

THE COVENANT VISION

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ISSUE No. 5

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**“Heaven and earth shall pass away:
but My words shall not pass away.”**

THE COVENANT VISION.

Editor: F.W.Dowsett.

In presenting this little magazine, it is not our intention to start up another organisation. Our only purpose is to present the Word of God in its fullness as we feel God has revealed it to us, in order that the God of our Fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob may be glorified.

It is our firm conviction that we are living in the very last days prior to the return and appearing of our Great God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are also convinced that never before in the history of our nation and people has there been such a need for the "Watchmen in Israel" to 'sound the alarm' in order to awaken God's People to the urgent need to repent, and to return to God with all their hearts, and with all their minds, and with all their strength.

Denominational doctrines and differences are not our concern, and it is not our intention to enter into such arguments. There is not enough time left that we can afford to waste it on such unproductive, and indeed destructive exercises. We are concerned ONLY with what the Word of God says and teaches.

We proclaim the absolute necessity for all people to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour as the only means to Eternal Life.

We proclaim the absolute necessity for the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic people to recognise their inheritance, and their responsibility, as the literal descendants of God's people Israel.

We proclaim the absolute necessity for all who would faithfully serve God to 'receive the Power from on high'

(continued on inside back cover.)

IS THIS THE DAY?

By F.W.DOWSETT.

For as long as there has been a knowledge and acceptance of God by man, there has been a longing and yearning for the time when He would step into this world and take control of its affairs with Justice and Righteousness. Side by side with this was the certainty of the resurrection of the dead. We are told that "Abraham rejoiced to see His day." (John 8:56). Job knew that in his resurrected body he would see God at the time when He returned to this earth. (Job 19:25-26). The prophet Isaiah spoke of the time when "the government would be upon His shoulder." (Isa.9:6-7). Zechariah foretold the time when His feet would stand upon the Mount of Olives. (Zech.14:4). Martha believed in the resurrection of the dead. (John 11:24). And Paul, in his letter to Titus, exhorts us to be "looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13.).

Whether we like to accept it or not, there is absolutely no doubt whatsoever that the greatest event in the entire history of the earth is still to happen. Jesus Christ is most definitely coming back in great power and glory to reign on this earth. Those who attain to the "Prize of the High Calling in God" shall be priests of God, and shall rule and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ over His Kingdom. Those who accept Christ's sacrifice on their own behalf, and are made righteous by the shed blood of the Lamb of God shall receive everlasting life, and enter into the full blessings of the Kingdom of God here on earth. Those who reject Him will know His wrath and judgment upon them. This is a matter for our own individual choice. But irrespective of that choice, the purposes of God will proceed completely unchanged. The decision has been made in the Mind of God before the foundations of the world were ever put into place. The time has been appointed.

So the question that should be upon the mind of every Christian today is not so much how, or why, or even if, but WHEN? I am continually staggered at the number of Christians who openly and unashamedly say that they are not interested in when Christ will return, professing to be satisfied to leave it all to God to work it out in His own good time. Let it be clearly understood that God expects us to be looking forward with keen anticipation to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. So much so that He gave us numerous clues by which we could recognise this time as it drew near. It is quite true that He told us that we would not know 'the day nor the hour', but this is no excuse to remain in self-imposed ignorance on the entire subject, because He also told us that those who were of the light would know and recognise 'the times and the seasons.'

I would suggest that those who claim to be so obedient to God in other areas that seem to suit them best, also decide to be just as obedient in this area of knowledge, else they will find themselves numbered among the 'foolish virgins' who had the lamp of God's Word, and started off with at least some of the Holy Spirit, but in the final analysis just plain ran out of steam and missed the boat.

Now lest my intentions be misunderstood, let me say quite emphatically that I have no intention of trying to set dates, as so many have done in the past, to their regret. The sole purpose of this article is to present certain details which in conjunction with each other would seem to strongly suggest that the Great Day for which we have been so anxiously waiting is now almost certainly upon us. God's Word tells us that there must be at least two, or even three witnesses to establish a fact. (II Cor.13:1). So in conformity with this requirement, I present the following THREE features for consideration. As you study them, please remember that the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ is just as certain as His first, and that the day will surely come when people will say, "Christ returned yesterday." Nobody is compelled to accept everything that they are told, but

every Christian is required by God to "Test all things" and to be as fully equipped with as many facts about Him as humanly possible. Ignorance is no excuse. We are told very definitely that "the wise shall understand." (Dan. 12:10). The apostle Paul confirms this principle in I Thess. 5:1-6. So let us obey his instructions and "Watch and be sober" as true children of the light.

FEATURE 1.

Many Christian teachers and leaders have become aware of the fact that the year September 1985 to September 1986 constitutes the 70th. Jubilee of the Nation of Israel. The full details of this 'Jubilee Year' are recorded in Leviticus 25:8-18, of which we will quote verses nine and ten as follows:

"Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the Day of Atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.

And ye shall hallow the FIFTIETH year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof. It shall be a Jubilee unto you."

Thus we see that this proclamation of liberty was made throughout all the land of Israel every fiftieth year, and the entire year was a public holiday.

The SEVENTIETH anniversary of this great year occurs in 1986, and the importance of this can be measured by the fact that the number '70' in Scripture is always associated with the perfection of both Spiritual and Divine order, for instance, the SEVENTY elders of Israel, and the SEVENTY disciples which our Lord sent forth.

On its own, this could just be a fact of great interest. But it is not an isolated feature, as we shall see.

FEATURE TWO.

By far the major portion of prophecy in the Bible relates to God's people Israel. As a matter of interest, the very small portion that applies to any nation other than Israel does so only as that nation relates in some way to Israel. It must then necessarily follow that if we are to properly understand the true application and fulfillment of prophecy in regard to Israel today, we must have a sure knowledge of WHO and WHERE Israel is today in the world. Remember, that if we incorrectly identify Israel, then we will automatically apply the prophecies regarding Israel to the wrong people.

Now apart from the totally God-dishonouring claim that God changed His mind about all the national covenants and promises which He made regarding His specially chosen nation and kingdom of Israel, allegedly replacing this literal nation with the 'church', there are four varying opinions regarding the identity of Israel in the world today. They are:

1. That the people presently known as Jews are the complete and only literal representation of Israel.

2. That the people presently known as Jews are the descendants of only the Two-Tribed House of Judah, and are to be united at some future time with the remaining ten tribes, the whereabouts and identity of whom at present remain totally unknown.

3. That the people presently known as Jews are the descendants of only the Two-Tribed House of Judah, and that the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic people are the descendants of the Ten-Tribed northern House of Israel, with whom the Jews are still to be re-united.

4. That the entire Twelve-Tribed House of Israel is found in the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic people today, both the Northern and Southern Houses of Israel and Judah having already united in 1603 under the reign of James I when England and Scotland became Great Britain.

Now it is not the intention of this work to investigate or discuss to any degree the above claims. But it must be quite obvious to any discerning student or reader that those who hold the views expressed in items 1 and 2 above, and to some degree even item 3, will have a completely different understanding and application of prophecy than those who believe in item 4.

