will have come when the New Covenant has been established with the house of Israel.

This will be the first stage of submission: accepting God after the appearing of the Lord, after the "miracle" in Israel, the resurrection, the New Covenant, and the opening of the highway of holiness. The second stage is pictured by the giving of the "gold of Sheba" and the "presents of Tarshish."

For the most part Bible Students agree that Tarshish symbolizes countries that lie far away from Israel. The signs point toward Europe. In the fourth volume Brother Russell explains that Magog, Meschech, Tubal, Gomar, Javan, and Tarschisch (Tarshish) were the children of Japheth. Japheth probably was the progenitor of Europe's first inhabitants. Because large parts of America, Australia, and New Zealand were later colonized by Europeans, we would include these countries in the word "Tarshish."

The Prophet Micah. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks."

In his comments on Psalms 72:15, Brother Russell writes that gold symbolizes obedience. Thus these countries are to give political obedience and support for Christ's kingdom reign on earth. All those who did not know God, or knew Him only in part, will willingly submit and be obedient. The submission of the kings also involves the beating of swords into plowshares. After the kings of the earth have acknowledged the anointed one and when they will have given him honor, obedience, and support [gold, presents, incense], they must demonstrate that they really do submit. God's kingdom on earth will be a kingdom of peace with no place for weapons.

The last stage of submission concerns the acceptance of justice by the kings of the earth. Micah 4:4 says that every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree. Psalms 72:4 says clearly, "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor."

Truly, oppression will end and justice will rule. The people will be filled with the knowledge and the love of the Lord. "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things." (Psalms 72:18) Yes, He alone does wondrous things. We may not know all the details of the execution of His plan, but it is our hope that soon we shall participate in this great work of restitution.

Let us lift up our heads, for our deliverance draweth nigh. And let us be happy that after this short time of trouble, the kingdom of peace will be established on this earth. "Blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen!" (Psalms 72:19)
- *Samuel Stalder*

The Silent Years

The Old Testament is the history of the people of Israel. Of its 39 books, only Genesis is not concerned with that story, encapsulating the history of nearly 2500 years from creation to the formation of Israel into 50 short chapters.

The Israelites were God's people. They were the ones for whom he specially cared. Theirs were the patriarchs, priests, judges and kings. But especially, theirs were the prophets. The prophets were their instructors, and their chastisers. The prophets were the nation's conscience. And they

needed a conscience, for they were a wayward people -following God in adversity, but turning from him in prosperity.

“You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” (Amos 3:2)

It was only after their longest captivity, 70 years in Babylon, that they finally stopped seeking after other gods. And ironically, it was shortly after their return that God stopped sending them his spokesmen, the prophets. They had entered The Silent Years, the time between the Testaments. There was nearly a 400-year famine for hearing the word of God -from the death of Malachi to the ministry of John the Baptist.

“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.” (Hosea 3:4)

Why, when Israel finally learned their lesson to stop worshipping other gods, did God remove from them his spokesmen? After all, these prophets were one of God's chief blessings to his chosen people.

“Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” (Romans 3:2)

Does God speak to this question as to why and for how long he will leave Israel without a prophet? An interesting prophecy in the fourth chapter of Ezekiel may address these silent years and the reason for them.

“Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof. And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it. Thou shalt drink also water by measure, the sixth Part of an hin: from time to time shalt thou drink. And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man, in their sight. And the LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them. Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself or is torn in pieces,- neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth. Then he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith. Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care,- and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment: That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another and consume away for their iniquity.” (Ezekiel 4:9-17)

The first half of this fourth chapter deals with the prophecy of Ezekiel alternately laying on his left and right sides for periods of 390 days and 40 days respectively. This was to illustrate the burden of the sins of Israel and Judah (verses 4 to 6). The first three verses indicate that the terminus of

these days of iniquity would be when siege was laid against Jerusalem. This is an obvious reference to the setting of siege by Nebuchadnezzar when he took Israel captive to Babylon. If the punishment for their iniquity was not to begin until sometime after Nebuchadnezzar's siege, then the 390 years and 40 years of iniquity must precede this event. But verse 13 says that the eating of defiled bread would be "among the Gentiles, whither I would drive them" Thus we conclude that the 390 years of punishment in the second half of Ezekiel 4 is a different period from the 390 years in the first half.

In addressing this prophecy there are three areas of investigation: the content of the punishment, the dating of it and the reason for it.

