



THE COVENANT VISION.

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

THE COVENANT VISION.

EDITOR: Pastor Frank W. Dowsett. J.P.

In presenting this magazine, it is not our intention just to indiscriminately add to the number of Christian journals already available. Our only purpose is to present the Word of God in its fulness 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 appearing and return 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.

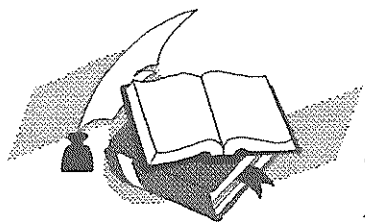
Denominational doctrines and differences are not our concern, and it is not our intention to enter into such arguments. There is not enough time left to waste it on such unproductive, and indeed, destructive, exercises. We are concerned **ONLY** with what we believe the Word of God says and teaches.

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 identity, 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', which can only

(continued on inside back cover)



Editorial.

We keep on hearing about an alleged "Conspiracy Theory". There are clearly some people who have the absurd idea that what is going on around us is planned by some terrible people or groups in order to force some particular control over the people in order to impose some nefarious scheme of their own, and for the benefit of their own particular cause. Now we know perfectly well that this is not happening. If we could only adapt our minds to the facts of natural evolution, then we would immediately realise that what is happening is a totally similar process within the political and economic scene as that which has been accepted as incontrovertible fact as applied to the evolution of the human race. It's all, of course, just a natural process of "development". Things just turn out this way. It's been happening for thousands of years right down to our present day. Nations rise, and nations fall. Systems of government rise, and systems of government fall. Leaders rise and leaders fall. It's all, as I say, just part of the process of natural evolving development.

If you were walking along your footpath and found a 50c coin lying across the groove in the path which they put there at regular close intervals to act as expansion joints in the concrete, you would no doubt pick it up and think you had just been lucky. If across the very next groove about a meter away you found another 50c piece, you might think "What a coincidence", pick it up, and feel that it certainly was your lucky day. But if you kept walking along the path and found a 50c piece lying across every groove in the path right up the street for its entire length, I wonder what you would think. I can't imagine that anyone would be so naive as to think that it was all just some unbelievable coincidence. It would be quite obvious to even a child that someone had placed the coins there in accordance with a deliberate plan and purpose. Crazy, yes, but by coincidence, NO. Yet this sort of thing is happening regularly and consistently throughout the entire world, especially the Western Christian World. Have you ever wondered why it is that when we get a change in government the very same overall plans which were

condemned by the opposition suddenly become the very same plans, in principle, of the new government which previously condemned them? We don't find the new government rescinding the laws passed by the previous government which they so strenuously opposed. I wonder why? Could it possibly be that there really IS a conspiracy after all? Is the present move toward a One World Government, and a One World Economy, and a One World Religion just an aberration of our imagination? Well, being a Christian based article, I suppose it wouldn't do any harm to read what God has to say on the matter. As a matter of fact, most Christians don't seem to know that He even has an opinion on this subject. So let's look at a few things He stated in His Word. In Psalm 2:1-3 we read; *"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."*

Then in Psalm 83:2-5 we read; *"For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee."*

For those with 'eyes to see and ears to hear' the very next verse identifies these enemies, commencing with "the tabernacles of Edom!!"

Now if that does not conform to the definition of "conspiracy" then I don't know what does.

Does God have a plan for these destroyers? Look at verse 4 of Psalm 2: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."

Then consider what God says in Isaiah 34:5; "For My sword shall come down from heaven. Behold, it shall come down upon Edom, and upon the people whom I have devoted to destruction." (NASV).

You see, there are actually TWO conspiracies. One by our enemies to destroy us, and one by our God to destroy them.

I wonder who'll win?

The Heritage of Israel.

By Frank W. Dowsett.

Part Five.

The Glory. Part Three.

There is a further aspect of "The Glory" which we have not to date studied, and which cannot be overlooked if we are to understand the fullness of **The Heritage of Israel**. We read of it in Isaiah 46:13;

"I bring near my righteousness: it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory."

We've been studying the subject of the glory of God in Israel, but we have to realise that in addition to this, Israel is also referred to as being God's glory. We have a designation here that so very few people realise. This doesn't apply simply to the fact of realising the existence of the statement, but to the fact of its significance, and the depth of its meaning. God has said that He will place salvation in Zion "for Israel my glory". Israel is referred to as being "God's glory". This fact places a far greater emphasis upon our necessity not only to realise who we really are, but upon the responsibility that has been placed upon our shoulders. If we, as God's glory, do not obey God's Word, and if we do not do what He has destined and ordained us to do,

we then cannot remain as, and certainly cannot expect to retain, this exalted position of being God's glory. The automatic result is that God's glory departs from us. The situation is just as clear as that. I sincerely believe that we must keep this factor very much in mind when we're talking with people endeavouring to convince them of our special calling. As I've said many times before, this does not constitute some sort of special favouritism. We're not simply a favoured people. We are a chosen people who have been ordained to show forth the glory of God.

Let us keep in mind the statement which is the basis for this series of studies. Referring to the statement made in Romans 9:4 regarding the Israelites, we read, "To whom belong the adoption and the glory." These days, people, and especially Christians, just don't seem to have the slightest idea of what that means. We will only achieve the purpose for which God appointed us in the first place when we get back to obedience to God and teach not only our own Israel nations, but the other nations of the world, that therein, and therein only, lies the key to blessing and to righteousness. The nations of the world are in a very parlous situation aren't they? Now I'm not unsympathetic to the terrible situations that exist in so many non-Israel countries, but I have to confess that I'm more sympathetic to the situation of hundreds and thousands of our own children over here who are also living in pretty desperate circumstances. Our young people, especially the little kids, have become the victims of the most horrendous sexual and criminal activity, and it truly staggers me to hear of what's going on in our own country to which we refer as a Christian country, most of the inhabitants of which are Israel descended people.

We're just playing around with God's word. We're just making it mean anything we like. We are not helping the children of God, and I mean that in a very literal sense. We'll go to any lengths to help everyone else, and I have no objection in principle to doing this, but when it comes to helping our own, they seem to become a secondary factor. If half the money sent overseas to help others was directed towards helping our own people, what a difference it would make to our own society. If half the missionary activity directed today to other nations was expended on converting our own people, we would be in a far greater position to help the other nations and people of the world, simply because they would see the proof of God's glory and mercy as it became manifest in and through His own people.

I know that what I am saying may offend some folk, and I assure you that I do not condemn the sincerity of those involved, but I say very deliberately that sincerity is no guarantee of correctness. If we don't know what is going on behind the scenes, our sincere efforts can be totally misplaced. We should never forget that the basic purpose of the enemies of our Christian Faith, and of our inheritance under God, is to destroy our very existence as God's servant nation and people. It is clearly documented in Psalm 83:1-5;

"Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.

They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.

They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee."

But the purposes of our enemies do not in any way accord with the purposes of God for us. We are His glory. He is not only the glory of His people, but he created us to be His glory, and unless we maintain that balance we are never ever going to achieve the purpose for which He called us.

However, before concluding this portion of our studies, and proceeding to the study of the Covenants and Promises, there is one final designation of which I wish to make mention. It is not just in regard to the purpose of Israel, but to the destiny of Israel. In Romans 9: 22-28 we read;

"What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? (or nations).

As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

Esaiahs also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth."

Now here is God's Word regarding the destiny of Israel, and I would like to refer back to the first of those verses we read above, verse 22.

"What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known endured, with much long suffering the vessel of wrath fitted for destruction."

One of the things we must always keep in mind is that the enemy is only the enemy because God allows them to be the enemy. He used the enemy to test us. If God didn't want to test us He'd have wiped these people out thousands of years ago, they would have never achieved anything. He deliberately allowed this to happen. He allowed these 'vessels of wrath' as He called them, full authority to operate, in order to show His own wrath and to make His power known. He did this with much long suffering, knowing that these 'vessels of wrath' had been fitted, or appointed, to destruction. Now you can take that in two ways, and they're both applicable here by the way. Let us ask the question. Did this enemy just appear on the scene accidentally as a result of their anti-God thoughts and subsequent doctrines, and did God just allow this scenario to continue to develop for His own purposes, **OR**, did God deliberately form this enemy for the express purpose of using them to show forth His own glory and power?

We remember what God is recorded as having said in Romans 9:17-21;

"For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?"

But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?' "

Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?" (NIV. Translation).

