

Beauties of the Truth

*A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
Volume 10, Number 1, February 1999*

Understanding the Bible

What is the difference between you and others who read the Bible but do not understand what it teaches? What do you have that they do not have? Paul tells us:

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither have entered into the heart of man; the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us, by His Spirit:' - **1 Corinthians 2:9, 10**

It is the holy Spirit that you have and others do not. Without it the scriptures may indeed be valued as an ancient historical record; a compendium of laws and statutes, a collection of fascinating stories, teaching lofty moral precepts. But without the holy Spirit it contains no message from God, no revelation. The essence of the scriptures cannot be extracted and appreciated, cannot sanctify us, without the holy Spirit. Consider a phonograph record. Given to a savage, a phonograph record may be highly appreciated and greatly prized because it is a disc made of shiny, black, ebony-like substance. It is perfectly round, beautifully designed with a colorful seal in its center containing characters inscribed upon it. It has mysteriously engraved grooves on either side which give a peculiar sensation to the touch. It has a hole in its center by which it can be strung around one's neck as a magical charm. This is the limit of a savage's appreciation of a phonograph record.

Let us suppose he has possessed it for many years. Although it is valuable to him, he has no conception of its full potential. One day a missionary arrives with a phonograph machine. Seeing the record hanging from the neck of the savage, he asks: "Do you know what you have there?" With great pride the savage describes the various unique and ornamental features of the record. Then the missionary takes the record, places it upon the phonograph turntable, puts the needle in the groove and magnificent music fills the air! Beautiful voices, recorded years and years before, come alive and are heard in all their glory.

Do you see the application of this picture? When the phonograph record was made, a diamond stylus cut those grooves. Similarly the Bible was written long ago by holy men of God as they were moved by the holy Spirit. (**2 Peter 1:21**) All the glorious music of God was recorded by that Spirit. The Bible is the original high-fidelity recording of God's supreme greatness, his mercies, his loving attributes, his magnificent divine plan of the ages. It also has his exceeding great and precious promises, his counsel with his encouragements, and expressions of his love and care. These are all recorded by the Spirit in the Bible. But as far as the world is concerned, like the savage with a record in his possession, the deep things hidden in the grooves of the record are inaudible. The world does not have "ears to hear." But when one has the diamond needle of the holy Spirit, the very same holy Spirit that moved the writers to make the record, the scriptures come beautifully and magnificently alive. Then are made manifest the deep things of God which Paul describes:

"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to the saints". (**Colossians 1:26**)

- Robert Seklemian

1 Thessalonians 4:14-17

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When we read our English Bibles we must at all times remember we are reading translations of the original writings. These translations were made by mostly very sincere and honest people - people, however, who did not understand the plan of God. They had no knowledge of the two salvations - the salvation now for the Church, the salvation in the future for all the rest of humankind (to be administered by that Church and Israel). This lack of knowledge greatly influenced the way they understood texts and their rendering of them.

First Thessalonians, chapter four, is a good example of this influence. Not understanding the two salvations, the translators rendered certain words so the meaning of the text would fit their theology (of course, that is what we do too). Below is how I believe **1 Thessalonians 4:14-17** should be understood (it may be helpful to follow this rendering in an interlinear translation):

(14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so also [we believe] God will bring with [sun] him the ones having fallen asleep through [dial Jesus.

(15) For this we say to you by a word of the Lord that we -the ones living, the ones remaining into [eis - note 1] the Lord's parousia - may in no way precede the ones having fallen asleep [through Jesus - vs. 14];

(16) because the Lord himself, in a commanding shout, in an archangel's voice, and in God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in [en] Christ will rise first [at the beginning of the parousia - vs. 14];

(17) afterwards, we - the ones living, the ones remaining [into the parousia - vs. 15] - shall be caught up into [eis] the air [note 2] into [eis] a meeting [note 3] of the Lord in clouds [note 4] together [hama - note 5] with [sun] them [Jesus and the raised saints who had slept]; and so, we fall who believe, dead and living] shall always be with the Lord. - **1 Thessalonians 4:14-17**