SIX GRAIN BREAD

The punishment consisted of eating a prescribed six grain bread, prepared in a specific manner for a period of 390 days -"a day for a year." (vs. 6) The six prescribed grains were to be wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet and fitches.

The mixing of grains was considered by the Israelites to be an abomination. They were not even to grow diverse seeds in the same field, or make garments of different kinds of material.

"Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind.- thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed.- neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee." (Leviticus 19:19)

This prohibition is spelled out directly in the prophecy under consideration, for God calls the result "defiled bread" The conditions of verses 10 and 11 are reminiscent of the black horse of Revelation 6:5, 6 where wheat and barley were rationed out during the period of the church of the dark ages. It also reminds one of the famine conditions of Amos 8:11, 12.

'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.- And they shall wander m sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.'

The fulfillment, then, of this prophecy would be when Israel would be deprived of access to the Word of God and have to subsist on a defiled admixture of various other philosophies.

390 YEARS

The length of this punishment we interpret to be 390 years, using the context's own rule of "a day for a year." It is more difficult to determine when to place this punishment. Two things are apparent - it is after Israel has become dispersed amongst the Gentiles, and it occurs when they are having a famine for the Word of God. The one time slot that meets both of these criteria is the period between the Testaments - the silent years from Malachi to John the Baptist.

A comparison of Nehemiah 13:10-14 with Malachi 3:8-10 has led many scholars to the conclusion

that Malachi wrote his prophecy after the failure of Nehemiah's reforms. Nehemiah served as cupbearer to the Persian king Artaxerxes around 460 BC. At first sufficiently successful to rebuild the Temple, inaugurate a release of captives and reinstitute the tithing system, within less than a generation the reforms failed. It was to address this failure that Malachi gave his prophecy.

While scholars do not agree on the exact year of Malachi's death, they place it between 400 and 350 BC - a date of 360 BC would not be unreasonable. It is far easier to date the beginning of the next prophet, John the Baptist. Being six months older than Jesus, he would have started his ministry in the spring of 29 AD. This being so, the duration of the silent years between the Testaments would have been, as Ezekiel seems to have predicted, 390 years.

WHY?

The reason for this punishment was to "bear the iniquity of the house of Israel." (verse 4) But, we inquire further, what specific iniquity? At first glance, it is tempting to associate this punishment with the house of Israel, and exclude it from the punishment of the house of Judah, for the 390 years in the first half of the chapter dealt with Israel while 40 years were singled out for Judah. However, verse 9 states that Ezekiel lay on his side 390 days, not 430-390 plus 40. While the

narrative indicates the longer period of days, they evidently represented only 390 total - Judah's period of iniquity being concurrent with the last 40 of Israel.



Mattathias and the Apostate, the incident which sparked the Maccabean revolt during the "Silent Years."

Without going into a detailed examination of the first half of Ezekiel 4, suffice it to say that Israel's iniquity dated from the separation of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel from the two-tribe kingdom of Judah in the days of Rehoboam and Jeroboam. Concurrent with this was an attempt to keep Israel from going into idolatry by an unnamed prophet of the Lord. See 1 Kings 13 for details.

Judah's iniquity, on the other hand, dates from the days of Josiah's great reform, recorded in 2 Chronicles 34. It was not the reform, but the failure of the Israelites to maintain it, that caused God to bring

the punishments against them. Interestingly enough these two events are historically connected in 2 Kings 23:15-18.

The punishments of both kingdoms-of Israel and Judah-were for failed reforms. The execution of the punishment was also associated with a failed reform, that of Nehemiah. The silence between

the Testaments, the withdrawal by God of his prophets, his oracles from Israel, was therefore due to that people's failing to heed the prophets when sent.

THE DETAILS

Finally let us consider the details of Ezekiel's portrayal of this punishment.

Six Grains. First, the bread of affliction here was to be composed of six grains -a diversity specifically forbidden in God's law. While it would be arbitrary to assign a specific philosophy to each of the mentioned grains, one such list might read: (1) Hellenism, which produced the Sadducees; (2) Platonism, which corrupted the high intentions of the Pharisees; (3) the teachings of Zoroaster, which produced such Magi (or "wise ones") as Simon and Elymas mentioned in the book of Acts; (4) mysticism, which led to the Essene community, and later to the Cabalists; (5) the nationalism of the Maccabees which found itself represented in the Zealots of Jesus' day and (6) assimilationism, which was so evident in the Herodians.