Those who support items 1 and 2, and even many who support item 3, are unanimous in their claim that the present occupation of the Holy Land by the Jews is the fulfillment of the promises made by God to Israel, and that Israel has now returned to its land. It is claimed that this took place in 1948. Now there is no doubt about the fact that the Jews occupied Palestine in 1948. But I can assure the reader that there is very considerable doubt that this occupation was the fulfillment of any prophecy made to Israel. All those who believe in item 4 above, including this author, together with many who support item 3, are convinced by both the historical events and their timing in fulfillment of prophecy, that Israel, that is True Israel, came into possession of their promised land in 1917 when General Allenby, in charge of the British forces, marched into Jerusalem exactly as prophesied. They were there for 31 years. They were then kicked out by 'the inhabitants of Jerusalem' just as God's Word said that they would be in Ezekiel 11:15;

"Son of man, thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, AND ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL WHOLLY, are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get you far from the Lord. Unto US is this land given in possession." (emphasis added).

Now let us note this fact very clearly. If the people who were kicked out of Palestine were ALL the House of Israel WHOLLY, then the ones who kicked them out, and stayed there as a result of their claim that it was their land, could NOT have been part of the House of Israel!

Thus true Israel was deprived of her inheritance, and has been waiting ever since to re-enter it. Now by this time, some of you no doubt will be starting to wonder what all this has to do with our subject. Well, before revealing this, I would draw your attention to just two other incidents in the Bible. Firstly, as most Christians will be aware, after escaping from their captivity in Egypt, Israel wandered for 40 years before entering the Promised Land. But when we study the account of this incident we find that the first two years were involved in local activities prior to their actual wanderings. Deuteronomy 2:14 tells us that the time Israel actually took to journey from Káadesh-barnea to the other side of the Brook Zered in the Promised Land, was in fact 38 years. The second incident is recorded in John chapter five where we read of Christ's miracle in healing the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda. This miracle, as were most of Christ's miracles, had a very prophetic application to the future of God's people Israel. And in this context it will be noted that the impotent man, representing here the nation of Israel, had been infirm for 38 years.

Israel wandered for 38 years before entering their Promised Land to receive the blessings which God had for her. The impotent man waited 38 years before being healed of his infirmity and receiving the blessing of God. 38 years from the time we were kicked out of our land during which we have been wandering around setting up our own tabernacles and doing our own thing, but still waiting for the healing hand and blessing of Almighty God to fall upon us, brings us to 1986.

FEATURE 3.

When our Lord came to this earth nearly two thousand years ago, certain wise men, (the Bible doesn't say three), knew of the event because (a) they were keenly waiting for it, (b) they knew what they were looking for, and (c) they recognised what they saw for what it was. This sign is recorded in Matt. 2:2 as being 'His star in the east!' Investigations now suggest that

this star actually appeared in the constellation of Coma, which is one of the constellations attached to Virgo. This is most appropriate, for whilst Virgo is portrayed as a virgin woman, Coma is portrayed as a woman holding a child. If the Star of Bethlehem had appeared in the constellation of Virgo it would not have had any particular significance to the wise men. But when they saw that it had appeared in the constellation representing the woman with a child, they knew that the promise of the virgin bringing forth a son had been fulfilled. Don't forget that in Genesis 1:14 we are told that God placed the stars in the heavens to be, among other things, for signs. It is a terrible shame that this understanding of the stars has been perverted by Satan into the present Satanic practice of astrology. But Satan has always perverted the truth of God. We have to be very careful that we don't deprive ourselves of the true knowledge of God just because of this.

Now if the First Advent of Christ was heralded by a star appearing in an appropriate constellation, is it unreasonable to assume or at least consider that a similar sign would be given by God to herald His Son's Second Advent? Christ Himself tells us in Matt.24:30 that immediately prior to His appearing, 'the sign of the Son of Man' will appear in heaven. In view of the fact that we have already found two 'signs' pointing to 1986 in a very special way, is it just coincidence that we now have visible in the heavens for the greater proportion of this Jubilee Year a 'star' in the form of Halley's Comet? Now I fully realise that this comet has appeared at regular intervals for centuries, but the point to be noted is not just the fact of its appearance, but the circumstances of its appearance. Just as the Star of Bethlehem would have meant nothing unless it had appeared in the constellation of Coma, representing the woman with the child, so this appearance of the 'star' called Halley's Comet has some very remarkable features.

Now may I implore my readers at this stage NOT to become concerned with my constant reference to the

stars, as I am using them in the way that God intended them to be used, and not in connection with the occult practices of astrology.

Let us consider the following facts. The comet has appeared straight from the direction of the constellation ORION. It passes through the constellation of TAURUS, skirts the PLEIADES, and finally disappears in the constellation of LEO. Each of the constellations, together with their individual stars, have very ancient meanings which all refer in one way or another to the birth, ministry, death, resurrection, return, and ultimate victory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The secret behind the wise men's recognition of the star which appeared in Coma lay in the fact that the true meaning of this constellation is "The desired of all nations." How could they miss its implication. So let us take a quick look at the meaning of the stars in the constellations connected with this present appearance of the comet.

ORION, from which the comet appears this time, means "The redeemer breaking forth as light." The various major stars in this constellation mean, 'a strong one, a hero, the coming of the branch, swift destroyer, the foot that crusheth, quickly coming, the wounded one, bruised, the branch, the mighty, the ruler, prince.'

TAURUS, through which it passes, means 'the leader or governor. He who saves or delivers.' Some of its stars mean 'the head or chief, wounded or slain.'

THE PLEIADES, which it skirts, and which is a group of seven stars within the constellation of Taurus, means 'the congregation of the judge or ruler.' If we read Job 38:31-32, we find God asking him, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth the signs of the Zodiac (A.V. Mazzaroth) in their season . . .?"

LEO, where it finally disappears from view, is the final constellation of the circle of the twelve signs of this Zodiac. The circle starts with VIRGO, representing

'the virgin who would conceive and bear a son,' and ends with LEO the lion, representing 'the Lion of the Tribe of Judah'. The meaning of some of its stars are, 'the Judge or Lord cometh, the exaltation, shining forth, the enemy put down.' It represents the coming of the King, coming forth to destroy His enemy.

So here are three features, three witnesses if we like, all pointing to the same 'Times and Seasons.' In view of the fulfillment of so many prophecies as signs pointing to the near return of our Lord, are they just a coincidence? Are they just a meaningless converging of unrelated events?

If they are, then our study will not have really done any harm. At least it will have directed our attention more seriously to this wonderful event which in any event is extremely close at hand.

But what if they are NOT a coincidence? What if God is really speaking to us, and revealing to "those who are of the light", those whom He designates as "the wise", the 'times and seasons' of the culmination of all our hopes. If so, then He is only using the same methods which He has already used in the past. Is He revealing His will to a present group of "wise men" as He did at Christ's First appearing? Remember the parable of the Ten Virgins? At midnight a cry went out to get ready to meet the Bridegroom who was about to appear. Who shouted out the warning? Obviously, someone did.

So can we afford to just shrug the whole thing off and ignore it?

My only intention in writing this article has been to present the information and possibilities. I make no predictions. The Holy Spirit is the only One who can finally reveal the whole truth, and this of course will be confirmed by Christ's actual appearance.