Clearly, this enemy developed anti-God thoughts and intents which God allowed, but just as clearly, there were those whom God deliberately formed for the very distinct purpose of becoming His enemies. There are those whom God has formed to be vessels to dishonour. There are those who were created and formed by God, more than to just be allowed to exist and exercise their own particular ideals. God formed them as vessels of destruction. They were deliberately formed by Him to be chosen implements in His hands, and for the accomplishment of His purposes.

A lot of people just don't realise this. They think that everything that is happening to us today is as a result of some form of political evolution. Perhaps it would be appropriate at this stage to read verses 10-13 of Romans chapter 9, which precede those quoted above;

"And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."

Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

How is it then, that the descendants of this people Esau today are wreaking the havoc that they are upon God's people, the descendants of Jacob? Is it because God didn't know what they were going to do? Is it just because He allowed them to do their own thing? Before these twins, who are the chief subject of this whole thing, were even born, God said He'd accepted one of them, Jacob whom He loved. and had rejected the other twin,

Esau, whom He hated. He knew that Esau was going to be the vessel to be used for destruction, and we are informed that God endured the situation with much long suffering and patience. He is still very patient about what's happening. These people have been used of God, and were in fact deliberately put there by God to do a particular job. And we've got to recognise the fact that God appointed them to be a testing mechanism to His people. The tragedy is that we have very, very seriously failed in that test. And Esau, the one who was despised, has now got the ascendancy over us. Many will recall the incident where Esau so despised his birthright that he sold it to his brother Jacob for a feed. Realising later on his gross stupidity, and failing to change his father's mind regarding the bestowal of the birthright, Esau vowed that after his father Isaac died, he would kill his brother in order to regain the birthright for himself. His attempt to carry out this vow has been the basis of the entire history of Jacob's descendants from that time right down to the present day. But this same Esau, the one whom God hates, is also the one whom God has said quite, quite clearly in His Word that He is going to destroy.

Here is the other application. They're not only the vessels of wrath to be used against God's people in order to test us, but they're the vessels of wrath against whom God is going to move in destruction. There is a passage of Scripture found in Isaiah 34:1-5 which reads thus; (NASB Translation);

"Draw near, O nations, to hear; and listen, O peoples! Let the earth and all it contains hear, and the world and all that springs from it.

For the LORD'S indignation is against all the nations, And His wrath against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to slaughter.

So their slain will be thrown out, And their corpses will give off their stench, And the mountains will be drenched with their blood. And all the host of heaven will wear away, And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, Or as one withers from the fig tree.

For My sword is satiated in heaven, Behold it shall descend for judgment upon Edom, And upon the people whom I have devoted to destruction."

God has already planned what these people are going to do, and He has already planned what is going to happen to them. He says "I have planned their destruction" Just as Israel has been appointed by God to be His glory, so the enemies of Israel have been appointed by God to be totally destroyed as the objects of His wrath. And therein I believe lies the secret of knowing who we are, because if we don't recognise who we are, we won't recognise the seriousness of our present situation and we certainly won't recognise the fact that God is going to destroy this enemy that has infiltrated and is now ruining His people.

In Romans 8;17 we read of His people;

"And if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

Because we are the children of God, we have to suffer with Him, that we may be glorified with Him.

Now what is to be the end result of all this? Let's have a look at what God's Word says. In Isaiah 60:1-6 we read;

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

For behold, darkness will cover the earth, And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you, And His glory will appear upon you. And nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.

Lift up your eyes round about, and see; They all gather together, they come to you. Your sons will come from afar, And your daughters will be carried in the arms.

Then you will see and be radiant, And your heart will thrill and rejoice; Because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you, The wealth of the nations will come to you. They will bring gold and frankincense, And will bear good news of the praises of the LORD." (NASB Trans.)

This is not talking about the Jewish state over in Palestine. This is talking about God's Israel people of Anglo-Saxondom where the whole wealth of the world will be brought to them Why? Because we have been elected by God to be His

glory and to show forth His glory. This is a reference to the fact that all nations will eventually serve God. And they will bring their substance to the house of God, and to the people of God. In the 10th and 12th verses of this same chapter we read;

"And the sons of strangers shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister under thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour in have I had mercy upon thee."

"For the nations and the kingdoms that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. . . . Thou shalt suck the milk of the nations, and shall suck the breast of kings: thou shalt know that I the Lord and thy saviour and thy redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thine officers peace, and thine exactor righteousness."

What a change from today this will be.

"Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thine mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in its time."

That is the destiny of Israel.

Those who are the glory of God.

(To be continued).

C.V.NEWS.

Once again, our sincere greetings to all our friends. We have received so many letters of encouragement about the attack made upon us by the ADC that it has been almost embarrassing. The promise of your prayerful support has meant a great deal to both Betty and I. The response from readers of our Web Page on the Internet has also been quite outstanding. Ever since we published this report, with our reply, we have received many E-mail letters of encouragement and congratulations for the stand we have taken. So we pray that you will all keep us constantly in your prayers, as being on the wrong end of a firing line is not the most comfortable place to be.

I apologise for the error in our last Covenant Watch re this report. It had never been our intention to publish the entire report, but to include only those portions which were relevant to our Ministry, as it would have taken too much room in the C.W. But I down-loaded the wording I had published elsewhere to save typing it out again, without realising that I should have altered the wording of my statement in the last C.W. If any of you wish to read the entire report, just let us know and we will send you a free copy of it.

Unfortunately, our last two months since we last reported has not been the best we have experienced. One of our key people, Ray Moss, who looked after all the office work, suddenly decided to leave us for personal reasons, and this has been a very great and unexpected shock to all of us. Ray was a tireless and valued worker and helper, and introduced many innovations which have greatly increased our efficiency over the past few years during which he worked among us, and his loss has very seriously affected us, both personally, and as a valued assistant. We can only wish him well in whatever area he finds himself ministering in the future.

But it's marvellous just how the Lord works. A few of our folk have already offered to come in during the week to help whenever needed, so with their help, and the continued support of our stalwart assistant and speaker, Bruce Horner, we trust that we will be shortly back on track again, as they say. So if any of you are waiting for orders you have placed, please be patient, as we are catching up as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, this leaves Betty and I with a great deal of added work keeping the

computer records up to date and attending to the general office work involved, and we are most thankful for the offers which have come along. We have had to postpone our holiday for another month, but that can't be helped. This will also affect our ability to answer all the letters which we would like to write, so please don't think that we don't care about your letters, because they are a constant source of encouragement and blessing to us. We especially thank those who responded with financial assistance for our new computer. We have also installed a new flat-bed scanner, by which we can now scan a lot of reports direct to our computer, thus saving quite a bit in typing costs.

Again, we remind you all of our prayer list. As previously advised, we update this list every week to include prayers in both our meetings for those who are in need of special prayer, and suggest that you don't hesitate to let us know of any loved ones or friends who are in need of prayer in any way.

We would especially ask for your special prayers for both Betty and her sister Daphne. As reported in our last "C.V.NEWS", Daphne is to undergo surgery for her condition of fluid on the brain. This situation has been complicated by the discovery through X-Rays that she has also had at least five mini-strokes. Over the last few weeks, (as at the time of writing this - August 24), she also became affected by a very strong virus which also affected her sense of balance. This has now been overcome, but she would very much appreciate your continued prayers. Betty has not experienced any pain in her knee for at least four months now. Even the doctors have expressed their surprise at what has happened. She obviously will not now require the surgery to replace her knee. But all the tests she has had have revealed that whilst her heart and other organs are functioning quite satisfactorily, she has developed a low level of diabetes. She is also prone to bronchitis, having had four serious attacks this year alone. So she too would appreciate your special prayers. One of our closest friend and supporters, Neville, has suffered a serious loss of hearing recently, and we ask that you share with us in prayer for his full recovery.

The events of the last few weeks have had a very traumatic effect on both Betty and I, and we trust you will especially remember us in prayer so that we can continue the witness which the Lord has given us. We pray that the Lord God of Israel will continue to bless and guide you all, especially in these last momentous days in which we live. □

A WALK THROUGH THE GOSPELS.

Part 8.

The Herod Impact On The Ministry Of Christ.

By Bruce Horner.

THE THIRD TOUR OF GALILEE AFTER INSTRUCTING THE TWELVE. AND SENDING THEM FORTH BY TWOS.