As an interesting sidenote to history, it seems worthy of note to mention that it was the reform minded period of the Maccabees (circa 167 BC) that produced a large flood of Jewish philosophical literature known today as the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha.

Eaten By Measure. It is tempting, and may be profitable, to decipher the significance of the measurements of 20 shekels of bread daily and the one-sixth of a hin of water, but the lesson appears not to be so much in the amount, as in the fact that they were rationed. Note verse 16 in this regard:

"Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care, - and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment"

Human Dung vs. Cow Dung. The permission to bake the bread over cow dung rather than human dung at the insistence of Ezekiel appears to be a distinction without a difference. The statement in verse 15, "I have given thee cow dung for human dung," appears to relate the two. In a similar vein, in Leviticus 8:14, 18, the laying of the hands on the animal seemed to equate the two, stating in effect, "this represents me."

Dung is excrement. Human dung represents that which comes out of man. This was the point of the prophecy. The mixed bread of defilement which they would be forced to eat during the silent years would not represent God, but that which comes out of man-as valuable as excrement.

As Barley Cakes. While there are many references to barley in the Scriptures as the first harvest of the year, representing Jesus, there is only one other passage that relates to barley cakes. It is found in Judges 7:13.

"And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along."

The meaning of it is explained in the following verse:

“And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.”

Here the barley cake represented vengeance - the Lord's vengeance through the sword of Gideon. In Numbers 5:15 barley is associated with the jealousy offering, intended for “bringing iniquity to remembrance.”

Putting these thoughts together we deduce that the eating of the mixed grain as a barley cake was to call to remembrance their prior iniquities in failing to heed the word of God when a prophet was sent, and represented God's sword of vengeance upon them for that act. Note Romans 10:14-21 in this regard.

SUMMARY

This short prophecy in the latter part of Ezekiel 4, then, seems to indicate that God's punishment for failing to heed his repetitive prophetic warnings was to deny them those prophets for a period of 390 years, from Malachi to John, forcing them to subsist on human philosophies. These concepts, instead of uniting them into one covenant people of God, divided them into such conflicting and competing groups as the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Herodians, Zealots and Magi.

Malachi, in the closing words of the Old Testament, points forward to the next prophet, John the Baptist:

“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:4-6)

- *Carl Hagensick*

Chronology Lessons from the Book of Ezekiel

Ezekiel was a prophet of God to the Hebrews in Babylonian exile, and he was a priest. (Ezekiel 1:1, 3)

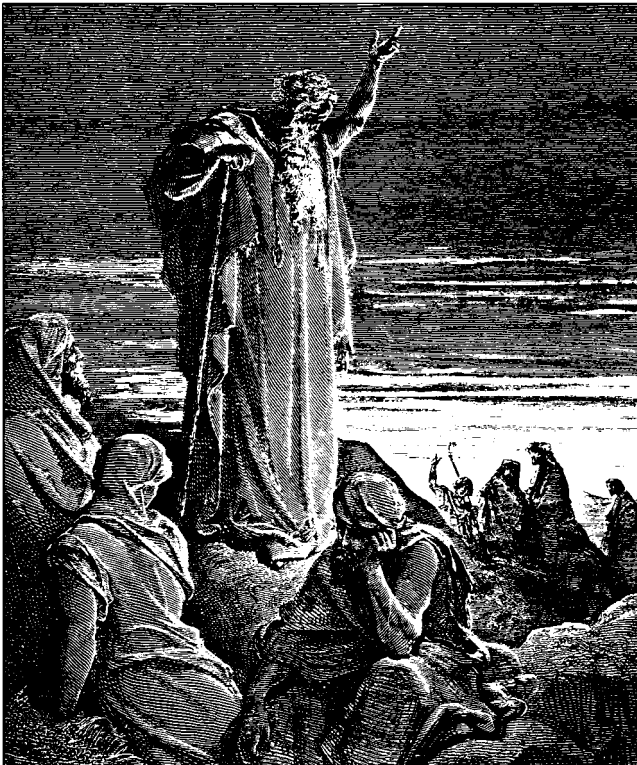
(A) The Lord began Ezekiel's prophetic office in a very marked way (Ezekiel 1:3-onward). Ezekiel recorded the day (5th), the month (4th), and year (5th), of king Jehoiachin's captivity (612 BC), which was Ezekiel's fifth year of captivity as well. Yet Ezekiel synchronizes king Jehoiachin's captivity chronology, with that of some marked event 30 years previous, that is, King Josiah's great Passover observance (642 BC), a very marked event in all Hebrew minds, yet especially to the priest Ezekiel.