But the time is most assuredly at hand. We MUST now prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord.

I exhort you all to take the most serious heed to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who, when referring to the signs of His return, said;

"When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh. . .

Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. . .

Watch therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:28,34,36).

"Blessed are they which are called unto the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. . . These are the true sayings of God. (Rev.19:9).

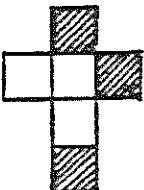
"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying,

BLESSING, AND HONOUR, AND GLORY, AND POWER, BE UNTO HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND UNTO THE LAMB FOR EVER AND EVER."



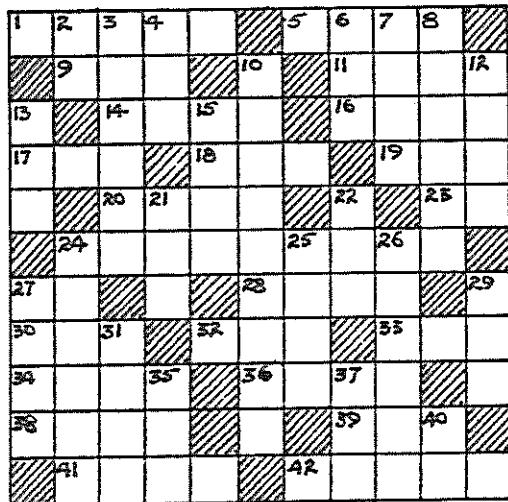
Bible



Find the word in the reading quoted. Authorised Version.

Words.

by F.W.D.



ACROSS.

1. Gen. 31:48-49.
5. Gen. 4:19.
9. Isa. 1:18.
11. Josh. 15:52.
14. Matt. 27:57-60.
16. I Kings 7:33.(sing.)
17. Isa. 44:14.
18. I John 1:3.
19. I Chron. 15:18.
20. Gen. 46:14.
23. New Testament (init.)
24. Romans 11:25-27.
27. Matt. 9:29.

28. II Sam. 3:7.
30. Psalm 40:13-16.
32. Luke 2:7.
33. II Cor. 3:2-3.
34. Mark 6:54-56.
36. Prison room.
38. I Sam. 21:9.
39. I Chron. 7:34.
41. Luke 24:15.
42. I Thess. 5:9-11.

DOWN.

2. Num. 21:14-15.
3. Gen. 35:14-15.
4. Mark 5:39.
6. Gen. 49:16-18.
7. Josh. 15:52.
8. Acts 27:8.
10. II Cor. 8:13-14.
12. Psalm 7:11-12.
13. John 6:51.
15. Psalm 8:3-4.
21. Col. 3:9.
22. Matt. 8:26.
24. John 1:14.
25. Luke 17:17-19.
26. I Kings 22:42.
27. Heb. 5:13-14.
29. Matt. 16:3.
31. Ezra 6:15.
35. John 20:16.
37. Gen. 22:12.
40. Romans 10:9.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

By F.W.DOWSETT.

PART 2.

DEFINING THE KINGDOM.

In our last study, we looked at the phrase, "The Kingdom of Heaven," and its application and useage in God's Word. In this study we move on to the next phrase;

2. THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Unlike the phrase "The Kingdom of Heaven", which only appears in Matthew's Gospel, the phrase "The Kingdom of God" appears in all four Gospels, only five of the references being found in Matthew's Gospel. They are:

Matt.6:33;

"Seek ye first THE KINGDOM OF GOD, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Matt.12:28;

"But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then THE KINGDOM OF GOD is come unto you."

Matt.19:24;

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

It is interesting to note that in the Aramaic language, which our Lord also used, the word translated here as 'camel' is 'rope'. So that in the Aramaic, the verse reads;

"It is easier for a 'rope' to go through the eye of a needle etc."

Matt.21:31;

"Verily I say unto you, the publicans and the harlots go into THE KINGDOM OF GOD before you."

Matt.21:43;

"Therefore I say unto you, THE KINGDOM OF GOD shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

God's Kingdom is also referred to by Matthew some 14 times without designating it as either the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God, and a study of the context in each case shows that they apply in the main to THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

These passages refer to the Kingdom in its ULTIMATE STATE OR CONDITION OF PERFECTION, rather than in its state of development, as we saw with the phrase "The Kingdom of Heaven."

This difference in application can be readily seen when we apply it to the references quoted above. For instance, all the righteousness of God can only be experienced in the PERFECTED Kingdom, not the developing kingdom. The absence of devils, and the power of Satan, will only be experienced in the PERFECTED Kingdom. Earthly riches will have no effect in the PERFECTED Kingdom. The publicans and the harlots might have all sorts of trouble existing in the developing Kingdom, but if even they accept the Lord Jesus Christ, they will have no trouble getting into the PERFECTED Kingdom.

But one of the most important aspects of this difference to be noted is its application to the Jews. It is obvious that the Jews not only lost, or had taken from them, the temporal, or earthly kingdom, but that the Lord took from them THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN ITS

ENTIRETY, AND IN ALL ITS ASPECTS, INCLUDING ITS SPIRITUAL ASPECT!!!

The Jews lost not only the developing Kingdom, but they also lost THE PERFECTED KINGDOM! This is in complete accord with the marginal rendering of Daniel 9:26, which reads;

". . . and the Jews shall be no more His people."

Thus, to look to the Jews for some future ministry in restoring the Kingdom and converting the world is CONTRARY TO GOD'S WORD, and becomes the basis for utter confusion in trying to interpret and understand God's plans and purposes.

I can only pray that it will not be too long before God removes the scales from His people's eyes, and that we rise to our glorious heritage and responsibility as God's TRUE Israel people, and stop bowing and scraping to this polyglot lot of usurers and blasphemers who are falsely presented as God's Chosen People, but who are nothing less than ANTI-CHRIST, THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN, THE REAL ENEMY OF BOTH GOD AND HIS KINGDOM. No wonder we're in a mess.

It should also be remembered that many of the parables of our Lord are repeated in several of the Gospels, either as parables of the Kingdom of Heaven or as parables of the Kingdom of God. But, as outlined in our first study, only two of these are mentioned as parables of the Kingdom of Heaven, and NOT of THE KINGDOM OF GOD. These are the parables which contain that which is evil or bad, the wheat and the TARES, and the good and BAD fish. There can be good and bad side by side in the developing Kingdom, but certainly not in the PERFECTED Kingdom.

The following five expressions all refer to varying aspects of God's Kingdom, and we will mention them briefly so as to give a complete representation of the different phrases used in God's Word.

3. THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF MAN.

These references to Christ's Kingdom demonstrate both the cleansing and perfection of the Kingdom.

Matt 13:41;

"The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity."

Matt.16:28;

"There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom."

4. THE KINGDOM OF THE FATHER.

Matt 13:43;

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER."

This verse follows the events recorded in verse 41 which speaks of the removal of all that offends out of the Kingdom. It parallels the statement in I Cor.15:24;

"Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."

From the above, it is obvious that this particular phrase relates to the PERFECTED Kingdom of God.

5. THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF HIS LOVE.

Colossians 1:13;

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the KINGDOM OF HIS DEAR SON." Or as the margin reads, "THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF HIS LOVE."