From the above rendering and notes it may be seen that the thought of both the dead and living saints rising simultaneously is not present in Paul's words to the Thessalonians. Paul declared the dead saints were to rise at the beginning of the parousia, while the living who remain **into** the parousia were to rise **afterwards**. Neither does a simultaneous rising agree with Paul's statement that the living are caught up **into** a meeting and not to a meeting. Paul declared unambiguously the rising of the saints was to be a process over a period of time and not something that was to happen all in one instant.

Following that process all the saints, both those who were dead at the parousia and those who live **into** it, shall be with the Lord always.

- R. E. Evans

NOTE 1: *An Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, W D. Chamberlain, page 119: "... eis, `into.'... In the New Testament, it will usually have the idea of `up to and within; and is used with verbs of motion...'

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains J. P Louw and E. A. Nida, page 723: "84.22 eis... extension toward a goal which is inside of an area - `into: "

NOTE 2: "Air" is no doubt used in this text in the sense used in **Ephesians 2:2**. The phrase "into the air" should be construed with "shall be caught up:'

The New Testament for English Readers H. Alford, page 1331:... `into the air' (belongs to `shall be caught up; not to the words '*to meet the Lord,*' as in the AV):...'

NOTE 3: The meeting of the Lord is first assembled with the saints that were sleeping and then the living are caught up "into" [*eis*] it.

NOTE 4: "Clouds" are often associated with the Lord's return. (**Matthew 24:30,26:64, Revelation 1:7**) In the Bible they are sometimes used as a figure for trouble. (**Joel 2:1-3**)

NOTE 5: *Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul* J. B. Lightfoot, page 68: "17. *Hama* is not to be taken apart from *sun autois* in the sense `at the same time,' `together with them'; for the combination *hama sun is* too common to allow of the separation of the two words... In **Matthew 13:29** the sense seems to require that *hams autois* should be interpreted of place rather than of time, and instances of a local meaning are frequent in the classics....

An Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament, W. D. Chamberlain, page 130: `:... *sun*, `together with: It is used only with the associative-instrumental case, and the basic idea of association is always present... Twice, it is used with *hama*: **1 Thessalonians 4:17,5:10**. This is really a redundancy, and shows the beginning of the retreat of *sun* before *hama* In modern Greek, *sun* has been entirely displaced by *meta* (*me*) and *hama*."

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and..., Bauer, Arndt & Gingrich, page 41: "... (1) adv. - a denoting the coincidence of two actions in time... (b) denoting coincidence in place together...'

In BA&G there followed a reference to **Psalms 13:3** and Psalms 52:3 in the LXX for *hams* used in the sense of 1(b).

Financial Statement

Beauties of the Truth 1998 Financial Statement

\$1302.21	Balance January 1, 1998
4944.16	Donations
40.05	Interest
-2855.00	Expenses

\$3431.42	Balance December 31, 1998

The Breastplate and New Jerusalem

These thoughts are a comparison between the High Priest's breastplate as described in **Exodus 28** and New Jerusalem as described in **Revelation 21**.

Both the breastplate and the city of New Jerusalem are said to be foursquare. The breastplate was set with 12 stones. New Jerusalem has 12 foundations garnished with precious stones. The 12 stones of the breastplate were in four rows of three stones each. New Jerusalem has 12 gates with three gates on each of the four sides. The 12 stones of the breastplate had the names of the 12 tribes of Israel engraved on them. The 12 gates of New Jerusalem also have the names of the 12 tribes on them. The breastplate stones were set in gold. The "street" of New Jerusalem is of pure gold. The breastplate was the means by which judgment was given under the Law. The purpose of New Jerusalem is to execute the righteous judgments of the kingdom under the New Covenant. (**Isaiah 11**) The High Priest had on the garments of glory and beauty when the breastplate was used in judging Israel. So the great High Priest will be complete and glorified when judgment is rendered to mankind.