One of Ezekiel's first assignments is recorded in Ezekiel 4th chapter. Ezekiel is told to paint a

picture of the city of Jerusalem upon a tile (hard, smooth surface). And to depict the city being besieged in a most vehement way. And further, Ezekiel was to lie down on his left side, looking toward the tile, but with an iron skillet between himself and the tile. This suggests that there would be a terrible siege against Jerusalem, yet God would not intervene on Israel's behalf, their heaven would be like iron-hardened. This is in contrast to two previous sieges against Jerusalem in which the city was eventually spared both times, once in 626 BC with King Jehoiakim's 3rd year, and again in 617 BC with King Jehoiachin's (and Ezekiel's) captivity.

No, this time was going to be different. God was going to exact retributive judgment, to expiate both Israel's (the 10 tribes) and Judah's (the 2 tribes), sins against favors, and warnings (the previous partial captivities). Ezekiel was to lie on his left side for 390 days, representing 390 years for the iniquities of Israel, and then to lie on his right side an additional 40 days, representing 40 years for the iniquities of Judah.

Bro. Russell in *Thy Kingdom Come*, page 295, observes that this judgment is depicted as coming against the one city, Jerusalem. The thought would be, that the 390 years and 40 years both end with the same event, the start of the final siege of Jerusalem. Following this suggestion, we would begin the 390 years for the 10 tribe kingdom from the point at which they rebelled, King Rehoboam's 1st year (998 BC). Adding the 390 years brings us to 608 BC, the year the final siege of Jerusalem would begin (608, 607, 606 BC). This, fitting so well, gives us confidence to add the 40 years for Judah to 608 BC, and that brings us to 648 BC. Interestingly, this is the 12th year of King Josiah's reign, and we read in 2 Chronicles 34:3 and forward that he began religious reforms in this year, a marked event. Yet why would God date 40 years from this event, for it was a good event? We suggest that God foresaw that Judah would not stay reformed, but instead sin grievously thereafter. We also ask ourselves why God might have chosen 40 years for Judah, why not 100, 400, etc.? As we know, 40 in the Scriptures represents a period of trial, judgment, and so it was the case here. Judah would fail of being reformed for long, and so the prophetic judgment would abide.



Ezekiel Prophesying. "In the 30th year, in the 4th month, in the 5th day... the heavens were opened."

We note that this is the second event or date marked from King Josiah's reign.

Sir Isaac Newton made a wonderful observation in his work on chronology. He used this lesson of Ezekiel 4 to corroborate the scriptural chronological time period of the Kings. From King Saul to King Rehoboam was 120 years (Saul 40, David 40, Solomon 40), from King Rehoboam's 1st year we add the 390 years of Israel's iniquity, followed by the 3 years of the final siege of Jerusalem, ending in its destruction and the dethronement of

Judah's last king, Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:1, 2): total, 513 years for the period of the Judean kings.¹

Continuing in Ezekiel, in the eighth chapter, verse 1, he mentions it is the 6th year. He does not state of what, but let us follow the logic that in chapter one it was the 5th year of Jehoiachin's captivity (612 BC); this 6th year would be 611 BC. And because the events in the 4th chapter fall between these two chapters (1 and 8), we suggest that Ezekiel was given the task of lying on his sides, etc., during this interim (about one year).

Continuing to Ezekiel 20: 1, it states it to be the 7th year, or 610 BC.

(B) In Ezekiel 24:11 2 we read that in the 9th year (608 BC), the 10th month, and the 10th day, God told Ezekiel (in Babylon) that the final siege had begun. This is said to be to the same day, stated twice for emphasis, and indeed Jeremiah 52:4, 5 and 2 Kings 25:1, 2 so record it. This would be the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophetic acts of the fourth chapter.

(C) Ezekiel 26:1-4 again provides a means to track this chronology. "In the 11th year" (606 BC), Ezekiel receives word from Jehovah that the inhabitants of the city of Tyrus were rejoicing at the *destruction* of Jerusalem, because they thought they could now take advantage of her. Yet God was telling the Hebrew exiles through Ezekiel that he would destroy Tyrus, that her rejoicing over his city's destruction would be to Tyrus' sins. In this prophetic way, Ezekiel learned of Jerusalem's being laid waste, and in the exact year.