The context of this passage, as stated in verses 2 and 12, shows that this expression is used in reference to the 'inheritance of the saints', and in the further context of;

- (a). Their love for the saints, and
- (b). Their love in the Spirit.

Again, we find that this expression also refers to the **PERFECTION**, rather than the earthly development of God's Kingdom, but with special reference to its spiritual nature.

6. THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

II Peter 1:11;

"Give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things, ye shall never fail.

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

This refers to the same Kingdom of God, but specifically after Christ's second advent, that is, during the millenium and onwards.

7. THE KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST.

Rev. 11:15;

"The kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

Some have wondered as to the use of the words 'Lord' and 'Christ' in the above passage, seemingly as a repetition of each other, and the following may be of some benefit or interest. The Greek word translated into our word "Christ" is "Christos", meaning "anointed". But the word "anointed" can apply equally to "the anointed ONE" i.e., Jesus, or to "the anointed PEOPLE", i.e., Israel. Thus, the passage can be just as properly

translated "...has become the Kingdom of our Lord (Jesus), and of His 'anointed people' (Israel). This would be in full accord with Daniel 7:18 and 27:

"But the saints of the Most High shall take the Kingdom, and possess the Kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."

"And the Kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

Which ever way we take it, it is certain that here we have God's Kingdom under the control and reign of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The important thing to note however, is that the above references do not apply to different kingdoms. It is the SAME Kingdom, but at different times, and under different conditions and circumstances in its formation and development.

If we are to banish both the confusion and lack of understanding regarding God's Kingdom, we must realise that the Kingdom as expressed in the New Testament is the continuation and extension of the same Kingdom spoken of in the Old Testament. God only ever formed ONE Kingdom. At no time has He ever said that He intended changing it. As a matter of fact, the whole of God's plans and purposes are completely centred on this Kingdom, and the means by which you and I can share in its wonderful blessings. It is the only instrument through which God ever intends to fulfill His promises to bless all the nations, families and people of the earth.

The Bible is THE HISTORY BOOK OF THIS KINGDOM.

Past, Present and Future.

“Because Our Testimony Among You Was Believed in That Day”

E.T. SPRINGETT MOXHAM

New Jerusalem Fellowship

Editorial

We are informed in Joel 2:32 and in Acts 2:21 of a group of people who are saved in the time of the end because they will have called on the name of the Lord. Simple as it may seem, this is the one sufficient condition of deliverance when judgment breaks over the heads of the people of this earth!

Now mark this very carefully indeed! God considers it but just to repay with trouble those who trouble His children, who themselves will be repaid, in His great mercy, with rest and relief when the Lord is revealed from Heaven together with the angels of His power in flaming fire to inflict punishment on those who ignore God, even on those who refuse obedience to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. Thus saith the Lord!

The inspired Apostle speaks of Christ coming to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all believers at that day! Here Paul was inspired to make clear an outstanding statement, a gem of a remark, as he actually pointed to the reason for the wonder and admiration set in the hearts of the believers in the end-days — now! He says that the reason will be ‘*because our testimony among you* (i.e. among the Thessalonians) *was believed in that day*’ i.e. in our day! In this way has God guaranteed His Word and ties the faith of Paul and the Thessalonians to ours! How awe-inspiring that is! (2 Thes. 1:5-12).

Imagine the reaction of the Thessalonians, the model Church, as they listened to Paul speaking of the Father’s guarantee to raise up a people in the time of the end similar to themselves, strong in faith and upheld by the power of the Holy Spirit, standing unflinchingly before the Lord amidst the manifestation of the fires of judgment and the wonders of His power.

Such a remnant, said the Apostle, would stand, not in fear, but in admiration, strong in the Spirit, serene and at rest!



“There are two world powers, the sword and the spirit, but the spirit has always vanquished the sword.” — Napoleon

"Fire Baptism"

C. O. STADSKLEV

America's Hope Monthly
Hopkins, Minnesota

(Courtesy 'Kingdom Digest')

Matthew, Mark and Luke refer to a baptism of fire. Matthew and Luke quote the words of John the Baptist relative to this baptism, and John quotes the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. That the fire baptism is a distinct baptism apart from the baptism of the Holy Spirit is clearly and definitely taught in the Word of God.

John the Baptist said: "*I indeed baptized you with water unto repentance, but he (Christ) that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*" (Matthew 3:11).

Notice this verse of scripture does not say "Holy Ghost fire." It says the Lord shall baptize with the "Holy Ghost and fire." There are two distinct baptisms here, fire and Spirit.

The Gospel of Luke also reads: "*He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*" (Luke 3:16). Relative to the fire baptism which falls upon every believer who lays himself upon the altar for God, Jesus has this to say: "*For everyone shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt*" (Mark 9:49).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit imparts to heart and mind a definite, positive courage and faith with confidence toward God. This baptism endues the believer with power and makes him militant for God. The baptism of fire is something entirely different. It has another purpose; it appears to work in the opposite direction. The purpose of the baptism of fire is to remove the dross and the tin, the undesirable elements and characteristics in the believer's heart and mind. Both baptisms are necessary for a fruitful and useful Christian life. They supplement one another and are counterparts one of the other. Where one begins and the other leaves off we cannot say.

Paul deals at length with the problems of trouble, persecution and suffering of the believer. He tells us it is something we should expect and that it is foreordained and predestined for us as believers. He sums up the believer's affliction in these words:

"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things

which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:17 and 18).

We find some outstanding cases of this in the Old Scriptures, which we are told were written for ensamples and for our learning. Perhaps the outstanding experience of the baptism of fire as recorded in the Old Scriptures is the experience of Job. We read concerning this man that "*There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil*" (Job 1:1).

Here you have a delightsome, wholesome Christian, walking in communion and sweet fellowship with God, quite unaware that there was anything in his life that needed salt, anything in him that might spoil this sweet fellowship with God or mar his testimony before his fellow men. Now mind you — it was the Lord who said concerning Job that he was perfect, upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil. What more could God ask of any mortal being? What more could anyone desire in a believer? Nevertheless, God put Job through the baptism of fire.

After being in the furnace and after going through this baptism of fire, Job's mind held a different attitude with respect to himself. He tells the Lord. "*Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee, I will lay my hand upon my mouth.*" The fire and the burning brought to the surface something that was buried deep within Job that was vile, something that needed salt, something if allowed to remain that would work corruption and destruction.

All Christians, more or less, have tried to analyze the experience of Job. They ask, "Was it self-righteousness? Was it pride? Or what was it?" Whatever it was, it took the baptism of fire to bring it forth. The tremendous pressure and wringing that Job's soul went through was the only thing that would bring to the surface that which God saw hidden deep within this good, perfect and upright man, this outstanding Christian, this supreme champion of all believers of that day.

God saw the hidden, foreign element and He knew the power of that thing if it were allowed. Therefore Job had to go through the baptism of fire. Afterward we read that Job said, "*I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes*" (Job 42:6).

We could consider other characters of the Old Scriptures, but let us consider Peter instead. You are all familiar with Peter, his temperament and his characteristics. He was the man who offered to die for the Lord, and he meant it. Do you know it is quite easy, comparatively speaking, to die for the Lord? Quite easy. But it is another thing to live for Him.