After the second tour of Galilee, which we have previously described, Jesus went about the villages teaching, and Matthew tells us how Jesus was moved with compassion for the multitudes, because they were distressed, and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd, observing to his disciples that the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. They must have been allowed to have a short time to themselves at this point. Perhaps they may even have gone home for a few days. But in a short time we are told by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that Jesus called the twelve together. Matthew gives us much more detail than the other two disciples. Jesus gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. The names of the twelve are then recorded by Matthew, and instructions were given to them.

Mat 10:5 *"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:*

6 *But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

7 *And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

8 *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*

9 *Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,*

10 *Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.*

11 *And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.*

12 *And when ye come into an house, salute it.*

13 *And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.*

14 *And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.*

15 *Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city."*

His instructions are explicit. Go only to Israelites, and not to gentiles or Samaritans. This would restrict their journeys to both Judah and Galilee, but the instructions that follow from verse 15 suggest that they would be in great danger if they were to travel and preach in Judah. Verses 16-42 seem to suggest a soliloquy concerning the future when Christians would be in great danger, but on reading the same verses in Ferrar Fenton, they become much more obvious as merely warnings of danger in their immediate travels among the Jews.

When the instructions were completed, he dismissed them to preach and teach in their own towns. These words are from Ferrar Fenton, and they seem to suggest that he did not go with them, and neither could he be with them all, because they went in pairs, each pair to a different place. But all other translations say that he went out himself to preach and teach also.

THE GUILTY FEARS OF HEROD ANTIDAS IN TIBERIAS ABOUT JESUS BECAUSE HE HAD BEHEADED THE BAPTIST IN MACHAERUS.

Matthew Mark and Luke all interject into the story now, with a report concerning Herod, who had beheaded the Baptist in Machaerus.

The execution of John took place while the disciples were on their preaching mission.

Josephus tells us in his Antiquities that "Herod thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late."

Herod had married Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. The whole family of the Edomite Herod family was riddled with divorce, crime and lechery, and John had no hesitation in making an objection to Herod concerning his wife. Mark says this:

Mark 6:18 *"For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.*

19 *Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not:*

20 *For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.*

21 *And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;*

22 *And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.*

23 *And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.*

24 *And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.*

25 *And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.*

26 *And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.*

27 *And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison,*

28 *And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.*

29 *And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb."*

Matthew tells us that, having buried John, John's disciples then went and told Jesus.

In a short time after this, reports of the preaching and healing mission of Jesus' disciples began to be told to Herod, and he said, "*John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore do these powers work in him.*"

But others said, "*It is Elijah.*" And others said, "*It is a prophet: even one of the old prophets is risen again.*"

But Herod said, "*John, whom I beheaded is risen.*" For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother's wife. Herod added the words, "But who is this, about whom I hear such things?" And he sought to see him.

Josephus presents the public and political aspects of the imprisonment and death of John, but it is the Gospels which give us the details of the trigger that put it all into action.

THE HERODS.

Altogether there were seven Herods mentioned in the New Testament. Antipas was the first of the Herods to come to public notice. We do not know much about him. He was, however, designated "general over all Idumea." The beginnings of his son Antipater are also shrouded in mystery. But we do know that he held high political position and that he lived in Jerusalem around 67 BC. Amazingly, Antipater was not a racial Jew, nor was his wife Cypros! Antipater, father of Herod the Great, the King of the Jews, was an Edomite. These descendants of Esau occupied the deserts of Southern Judea. And from the beginning of their existence they had been antagonistic to Israel. They had a habit of swooping down on Jewish settlements and making slaves of the people. The Edomites, however, had been conquered in the second century BC by the Jewish High Priest and King, John Hyrcanus. Hyrcanus then forced them to be circumcised and to become Jews. Thus Antipater was a Jew merely because his ancestors had been forced into Judaism.

And yet even more damaging to the children of Antipater in the sight of the Jews was the fact that his wife was a Nabatean Arab! And even worse, according to Jewish law, the children took the nationality of the mother. Still, this was not the end of the handicaps that were heaped on the shoulders of the future King of the Jews. Antipater had five children. Four of these:

Phasael, Joseph, Salome, and Pheroras had solid Jewish names. But alas, when the King-to-be of the Jews made his appearance in 73 BC he was shackled with the Greek name Herod!

After clearing the Mediterranean of pirates in 63 BC, Pompey headed for Jerusalem. Fearing for the life of his 10 year old son Herod, Antipater sent him along with his mother to Petra. There he was undoubtedly taunted by the Arabian children as being a Jew, just as he was taunted by the children in Jerusalem as being an Arab. These taunts affected him deeply. And then he had an experience that influenced his entire future life. Petra was close to the Dead Sea and not too far from the place where, 2000 years later, the Dead Sea Scrolls were found; and thus Essenes were a familiar sight on the streets. While on his way to school, Herod was surprised when a distinguished Essene by the name of Menahem approached. The old man said he was glad to meet the future King of the Jews. "But I am just a commoner," replied Herod. He was startled, for Menahem had a reputation of knowing the future.

"You will nevertheless become the king," assured the old man, and added the caution: "you should practice justice and piety toward God. But I know you will not be such a person."

Young Herod grew rapidly into a tall, good-looking young man. He was good with a bow and arrow and expert with a javelin. In 47 BC Julius Caesar made Antipater ruler of Palestine. In turn, Antipater made his eldest son Phasael Governor of Jerusalem and Herod the ruler of Galilee. About this time, Herod met Mark Antony at Petra and they formed a lifelong friendship. Ever conscious of his lowly Arab origins which he did his best to hide, he decided he must marry into the highest circles. His eye fell on Mariamne, grand-daughter of John Hyrcanus II, a Maccabean, and the present high priest. Forthwith he divorced his wife Doris, an Edomite like himself, and soon became engaged to Mariamne.

In the meantime Antony and Octavian joined forces to defeat Brutus and Cassius after the murder of Caesar. Antony then appointed Herod and Phasael as Tetrarchs (that is, rulers over a fourth each). Antony also appointed Hyrcanus as Ethnarch - ruler of the nation. In about 40 BC the Parthians from what is now Iran, took Syria and then attempted to take Jerusalem, making a deal with some of the Jewish leaders. Herod then assembled the Jewish aristocracy and they escaped. Next morning the Parthians pursued them, but with the fear of

death before them, the party defeated the pursuing Parthians and fled to the fortress of Masada. Herod managed to sail for Rome, where Antony presented him to the Senate, who voted him the title of King of the Jews. Then with Roman help he commenced a 5 month siege of Jerusalem which fell, allowing him to marry Mariamne. The plotting and treachery which both preceded and followed these events defy the imagination. Because he hated the Sanhedrin, he executed 45 of them and confiscated their property, and then appointed another 45 to make up the number of 71 required to rule. More murders followed and he married more wives till he had married a total of ten. He began to age quickly, and to be very ill. In his 68th or 69th year, the wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. Did he remember Menahem? Did he remember Bethlehem, also; for it was near that city that he and the 9000 escapees were overtaken after their escape from Jerusalem. History is silent about this episode, but the New Testament relates that Herod ordered all the children in Bethlehem from two years and under to be slaughtered to kill the future King of the Jews, and it fits in with his character, so it must be true. He died a dreadful, messy and painful death on March 13, 4 BC. We are told the date is accurate because on that night there was an eclipse of the moon as mentioned by Josephus, although this suggests that Jesus was born in 5 or 6 BC.

Herod Antipas - referred to as Herod in the New Testament - was the son of Herod the Great and Malthace, a Samaritan wife. This means that he had even less Abrahamic blood than his father! In spite of this, Antipas is mentioned more often in the New Testament than any other Herod. And so sordid was his character, that even the Pharisees warned Jesus that Antipas sought to kill Him. Jesus responded, dubbing him "that fox" (Luke 13:31-32). He was never popular and his prestige sank to a new low when he married his niece Herodias, the former wife of his half-brother, Philip - son of Cleopatra of Jerusalem (Herodias was the daughter of another half-brother, Aristobulus). This double sin had inspired John the Baptist to reprimand him face to face (Matt 14:1-4). Herod Antipas is also the Herod to whom Pilate sent Jesus during His trial. Luke has given us a graphic picture of their confrontation.

"And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad: for he was desirous to see him for a long season, because he

had heard many things of him; and he hoped to see some miracles done by him" (Luke 23:8).

Following his one-way conversation with Jesus - it was one-way because Jesus refused to answer - "Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate" (verse 11).

Like his father, Antipas was an enthusiastic builder. He continued many of the projects his father had started; and he built a new seaport on the southwest shore of Galilee and named it Tiberias in honour of the Roman Emperor. He also built Sephoris some four miles north of Nazareth - a place where Jesus and Joseph may have worked as carpenters.

Herodias soon became jealous of her half-brother Agrippa I - son of Aristobulus and grandson of Herod the Great and Mariamne I (for he had married two ladies named Mariamne). This was because Agrippa had been made King of Judea. In order to advance her husband Antipas, she persuaded him to go with her to Rome and ask Emperor Caligula for a crown. But before they arrived, Agrippa had sent word to Caligula that Antipas was in secret league with the Parthians. Agrippa and Caligula were, of course, old friends; and the youthful emperor chose to believe Agrippa.

Antipas was exiled in AD 39. And it is interesting to note that this was only a handful of years after he had mocked Jesus. No one is quite certain of the place of his exile. In one passage Josephus says that it was in Gaul, and in another passage he states that it was in Spain. Herodias shared his exile.

It is said that Agrippa I - commonly called King Agrippa - was seen standing and weeping in the synagogue. Why? Because he had just read Deuteronomy 17:15. That pivotal passage says: "Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord God shall choose: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother."

Agrippa was deeply concerned over the fact that his grandfather, Herod the Great, was not a real Jew. Experts in the Scripture, however, comforted him by pointing out that his grandmother, Mariamne I, was as blue-blooded a Jew as one could find, for she was the grand-daughter of the great John Hyrcanus! They also pointed out that a child always takes the nationality of the mother.

Having gone to school in Rome and having been a close friend of Caligula, he was inclined to be conceited. His death came as suddenly as the death he had meted out to James. Here is Luke's description.

Acts 12:21 "And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

22 And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.

23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

Josephus confirms this painful death and adds that he died in his 54th year.

Agrippa II was the 6th Herod to be mentioned in Scripture. He was son of Agrippa I and Herod the Great was his grandfather. He is the one before whom Paul presented his case in Acts 25:23.

Acts 25:23 "And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth."

Paul had respect for Agrippa's knowledge of the Jews. He addressed him as follows:

Acts 26:3 "Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently."

The courtroom that day must have been extremely tense, and many of the eyes were certainly focused on Bernice. Although the name Bernice means "bearer of victory," this sister of King Agrippa, or Herod Agrippa as he was also called, was a very wicked woman. She was married twice, was suspected of living incestuously with Agrippa, and later, she became mistress

to Titus in Rome, and lived openly with him in the Palace. It was Titus who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD

In his defence, Paul outlined the story of his conversion. One can imagine the intensity with which the court listened to this dynamic man of Tarsus. As he summed up his plea, Paul became very bold and said: *"King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know thou believest."* To this Agrippa replied - perhaps sarcastically: *"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."*

Agrippa was living in Rome at the time of his father's death in AD 44. At the time he was a mere youth of 17; and the Roman Emperor Claudius felt that he was too young to accept his father's throne. Accordingly he remained in Rome. Then in AD 48 when his uncle, King of Chalcis, died, Claudius gave him this throne on the western slope of Anti-Lebanon.

Agrippa II seems to have pleased Claudius and he thus transferred him to the former tetrarchy of Philip which contained Batanea, Trachonitis, and Gaulonitis. And later even more territory was put under his jurisdiction. As war was threatened between Judea and Rome, Agrippa tried to persuade the Jews not to fight. Unsuccessful in this, he fought on the Roman side with Vespasian. He was wounded at the siege of Gamala.

Following the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, Agrippa and Bernice moved to Rome. There, he was made a praetor. He died in AD 100. Of the statements of Agrippa II which are recorded in Acts, he is especially remembered for his conclusion in regard to Paul. Said he: "This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed to Caesar" (Acts 26:32).

He also had another full sister, Drusilla, who became the wife of Felix, procurator of Judea AD 50-60.

Acts 24:24 "And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ."

Next we have Herod Archelaus. This Herod was the son of Herod the great and Malthasce - and thus a full brother to Herod Antipas. According to his father's will he was made Ethnarch of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea.

This Herod appears in one of the nativity events. Having fled to Egypt with the infant Jesus, Joseph and Mary were returning home after the death of Herod the Great.

Mat 2:22 "But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee."

Archelaus was in serious trouble with the Jews from the beginning of his reign. Like other Herods, he was morally corrupt. He married Glaphyra, a former wife of his half-brother Alexander. And what made this even worse in the eyes of the Jews was that Glaphyra had had three children by Alexander. Josephus wrote: "But in the tenth year of Archelaus' government, both his brethren and the principal men of Judea and Samaria, not able to bear his barbarous and tyrannical usage of them, accused him before Caesar."

Augustus Caesar responded by exiling him in Gaul. His reign lasted only from 4 BC to AD 6. Like the other Herods he dabbled in architecture. His exile was a turning point in Jewish history. From this time on the realm was ruled by procurators appointed by Rome.

As we have seen, Herod the Great had two wives by the name of Mariamne. Likewise, he had two sons by the name of Philip!

The first Philip was the son of Mariamne II; and the second Philip was the son of Cleopatra. This Philip is called the Tetrarch because his father's will made him ruler of Gaulonitis, Trachonitis, and Paneas. His only mention is in Luke 3:1

Luke 3:1 "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene."

This Philip was the founder of the Gentile city Caesarea Philippi. When Philip died in AD 34, the lands he had ruled were assigned to Syria. Historians rate him the best of the Herods.

Philip of Rome was the first Philip we have just mentioned and half brother to Philip the Tetrarch of Luke 3:1. He was the first husband of Herodias who later married Herod Antipas; he was the father of Salome whose dance brought about the execution of John the Baptist. He is also remembered because his father in a fit of anger removed his name from his will. Without lands to rule, Philip lived in Rome and died in obscurity.

THE SPECIAL TRAINING OF THE TWELVE IN DISTRICTS AROUND GALILEE.

Now begins a period of special training of the twelve disciples in the districts around Galilee. We believe the ministry of Jesus was three and a half years in length, and if this be so, then the crucifixion is but twelve months away. The feast of the Passover is imminent and the apostles gather themselves together unto Jesus, and there they tell Jesus whatsoever things they had done and whatsoever they had taught.

Mark 6:31 *“And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.”*

I have already, in previous studies, made a comparison to the lack of privacy for pop stars from the general public, but I really do not think they have it quite so bad as did the disciples. Certainly the disciples on occasions tried to prevent the children from pressing too close, but Jesus seemed to have limitless patience and his energy seemed to always be available. No doubt He recharged his resources by resting when He could, and by withdrawing by Himself at night: but even then many hours were spent in prayer, and it would seem that hours so observed resulted in a recuperation of energy as if He had slept. But I am sure that the disciples had some difficulty in keeping up with Him. But we do notice how He did study their needs.

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND (MEN + WOMEN & CHILDREN).

Mark 6:32 *"And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.*

33 *And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.*

34 *And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.*

35 *And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed:*

36 *Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.*

37 *He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?*

38 *He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes."*

Now, after a long break, we find that John is recording the events of the day: Indeed, with a little more detail. John says that they went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, while Luke says they went to a city called Bethsaida.

The Sea of Galilee is called Kinnereth in the OT (Numbers 34:11) because of its shape. The word means a 'lyre'. It came to be known as Lake Tiberias from the city which Herod Antipas founded on its west shore about AD 20 and named in honour of the Emperor Tiberius. The lake had probably not acquired its new name at the time of Jesus' ministry, but it was generally so known by the time this Gospel was written.

Bethsaida is the town on the east of the Jordan about 2 miles from the lake. I think that they would not have gone all the way up to the town, but only in the territory belonging to it, otherwise it would have been too long a journey for the crowds to outrun them and arrive first. F.F.Bruce tells us that the high ground on which he sat is known to us today as the Golan heights. In such a spot as this, Jesus repeatedly sought solitude and rest with or without His disciples (Mark 3:13; 6:46; 9:2). John makes a note that this was just before Passover. Three

Passovers are mentioned in this Gospel of John; for the first (John 2:13) and the third (John 11:55) Jesus went up to Jerusalem, but for this one He remained in Galilee. John's purpose in mentioning the Passover may be not only to fix the time of the year at which the following incident took place; he probably thought the Passover season particularly appropriate both for the incident and for the discourse that arose out of it.

It also appears from what John says about the crowd, that they were impressed by the signs which they saw, but their adherence was only superficial.

John 6:5 *"When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"*

6 *And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do."*

John is the only writer of the four to mention names at this time. Philip, Andrew and Peter were all from Bethsaida, the town on the west shore, near Capernaum, not Bethsaida (Julias). It was natural that they should be consulted about places where food might be bought. But lest the reader should imagine that Jesus did not know where bread might be bought or how it could be supplied, John adds the comment that He put the question to Philip just to see what he would say, since He already knew what He would do.

John 6:7 *"Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little."*

8 *One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,*

9 *There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?"*

Philip did some quick mental arithmetic. Since a denarius was acceptable as a day's wage for a casual labourer (Matthew 20:2), it would presumably buy a day's supply of bread for an average family. But Philip reckoned that even if 200 denarii could be raised, that would not nearly be enough. It is hardly worth while nowadays to translate denarius. In 1611 'penny' was good enough, but in these inflationary days this year's

modern equivalent will be out of date next year. 'Eight months' wages ' is the NIV rendering for 200 denarii here. John is the only writer to mention that the five barley cakes and the two fish belonged to a boy in the company; he had presumably brought them for his day's lunch. The flat barley cakes had been baked on a gridiron or on hot stones. While the other Evangelists use the ordinary word for fish (ichthys), John calls them opsaria, indicating that they were two small (perhaps salted) fish to be eaten as a relish along with the cakes of barley. Andrew drew attention to it simply to underline its ludicrous inadequacy. But it was enough for the Lord's purpose.

John 6:10 *"And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand."*

11 *And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would."*

The 'grass' is another eye-witness memory. Mark 6:39 notes that they sat down on GREEN grass. The plain here is very fertile, and in March or April would not yet be burnt brown by the heat of high summer.

Two different words for 'men' are used here. Jesus said, 'Make the people (anthropoi) sit down', but John adds that 'the men (andres) sat down.' The former word includes women and children; the latter denotes men only, and appears in all four Gospels - Matthew indeed emphasises the point by adding the words, 'apart from women and children' (Matthew 14:21) These 5000 men would have constituted a ready-made guerrilla force to anyone willing to become their leader, and verse 15 suggests that a leader was just what they were looking for.

John 6:14 *"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world."*

15 *When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."*

Mark adds that, in accordance with Jesus' directions to the disciples, the crowd was arranged in groups of fifty and a hundred. He who 'knew what he was going to do' had no need to panic when confronted by this huge catering problem: He proceeded about his work with perfect orderliness.

The verb rendered 'give thanks' in verse 11 is *eucharisteo*, from which we derive the term Eucharist ('thanksgiving'), commonly used of the Holy Communion. But Bruce tells us that this in itself would not require a eucharistic significance for the feeding; the verb itself is perfectly common and untechnical in Greek. If Jesus used the regular form of thanksgiving on such an occasion, He would have said, "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who bringest forth bread from the earth."

According to the Synoptic record, He gave the bread to the disciples, who in turn distributed it among the crowd. Philip tried to calculate how much would have to be spent for each person to have 'a little bit'; but in the event they were able to eat as much as they desired. When the Lord gives, He gives with no niggardly hand. In each of the Gospels, the multiplication of the bread and fish is implied rather than asserted.

John 6:12 "When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13 Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten."

When the Lord supplies His people's needs, there is abundance but no waste. His directions to the disciples convey an important practical lesson. To waste food which we do not need, when so many live at starvation level, is an insult to the Divine Giver. However plentifully the Lord bestows His grace, He has always enough and to spare for others; He is never impoverished by the generosity of His giving. Perhaps we should read again Proverbs 11:24-25.

Prov 11:24 "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

25 *The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."*

After all the crowd had been satisfied, more was gathered up than had been available before the meal began. Is there a coincidence with the twelve baskets and the number of the apostles; perhaps there is a hint that the Lord not only supplied the need of these 'lost sheep of the house of Israel' but had enough left over to supply the need of all twelve tribes.

John 6:14 *"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world."*

The people who had been fed with bread and fish thought that they had factual evidence that the prophet like Moses (foretold in Deuteronomy 18:15-19) was present among them. As their forefathers had been fed miraculously in the wilderness in the days of the first Moses, so the one who now fed them miraculously in another wilderness must be the second Moses, the great prophet of the end-time whose advent in Israel so many were expecting. When the true interpretation of his significance was made plain to them, most of them took offence.

John 6:15 *"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."*

If the Galilaeans did not live directly under Roman control, as their brethren in Judaea did, their ruler Herod Antipas was a creature of Rome, and they experienced no feelings of patriotic pride as they contemplated the Herodian dynasty. The Herods stood or fell with the Romans: to oppose the one was to oppose the other. It may well have been in the hope that Jesus would lead the cause of liberation that the crowd came to Him on this occasion: his feeding them there in the wilderness confirmed their assurance that He was indeed the man of the hour.

Their attempt to make Him king does not necessarily mean that they recognised Him as the Messiah of David's line. It appears that the Messiah and the prophet were separate in public expectation. Jesus had already shown His power to banish

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disease; now He had shown his power to banish hunger. If only He would show His power to secure His people's liberation, nothing could stand in His way. Here, surely, was the leader for whom they had been waiting. With Him as their captain and their king, victory and freedom were as good as won! If He would not take the initiative and present Himself to them as their leader, they would compel Him to do so. But Jesus knew that this was not the way to fulfil His Father's will, and win deliverance for His people. So He avoided the crowd's unwelcome attention by withdrawing to the Golan heights - not this time with the disciples (whom He sent back across the lake), but in solitude.

(To be Continued).



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THE BEAST SYSTEM.

by

Frank W. Dowsett.

Part Ten.

The Attributes of The Eighth Beast.

In our previous study, we showed that the intent of this "beast" was, and is, to deceive the people into believing that this beast, and what it represents, is actually God's "sheep" people - Israel.

So we now proceed to look at the attributes of this eighth beast. These constitute the signs by which it can be recognised by the discerning Bible student.

1. It spoke as a dragon.

We read again from Revelation 13:11;

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon."

The obvious question must now be, "Who, or what, is the 'dragon' mentioned here? This is conclusively answered in Rev. 12:9, where we read;

"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."

The 'dragon' is here clearly identified as "the devil, or Satan". Words could not be clearer. As we stated at the conclusion of our previous study, Our Lord did not mince matters when He Himself identified them as those who "say they are Jews (Judeans), and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." (Rev. 2:9, and 3:9).

Thus we identify this beast as an entity which falsely assumes the identity of Israel, but is in fact actuated and controlled by Satan. Thus we conclude that everything that issues forth from this beast is Satanically designed and motivated to achieve two major results.

- (i) To encourage and support Satan's own system;
- and (ii) To destroy God's system, or Kingdom.

It is the 'kosmos' of Satan's world system, now in its final manifestation of the "New Age Movement", and "One World Government" devoid of God, **AGAINST** The 'kosmos' of God's world system, soon to be revealed through His people of true Israel, ruled over by our Lord Jesus Christ and His Overcoming kings and priests, in peace and righteousness. This is the 'kosmos', or 'world system' for which He died as set forth by the apostle John in that beloved passage in John 3:16-17;

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

The word "world" as used in this passage comes from the Greek 'kosmos', meaning 'a world system'. This may be

somewhat of a new concept to most Christians, but the wonderful promise of the above verses are NOT restricted, as so many believe, just to individuals. This was the system, or world order, for which Jesus Christ died, and which He came to preserve. If He had not done this, there would have been no Throne of David on which He could sit and reign, and no Israel people, or Kingdom, over which He could reign. The angel Gabriel told Mary, as recorded in Luke 1:31-33;

"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Thus was fulfilled the promise of Isaiah 9:6-7;

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

Is it any wonder then that this 'beast' should be induced by Satan to do everything in its power to destroy the 'kosmos', or 'world system' intended by our Lord Jesus Christ ? We miss so much of what the Bible is actually telling us when we don't bother investigating the meaning of the original words used.

2. It was a master of deceit.

Our Lord Jesus Christ clearly identifies the perpetuation of this deceit in the following passages of Scripture;

"They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye

seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me." (John 8:39-49).

We read further in John 10:22-26;

"And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." (Emphasis added).

Here, our Lord Jesus Christ gives the lie to the claim that the "lamb with two horns" represents His Israel people. He specifically reveals that their claim to be "His people" is a deliberate and calculated lie from the mouth of Satan himself - **the father of lies!**

Here is identified present Zionist Jewry deceitfully passing itself off as God's chosen people Israel.

This programme of deceit has been so successful that the great majority of those who are supposed to be teaching the truth of God's Word, are now teaching and supporting Satan's deception. Here we have the supreme victory of this iniquitous "beast system" !!!!

3. It manifests the power of the first beast.

This is clearly set forth in Rev. 13:12 where we read;

"And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him,"

What are these powers? They are given in verses 5-7 of the same chapter 13;

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."

Our next question must be, "What does this eighth beast do with these powers? What is the major weapon it uses to blaspheme God and make war with the saints?" This is found in the second half of the 12th verse which we partly quoted above;

". . . and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."

To fully understand the implications of this statement, we need to know exactly the meaning of the word "worship" as used here. It means, "to crouch, crawl, or fawn, like a dog at his master's feet, to prostrate one's self."

Compare that with the same word as it is used in conjunction with our worship of God. In that context it means,

“to do reverence or homage, to prostrate one’s self in reverence.”

Quite a remarkable difference isn’t there? But it is obvious that Satan requires the same degree of dedication to himself from his followers and supporters as God requires of us as His followers and supporters. In both instances, we are required to prostrate ourselves, but the manner in which we do this, and the purpose for which we do it, is, as can be seen, totally opposite. If we go Satan’s way, we fawn like a dog. If we go God’s way, we do it with complete reverence.

His success is obvious from the way in which the majority of people, including our leaders - in fact, particularly including our leaders, both political and religious - fawn and grovel at the feet of this Esau/Zionist beast system, just like a dog at their master’s feet. We have now reached the stage where it is fast becoming illegal to say anything against - and particularly to expose - this false and completely deceptive organisation; those whom our Lord Jesus Christ referred to as “the synagogue of Satan!”

4. He does Great Wonders and Miracles.

We read in Rev. 13:13-14 (a);

*“And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,
And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; . . .”*

The word ‘wonders’ means, “signs by which anything is designated, which authenticates the mission of the doer - as distinct from their capability to do the miracle or wonder.” We are reminded of the words of the apostle Paul as expressed in II Thessalonians 2:9-10;

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”

Their "mission" is clearly manifest through their activities in the areas of finance, politics, education, health, humanism, the ecumenical movement, and through the world-wide agencies of the United Nations, the New World Order, now referred to by the wonderful title of Globalism! It all sounds so nice and homely, doesn't it?

How does he achieve such success? He does this by the use of deceit. In verse 13 which we quoted above, it is said;

"he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men."

It is interesting that the Lord should use this analogy, because it is the very method by which He evidenced His acceptance of what had been said or done. For instance, we read that when Aaron, the High Priest, offered the sacrifice to God, that the fire of God came down and consumed it. It is recorded in Leviticus 9: 24;

"And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces."

I believe that the Lord used this phraseology to illustrate the extent of the deceit which the beast system uses. It uses its own so-called 'wonders and miracles' and has brain-washed the people into believing that what they are being given is from God. And why shouldn't the people believe it? They have been convinced that the Law of God is no longer in operation, so what else is there for them but to accept and follow man-made laws and systems? And who else should they believe but those who are accepted as being the "experts" in their various fields of so-called expertise? The politicians are there because they are supposed to be the experts in running the country. The theologians are there because they are supposed to be the experts in telling us what God requires. So let us believe them. They would never deceive us, would they?

5. He causes an image of the beast to be made.

As we read in the last part of verse 14 which we quoted,

"saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."

The word "image" as used here means, "Not just a mark or impression, but, the pattern of which the original sets forth, the likeness or resemblance of which is meant to be found in the image." In other words, this final manifestation of Satan's beast system set-up, the eighth beast, which people have been forced to use, is an exact working replica of the original beast itself.

In an earlier study we found that the original beast had received a deadly wound, but that this wound was healed. Let me quote again verse 12 of Revelation chapter 13;

"And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."

This eighth beast, as we have already seen, is not something new. Satan has never changed his plan, nor has he changed the means by which that plan was to be implemented. Here is the same 'beast' brought back to life, as it were, and manifest in the exact likeness of its original. The "beast" still lives on as "the beast which was, and still is". Does that sound familiar? It should.

We have previously made mention of the fact of how Satan always copies what God does. This is what makes what he does so difficult to recognise, because it is such a perfect deception of the manner in which God operates. Here we have a perfect parallel with what was stated of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Rev. 1:8 we read;

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

Unfortunately for Satan and his system, the wording is;

"which is, and which was, and which is to be destroyed."

6. Finally, he had been given the power to give life - or breath - to this image, that is, to the original beast.

Again, we note the exact parallel with what happened to Adam. In Genesis 2:7 we read;

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

The purpose of this was to enable the original "beast system" firstly to "speak", that is, to give commands with authority, and secondly to bring about the destruction of all those who would not worship this image".

Satan's plans and purposes have never changed one iota. It is for this reason that the Lord constantly warns and enjoins us in the following Scriptures.

Matthew 6:24;

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

II Corinthians 6:7;

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

As we conclude this portion of our study, we would do well to heed of the promise of our Lord as set forth in Rev. 20:4;

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

(To be continued).

OUR PROTECTIVE GOD.

By Bruce Horner.

PART I.

KING ALFRED.

Exodus 15:1 *"Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.*

2 The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

3 The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name."

The story of the Bible is a single co-ordinated thread of events which recorded the history of God's people, Israel. In God's own words, they were not a large nation, in fact, one of the smallest, and more insignificant of the people that were scattered over the earth; but they had a potential which God recognised. In fact, Jehovah was to spend 4000 years in training and preparing these people for the role which He had for them to play, namely of being His servant, to show the rest of the world how government should function, and how happy, contented and prosperous living should be conducted. The only problem which God had to contend with, was the fact that these people were a stiff-necked and rebellious race. They did not want to learn the lessons that God demanded that they should learn; so the 4000 years became a contest between God and His elect people, and He was forced to postpone their benefits whilst they learned their lessons the hard way. Yet despite all this rebelliousness, He loved them with an everlasting love, telling them again and again and again that they would be a people forever, and that in the fullness of time they would become his perfect Kingdom over which He would rule with power,

supported by those elect individuals who would be resurrected to reign with Him as co-heirs and co-rulers.

The problem of their rebellion was so great, that, having formed them into a Kingdom, He was forced to break that Kingdom into two separate parts, knowing that one part must fail; thus there was another part left, with which to mould the Kingdom afresh.

The wickedness of Israel was so great that the only punishment which fitted their condition was for them to be defeated, and forcibly removed from their homes, and taken as slaves to areas under the Black Sea, 1000 miles away. God, having married them at Mount Sinai, now divorced them. Judah, meanwhile, did not learn: but for them the lesson, this time, was decisive and final.

Mat 21:42 *“Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?”*

43 *Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*

44 *And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”*

However, it was now that God showed the great love that He had for His people.

According to His own law, they were dead in sin; and the only way out was for a blood atonement; and the only sacrifice which would cover such an emergency was the death of His own Son. Thus the Bridegroom died for His wife, the people of Israel, thus allowing a future re-marriage when time allowed.

In the meantime the children of Israel were migrating across Europe, without knowledge of who they were. They had forgotten their God, even their language began to change, and all they knew was an impulse to travel Westwards. They went in groups, some large, some small. They left stragglers here and there, who settled and had posterity some 2000 years later, in all the different countries of Europe.

But I want, here, to take note of a promise that God made in Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 51:20 *"Thou art my battle ax and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms."*

A close analysis of battles throughout the ages seems to show that Israel, under the guise of the myriad of different identities which she assumed in the last 2500 years has played a major role in all the decisive battles of the centuries, either because she was one of the combatants or because she had lent mercenary battalions to one of the opposing groups. However, I would particularly like to point out the major role played by paganised Israel during her long journey across Europe. She was literally the Hammer of God in the rearranging of the national frontiers of Europe. By these European groups, she was constantly pushed Westwards to her destiny, but in the process was the instrument which nearly destroyed the Roman Empire, and decided the destiny of most of the present day boundaries of nations.

The last 2000 years has seen them at home in "the Appointed Place" of God where they have struggled to evolve a Christian government and legal system which, although not perfect, has been the envy of the world, until very recent times, when the enemy has been able to infiltrate and break the system down.

The element that is so surprising and so much in evidence, is the obvious fact of Divine help in times of distress, so that the building process of integration between the different parts of warring Israel, and the evolvment of law on Bible lines was able to go forward.

The first factor worthy of note was, of course, that this sacred spot was constituted by God as an island. This was to save them on numerous occasions, notably at the time of the Armada, then from Napoleon, and finally from Hitler.

In these so called enlightened times, it is fashionable to believe that we are so much more civilised than our forebears. We have heard much of conscientious objectors, and pacifists, some of the cults having a basic platform of pacifism. Nuclear bombs have been outlawed, and, indeed, war itself was thought to have been done away with by the introduction of the League of Nations and the United Nations. But these have led, in turn, towards more

war. Today we have trade wars, which are just as bitter, and will, if we take notice of precedent, lead to more wars.

God, however, promised Israel that she would live in a place of her own, which was not Palestine, where she would be safe from invasion. Let us read, here, a few verses of Scripture.

Is 41:1 "Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.

2 Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow.

3 He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet.

4 Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he."

Is 41:8 "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

9 Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.

10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

12 Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

13 For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

15 Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff."

Is 42:1 "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles."

10 "Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof."

16 "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

18 "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.

19 Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant?"

Finally in 2 Samuel, chapter 7.

2 Sam 7:10 "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; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as before time."

The purpose of this series is to discuss the way in which God has dealt with His people over the last 1000 years. The verses that I have just quoted indicate that these people would be afflicted in the future, but not the way in which it had happened in the past. Actually, most of this affliction would be applied by themselves to themselves.

Jesus made the statement to the Jews that the Kingdom would be taken from them and given to a people that would bring forth the fruits thereof. At this same time in the British Isles the people that were to receive the Kingdom were in the process of consolidating themselves. The Celts, the Angles and the Saxons had already arrived. In 55 BC and 54 BC Julius Caesar put his

first feelers out, considering if it was a ripe plum to pick. It was not: but the succeeding 97 years established a path of entry for the Christian faith to enter unopposed. In 43 AD, Britannia became one of the 45 provinces of the great Roman Empire, and before that event had even taken place, Christianity had penetrated and would quickly spread throughout the Isles.

I want to repeat what I have said already. War is a fact of life. It is fruitless to condemn it, or even to deplore it. Historians tell us that there is scarcely a single year in which peace has reigned on the earth since time began. God has declared that He is a God of War. By means of war He punishes nations and He punishes us. And because of this fact, war is a measuring stick by which we can observe the way in which God has dealt with this special people.

A study of the first 1000 years of British history will show that God so caused the Christianity that He had placed here to spread and grow, that under His guiding hand we were brought to three great landmarks.

First, a good 200 years before the reign of King Alfred, God brought us to the point when, to quote the words of Winston Churchill: 'There was no kingdom in the realm in which heathen religion and practices now prevailed. The whole Island was now Christian.'

In the light of what is happening in our country today, this presents us with a tremendous challenge. For centuries there had been carried on the offering of heathen blood sacrifices, temples to Mithras had been erected, and still later, the ancient gods of Thor and Woden held considerable sway - That island had so rallied to the Christian faith, that the great Venerable Bede was able to give this description of it: 'A Christian England divided into seven kingdoms of varying strength, all professing the Gospel of Christ.'

Secondly, God brought us to that point during the 12th century where - and I quote Winston Churchill again - 'After years of being the encampment and battleground of an invading army, England became finally and for all time one coherent kingdom based on Christianity

This was at the time of Henry Plantagenet (Henry II, 1154-1189). We had reached another significant peak in our history which testified to the fact that Christian growth and development had so continued under God that, by the time the British Isles had become ONE kingdom out of many kingdoms, the foundation of that one kingdom was the foundation of Christianity. It was the rock on which the island kingdom had been built. A united kingdom based on Christianity was a position which became so firmly established in the nation that eventually it became the position CONSTITUTIONALLY.

This brings me to the third great landmark to which God Almighty has brought us.

The Christian faith - and here I need to stress that it was the PROTESTANT Christian faith - became Britain's constitutional basis to such an extent that it was embodied by an act of Parliament in the Coronation Oath. There is overwhelming evidence to show that whenever those foundations have been in danger, either of being destroyed or of being eroded and gradually whittled away, God has been at work to ensure that they were being either strengthened and buttressed or, where necessary, totally restored.

This was true at the time of St. Patrick, when Britain was passing through one of its very early periods of great darkness. Christianity had taken root and was spreading through Roman occupied Britain to such an extent that Churchill was able to say: "The new creed was winning victories everywhere." Then, when Rome had reached its civilising peak, a terrible and devastating menace of unprecedented proportions began to shake and convulse the nation. In the north, the Scots from Ireland and the Picts from Scotland were ferociously assaulting the defences of Hadrian's Wall, whilst at the same time the Saxons from Europe rowed across the North Sea in their long boats and heavily attacked the east coast all the way from Dover to Newcastle.

It was the year 367, and the Roman Empire was being assailed by invading hordes. Rome was obliged to withdraw her legions to defend her own borders, and the Picts, Scots and Saxons all fell together on Britannia and circumstances of supreme and murderous horror beset the island.

In 442, less than 40 years after the last of the legions had departed, a mass migration of assaulting barbarians came from north Germany across the North Sea to Britain. A period of terrible destruction and carnage began, and from this time onwards the curtains closed down on our history. The period called the Dark ages had been ushered in, and a long dark night fell upon Britannia.

200 years later the Roman civilisation had been swept away. Churchill laments: "England was once again a barbarian island. It had been Christian, it was now heathen."

But in all this, God had preserved and nurtured more than a remnant of that already existing Christian Church. In the face of the onslaught, the British Church and other survivors had fallen back upon the western parts of the island and taken refuge behind the Welsh mountains. There, under the hand of God, it continued to be fed, nurtured and encouraged by Christian missionaries who kept coming from the Continent to ensure that faith was sustained. It was a miracle of divine preservation. It was now that God raised up a man, just as He does in every emergency. The time of trouble had not long begun, when a band of raiders from Ireland came across to the Severn valley, and carried away captive a lad by the name of Patrick, the son of a Christian deacon, and sold him into slavery when they got back to Ireland. For 6 years he was obliged to tend swine, and during his long period of loneliness he was converted to Jesus Christ. He then received supernatural guidance that he should make his escape. This he did, and on reaching the coast managed to persuade a captain to take him on board his ship. After many wanderings he found his way to some islands off Marseilles. During this time there came to him a strong desire to go to his former captors in Ireland and return good for evil by sharing with them the good news of the Gospel. He came under the care of Bishop Germanus of Auxerre and, after 14 years of preparation and training, sailed back to Ireland in 432.

In the providence of God, Ireland was miraculously spared the onslaughts of the Saxons and, in 442, the north Germans. We read: "Then came Patrick, and gathered together those Christians that remained, and through them, proceeded to convert whole regions of Ireland to Jesus Christ." From Ireland, the Gospel was carried over to the northern part of England by Columba. When God's hour of deliverance for Britain had come, this Columba, imbued with the same fire as Patrick, set up his group

of beehive huts on the island of Iona. In 563, using Iona as a base, he led swarms of missionaries over western Scotland and northern Britain. A vital Christianity spread quickly to the kingdom of Northumbria in the east and the British kingdom of Strathclyde in the west. Columba became the founder of the Scottish Christian Church. All this was well before the arrival of Augustine who did not come for another 33 years. However, as the history books tell us, the work of Patrick and Columba was not the ARRIVAL of Christianity, but the RETURN of Christianity to Britain. Equally important is it to realise that there was a distinction between Columba's form of Christianity and that throughout Christianised Europe, and that Columba's form travelled from its original source in the Middle East, through Northern Ireland, to its new home in Scotland and the north of England WITHOUT TOUCHING AT ANY MOMENT THE CENTRE AT ROME. In 596 Pope Gregory sent Augustine, and the Roman form which dominated Western Europe was introduced to Britain.

As time went on the latter stream of Christianity sought to exercise a position of superiority over the former.

From about 789 onwards, the incredibly cruel Vikings had been making sudden raids on the island. The wealthy monastery of Lindisfarne, off the Northumbrian coast, had been ravaged, and the monasteries of Iona and Kildare soon suffered a similar fate. Places in the south of England and the Scottish mainland, as well as the outer isles, were raided and pillaged in turn. But it was not until 865 that the great invasion of Northumbria and eastern England began. Then the storm broke in full fury. Using fleets of long boats, sometimes three and four hundred strong, the invaders broke in upon the eastern seaboard and, by rowing up the long rivers of England, penetrated and pillaged far inland. East Anglia fell that year; Northumbria in the spring of 866. The Midlands, which were then called Mercia, and which for nearly 100 years had represented the 'strong-point' of England, were next to succumb, and became tributary to the Danes. It seemed that before long the whole of England, which for four centuries had been predominantly in the hands of the Saxons, would have to submit to the devastating inroads of the Vikings.

But this is precisely the point at which God began to intervene. Suddenly, at this critical point when all seemed to be lost, God raised up a man, and there appeared on the scene one

of the great figures of our national history. Alfred was not yet king, but was second in command to his elder brother Ethelred, King of Wessex, who commanded the West Saxon armies. They were devout and godly men, of vision and great faith. For generations it had been West Saxon policy to bring about a union of the two kingdoms of Kent and Wessex, and it was now that God saw to it that this union was achieved, and a solid southern bloc was created just in time to encounter the Viking invasion which was about to fall upon it from the north. Wessex was strategically strong geographically, with sharp ridges facing north, and none of those long slow rivers up which the Danes had been able to steer their longboats into the heart of the now vassal kingdom of Mercia. When Alfred first appeared on the scene, the north of England, the Midlands and the East had all gone down under the Viking fury. Wessex was the one remaining Saxon Kingdom yet to be assaulted. Would it be able to stand?

In January 871 the invaders moved forward to meet the West Saxon forces on the Berkshire downs, and the Battle of Ashdown was about to begin. King Ethelred believed strongly that the invaders would be defeated primarily by faith and prayer; so he went to pray and spent a long time at his devotions. Alfred, as second in command agreed to stand by his arms.

Bishop Asser tells us what took place. King Ethelred was warned that the battle must soon be joined. He replied, "God comes first" and continued to pray. Alfred, trusting in God no less, decided to launch the attack, "and so", to quote Bishop Asser, "relying on God's counsel and trusting to His help, he closed the shield-wall in due order, and thereupon moved his standard against the enemy". King Ethelred soon joined him. Despite the fact that the Vikings had seized the high ground and had the advantage, the Saxons advanced uphill. The fight was long and hard, but at last the Danes gave way and fled back to Reading, hotly pursued and leaving the whole length of the Berkshire Hills strewn with their dead, a Viking king and five of his earls among them.

This was the first time the Vikings had been beaten on the field, and it was also Alfred's first battle, and the last of the Saxon Kingdoms had withstood the storm.

If they had succumbed, all would have been lost. It is the view of historians that had the West Saxon army been defeated here, the whole of England would have been overrun by this great heathen Viking army, and they would have dragged the country

back into anarchy and darkness once more. True, the victory did not break the power of the Danish army, they were back in the field within a fortnight, but it is clear from what followed during the next seven years that God firmly intended to keep the way open for Alfred to lay the Christian foundations for the future of the English people. Alfred had to go through at least three periods of grave crisis before God's ultimate purpose for his life was to be fulfilled. Yet out of each of these crises, God was to deliver him by means of a miracle.

The first of these critical periods came about as follows.

King Ethelred fell sick and died. Alfred became king at the age of 24. He inherited a desperate situation, for the Vikings were already once again engaged in deadly combat. To and fro the battles raged. With seven or eight battles fought, Alfred's numbers were being worn down, whilst the Vikings were receiving strong reinforcements from overseas. About a month after his accession, Alfred suffered a terrible defeat in the heart of his own country. After a feigned retreat, the Vikings had turned on their pursuers and inflicted such heavy losses that Alfred decided that it was best to come to terms while he still had an army. Nobody knows the exact conditions into which he entered, except that he managed to 'buy off' the Danes in order to secure five years in which to consolidate his forces. There is no doubt that a heavy price had to be paid in gold.

While this truce was in operation, an amazing miracle happened. A profound change came over the Viking army. Nearly half of these barbarous and heathen sea pirates began to settle down on the land and till the soil. They forgot the sea and the army, and became farmers. This happened on a considerable scale in those parts of the country which they had already won with the sword, namely Northumbria and East Anglia. Churchill said: "It remained only for conversion to Christianity to mingle these races inextricably in the soul and body of the nation."

The second period of crisis came after the five year period of truce was over. A new Viking leader named Guthrum stepped on to the scene. He had a large design for the complete and final subjugation of obstinate Wessex. His plan was to attack by sea and land. So he marched his army to Wareham near Portland Bill, where he was joined by his sea army in Poole Harbour. The two armies fortified themselves in this region of Dorset, and then

proceeded to attack Alfred's kingdom from every quarter. Alfred, it seems, pinned down the Viking Land army near Wareham. Then he offered gold and sued for peace on condition that the Danes would go away. They took the gold and swore peace, but, with a sudden act of treachery they made a dash for Exeter and seized it. Alfred, with mounted infantry, followed hard in pursuit, but arrived too late. The enemy were in the fortress and could not be confronted.

And then a frightful storm hit Guthrum's sea army as they sought to join their comrades at Exeter. 120 of their ships were dashed against the cliffs near Swanage and sunk. Upwards of 5000 perished. At the time this was considered to be a direct intervention of God, and in the summer of 877 Alfred found his enemies ready for a new period of peace.

Yet the year was scarcely out when Alfred had a third crisis on his hands, and it was the greatest peril of his life. Early in January 878, whilst his army was keeping the Christian festival of Twelfth Night, he met with the most surprising and harrowing reversal of his fortunes. The enemy suddenly swept down upon his camp, taking it completely off guard. Alfred's entire army was thrown into confusion and disarray.

The soldiers scattered, some to their homes, and some, even, fled overseas.

Alfred, with a few officers and aides, escaped to the marshes and thence to the forests of Somerset. It was during this period that he was allegedly seen playing his harp in the Danish camps, and the story was told of how he burnt the cakes. With the king now a fugitive and hiding, it seemed to the people of Wessex that all was over.

And then the news reached him, of how, in Lent of that year, a strong force of Vikings who had been ravaging Wales, sailed in 23 ships to Devon, and marched to attack one of Alfred's strongholds on Exmoor. They thought that it would be easy, because this stronghold had no water supply. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle says that Alfred's men "by the inspiration of heaven, judged it to be better either to suffer death or to gain the victory before they endured any such distress." So, "at daybreak they suddenly rushed forth against the heathen. In the first attack they laid low most of the enemy, including their king. Eight hundred

Danes were killed in the attack. Only a few, by fleeing, escaped to their ships."

This greatly encouraged Alfred, and decided that the time had come to rally and take to the field again. There was a great response, and the forces of Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire rallied to him. It is said that they welcomed him as though he had come back from the dead.

Alfred advanced to Ethandon, and there the largest and culminating battle of Alfred's wars was fought. They fought for hours with sword and axe, and eventually the Danes turned and fled. This time the victory was complete, with Guthrum penned in his camp and entirely at Alfred's mercy. The chronicler says that the Danes were terrified by hunger, cold and fear and completely in his power. Instead he invited Guthrum and 30 of his chiefs into his camp, where he entertained them for 12 days. We do not know precisely what happened during those 12 days, except that he treated them as brothers, gave them costly gifts, they dined at his table and he showed them Christian love. When the 12 days were over, Guthrum emerged from King Alfred's camp a baptised Christian, and according to the historians, Alfred looked on Guthrum as a son, and this probably means 'a son in the Lord'. A whole series of Viking conversions followed. Winston Churchill was so impressed by this outcome that he wrote: "We must still wonder how the hearts of these hard-bitten swordsmen and pirates could be changed in a single day."

And it did not stop there. The impact on those barbaric hordes of Vikings was so great that thousands became converted. There is no doubt that the conversions were genuine, because they abandoned the worship of Woden, and settled down in the land as Christian families. The change was complete. Churchill says of this period, "that we are watching the birth of a nation."



The Israelites looked at Goliath and said,
"He`s too big to hit".

David looked at Goliath and said,
"He`s too big to miss".

come through the infilling, baptism, 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, namely,

THE RETURN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

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We also invite our readers to send us the names and addresses of any whom they think would be genuinely interested in receiving a sample copy. In this way you can share in the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified.

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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**Thus saith the LORD,
Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,
neither let the mighty man glory in his might,
let not the rich man glory in his riches;
But let him that glorieth glory in this,
that he understandeth and knoweth me,
that I am the LORD which exercise
lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness,
in the earth:
for in these things I delight,
saith the LORD.**

Jeremiah 9:24.

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