- From the notes of Stanley Jeuck

Wisdom of the Seven Churches

Biblical prophecy is comprised of two aspects. One is the predictive side, where certain events are foretold. The second aspect of prophecy is the moral lesson intended. With that in mind we want to look at the seven churches and see the moral lesson in each of the messages given. In addition, there appears to be a correlation between the moral lessons from each stage of the church and the seven elements of wisdom found in **James 3:17**.

Church	Message of Praise	Message of Criticism	Corresponding Element of Wisdom and Contemporary Lesson
Ephesus	Good works, patience, cannot bear the evil, tested the doctrines	Left thy first love	Wisdom from above is first pure. Works are an expression of love. Maintain intensity of first love.
Smyrna	Good works, faithful in tribulation and poverty	None	Wisdom is peaceable, comes through total conviction to the Lord.
Pergamos	Hold fast my name, Did not deny faith, Opposed Papacy	Doctrine of Balaam Doctrine of Nicolaitans	Seek truth, combat error, did not compromise the Lord. Wisdom is a gentle servant.
Thyatira	Good works, charity, patience, service and faith	Jezebel established fornication and idols	Easy to be entreated of the Lord. Be ready and anxious to obey Him.
Sardis	Have not defiled their garments	Imperfect works	Wisdom is full of mercy and good fruits, embroidering of spiritual garments.
Philadelphia	Kept God's word and did not deny His name	None	Wisdom is without partiality. Demonstrated by the Reformation. We are equal before the Lord. Appreciating forgiveness helps us to forgive others.
Laodicea	None	Lukewarm and self-sufficient	Wisdom is without hypocrisy. We should be on fire for the Lord resisting the spirit of our time.

- Tom Ruggirello

Elisha's Typical Experiences

(Continued)

In the previous issue seven of the fourteen episodes of Elisha following his recrossing of the Jordan were examined, each picturing something about the Ancient Worthies in the Kingdom to be established at Israel. The fourteen episodes are found in 2 Kings. They are listed below, followed by an examination of the last seven to complete our discussion.

(1) Waters (**2 Kings 2:19-22**)

(2) Bears (**2 Kings 2:23-25**)

(3) Moab (**2 Kings 3:4-27**)

(4) Oil (**2 Kings 4:1-7**)

(5) Son (**2 Kings 4:8-37**)

(6) Pottage (**2 Kings 4:38-41**)

(7) Loaves (**2 Kings 4:42-44**)

(8) Naaman (**2 Kings 5:1-27**)

(9) Axehead (**2 Kings 6:1-7**)

(10) Syria (**2 Kings 6:8-23**)

(11) Siege (**2 Kings 6:24-7:20**)

(12) House (**2 Kings 8:1-6**)

(13) Hazael (**2 Kings 8:7-15**)

(14) Jehu (**2 Kings 9:1-10:38**)

(8) HEALING OF NAAMAN THE LEPER (2 Kings 5:1-27)

Leprosy is a symbol of sin, so the healing of Naaman's leprosy is easy to understand as the healing of sin in the kingdom. Naaman, captain of the host of Syria, was a gentile, so this pictures the cleansing of the whole world. Israel is shown by the young servant maiden who told Naaman about the wonderful abilities of Elisha, for Israel will serve the nations in the Kingdom by directing them to the Ancient Worthies, who by the Lord's spirit will cleanse the world from sin.

Naaman was prepared to pay for his cure, and offered "ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment". (**2 Kings 5:5**) This is a remarkable sum, exceeding \$1,000,000 by today's valuation, but the prophet refused any payment whatsoever. Elisha recognized that God, not himself, was the source of the healing, and the honor of representing such majestic power would be sullied by accepting sordid temporal gain. This is the kind of devoted character the Ancient Worthies will display in the Kingdom.