It is one thing to fight for Christ and another thing to live a Christlike life. That which God is actually desirous of and which He wants to accomplish in our individual hearts and lives is not to make great preachers, singers, workers and teachers. No, no. The thing the Lord is after is to make us Christlike, which is much more important and far greater.

The tremendous change which came over Peter is revealed in the First Book of Peter. He was a man who would fight, would sooner fight than eat apparently; he would fight anything and anyone. He would even challenge the mob. Some people say that Peter was afraid when he swore and denied the Lord. Hardly so. He was not nearly so afraid as he was angry, disgusted and confused. Peter had heard all the preaching and teaching of Christ. He knew that the Lord was well able to handle any situation. Peter had witnessed the miracles. The understanding Peter had was that he was to sit on a throne shortly judging in Israel, but he was a little ahead of time. Therefore, when Christ manifested the lamb attitude toward the scribes and the Pharisees, Peter was so completely dumbfounded and confused that he sank in despair and disgust. Yes, Peter hit bottom.

You ask, "Do you really think Christ intended Peter to get to the place where he swore and denied the Lord?" Yes, Peter needed that experience. Jesus knew that this was an experience Peter had need of. He needed to experience the weakness of his own flesh and mind. That was part of his baptism of fire. He needed this experience just as much as he needed the baptism of the Holy Ghost to empower him for service. Peter never could have had the baptism of the Holy Ghost; he never could have had the anointing and the power with the grace and glory of God resting upon him had not our sovereign God taken Peter way down to the depths of human despair and guilt.

So deep and dark was Peter's valley that he had made up his mind to throw his ambitions of the past three years overboard and forget about his call and discipleship. Said he, "I'm going fishing." But try as he might or fish all night, Peter could not keep his mind off the words that Christ had spoken. Think of the thoughts that went through his mind those days! When Christ was in the grave, Peter was in the furnace. Yes, he was in the fire and God was turning on the heat. The dross, the tin, the pride, the selfishness and self-sufficiency in Peter must go.

God wanted to use that militant, aggressive spirit of Peter's which up until this time had been acting purely in the strength of the arm of flesh and general carnality. God knew He could use Peter if He were allowed complete control over this ambitious personality. God wanted to sanctify

Peter, so fire baptism came into operation. Poor Peter must have felt as Job did when he saw what the baptism of fire was bringing to the surface in his life.

Perhaps he felt as Judas did, Why live? But Jesus had prayed for him. Don't you remember reading that Jesus said to Peter one day, "*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*"

The day of Pentecost came. The fire had done its work and Peter was prepared now for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The change that came to Peter was remarkable and marvelous. It was the change that God has wrought in millions of hearts and lives of believers. Prior to the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the baptism of fire, Peter, faced by the mob, drew his sword and "clipped off" a fellow's ear. Afterward, when writing to believers, he says:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God. through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice. though now for a season ye are in heaviness through manifold temptation: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:3-7).

What, then, is the purpose of the trial of faith? That the believer might partake of praise, honor and glory at the appearing of the Christ. To believe God in the face of trials and burning has great reward, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. reserved for you.

In view of Peter's denial of Christ in Pilate's judgment hall, listen as he now fervently expresses himself:

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; But rejoice . . . If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy (blessed) are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" (I Peter 12-14).

There is an important thing to remember in connection with the baptisms. It is this: Some people think that the glory and the anointing of God comes upon the believer just because that individual will agonize

and prevail in prayer. This might be a prayer ministry which is separated altogether from the anointing, grace and glory of God wrought through the baptism of fire.

Have you seen Christians grow old ungracefully and become stale instead of being youthfully joyous in the Lord because of the anointing, the grace and glory of God? Have you? Well, that is the thing that Job was in danger of and all believers are in danger of. That is why there is need of the baptism of fire. That is why we have the fiery trials, now and then, which burn away and bring to surface the tin and dross that accumulates so we can grow in grace and glory.

Nevertheless, you can do as some have done if you so choose. You can break to bits the furnace designed for your purifying and deepening. Yes, indeed! You can break it and walk out. If you do, you will walk out into a life apart from the anointing, the fellowship, the glory and the grace of God. So don't break the furnace. Neither foster the idea that the common sufferings and afflictions and all those little rebuffs that come your way is the "fiery trial." Such trials are common with believer and unbeliever alike. Fire baptism is something else. It is designed to fit individual cases. It will be one thing for you and quite another thing for the next believer.

Above all else, don't get the idea that God wants you in the furnace all the time. He knows how to temper the personality you have: He knows your metal. "How long?" you ask. This is so important that only God times this process. The only thing that must keep you in the furnace is your faith in God. You must realize thoroughly that God doeth all things well — including your case — and that His purpose is to remove all foreign elements so that He might conform you unto the image of His dear Son.

Saul broke the furnace; he rebelled and talked back to God. David bowed his head and humbled his spirit; he accepted the fire and the furnace. David sought the will and purpose of God. Seemingly justified, he could have exercised what carnal Christians frequently refer to as "holy wrath" on many occasions, and he could have fled the furnace. Instead he remained silent, and the Lord exalted him in due season.

Don't build your own furnace. Also, be sure you are acting in faith and that you are not enduring certain fire because you have lost your faith. The furnace has nothing to do with personal salvation. This fire is for the perfection of the believers, not for the saving of the sinner. Do you see the difference? The purpose of the baptism of fire is to remove from the sincere believer's life things that mar and which are valueless.

When some believers have this baptism of fire, they get so discouraged and they see so much dross and fire, they conclude all is dross and fire so they give up; they backslide. Don't do either! All you need to do, and all you actually can do, is to bow and surrender unreservedly to God. Trust Him! He has in mind to make you a vessel for grace and glory, that rare quality found only in truly spiritual believers.

Other believers do as Saul did. They maintain profession, activity, noise-sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, but no anointing, no glory, no grace. Theirs is the wilderness experience in the inner man. They purposely side-stepped the furnace and therefore their lives are fruitless and useless. They possess appearance, but hidden within is dross and tin which God's fire would remove. Saul's crown and regal rags do not count with God.

Just what is God after? The thing God is after is that which He states in Romans 8:29. When some read this passage, for some strange reason they read it this way: "For whom he did foreknow he also predestinated to become great singers, great teachers, great preachers, great personalities and great characters." Footlight creatures, these. Just other Peters on parade. This is not what God is interested in at all. No, no! There is something much greater to be attained.

This passage reads: "*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to his Son.*" That is what God is interested in, and that is what He is working out for you. He wants us to be Christlike. The only way He can make us Christlike is to give us the baptism of fire and the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Just what is involved in being Christlike? That is the matter which just floored Peter. Christ was meek, lowly, patient, long-suffering, and yet all power in heaven and earth was His. When reviled, He reviled not again. He did not threaten when threatened. Peter just couldn't take it until after Pentecost. It took the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire to bring out that good thing, that glorious thing, that delightful thing, that thing which has been such a refreshing to believers since Peter wrote his letters to fellow-believers. Just Peter, now with dross and tin removed, motivated and directed by another Spirit.