(D) Ezekiel 33:21 follows up with an actual eye witness account , by a survivor from Jerusalem's destruction, informing Ezekiel firsthand of that which God had revealed by the prophecy in Ezekiel 26:1, 2.

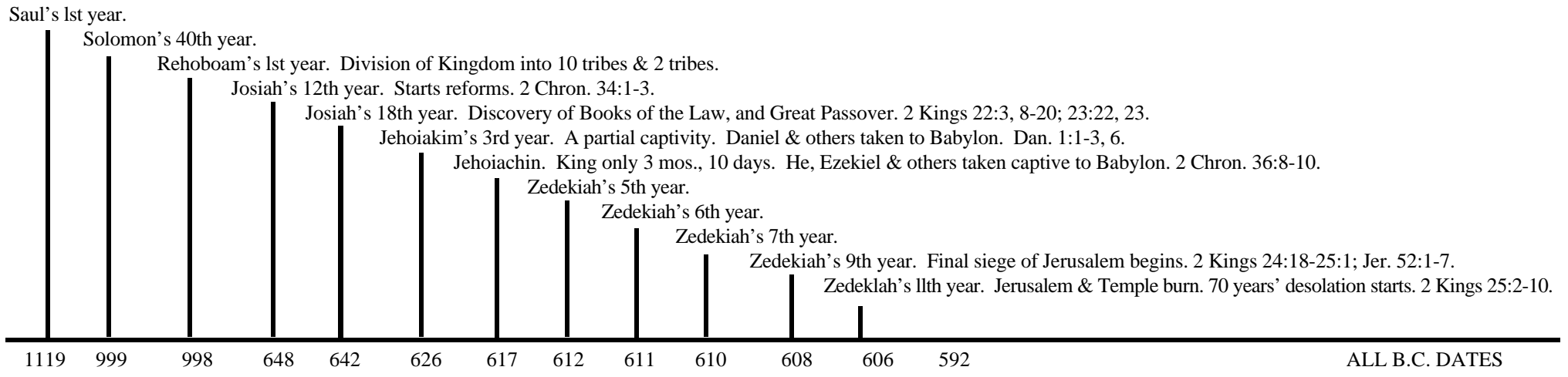
Here there are some differences of opinion on whether this should read the 12th or the 11th year. Without going into all the various lines of reasoning, let it suffice to say that it is of little consequence to the narrative of events, but that Rotherham's footnote suggestion of 11th is appealing, making the length of time from the fall of Jerusalem, to the survivor's arrival at Ezekiel's residence in Babylon, about 6 months' time.

(E) In Ezekiel 40:1 we have a similar circumstance as in Ezekiel 1:1, 2. That is a synchronization of Ezekiel's captivity with an event known to all Hebrews. He states it to be the 25th year of captivity (592 BC) or, in other words, 20 years since Ezekiel 1:1, 2, and the start of his prophetic office. And it is the 14th year after the city (Jerusalem) was smitten, again a confirmation for Jerusalem's destruction in 606 BC ($592 + 14 = 606$ BC).

He states that it is the selfsame day, this 10th day of the beginning of the year, which would be the spring, meaning Nisan, the first month, especially to a priest, who would follow the religious year more particularly.

So it is the 25th year, the 10th day, of the first month, the beginning of the year. This cannot be the date of the destruction of Jerusalem, since that was about the 9th day of the 4th month (2 Kings 25:3, 4; Jeremiah 52:4, 7). The month and day of the start of King Jehoiachin's (and therefore Ezekiel's) captivity can be found in 2 Chronicles 36:9, 10. There we read that Jehoiachin reigned

YEAR OF KINGS' REIGNS & EVENTS



ALL B.C. DATES

(1119-606) 513 years of period of the Kings.