Nevertheless, the items proffered are appropriate symbols of the price of redemption. A talent of silver is the price assigned to a human life in **1 Kings 20:38**, and the sockets of the tabernacle, each one talent of silver which came from the ransom money of the Israelites, show this represents the price paid by our Lord Jesus to redeem Adam and his race. (**Exodus 30:12,38:27**) The change of garments represents the covering for sin (as in **Judges 14:12**). The number 10 (10 talents, 10 changes of garments) reminds us that the world is represented in the 10 nations promised Abraham in **Genesis 15:18-21**. Perhaps the many pieces of gold show the involvement in the restitution work of the many members of the Church, who will be invested with immortality (gold), and the number 6000 pertains to either the sinful nature of those needing atonement, or the 6000 years of sin, or that the church themselves were taken out of the sinful world. (compare **John 2:6**)

Naaman first sent a letter to the King of Israel, who remonstrated that he was incapable of effecting a cure, just as Israel, by any natural means, are incapable of offering such a cure to the world. But when Elisha heard of it he replied "let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel". (**2 Kings 5:5**) So also the world will know that the Lord's prophets are among Israel by the wonderful healing they effect.

Now Naaman's faith is tested. Just as Jesus required the blind man to cooperate in his cure by washing at the pool of Siloam, so Naaman is told to bathe in the Jordan seven times, and he would be clean. This humble act was not at all what Naaman had in mind. "I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper" (verse 11). In the Kingdom sin will not be cured by a miracle stroke, suddenly, with great show and glory. Rather, the Lord will encourage the humble efforts of each person to daily cleanse himself from defilement, by giving a gradual miracle no less wonderful, indeed more precious and enduring, than had it been done with spectacle and excitement.

Naaman was at first incensed. "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" (verse 12). The names of these two rivers are from words which mean "stone" and "break up" (Strong's Concordance). Perhaps they are intended to suggest the stony hearts of pride which must be broken, mellowed, before the world will stoop to the simple regimen of selfdiscipline required of the Lord.

The process reminds us of the cleansing of the leper in **Leviticus 14:7**, "he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean;" and of the cleansing of the defiled in **Numbers 19:19**, who are sprinkled with the water mixed with the ashes of a heifer, and "on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even."

After his initial refusal Naaman bowed to the advice of others and complied. He washed seven times in the Jordan, and wonder of wonders, "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. And he returned to the man of God... and said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel". (**2 Kings 5:14, 15**) Mankind will have the same reaction in the Kingdom.

Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, seeing an opportunity, did not overcome temptation, and rode after Naaman with an untrue story, by which he secured two talents of silver and two changes of garments. He hid them from his master, but Elisha divined the matter. "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee" (**2 Kings 5:27**) was his judgment. Apparently Gehazi represents those who do not overcome during the Kingdom, and will not receive the reward of life. (There is a similar picture pertaining to the Gospel Age in **Joshua 7:21**).

(9) THE FLOATING AXEHEAD (2 Kings 6:1-7)

The sons of the prophets wished to build a spacious dwelling home, probably representing the restored "house" of Israel in the Kingdom which will ultimately be the dwelling of the whole world, when they are regathered into Israel's covenant by accepting its terms. (**Jeremiah 31:31-34**) Israel of old was termed a "house", (**Hebrews 3:2, Nu 12:7**) and the term is just as appropriate for restored Israel in the Kingdom. In the preparations, an "axe head [of iron] fell into" the Jordan, causing special consternation "for it was borrowed". (**2 Kings 6:5**) This probably represents the great loss experienced in the garden, when Adam lost his life through disobedience, and was plunged into the murky waters of death. When he died, the spirit of life returned "unto God who gave it", (**Ec 12:7**) from whom it was "borrowed."

Recovery appeared hopeless. But in the Kingdom, under the direction of the Ancient Worthies, the life lost in Adam will be restored to him and his posterity. The axehead will rise from death, and the building of the "house" of mankind will continue.