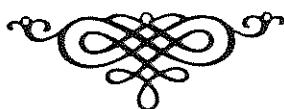
Have you ever met believers who are so jubilant when they are active in the work of the Lord? Oh, how happy they are when they occupy some place of prominence and spotlight activity. How sad and sullen they become when the Lord places them in the sidelines to test their sincerity with the salt of fire. From the way they then respond one might conclude

that God had died. But God is looking for pure gold, pure silver. Sometimes God actually lets a person go for many years, even using him, before bringing this person up to the place where He says, "Now, my servant, my child, there is something more important to Me than what you have done; it is what you are. You are going to have a baptism of fire." How important it then becomes to be quiet and low before the Lord. The gold is due for the fire and the silver for the refining pot. The Lord is going to try this person's heart.

The fire baptism is not so much for the weak Christians as for the strong. It is for those who want to go on with the Lord, for those who know God best, for those who would do exploits for God. God has a way of arranging the strangest combination of circumstances for them you can imagine. As the fire does its work, God gives grace. The more fire, the more of God's grace. God doesn't abandon His child to the fire. He remains near, even though unseen.

There is one baptism of the Holy Ghost, but many fillings. There is one baptism of fire, but many burnings of fiery trials. When this test comes it is of utmost importance to the believers to remember that the Lord is conforming him to the image of His dear Son, that God in tender love and mercy is removing the accumulation of hindrances and worthless luggage that would prevent this conformation from taking place. Unless the goal is kept in view, such an one might sink in despair and become bitter and complaining. Christian, don't struggle against God. Submit to Him. Trust Him. He makes no mistakes.

Lest anyone become discouraged, we read in Jude: "*Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory, majesty, dominion and power both now and forever.*"



God's Will

We cannot escape God's Will. We can accept it and obey it, in which case we enrichen and ennable ourselves. We can refuse it, in which case we degrade ourselves. God's well-being is not in question: *only ours! Without God there is only frustration and soul-starvation.* J.W.S.

The Prophetic Ministry of Elijah.

By F.W.DOWSETT.

PART 2.

Now with the unexpected appearance of the prophet Elijah on the scene, I'm sure that we can appreciate that King Ahab was not pleased one little bit. And Elijah obviously knew that Ahab was not pleased. Very fortunately, God also knew, and made provision for Elijah to escape the wrath of King Ahab. In I Kings 17:2-7 we read;

"And the word of the Lord came unto him saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord, for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook.

And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land."

Now there are three main elements in the above account, each of which is prophetic of some future stage of Israel's history. Firstly, Elijah was sent away from the area of danger. Secondly he was sustained with food and water during the full time of this protection. Thirdly, the brook dried up.

Let us take a closer look at these events in order to more fully understand their deeply prophetic import.

1. THE ESCAPE FROM PERSECUTION AND DANGER.

There are TWO subsequent incidents in the history of Israel of which Elijah's escape is indicative or prophetic. These incidents involve the KING of the Kingdom, and the KINGDOM itself respectively.

In regard to the escape of the KING, we read that following the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, wise men from the east visited Him. (Incidentally, nowhere in the Bible does it record that there were THREE wise men. It only records three different kinds of gifts). But following the situation that arose as a result of their visit, Joseph, our Lord's foster-father, was warned of pending persecution against their new-born child. He was told, as recorded in Matt.2:13-15;

"And when they (the wise men) were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and His mother and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word. For Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt. And was there until the death of Herod."

Thus the plans of Satan to destroy the KING of the Kingdom were frustrated by the provision and mercy of God in sending Him away from the area of danger.

The second account relates to the deliverance of the KINGDOM itself, and is found in the 12th. chapter of the book of the Revelation;

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne.

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was there place found any more in heaven.

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death.

Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! For the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

And the dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Now whilst it is not the intention of this work to enter into an in-depth study of the Book of the Revelation, certain statements in the chapter just quoted require further attention because of their particular relationship to the subject of our study.

It will be readily noticed that the account centres around three main entities. They are a woman, a dragon, and a man child. Now who do these represent?

The first to be mentioned, in the first verse, is the woman. She is portrayed as being at the point of giving birth to a child. She is also portrayed as "being clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." Whilst the first part of this description may be applicable to Mary, the mother of our Lord, this application is not supported by the remainder of the description. Why, we may ask, is the woman associated with the sun, the moon, and the stars?

In studying the Book of the Revelation it is absolutely necessary to remember two basic principles. Firstly, the message of the book is presented in SYMBOLIC language. In the very first chapter we read;

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; And He sent and SIGNIFIED it by His angel unto His servant John."

The word to note is 'SIGNIFIED'. It is translated from the Greek word 'semaino', and means literally, 'to shew by SIGNS and SYMBOLS.'

Secondly, the message is intended to be understood. One is amazed by the downright effrontery of so many self-styled Bible teachers who claim that Christians should not bother themselves with studying the Book of the Revelation because, according to them, 'it is a mystery.' Verse three of the first chapter reads;

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear (understand) the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein."

If God promised a blessing to those who understood it, then He obviously meant it to be understood. But as it is a book of symbols, then how do we know what the various symbols used stand for? The answer is really quite simple. They are found in the 'Scriptures', that is, the Old Testament. Thus, when we read of the woman bringing forth a man child, we immediately think of Isaiah 9:6;

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given."

The context of this statement shews that the child, or son, is born to Israel. So we conclude that the 'woman' of Rev. 12:1 represents Israel.

But we also find that the sun, moon, and stars are associated with this 'woman'. Turning again to the Scriptures, the Old Testament, we find ample evidence of the application of these heavenly bodies to Israel. We recall, for instance, the account of Joseph's dream as recorded in Gen.37:9-10;

"And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more.

And behold the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren. And his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee in the earth? "

Then, if we turn to Jeremiah 31:35-36 we read;

"Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hosts is His name.

If those ordinances depart from before Me saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever."

The sun, moon, and stars, together with their ordinances of day and night, are here associated with Israel as God's appointed witnesses to His own faithfulness. There can therefore by no doubt but that the 'woman' represents Israel.

The second entity mentioned is 'a great dragon'. (Rev.12:3). Now there is no mystery here as to the dragon's identity. Personal opinions such as 'the beast', 'the false prophet', 'the anti-christ', and even 'China', are quite irrelevant, as the answer is given in verse nine of the same chapter. The great dragon is identified as;

"That old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan."

The third entity is 'a man child'. There can be no doubt that this refers to our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 9:6 supports the description given;

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder."

Speaking of the time of Christ's Second Advent, Rev.19:15 records;

"And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations. And He shall rule them with a rod of iron."

The overall picture is thus of Israel, about to give birth to her Redeemer-King, our Lord Jesus Christ, being persecuted by her enemy, Satan, with the main attack being directed against our Lord. It is in this context that we read verses six and fourteen of Rev.12;

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." (verse 6).

"And to the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, times and half a time from the face of the serpent." (verse 14).

The prophetic nature of Elijah's flight to safety is thus clearly illustrated.

2. SUSTAINED WITH WATER AND FOOD.

Let us recall the words of I Kings 17:4-6;

"And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord, for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook."