A. Ezekiel's 5th year of captivity (612). The start of Ezekiel's career as a Prophet of God. (Ezek. 1:1-3) Also he synchronizes his chronology of Jehoiachin's captivity with that of a marked event in Judah's history, i.e., Josiah's Great Passover. (note the day & point E)

Ezekiel's 6th year of captivity (611). (Ezek. 8:1)

Ezekiel's 7th year of captivity (610). (Ezek. 20:1)

B. Ezekiel's 9th year (608), 10th mo., 10th day, ends the fulfillment of Ezek. 4. Final siege of Jerusalem begins. (Ezek. 24:1, 2)

C. Ezekiel's 11th year of captivity (606). Jerusalem & Temple burned. He is prophetically informed of its destruction. (Ezek. 26:1, 2)

D. Ezekiel's 11th or 12th year of captivity (606). See Rotherham footnote. He hears first hand report of city's destruction. (Ez.-k. 33:21)

E. Ezekiel's 25th year of captivity (592). 141st year since city was burned. He receives vision of Millennial Age Temple and return of God's favor. (Ezek. 40:1; 2 Chron. 36:10, 50 years to the day)

120 YRS.

390 YRS.

3 YRS.

30 YRS. (642-612)

40 YRS. (648-608)

390 YRS. (998-608)

50 YRS. (642-592)

only 3 months and 10 days, before he was dethroned and Zedekiah enthroned. (Hence Jehoiachin's captivity and Zedekiah's reign run concurrently.) But note the marginal rendering in vs. 10, "at the return of the year," or in the spring, a new year as it were. So then, Jehoiachin was taken captive the 10th day of Nisan, fitting with Ezekiel's testimony of chapter 40:1.²

Now we can see the point of the phrase "the selfsame day" in 40: 1. He had been in captivity exactly 25 years, but even more interesting is the fact that it means it was exactly 50 years to the day since the day the Israelites would have selected the passover lamb for king Josiah's great Passover of 642 BC! A wonderful confirmation for the 30 year reasoning of Ezekiel 1:1, and furthermore it suggests itself as the symbolic 50 year jubilee cycle representing restitution, a restoring. And indeed, the vision of the holy city Jerusalem with the Temple, and God's glory returning (40:2-43:5), seems intended to encourage the Hebrews (who were then all in exile) to look forward to the future age, when God would once again dwell in peace with his restored people, in the restored city and the land of the faithful Patriarchs.

1 The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended, Sir Isaac Newton, London, 1728 AD, pg. 298.

2 Newton, *ibid.*, pg. 296. "So the Jews, as their authors tell us, counted the reigns of their kings by the years of Moses, beginning every year with the month Nisan: for if any king began his reign a few days before this month began, it was reckoned to him for a whole year, and the beginning of this month was accounted the beginning of the second year of his reign." See also page 301.

2 Chronicles 36:10, "when the year was expired" (AV). See margin, "return of the year," same as in 2 Samuel 11:1, margin, and 1 Kings 20:22,26. The first of these passages includes the phrase, the second the thought, "when kings go forth to battle." This is in the spring of the year.

The phrase "when the year was expired" in 2 Chronicles 36:10 is rendered "in the spring" by the Revised Standard, and James Moffatt, An American Translation. Clearly, the phrase must mean either the fall or the spring, and no translators or other scripture texts render this phrase "fall."

A corroboration: 2 Chronicles 36:9 tells us that Jehoiachin reigned 3 months and 10 days. Counting backwards, from Nisan 10, we reach approximately the end of December or beginning of January. Knowing that Jehoiachin succeeded Jehoiaquim, we read with interest Jeremiah 22:19 concerning Jehoiaquim, "he shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem," and Jeremiah 36:30, "Therefore thus saith the Lord of Jehoiaquim king of Judah; he shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost." This could certainly be fulfilled in December/January, but not 3 months before a fall date – that would be in the summer.

FROM A READER

Dear Brethren: Greetings in our Present Lord. In the August, 1992 issue, "J.N. of California" spoke of Lamech, how he had two wives and that he slew "a young man to his hurt," etc., Genesis 4:23,24.

It will be well to note that there are *two* Lamechs in the Bible. The one referred to in Genesis 4th chapter was from Cain's lineage. The other Lamech, in Genesis 5:31, who died at age 777 years, was the father of Noah, and from the lineage of Seth.

The may help some of the new ones in the Truth.
- J.H., MO

A Prophecy Nearing Fulfillment (Isaiah 21:5-10)

In Song of Solomon 2:12 the time of mating is called the "time of the singing." This book is the love song of Jesus and his future Bride. As the time nears for the marriage, the focal rays of prophecy converge in a climactic fashion, and there comes a quickening need for these predictions to terminate in prophetic events. As the birds begin to flock together, fast and more numerous fulfillments are to be expected. All the evidences picture the near approach of God's Kingdom and the marriage of the Lamb, which is the Song of Songs.