It is likely that the axehead was floated to the surface by means of the large branch stripped from a tree, and put into the river where the axehead had fallen, letting the far end of the branch scoop beneath the axehead, the implement lodging perhaps on a forked segment, then allowing the whole to float upward with its treasure. Though the iron did not of its own accord magically float, the incident is remarkable nonetheless, because by the providence of the Lord the axehead was located in the depths evidently unseen.

Symbolically, the branch cast into the water represents our Lord (like the tree cast into the waters in **Exodus 15:25**). By means of his sacrifice, going into death (Jordan), he is able to lift Adam and his race out of death.

(10) THE SYRIAN RAIDERS (2 Kings 6:8-23)

The next episode finds Syria taking arms against Israel. But at every tactical move the king of Syria found himself outmaneuvered, for Elisha "sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down... and saved him... not once, nor twice". (**2 Kings 6:10**) The king of Syria examined his close advisors, but one of his servants assured him it was not treason. "Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber" (verse 12).

When the Ancient Worthies are raised in the midst of Israel at the height of their crisis, with the invaders from the north all around ready to crush them, the Lord's providence will no doubt take a variety of forms in their deliverance, and it is likely the Ancient Worthies will be supernaturally informed how to prevent Israel from suffering calamity.

The king of Syria decided to capture Elisha, and "it was told him... he is in Dothan!" (verse 13). This location is only once elsewhere mentioned in scripture. (**Genesis 37:17**) It is the place Joseph went to meet his brethren, where he was put into the pit and subsequently sold. That represents Jesus at his first advent, sent to inquire for the welfare of the Jewish race, but "he came to his own, and his own received him not" and instead delivered him to the pit of death.

Israel has suffered greatly for this, and the troubles are not yet ended. A final difficulty is still ahead, the invasion of Gog from the north, as prophesied in **Ezekiel 38**. Probably it is to connect Israel's final trouble with their rejection of Messiah that "Dothan" is mentioned in this episode with Elisha.

The king of Syria sent "horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about" (verse 14), just as Gog and his forces will threaten Israel, and their most important city Jerusalem, in the final debacle. Elisha's servant, probably representing Israel, was overcome with fear. "Alas,

my master!" (verse 15), but Elisha prayed to have his servant's eyes opened, and he saw protecting them a large array of "horses and chariots of fire" from the Lord (verse 17).

When the enemy descended, Elisha asked the Lord to smite them with blindness. Evidently it was not total blindness, as they saw enough to walk or ride their steeds, but they were not aware of their surroundings enough to observe where Elisha was leading them. He took them into Samaria, the capital city of Israel's northern kingdom, their sight was restored, and they realized their hopeless situation. Elisha instructed the king of Israel not to take vengeance on them, but to treat them kindly, refresh them with food and drink, and send them on their way. The gesture was successful, and "the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel" (verse 23). So during the Kingdom Israel will show kindness to their former oppressors, and over time thus mellow their adversaries.

(11) THE SIEGE OF SAMARIA (2 Kings 6:24-7:20)

In the next episode hostilities resumed. Benhadad of Syria amassed his armies and sieged Samaria. The siege was so severe, food so scarce, that two women conspired to eat their own sons. So in Israel's dire emergency, no doubt some factions in Israel will turn inward upon each other, as they did also during the Roman siege in 70 AD.

When the king of Israel heard of this, he was incensed, and holding Elisha liable determined to execute the prophet. Elisha sat in his house, and before the messenger came "he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head?" The king is not named, but it was evidently Joram, the son of Ahab who had caused the death of Naboth. Those in Israel who lodge complaints against the prophets will show themselves to be of the same spirit as their forebears who slew the righteous one.

To the messenger and his master Elisha made a bold prediction. "To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria" (**2 Kings 7:1**) - which meant great abundance in order for prices to be so low. The king's right hand man scoffed at the prediction, and for his unbelief he was told "thou shalt see it with throe eyes, but shalt not eat thereof" (verse 2).

That evening four lepers in Samaria decided to take their chances fleeing to the enemy. They rose at dawn and went out, but when they came to the Syrian camp they found it deserted. The Lord had caused the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and supposing the Israelites had hired Hittites or Egyptians they fled in panic, leaving wealth and abundant food supplies behind.

As the four lepers went from tent to tent, pilfering and feasting, they recognized this news was too good to keep and returned to the city to spread the word. The king was suspicious at first, but the people went out, found the report true, and because of the abundance of spoil Elisha's words came true. So enthused was the crowd of people at the city gate that in the commotion the king's servant was trampled, and Elisha's words fulfilled. So in Israel's final extremity. The people will respond with great joy, but the faithless will not receive the blessings to follow. "I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels". (**Ezekiel 20:37,38**)

The "two measures of barley" remind us of the 20 barley loaves in **2 Kings 4:42-44**, and the "measure of fine flour" reminds us of the meal offering in **2 Kings 3:20**, both pointing to the redemption in Christ, then readily available. The abundance received from the camp of Syria reminds us of **Isaiah 23:18**, "her merchandise and her hire shall be... for them... to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing:" The residual wealth of this age will be used in the next for the common good.

(12) THE HOUSE RESTORED (2 Kings 8:1-6)

At the head of this article the 14 episodes of Elisha are arranged in two columns of seven each. Because seven is such a significant number in the scriptures, we wonder if there is some correlation between the first seven and the next seven, the more so as we see some superficial connections.

The narrative at hand provides one of the stronger connections. It is about the same woman that appeared in narrative five, "whose son he had restored to life." Elisha warned her of seven years of famine approaching, and advised her to "sojourn wheresoever thou canst" for this period. Her family went to the land of the Philistines, "and it came to pass at the seven years' end that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land". (**2 Kings 8:3**)

The woman, the same as in the other narrative, represents Israel. A time of distress and "famine" was to afflict Israel during the seven stages of the Gospel Age, and they were scattered from their homeland. But now, at the end of the age, they have returned, and press their claim for their ancient home again.

At just this time Gehazi, Elisha's servant, was recounting to the king various of Elisha's remarkable deeds, and "it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life" (verse 5).

The king appointed an officer to "restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now" (verse 6). So with Israel. God promises them "I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God". (**Am 9:15**) "And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you". (**Joel 2:2**)

(13) THE ANOINTING OF HAZAEL (2 Kings 8:7-15)

Elisha went to Damascus, the capital city of Syria, when its king, Benhadad, was sick. When Benhadad heard of it, knowing the remarkable abilities of the prophet he sent his servant Hazeal with a large gift, "even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden;" to inquire of the prophet whether he would recover of his disease. Elisha advised Hazeal to return with a good report, but admitted "howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die". (**2 Kings 8:10**) Perhaps the "forty" camels are symbolic of the judgment to fall.

The prophet settled his gaze on Hazeal, and then began to weep. When Hazeal asked for an explanation, Elisha said "Because I know the evil thou wilt do unto the children of Israel;" and enumerated the atrocities which were to come. Hazeal was stunned. "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this?"... And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria" (verses 11-13). Hazeal returned to his master with a good report, but the next day suffocated Benhadad with a thick cloth dipped in water, and took the kingdom.

This episode is very different from the others. It is about Syria rather than Israel, Damascus rather than Samaria, Benhadad rather than Joram. Instead of a wonderful deliverance it predicts an approaching evil. It is all about the enemy of Israel.

In three other places in scripture the prophets speak of the king of a gentile kingdom where the brethren generally recognize Satan as the prophetic subject. Of the King of Babylon, Isaiah said "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" (**Isaiah 14:12**, see context beginning with chapter 13). Of Pharaoh, Ezekiel said he was "the great

dragon that lieth in the midst of the rivers" (**Ezekiel 29:3**, compare **Isaiah 27:1,Re 20:1**). Of the King of Tyre we read "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth... thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (**Ezekiel 28:14,15**, see context starting in verse 1).

We propose that in the present narrative the King of Syria also represents Satan, both Benhadad and Hazael. Benhadad, smothered in a watery cloth, represents the demise of Satan as the "god of this world;" deposed from his kingdom by the power of truth (water, elsewhere represented as the "sword" which strikes the dragon, **Isaiah 27:1**), and restrained by Christ in the "bottomless pit" during the Kingdom. (**Revelation 20:1-3**) Hazael represents Satan at the end of the Millennium, when he is released and works evil on the world again.

Elisha, the Ancient Worthies, of course do not have actual authority over Satan to either bind or release him - that authority vests in Christ, who together with his body members are in spiritual control, with spiritual divine bodies, in every way the superior and master of Satan. Elisha simply predicts the coming events, and even then he is actually the agent of Elijah. When Elijah was at Mount Horeb, he was told

to anoint Elisha his successor, Jehu the successor of Joram, and Hazael the successor of Benhadad. Elijah did only the first of these, and Elisha the others on behalf of Elijah. But that the commission was given to Elijah implies it is the Church (with Christ) who actually accomplishes the other two.

(14) JEHU SUCCEEDS JORAM (2 Kings 9:1-10:38)

This lengthy episode describes the anointing of Jehu as king of Israel, and his putting an end to the house of Ahab. Jehu represents Christ, the Lord's anointed, who removes the system of Antichrist.

While Ahab's son King Joram was healing from battle wounds, and Ahaziah King of Judah was visiting him, Jehu was anointed by a messenger from Elisha sent to Jehu's post in Ramoth-Gilead. This is the location of the battle in which Ahab had died some years previous, and Joram his successor represents the same as Ahab. His ally Ahaziah represents Antichrist's ally, the Protestant systems. These both were killed by Jehu. Subsequently Jezebel, the queen mother, who represents the Catholic Church, was thrown from a high window by her eunuchs, trampled, and eaten by dogs. (compare **Revelation 17:16**)

The people of Samaria slew the 70 sons of Ahab, which connects symbolically to a retribution for the 70 sons of Gideon slain when Abimelech (another type of Antichrist) usurped power in **Judges 9**. Gideon represented Christ, and his 70 sons represented the followers of Christ, (**Hebrews 2:13**) represented during Jesus' ministry by his 70 disciples.

Later 42 of Ahaziah's brethren were slain "at the pit of the shearing house", (**2 Kings 10:14**) reminding us of the 42 months the saints, the sheep of the Lord's flock, had been "sheared;" persecuted, during the reign of Antichrist (see the comments on the two she bears from the previous issue).

These episodes occur at the instance of Elisha, because the Ancient Worthies will be resurrected before this retribution occurs. **Revelation 16** describes the seventh plague as first a battle (at Israel), followed by a great earthquake in which Babylon, the great city of the nations, collapses. (**Revelation 16:14-21**) Since the Ancient Worthies are raised in the midst of Israel's crisis, (**Micah 5:5**) they are present to point Israel to Christ their deliverer, and on the scene when the subsequent "great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great" levels the institutions of Christendom.

Then, gradually, under the new King of Earth, the wonderful blessings God has designed for every one of his human creation will spread from one to another, converting one heart after another, till the old is all removed, "all tears" pass away, and "all things" are made gloriously "new". (**Revelation 21:4**)

- *David Rice*

On the Addition question in Numbers Chapter Three

Numbers chapter three contains an inconsistency in the count of Levites. **Numbers 3:22** records **7500** from Gershon, verse 28 records **8600** from Kohath, and verse 34 records **6200** from Merari. This totals 22,300, yet verse 39 gives the total as 22,000. Where is the error? It is clear from **Numbers 3:43,46-47,50** that 22,273 firstborn were 273 more than the total number of Levite males (over one month of age); so the 22,000 figure must be correct. So what could have caused a slip in one of the first three figures? Consider alphabetic numerics. It is more familiar to most people in the Greek New Testament than in the Hebrew writings. (The Greek was derived from the Canaanite alphabet, which exactly parallels the Hebrew. Thus the Greek alphabet parallels the Hebrew except that it omits the letter tzaddi, the Hebrew letter for 90). The scheme goes like this for Greek and Hebrew:

$$\alpha = A = 1 = \aleph$$

$$\beta = B = 2 = \beth$$

$$\gamma = \Gamma = 3 = \beth$$

$$\delta = \Delta = 4 = \daleth$$

$$\varepsilon = E = 5 = \beth$$

$$f = F = 6 = \beth$$

$$\zeta = Z = 7 = \beth$$

$$\eta = H = 8 = \beth$$

$$\theta = \Theta = 9 = \beth$$

$$\iota = I = 10 = \beth$$

$$\kappa = K = 20 = \beth$$

$$\lambda = \Lambda = 30 = \beth$$

$$\mu = M = 40 = \beth$$

$$\nu = N = 50 = \beth$$

$$\xi = \Xi = 60 = \beth$$

$$\omicron = O = 70 = \beth$$

$\pi = \Pi = 80 = \text{פ}$

$\psi = \Psi = 90 = \text{צ}$

$\rho = P = 100 = \text{ק}$

$\sigma = X = 200 = \text{ך}$

$\tau = T = 300 = \text{ש}$

$\upsilon = Y = 400 = \text{ן}$

$\phi = \Phi = 500$

$\chi = X = 600$

$\psi = \Psi = 700$

$\omega = \Omega = 800$

$\epsilon = \text{€} = 900$

Later when vau or digamma, koppa and sampi, the Greek letters for 6, 90 and 900 respectively, were dropped from the Greek alphabet, these orphan letters continued to be used, or substitutes for them, such as the terminal sigma, s (stau), for vau. To indicate that it is a number, a line would be drawn over it; to indicate that it was thousands, a line would be drawn under it. For examples from the third century Chester Beatty III papyrus (P47),

Revelation 13:18 XΞX, for $600+60+6 = 666$

Revelation 14:1 PMA χιλιαδεις, for $100+40+4 \text{ thousand} = 144,000$ (alternatively, PMA)

Revelation 12:6 AXE, for $1,000+200+60 = 1,260$ (**manuscript only partially legible here**)

(In the 4th century uncial manuscripts, the numbers began to be written out full, such as 'six hundred sixty six;' rather than '666.' It is thought that, because even the rare miscopying that happened with alphabetic numerics was unacceptable in the Word of God, the change was made to writing out numbers in full. The later minuscule manuscripts, beginning about the 9th to 10th centuries, again began to use alphabetic numerics.)

It is not unreasonable to suppose that the early Hebrew manuscripts also used alphabetic numerics (particularly as Millar Burrows told J. B. Parkinson he had seen the Hebrew 'nun' [the letter representing 50] so used one place in the Dead Sea Scrolls). Consider that part of **Numbers 3:28** which in the Masoretic reads:

שמרי	מאות	ושש	אלפים	שמנת
..of keepers,	hundred	six and	thousands	eight were...

(Note that Hebrew is to be read from right to left, which was the natural way for a right-handed person to chisel block letters into stone.) If this same line had been written in alphabetic numerics it would have been as appears below left, or for 8300, as below right:

מרִי	ה שש	ה מרִי	ש ה
.. of keepers,	300 + 300 + 8,000...	of keepers,	300 + 8,000

In the manuscripts, there is little or no space between words (as may be seen in James A. Sanders, 'The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11;' Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan IV; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965); so this line would appear as: **הששמרִי**. A scribe writing out the numbers could then very easily have mistaken **8300** for **8600** by seeing the two adjacent שs. This would seem to be the simplest explanation for the apparently discrepant numbers.

- James Parkinson