The prophetic nature of this promise is clearly borne out by the statements in Revelations 12:6 and 14 quoted above. We note that verse six quotes in part;

". . . and they shall feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

whilst verse fourteen quotes in part;

". . . where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time from the face of the serpent."

It is of value to note at this juncture, that these two verses give the understanding of the Bible periods designated as "times". This expression is used in Leviticus chapter twenty six, where God refers to the 'seven times' of punishment. It is also used in Dan.7:25;

"And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and think to change times and laws. And they shall be given into his hand until A TIME, TIMES, AND THE DIVIDING OF A TIME."

By comparing verse six with verse fourteen of Revelations chapter twelve, we see that the same period is expressed as "1260 days" and "a time, times, and half a time." This latter expression reads literally, "one time, two times, and a half a time," which is 3.1/2 times. So if 3.1/2 times equals 1260 days, then we see that "one time" would equal 360 days, and that "seven times" would equal 2520 days, or prophetic years. A similar period is referred to in Rev. 11:2, and 13:5, where the treading down of the Holy City, and the duration of the powers given to the 'beast of the sea' are both stated as being 42 months. As a month in prophetic terms consists of 30 days, we again have this same period of 42×30 , or 1260 days or prophetic years.

Thus we see that the feeding of Elijah after his escape from his enemy was most prophetic of Israel's feeding and nourishment when she fled from her arch-enemy Satan into the wilderness (which means by the

way 'a place of pasture'), and was nourished there by being fed on the Word of God. Thus she grew into the greatest missionary force, and the greatest protector of the Word of God that the world has ever seen.

One further point of interest is the statement that Elijah was fed by "the ravens." Now the raven is a scavenger bird, similar to the crow, and feeds on dead flesh. As such it is designated as 'unclean'. In Leviticus 11:13-15 we read;

"And these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls. They shall not be eaten. They are an abomination.

The eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray, and the vulture, and the kite after his kind. Every RAVEN after his kind."

Dr. Bullinger, in the Companion Bible, identifies these birds as:

Ossifrage. A rendering of the Hebrew "bone-breaker", from taking their prey up in the air and dropping it on a rock to break it.

Ospray. A sea eagle.

Kite. A falcon.

Raven. Blackbirds of all kinds.

It would therefore seem very strange that God would select an 'unclean' bird which feeds on dead and rotting flesh, and which He Himself refers to as an 'abomination', to bring portions of 'clean' meat, night and morning, to Elijah. Under God's own Law, even the contact of the 'clean' meat with that which is 'unclean' would contaminate it.

One is therefore inclined to seek some explanation for the use of this phrase which does not contravene the Law of God, and yet does not violate the text. In

this context it is interesting to note that at that time, this particular area was frequented by sections of the Arab people known as Bedouins. It would appear that their tents were jet black, and that because of this, they were referred to as "Ravens". Being descendants of Ishmael, and thus of Abraham, they would be Hebrew, though not Israel, stock. It would not therefore appear to do violence to the Scriptures to suggest the very real possibility that Elijah was fed by these wandering Bedouins. Any conclusions on this suggestion are left to the prayerful consideration of the reader.

3. THE BROOK DRIES UP.

"And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land." (I Kings 17:7).

How truly prophetic is this of what subsequently happened to God's people. They had been delivered from the regions of greatest persecution. They had been led in God's providence to their appointed place, the place which God Himself had designated as Israel's territory from the very creation of the world.

"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.

When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

For the Lord's portion is His people. Jacob is the lot of His inheritance." (Deut.32:7-9).

"Moreover, I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more." (II Sam. 7:10).

They had been fed and sustained by the mercy and loving-kindness of the Lord. But eventually the brook, or waters, dried up.

We ask ourselves two questions. Firstly, how was it that after all this provision and faithfulness on God's part that the waters failed? The answer is clearly stated.

"There had been no rain in the Land."

We ask our second question. WHY had there been no rain? King Solomon had the answer. At the dedication of the Temple, as recorded in I Kings 8:35-36, he stated;

"When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against Thee; if they pray towards this place, and confess Thy name, and turn from their sins, when Thou afflictest them.

Then hear Thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of Thy servants, and of Thy people Israel, that Thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon Thy land, which Thou hast given to Thy people for an inheritance."

Solomon recognised the principle clearly laid down in God's Laws. They are recorded in Leviticus chapter twenty six, and Deuteronomy chapter twenty eight. These chapters are too long to repeat here, and readers are urged to carefully read and study them for themselves. The main passages to note are;

"If ye walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them,
Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

But if ye will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments; and if ye shall

despise My statutes, or if your soul abhor My judgments, so that ye will not do all My commandments, but that ye break My covenant. . . I will break the pride of thy power. And I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass. And your strength shall be spent in vain. For your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield her fruits." (Lev.26:3-5, 14-15, 19-20).

Similar statements are repeated in Deut. 28.

Thus it is clear that the absence of rain was a direct result of sin, which is defined in I John 3:4 as **THE TRANSGRESSION - OR BREAKING - OF THE LAW.**

It would be a complete waste of time and space to detail the decline of the Anglo-Saxon people once they had grown to full stature as a result of God's covenants and the never-failing provision of their ever-faithful God. Not only as individuals, but as a Nation and Commonwealth of Nations, we have turned our backs on God's Laws. We have committed, and continue to commit, every sin imaginable. We reap the results.

Read them again in Leviticus 26, and Deuteronomy 28. Therein is listed every curse from which we are suffering today. They have not come upon us as some evolutionary process, or as we are so often piously informed, as a trial of our faith. They have come upon us for one reason, and one reason only.

WE HAVE DISOBEYED GOD'S LAWS, HIS COMMANDMENTS, AND HIS STATUTES!

We reap our reward. The rain has stopped. The waters have dried up.

The prophet Amos put the position in a nutshell;

"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."
(Amos 8:11).

We no longer hear "the words of the Lord." With but all too few exceptions, we hear 'the words of theology'. We hear endless arguments based on denominational differences. We hear the words of philosophy. We hear the words of humanism.

We hear the words of integration, whereas the Words of the Lord teach us SEGREGATION.

We hear words exhorting us to unite, whereas the Words of the Lord say 'BE YE SEPARATE!'

We pray for prosperity, whereas we should pray for OBEDIENCE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

We pray for healing, whereas we should be praying for HEALTH.

If we truly desire God's rain, whether literally or spiritually, we must fulfil the conditions!

We need to "HEAR THE WORDS OF THE LORD." Leviticus 26:3-5 says it all;

"If you walk in My statutes, and are careful to observe My commands, I will give rain for you in due season. The land shall yield its crops, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. Threshing shall last for you until the time of vintage, and the time of vintage shall last until sowing time, so that you shall eat all that you want of your food, and live securely in your land. I will establish peace in the land, so that you shall lie down with none to frighten you."

(to be continued.)

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STUDY No. 4.

THE NEW COVENANT.

As an introduction to this study it is important that you first read chapters 8 - 9 - 10.

1. ITS ORIGIN.

To understand the full implications of the NEW covenant, we must have a knowledge of the OLD covenant which it replaced. This is recorded in Exodus 24:3-8, and Heb.9:19-20. (TO BE READ.)

A study of this OLD covenant reveals FIVE important factors:

1. It was made ONLY with Israel, and its blessings were specifically directed to, and applicable to Israel. Read Heb. 8:8,10. This does not mean that the blessings of the New Covenant could not be shared and enjoyed by people of other nations. It was a matter of PRIORITIES. To illustrate, a Pastor is chosen, trained, and anointed to lead others to Christ. The fact of his being thus called does not prevent others from the blessings of the Lord. It is for the purpose of bringing the others into these blessings that he has this calling. Someone must be chosen and trained to lead the others. This was, and STILL IS, Israel's responsibility. So on the list of priorities, Christ came first to Israel, and then, through Israel, to the other families and nations of the earth. I suggest you read Matt.15:24 in this light.

2. It was a LAW covenant. The 'words of the Lord' which Moses told the people in Exodus 24:3-8, and

which were accepted by the people, and which formed the OLD COVENANT, were the terms of God's Laws, part of which are recorded in Exodus 23:20-33. (Read them now, before proceeding.)

3. It was written on stone. This leads us to consider two things. (a), It came from an external source, that is, from outside of ourselves, and (b), there is no emotion or resilience in stone.

4. It was a conditional covenant. That is, the implementation and extent of the blessings under it depended entirely on the actions and extent of obedience of Israel, with whom the covenant was made.

5. It operated by means of religious ordinances. Read Heb. 9:1-10.

It is first referred to in Jer. 31:31, and repeated in Heb. 8:8. (For those conversant with, or interested in Bible numerics, it is more than interesting to note that the numeric value of the Hebrew word for 'God', which is 'EL', is 31, whilst the numeric value of the Greek word for Jesus is 888. Surely not a coincidence).

It is thus NOT just a New Testament teaching, and is therefore part of God's original plan and purpose.

2. ITS PURPOSE AND NATURE.

Why was a NEW covenant required? What was wrong with the OLD, or original one?

The OLD covenant was IMPERFECT! (see 8:7). This does not mean that it was in any way wrong, but that it was NOT COMPLETE, in that it was lacking in some very important aspects.

The NEW covenant rectified these short-comings.

1. It was an UNCONDITIONAL covenant. This means that its fulfilment and operation had absolutely

nothing whatsoever to do with the party with whom it was made. It depends entirely on God's Promise, which we can't change even if we wanted to.

2. It was based on better promises. These are listed in 8:10-12:

(a). I WILL put my law into their mind. There will no longer be what is called 'free will' to accept it or reject it as WE please.

(b). I WILL write my law in their hearts.

In regard to these first two items, read Deut.11:13-21. You will note the extremely important difference in that with the OLD Covenant, the people had the responsibility to bind God's Laws on their hand and forehead. But under the terms of the NEW Covenant, God removed this responsibility from the individual, and made it HIS sole prerogative and responsibility.

(c). I WILL be their God.

(d). I WILL be merciful to their unrighteousness.

(e). I WILL completely forget their sins and iniquities.

3. It was based on a better sacrifice. Under the Old covenant, the sacrifice was dead both before and after it was offered. The NEW covenant was based on a LIVING sacrifice. The lamb of the Old covenant stayed dead, and could only atone once. The Lamb of God of the NEW covenant rose from the dead, and remains alive as a continuous and everlasting atonement. No wonder God calls it a BETTER covenant. (Read 9:11-28.). It should also be noted that the 'blood of the Old Covenant' was sprinkled externally on the people, whilst the 'blood of the New Covenant', represented by the wine, is applied internally.

4. Like the OLD covenant, it was made specifically with "The House of Israel," and for the same reasons.

5. It is to be written on our 'hearts of flesh', and the 'stoney heart' is to be taken away. (Ezek.11:19). This is what the ordinance of circumcision represents.

6. It is a Law Covenant, just the same as the Old covenant. THIS FEATURE HAS NOT CHANGED! (Read Ex.24:3-8; Ezek.11:20; Heb. 8:10, 10:16). It did not abolish God's Laws of commandments, statutes, and judgments. They are still in operation. What it abolished was the 'laws contained in ordinances', or the rituals, and these laws ONLY. (Read Eph.2:15; Col.2:14.). The big difference is that whilst originally the people obeyed God out of fear or compulsion, we now obey Him out of love. Jesus said, "If you LOVE Me, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS."

7. It is everlasting, and complete. Heb.10:11 tells us that when Christ finished His offering, HE SAT DOWN. There was nothing more to be done. Jesus said it all from the cross. "It is finished.

3. ITS RESULT.

1. Israel was recovenanted to God as His people. By His death, Christ fulfilled the law of God pertaining to divorce, and the 'divorced wife' (Isa.50:1) was now able to remarry her former husband. (Hosea 2:19-20). Only in this relationship can Israel perform her God-given destiny and responsibility. (Read Heb.9:15, and Rev.21:9-27).

2. We are sanctified to God. (Read Heb. 8:12, 10:10, and 14-18). Note the difference between "forgiveness" where the sin can still be remembered, and "remission" where the sin is obliterated or sent away, that is, FORGOTTEN. This was the reason for the TWO goats of the original sin-offering. One was slain, representing the fact that our sins were FORGIVEN of God,

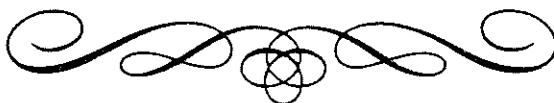
whilst the other was sent away, representing the fact that our sins are FORGOTTEN by God. You will read of this in Lev.16:5-22.

As a result of God's "I wills", there are two "We shalls:"

(a). WE SHALL be His people.

(b). WE SHALL all know God, from the least to the greatest.

3. This is what we remember every time we participate in the communion service. Just as Israel of old 'partook' of the blood of the sacrifice through the sacrificial rituals of the OLD COVENANT, so we today 'partake' of the blood of the sacrifice through the cup, which Christ said represents the NEW COVENANT. Under the OLD covenant, the people looked forward with HOPE. Under the NEW covenant, we look to the future with full confidence and assurance.



ALMIGHTY GOD, UNTO WHOM ALL HEARTS ARE OPEN, AND FROM WHOM NO SECRETS ARE HID, CLEANSE THE THOUGHTS OF OUR HEARTS WITH THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THAT WE MAY PERFECTLY LOVE THEE, AND WORTHILY MAGNIFY THY HOLY NAME, THROUGH CHRIST, OUR LORD. AMEN. —ST. JOHN OF CONSTANTINOPLE

It is the heart, not reason, which experiences God. This, then, is faith: God perceived by the heart and not by reason.

—Blaise Pascal
1623-1662

which can only come through the infilling and ministry of the Holy Spirit within us.

We proclaim the absolute necessity for our nation to return to full obedience to the Law of God as the only way by which we can receive the full blessings of God.

We proclaim the absolute necessity for each and every individual Christian to prepare themselves for the greatest event yet to be witnessed on this earth, **THE RETURN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

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It is our fervent prayer that you will be blessed and lifted to higher planes of joy and blessing as you study and learn of the wonders of God's Word, and of His boundless and merciful love for each of us.

With our Christian love, Frank and Betty Dowsett.

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I Peter 5:5-6

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