Isaiah 34:16 states, "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded ' " This means God's word is sent like a bird on an errand; it will not return unto Him void but will accomplish that for which it was sent. Not one prophecy will fail because each one will be mated. In this analogy one bird represents prophecy *foretold*, and the other, prophecy *fulfilled*.

The following verses from Isaiah 21 are a corrected translation:

5. Prepare the table, watch in the lookout, eat, drink: Arise ye princes [Psalms 82:6, 7], and anoint [that is, grease with the oil of the Holy Spirit] the shield [thus deflecting more readily the darts of the enemy].

The action taken here is somewhat comparable to the preparation made by Gideon and his three hundred men in their conquest of the Midianites (Judges 7). Both pictures will have their prophetic fulfillment at the very end of the gospel dispensation.

6-9. For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go set a lookout, let him declare what he seeth. when he seeth a rider, [in the forefront (Rev. 19:11), and behind him a cavalry of] horsemen in double

rank [that is, paired], a rider on an ass [a symbol of kingship (Zech. 9:9)], a rider on a camel [frequently referred to as a “ship” in the ocean-desert (cf Isa. 21:1)]; let him hearken diligently, very diligently, and then cry as a lion. Upon a watchtower I stand, O Lord, continually by day, and at my post I am stationed whole nights. Then: Behold, here cometh a rider-a man. Horsemen in double rank [also]. So he began and said, Has fallen, has fallen Babylon, and all the graven images of her gods, he [the Lord] hath shattered to the ground.

The camels and the asses (verses 7 and 9) are portrayed as marching side by side in double-file formation, each camel being paired with an ass, and a horseman on each animal. In other words, there was a column of camels down the line on one side, and there was a column of asses or horses down the line on the other side. They approached on the horizon like a train, each pair after the other.

When the watchman, with prophetic foresight, saw the animals thus mated together in pairs, he emphatically announced Babylon's utter destruction. The setting of the vision is this: the watchman (the seventh messenger to the Church) “hearkened diligently with much heed” to future events, which he understood long in advance of other Bible students. Even the religious publication of which he was the founding editor was called *The Watch Tower*. But what is there in this particular vision to suggest that Babylon indeed had fallen? No booty or trophy of war is described to ostensibly indicate the cavalcade was returning from the scene of Babylon's destruction.

The key is this: a rider on a camel was paired with a rider on an ass. But what is the significance of such an odd mating? Each member of the very elect rides both a camel and an ass. The camel, a conveyor of water in the desert, is a symbol of spiritual transport in the wilderness of sin and a reminder of Rebecca, who, picturing a class, rode such an animal to meet her bridegroom Isaac, a representation of Christ (Gen. 24:61-64). On the other hand, the ass is associated with victory and rulership. The judges of Israel rode on white asses (Judges 5:10). Therefore, each one who faithfully suffers with Christ during this Gospel Age will symbolically ride on the white horse of kingship (Rev. 19:14). Each animal wants its mate. If the individual is faithful in performing the one task, he is assured of the honor of participating in the other. The rider on the camel and the rider on the ass are *one and the same person!* In verse 7 of the prophecy, the rider on the ass is mentioned before the rider on the camel to indicate that which most recently is seen to occur. The camel represents the former fleshly condition, in which the promise of future reward was *foretold*, and the other animal portrays the performance faithfully *fulfilled*. Throughout his ministry the watchman (seventh messenger) consistently taught that the true Church would pass beyond the veil of human experience before Babylon's final fall. Therefore, the sight in the vision of the two animals paired throughout the line of march indicates the destruction of Babylon as a past event.

10. O thou my threshing the [bruised] sons of my floor: that which I have heard of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.

The “threshing” and “corn of my floor” refer to the harvesting and winnowing of the wheat class at the end of the age. The interjection and infusion of sympathy, as expressed in these words, come from Christ, the chief reaper (Matt. 13:30). So far in the harvest period, there has been a remarkable lack of the kind of persecuting experiences that have occurred in past ages -on the whole, there has not been the violence or the special crushing of the Dark Ages. However, this

Scripture, as well as others, seems to unmistakably indicate that in the end time “the heel” members of the Little Flock will be bruised. In other words, the millstone will grind again before it is cast into the sea (Jer. 51:63, 64). Some of the Lord's people will find themselves between the upper and nether millstones (Rev. 18:21).

-Frank Shallieu, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ”