



THE COVENANT VISION.

November/December.

1998.

Contents.

ISSUE No. **80.**

Editorial.	...	...	...	...	1.
The Heritage of Israel.	...	...	...	Pt. 6.	3.
C.V. News.	...	...	...	...	12.
A Walk Through the Gospels.	...	...	...	Pt. 9.	14.
Literature.	...	...	...	...	28.
The Beast System.	...	...	...	Pt. 11.	33.
Resurrection Proofs.	...	...	...	...	42.
Our Protective God.	...	...	...	Pt. 2.	43.

**“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.

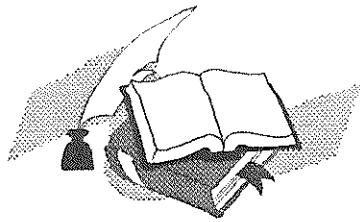
Denominational doctrines and differences are not our concern, and it is not our intention to enter into such arguments. There is not enough time left to waste it on such unproductive, and indeed, destructive, exercises. We are concerned ONLY with what we believe the Word of God says and teaches.

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.

Once again, we greet our white haired ho-ho-ho friend. How on earth did he get into the picture? I have to admit to being entirely paranoid about all this Christmas business. If our kids told us as many lies about what they believe and do, as we tell them about Christmas and all its present trappings, we'd be justifiably incensed. Most kids are mortified when they eventually find out that their great red-clothed and bearded hero and all his wonderful reindeers are pure fiction. Is it any wonder then that truth becomes a variable commodity with them, depending on what one has to gain by observing it?

At the risk of offending some - or even many - of you, I trust that you will allow me this end-of-the-year indulgence. How many of you ever really question the reason for what you are supposed to be celebrating? Some will answer, "The birth of Christ. The day is named after Him." Well, I suppose that that's a reasonable start. But what of the many, and increasing many, who don't believe in Jesus Christ? I well remember many years ago a fine Christian friend of mine went into one of our largest department stores looking for some suitable Christmas cards. Not finding what he wanted, he approached a sales girl (they did exist in those days), and asked her if they had any cards with the name of our Lord Jesus Christ on them. With some surprise she replied, "What's he got to do with it?" Times haven't changed much. He still hasn't got anything to do with it in the eyes of most. The paradox though is that in actual fact, Christ really never has had anything to do with what we now celebrate. Of course, there are endless excuses, which are expressed as reasons, for celebrating as we now do. One minister once told me that we must remember what the children think and want - we can't disappoint the kids, he said. Well, I suppose that sounds reasonable enough, because the Bible tells us that the time would come when we would be ruled over by children.

I well remember my early years when we got just one present. Try that now, and the parents will be in the doghouse

for ever and a day. Everyone seems to be obsessed with outdoing each other with the quantity of presents bought, and the amount of money spent. The retail trade would virtually collapse if we didn't have Christmas. Worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is a real bonanza. A friend of mine a few years back attended a business Christmas party, and was seated at a table with Jewish folk. Someone got a bit embarrassed when he inadvertently mentioned Christmas, at which one of the Jewish gentlemen there consoled him with the statement; "Don't worry. We're not offended. After all, we gave it to you."

Why is it that when I have a birthday, all my children and grandchildren give ME the presents. Yet when we celebrate the Lord's birthday, He gets nothing. I think I'd get a bit cheesed off if my children gave my birthday presents to their children instead of to me. After all, it's my birthday. But little things like this never seem to worry people. All too many parents now put themselves into debt for the rest of the following year just to live up to the "Christmas Ethic". Of course, the fact that Christ wasn't born on December 25 is merely incidental. The fact that December 25 is the birthday of one of God's greatest enemies, Nimrod, who was one of the founders of what we now know as the Babylonian system, is not only incidental, but mostly unknown. Even the churches won't let on. They can't cancel out their lovely nativity plays and special services. We are most certainly a peculiar people, as God said on several occasions. I wonder how many Christian folk, irrespective of the date they celebrate, give any presents to the Lord whose birth they are supposed to be celebrating. Not too many I'd wager. How many times have you heard of anyone sending a special "birthday donation" to the minister of their particular church in celebration of our Lord's birthday?

One could then seriously ask, what harm is there in celebrating our Lord's birthday in the present manner? Well, apart from the fact that there is not one word in the entire Bible requiring us to celebrate His birth, if we are going to do this, what's wrong with doing it at the right time, in the right way, and for the right reasons? The present mode of celebration is based entirely on pagan beliefs and teachings. This is not just a personal fad of mine. It is a proven fact. Every aspect of our modern Christmas celebrations are heathen in origin, and totally money oriented.

(Continued on Page 27).

The Heritage of Israel.

By Frank W. Dowsett.

Part Five.

The Covenant & The Promises. Part 1.

Introduction.

and

The Edenic Covenant.

You will no doubt recall that in previous installments we were looking through the statement that Paul made unto a people who were, as he said, 'those of his own flesh, who were Israelites'. He reminded them that they were those "*to whom pertained the adoption and the glory.*" Having studied both these aspects in considerable depth, we now move on to the next section of our studies. I should point out that I am not dealing with the next aspects of Israel's heritage strictly in the order in which they are quoted in the epistle. I intend to deal with both the Covenants and the Promises as a join study.

Now I have no doubt but that some would ask the question as to the difference between a covenant and a promise,

and I think we should clear that up first because then you'll realise why I'm dealing with them as one subject.

The alternative word for 'covenant' is 'testament'. The Old Testament in our Bible is really the book of the Old Covenant, whilst the New Testament is the book of the New Covenant. The words 'testament' and 'covenant' are synonymous terms, meaning the same thing. This is why you've got the Bible divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Now the majority of us would have what is called "A Last Will and Testament". That is the document which in my case contains the details of the 'covenant' which I have made regarding what I wish to be done with what I possess. It is called my "testament". But what use would that be if when you open it up to read it there was nothing printed inside? It would be no use whatsoever despite the fact that the document identified itself as my covenant or testament. The covenant is the document itself as a whole. It constitutes the relationship that is set up between the person who makes the covenant or testament and the person or persons who make up those that are to receive the benefits of the testament. When God made His covenants with His people, the major thing about these was not just what was contained in them, but the fact that God set Himself into a very special relationship with His people Israel, because they are the only people on the face of the earth with whom God ever made this type of covenant.

Paul, in his statement in Romans chapter four says, "who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the covenants and the promises." They were only concerned with Israel. God never made these covenants with anyone else, and He never made any covenant like them with anyone else.

But what about the promises? Let me just return to my illustration again. Should the Lord tarry, and I go to my rest, my last will and testament would be opened and read, and those concerned would then know what I had promised. The difference is, that the covenant is the relationship that is established between the two parties. The promises are what is promised by one party to the other because of that relationship.

Thus we read in Romans 15 and 11,

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."

It didn't say to confirm the 'covenant' made unto the fathers. That relationship had already been firmly established, because the covenant was the relationship. It constituted the intent of God, the irrevocable decision of God, concerning His relationship with His people. On the other hand the promises comprised, as we stated above, the terms of that relationship. Christians today seem to have totally misunderstood this fact. They talk about God changing His mind, or changing direction. Many of us have heard someone, and in my experience it's mostly been ministers of the Gospel, saying that God had to change His mind as far as these covenants were concerned because Israel turned out to be so bad and so sinful that He couldn't do with them what He originally intended to do.

Now to me that's nothing short of blasphemy. We read in God's word that His decisions and His election were made before the foundations of the world. In other words, God had made these decisions and established His will and purposes before He even commenced His creation. As a matter of fact, the manner and sequence in which He carried out His creative works was predicated on the these very promises. In His mind they had already occurred. We read in Deuteronomy 32:8-9;

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

For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

How then can we say God changed His mind about anything? When He says "*I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob shall not be consumed*", that's the understatement of the year. What did the prophet Balaam mean when he said, as recorded in Leviticus 23:19;

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

There is no possible way that God could ever change His mind, because as far as He's concerned, what He promised has

already happened. I am constantly amazed at the arrogance of so many people who think and teach that God will alter His clearly stated purposes just to please and accommodate some theological argument.

When it comes to the covenants and the promises, and the relationship that He set up with His people who were to be the recipients of these covenants, we find that they have been in the process of being gradually fulfilled over a period of thousands of years, and that in these days in which we now live are virtually at the culmination of what God has promised.

There are eight covenants in the Bible, and in this series of studies we will deal with them individually and in sufficient depth to hopefully equip the reader with a sound foundation for their belief in the faithfulness of God. They are:-

1. The **EDENIC** Covenant. Gen. 1:28-30, 2:16-17.
2. The **ADAMIC** Covenant. Gen. 3:14-19.
3. The **NOAHIC** Covenant. Gen. 6:12-13, 18; 7:1-5; 8:16-22; and 9:1-17.
4. The **ABRAHAMIC** Covenant. Gen. 12:1-3.
5. The **MOSAIC** Covenant. Exodus 24:8.
6. The **PALESTINIAN** Covenant. Lev. 26, Deut. 28,29,30.
7. The **DAVIDIC** Covenant. 2 Samuel 7:16.
8. The **NEW** Covenant. Jeremiah 31:31; Heb. 8:8.

These eight covenants are split into two major sections, or groups, namely, **UNCONDITIONAL** and **CONDITIONAL** covenants. Numbers 1,2,3,4,7 and 8 in the above list constitute **UNCONDITIONAL** covenants, whereas numbers 4 and 5 constitute **CONDITIONAL** covenants.

An **unconditional** covenant means that they are everlasting and eternal. Their fulfilment does not depend to any degree whatsoever upon what we do or believe. They simply state, and are based upon, God's unwavering and unalterable intentions. There are absolutely NO conditions placed upon these covenants whereby they may, at some future time, or because of some future conditions, be altered in the slightest detail, let alone rescinded. They are going to happen whether or not we like it, whether or not we believe it, or whether or not we agree with it. The only choice we have in the matter is whether we receive them the easy way or the hard way.

A conditional covenant, on the other hand, is, or could be, a temporary agreement, the fulfilment of which depends on one party obeying certain pre-specified conditions. (such as, "I will do this, if you do that".) Whilst they are the statements of God's Will, they contain alternatives of either blessing or cursing which depend entirely on our choice.

These covenants and promises constitute the expression of God's Will and Purposes for His entire creation through Adam, the greatest of all His creations. They are the basis for the entire Bible. They are major prophecies, in that they all refer to events and conditions that were future to the time in which they were made. Every event and circumstance in the entire Bible, and every event in history, has been related to, and dependant upon, one or more of these covenants.

One might question what the Edenic and the Adamic and the Noahic covenant have to do with the covenants God made with Abraham. But upon consideration, it's really quite simple. If He had not made these earlier covenants, the remainder could not have been implemented. Because of the ravages of sin brought upon the entire Adamic race by the sin of their parents, Adam and Eve, God had to prepare the ground, as it were, for what He intended to accomplish through Abraham and his descendants. So we find that when we study the first three of these covenants, that they are all inter-connected with, and totally necessary to, the full implementation of what God's overall plan was for this world of ours.

So with the above details in mind, let us now move on to a study of the individual covenants and promises listed. They begin with;

1. The Edenic Covenant.

We read it in Genesis 2, verses 7 to 9, and then verses 15 to 20.

"And the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastwards in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

"And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all the cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him."

I believe it's very obvious from a study of the Word of God in other aspects of the subject in question, that this Adam that we read of in chapter 2 is a very special person. I personally do not believe that this refers generally to the same 'Adam' of chapter one of Genesis. In that account we are told that God created Adam, or man in His own image. The word 'create' means to make something out of nothing. There is no doubt in my mind that Genesis chapter one contains the account of the creation of what is referred to as the pre-Adamic races of the world, including those of all colours. But the Adam of chapter two is referred to as being 'formed', which means that he was formed out of something that already existed. We are told that he was 'formed' out of the 'dust of the ground', something that already existed. And there are some very interesting things we need to keep in our mind at this point, because here, I believe, we have an expression of God's overall master plan. I believe that the garden of Eden was nothing more, and nothing less, than a working model, or preview in minature, if you could put it that way, of the Kingdom of God here on this earth. And as we study the subject, we realise that this was the formation of the highest order of God's whole creation about which we are now reading. It's highly significant and interesting to note the Septuagint Translation of this passage. This is the translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew to the Greek by 70 specially selected scholars, the title 'Septuagint' being the Greek for 70. When it translates the word Adam throughout this 2nd. chapter, it states;

"the Lord God formed the Adam of the dust of the earth".

Now if translators of the Bible, men who are very, very highly trained and recognised for their skills in translating from Hebrew into Greek, can see that there is something in the Hebrew expressions that warrants the inclusion of the definite article "the" to point to a specific person, rather than used in a general sense as in chapter one, then I believe we have to take note of this. This Adam referred to here was not just any old man. This was a very particular man who was formed by God to be a special person in His sight, and whom He intended for a very special purpose. When we go to Luke chapter three, we find the record of the genealogy of our Lord Jesus Christ. It lists the line of succession as;

*"who was the son of . . . who was the son of . . . etc"
and concludes with the listing; "who was the son of
Adam, who was the son of God."*

So we find that when God formed this particular Adam, He had formed someone who had the rank of the, or a, son of God. It's very easy to lose sight of the tremendous significance of this statement. Because every person in the Israel nation who subsequently became a descendant of this Adam, possessed a pre-planned and pre-ordained destiny to be Sons of God. This was theirs by Divine Right. They became heirs to all of God's blessings, even to the extent of sharing in His glory. This is the subject of Paul's remarks in Romans chapter 8, verses 14-23, to which the reader is referred.

The point now arises when we must ask ourselves whether or not we believe that God is going to eventually achieve this situation? If we think that he is not going to end up achieving what He originally planned, then we may as well give our belief away. God has no intentions of changing things. As we quoted earlier of the Lord;

"I am the Lord. I Change not."

But we find that the Lord acted in a definite sequence. In Gen. 2:7-8 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.

And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed."

Firstly God formed (the) Adam. Then He planted a garden, or dwelling place, in which He then placed the man whom He had formed. The place was prepared for the man for which it was intended. As I stated previously, I believe that the Garden of Eden was just a model or fore-runner of the Kingdom of God on earth. God had created or formed a working situation which prefigured the completion and the perfection of God's Kingdom on earth

But it says He planted this garden eastwards in Eden. Eastward of where? Sometimes we don't ask ourselves the obvious questions, do we? Why would God include the direction of eastward if there was no particular significance in where it was? He must surely have been directing our attention to some specific location. In the Bible we find that in most instances all directions like north, south, east and west are given as they relate to the geographical location of Jerusalem. When the children of Israel migrated they went west. West from where? They didn't go west from China. They went west from Jerusalem. That was the central focal point. So the garden of Eden, wherever it was originally, must have been east of Jerusalem. It is not possible to be absolutely dogmatic about the exact area involved, although I personally follow the concept that it was in the Tanim Basin within the country that we now call Tibet, or at least around that general area. But be that as it may, it doesn't make any difference to the fact that God prepared this particular area to which He referred as 'The Garden of Eden' east of what we would now call the middle-east.

The next thing He did, was to place in that garden the man whom he had formed - The Adam! He didn't just create or form Adam and then Eden and say 'look you guys, you just find yourself a nice place to settle down until I find a suitable permanent dwelling place for you.' He prepared the ground first. He prepared the place first and then He put them there, more or less saying to them 'now here is your habitat, this is what I have formed you for. You are to live in this perfect environment.' But there was just one other important factor. God had planted what

He referred to as "the tree of life" and "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" in the midst of this garden. He subsequently instructed both Adam and his wife Eve that they could eat of every tree that was in this garden with the exception of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil". We know only too well that these two people violated this instruction and brought upon themselves, and all their future descendants, the sentence that God had imposed should His instructions be disregarded. His sentence was quite clear. We read of it in Genesis 2:17;

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

In the original Hebrew that reads "in the day you eat of it, dying thou shalt surely die." In other words, a death process will begin in your body from the time you eat of this tree of good and evil.

There is much discussion and theorising as to the nature of the sin which Adam and Eve committed in eating of this "tree", and it does not fall within the province of this writing to go into detail about all these ideas. Suffice is it to point out that I do not believe that it had anything to do with Eve having sexual relations with 'the serpent', which represented Satan. We will deal with this subject more fully when we study the next covenant. For our present purposes, it is sufficient to realise that both Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and brought death to their descendants, the Adamic Race.

What must be kept in mind is that at this period prior to the "fall", it was a time and place of absolute perfection. This Adam, and subsequently his wife Eve, had been deliberately formed by God to be a special people who were to become "The Sons of God." This Divine intention was quite unconditional. Irrespective of what His formed creature did in the future, this plan was irrevocable. This was His covenant, and it is nothing short of breathtaking to find as we continue our studies, the extent to which our Great God and Saviour went in order to fully accomplish His wonderful plans and purposes in us.

(To be continued).

C.V. NEWS.

So we come to the last news report of this year. In so many ways it has been a year of great blessing, with a surprising number of contacts from people from virtually all over the world. Betty and I never cease to be amazed at how our work has expanded and developed over the 13-14 years since we first started. We regularly receive phone calls from overseas readers requesting understanding on particular portions of God's Word, as well as many similar requests via the E-Mail, particularly as a result of the material we publish on our Web Site, and it has been a source of great blessing to not only ourselves personally, but to the small band of faithful helpers on whom we depend. This includes, of course, all those very faithful brethren who constantly send their tithes and offerings with such generosity, and in many cases, self-sacrifice. Our grateful thanks go out to each and every one of you.

Naturally, there have been the down sides. During the past year we have experienced more persecution and abuse than every year put together to date, and it is not always easy to put up with it. But, as they say, it goes with the territory, and we can always look back and see the Lord's hand in the way in which He has kept us and led us through such times. We have lost a few friends, and gained others. The main thing is that our ministry, despite all the deterrents along the way, has steadily continued to grow, and we gratefully acknowledge the leading of our Heavenly Father in all that has happened.

We must admit that as we get older, our health does not hold up as it used to, and we could certainly do with a few more helpers, but I'm sure that as long as we remain faithful to our calling, and with your continued prayers and support, we will be able to continue for some time yet.

We are quite confident that the Lord will provide everything we need, including our health, until such time as our work is done, and with this commitment, we look to the future with every confidence.

Betty and I sent to you all our sincere prayers for God's very special protection and leading in the coming year, which appears to "those with eyes to see and ears to hear" to be one of such great possibilities and significance in the plans and purposes of God. May the Lord God of Israel for whom we so sincerely and eagerly watch and wait, richly bless you all.

We regret to announce the death of Cheri Peters, wife of the prominent Identity Pastor Pete Peters of "Scripture for America." Cheri has been very ill for some time with cancer, and she finally went to her rest on Sunday, October 18. We all join in prayer for the special comfort of the Lord God of Israel on this family at this time of sorrow and mourning. I'm sure they would appreciate your continued remembrance of them in order that they may continue in their service to the Lord and His Kingdom.

Covenant Vision Fellowship.

Pastor:- Frank W. Dowsett J.P.

You are cordially invited to join us in fellowship and worship at our Home Chapel

at

97 Brisbane St., St. Marys, N.S.W.

Sunday Morning at 10.00. Praise and Worship.

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A WALK THROUGH THE GOSPELS.

Part 9.

By Bruce Horner.

More About The Third Tour of Galilee.

Jn my last message, I referred to the feeding of the 5,000, and the subsequent attempt by the people to make Jesus their king or revolutionary leader.

John provides no wider political context for this incident. The situation had changed out of recognition by the time he wrote his Gospel, and he had quite another purpose before him in relating the feeding and its sequel. But it is illuminating to read John's account in the light of the Galilean context which Mark supplies. According to Mark, the twelve had just returned from a mission in Galilee which had quite spectacular results, but which excited the hostile interest of Herod Antipas. Herod had recently got rid of John the Baptist, but now it seemed that he had on his hands a greater menace than John. Jesus therefore took the twelve to the east side of the lake, out of Herod's territory, so that they might have a time of quiet after the recent excitement. But such excitement had been caused by their mission that the people followed them, and even overtook them, so that when Jesus and the twelve reached their place of retreat, they found that a great crowd of Galileans had got there ahead of them. Jesus fed their minds with words of life and their bodies with loaves and fishes because in his eyes they were 'like sheep without a shepherd' (Mark 6:34) - words which, as T.W.Manson used to emphasise, did not mean a congregation without a pastor, but an army without a captain (as in 1 Kings 22:17).

1 Ki 22:17 *"And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace."*

He knew how easily they might find the wrong kind of captain (one after their own heart though he might be), and be led by him to disaster. Against the background that Mark supplies, John's statement that the crowd tried to force Jesus to be their king is readily intelligible.

THE PERIL TO THE TWELVE IN THE STORM AT SEA. AND CHRIST'S COMING TO THEM ON THE WATER IN THE DARKNESS.

According to Mark 6:45, Jesus 'compelled' (*anankazo*) his disciples to embark and go back across the lake; perhaps he saw that they were being infected with the crowd's excitement. Mark adds (6:46) that Jesus himself had gone up to the high ground to pray. What John has just told us shows us how urgent an occasion for prayer it was.

The disciples, then, crossing to the west side of the lake by themselves, had to make headway against a wind that was not only strong but contrary (Mark 6:48).

G.A. Smith in his Historical Geography of the Holy Land says this. 'The atmosphere, for the most part, hangs still and heavy, but the cold currents, as they pass from the west, are sucked down in vortices of air, or by the narrow gorges that break upon the Lake. Then arise those sudden storms for which the region is notorious.'

Mark 6:47 "And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

50 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid."

Notice how John gives a little more information, making the experience so much more alive and fearful in its intensity.

John 6:16 "And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea,

17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

18 And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid."

F.F.Bruce tells us that a furlong (Greek *stadion*) was rather less than our modern furlong; they had rowed about three miles. From the neighbourhood of Bethsaida across the lake to Capernaum would be about 5 miles. Again, Bruce tells us that some commentators suggest that John means that they had been hugging the shore all the time, and that they had caught sight of Jesus walking by the sea. To be sure, the phrase *epi tes thalasses* does bear this meaning where the context requires it (as in John 21:1), but the same phrase is used in the Synoptic account of the present incident (Matt. 14:26; Mark 6:48 f.), where it certainly means 'on the sea'. Matthew 14:25 uses the phrase *epi ten thalassan* ('on the sea') in the same sense, and both Matthew (14:24) and Mark (6:47) say that the boat was 'in the midst of the sea'. True the wording of the Synoptists cannot determine the exegesis of John, but it is not John's practice to tone down the miraculous element in the Gospel narrative. Moreover, there would have been no cause for fear if the disciples had seen Jesus walking by the sea; it was the sight of him walking on the sea that made them cry out, thinking (as we are told in Mark 6:49), that it was an apparition.

Jesus' reassuring words quieted their fears. The present imperative (*me phobeisthe*) means 'Don't go on being afraid', i.e. 'Stop being afraid'. Since he was there, there was nothing to worry about. How interesting that the words rendered 'It is I' when Jesus made himself known to the disciples, is also rendered 'I am he' in John 8:24 & 28. That is, the name of the Almighty, "I AM".

As soon, then, as they realised that it was really their Master that they were seeing, and no apparition, the disciples gladly took him on board with them. There was no more trouble. Mark (6:48,51) fills in the details by telling us that it

was 'about the fourth watch of the night' - i.e., not long before dawn - that he came to them, and that the wind fell as soon as he entered the boat. Probably dawn was breaking as they came safely ashore at Capernaum.

The story of Peter's part in this episode is only told by Matthew. What a clumsy and impulsive man he was. But in the end, how deadly earnest and faithful he became.

Mat 14:28 *"And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water."*

29 *And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.*

30 *But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.*

31 *And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*

32 *And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.*

33 *Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."*

John 6:22 *"The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away (in it) alone;*

23 *(Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)*

24 *When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping (in those other boats), and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus."*

THE COLLAPSE OF THE GALILEAN CAMPAIGN BECAUSE JESUS WILL NOT CONFORM TO POPULAR MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS.

The sense of these three verses is reasonably plain, though the construction is complicated. It is necessary to insert some words in brackets to make the meaning plainer. The crowd, we are told, saw that the disciples had set off in their boat without Jesus, and there was no other boat which could have taken them across; yet in the morning he was not there. If verse 24 had followed immediately on verse 22, the reader would naturally have asked, 'How did the crowd get across by boat, since there were no boats there but that in which the disciples had embarked?' The answer is provided by verse 23. Other boats had come across from Tiberias to the east side of the lake - perhaps the strong gale from the west (see verse 18) had blown them across during the night. The phrase 'next day' or 'the day following' (depending on which version you read) at the beginning of verse 22 relates to the action of verse 24. The parenthesis in verse 23 is in very much the same style as that of John 4:2, where it says this:

John 4:1 *"When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptised more disciples than John,*
2 *(Though Jesus himself baptised not, but his disciples,)*
3 *He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee."*

The crowd, then, made sure that Jesus was nowhere in the vicinity, and that there was no sign of the disciples returning to fetch him, so they crossed to the west side to look for him.

John 6:25 *"And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?*
26 *Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."*

When the people landed at Capernaum, they found Jesus there, and naturally wondered how and when he had got across since they knew he had not embarked in the disciples' boat.

Jesus gave them no direct answer to gratify their curiosity, but tells them that their motive in seeking him out is an unworthy one. They were attracted to him because he had fed

them, and they imagined that they had found in him the leader for whom they were looking. But they had missed the real significance of the feeding. When in John 6, verse 14, they are said to have seen '*the sign which he had performed*', we are to understand that they saw the external action. You will remember that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all record this event. But verse 14 in John is additional and alone in its comment from the other three accounts.

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.*"

But here, John 6 verse 26, it is implied that they failed to see what lay beneath the external action. The 'signs' now denote the things signified. According to the Synoptic narrative, that is, Matthew, Mark and Luke, even the twelve 'did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened' (Mark 6:52; compare Mark 8:14-21)

Mark 6:51 "*And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.*

52 *For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.*"

Mark 8:14 "*Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.*

15 *And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.*

16 *And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.*

17 *And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?*

18 *Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?*

19 *When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.*

20 *And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.*
21 *And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?"*

So it was not surprising that the crowd failed to grasp the message. But while the Synoptic narrative simply leaves us with the feeling that beneath the surface of the miraculous feeding there was more than met the eye, John proceeds to bring that hidden meaning to light, by recording Jesus' discourse about the bread of life, delivered in the synagogue at Capernaum.

Mark 6:53 *"And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.*

54 *And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him,*

55 *And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.*

56 *And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole."*

Again we see how his patience and compassion were boundless. But now John takes up the thread of the story again.

OUR LORD'S DISCOURSE TO THE MULTITUDE IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT CAPERNAUM.

John 6:59 *"These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum."*

The discourse falls into three parts, with an appendix.

1. The true manna (John 6:27-34).

The text I am quoting, where it is not the KJV, is F.F.Bruce's own translation from the Greek of the Nestle-Aland edition of 1979.

John 6:27 *"Do not work for the perishable food; work for the food that endures to eternal life, the food which the Son of Man will give you. It is he whom God the Father has sealed."*

The discourse begins and ends with an interchange between Jesus and his hearers, and is punctuated by further exchanges. There is nothing out of the ordinary in this: it is part of what has been called 'the freedom of the synagogue'.

The contrast here between perishable and spiritual food is similar to the contrast between material and spiritual water in Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well (John 4:10 ff.). As the water in Jacob's well could not provide the soul-refreshment which 'living water' provided, so food which 'perishes with the using' (cf. Col. 2:22) might sustain physical life but could not impart life eternal.

As Jesus in John chapter 4 is the giver of that water which bubbles up to eternal life in those who receive it, so here he is the giver of the food whose properties are such that those who eat of it will never hunger again. He avoids using the term 'Messiah' or any other which would have appealed to his hearers militant aspirations. The designation 'the Son of Man' suited his purpose well enough; it was not current coin in their religious or political vocabulary and could therefore bear whatever meaning he chose to put on it. The Son of Man, he says, is the one whom God has sealed - that is to say, the one whom God has appointed as his certified and authorised agent for the bestowal of this life-giving food. Bruce suggests that if the aorist tense of the verb 'sealed' suggests that we identify the sealing with one particular event, we should probably think of our Lord's baptism (cf. John 1:32-34).

John 6:28 (KJV) *"Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?"*

29 *Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."*

Jesus had told them, in verse 27, to work for the food that is imperishable. What kind of work (they asked) is this? As they had to work to do their common daily work to earn their daily food, so (they supposed) to receive the food which imparted eternal life they would have to perform tasks especially

prescribed by God. What were these tasks? Jesus assures them that God's basic requirement for those who would receive the food which imparts eternal life, is faith - faith in the 'messenger of the covenant' whom God had sent in accordance with his ancient promise.

Mal 3:1 (KJV) *"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."*

The people (rightly) understand him to mean that he himself is the messenger referred to. They ask him, therefore, to supply further confirmation of his implicit claim to be the sent one of God.

John 6:30 (KJV) *"They said therefore unto him, What sign shonest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?"*

31 *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat."*

It might have been thought that the sign they had seen was sufficient attestation of Jesus' claim, but they want another. For many, the feeding of the multitude marked him out as the second Moses.

John 6:14 (KJV) *"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."*

Let him give further evidence of being the second Moses. If Moses had given their forefather manna in the wilderness, let the second Moses vindicate his authority in a similar way - not by a once-for-all feeding but on a more lasting basis. It may be that the narrative of the giving of the manna in Exodus 16:11-36 formed part of the Scripture lesson in the synagogue that sabbath. Jesus' words about 'the food that endures' might in any case have reminded them of the bread from heaven which their ancestors ate, though even the manna came under the description of 'perishable food'.

Exo 16:20 (KJV) "*Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them.*"

In later times the rabbis taught that the new age would be marked by the restoration of the gift of manna, and there are some indications that this idea was current in the first Christian century.

Rev 2:17 (KJV) "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*"

So the people may have meant: 'In the messianic age the gift of manna will be renewed; give us manna, and we shall know that the messianic age has truly dawned'. The Scripture which they quote about the manna is Psalm 78:24, which may indeed, be regarded as the text for the present discourse (cf. also Psalm 105:40; Neh 9:15).

Psa 78:24 (KJV) "*And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.*"

The loaves and fishes were a timely provision, indeed, but they were earthly food, not bread from heaven. One who could give them bread from heaven would beyond all doubt be the prophet like Moses.

John 6:32 "*Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.*

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

Jesus reminds them that it was not Moses, but God, who gave their forefathers manna in the wilderness. And God, who fed his people with material food in those earlier days - and in fact still did so - was now offering them spiritual food, heavenly

manna, life-giving bread. Like the loaves and fishes with which the multitude had recently been fed, the manna which Israel ate in the days of Moses was also material food, 'bread out of heaven' though it was. But there is another kind of bread which comes down from heaven - true, real bread sustaining the inmost and most lasting life of men and women - and it is of no perishable or material nature.

The expression 'the bread of God' is used occasionally in the O.T. of the 'shewbread' (cf. Lev 21:6, 8, 17, 21, 22; 22:25). The manna is called 'bread of the mighty' or 'bread of the angels' in Psalm 78:25. But here 'the bread of God' is the bread which God supplies: like the manna, it comes down from heaven, but unlike the manna, it gives life - eternal life - to all mankind.

John 6:34 *"Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread."*

Like the Samaritan woman, who said, 'Sir, give me this water' (John 4:15) when she heard Jesus speak of the living water which he could give, the congregation responds to his words about the true bread with an eager request that they may receive this bread for evermore. But they still understand his words in a material sense; he therefore uses a new form of words to make his meaning plainer.

2. **Jesus the Food of Eternal Life (John 6:35-51)**

John 6:35 *"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."*

Jesus' hearers had not understood what he meant by the 'bread of God which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world'. Now he tells them plainly what he means. In the former section of the discourse he had spoken of himself as the giver of this bread; in this section he identifies himself with it. 'For Jesus is himself the gift, of which he is the giver.' He has come to give himself that men and women may live by him. To partake of the bread of life they must come to him, they must believe in him. This total self-commitment to Christ, this appropriating of him by faith, is the secret of eternal life and perpetual soul-refreshment.

This is the first of the distinctive 'I am' sayings of John's Gospel.

John 6:36 "*But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.*

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."

The words 'you have seen me indeed but do not believe' echo those of John 5:36-38, but those earlier words were addressed to people in Jerusalem, and these addressed here are Galileans. In the present context, the words sum up the sense of what was said in verse 26: they had seen Jesus providing food for the multitude, but did not penetrate by faith into the true significance of what he did.

They had not come to him and believed in him in the only sense that matters. Unlike the Evangelist and his associates, they had not 'looked on his glory' (cf. John 1:14); thus they had not yet been able to partake of the bread of life.

Yet Jesus had the assurance that many would indeed come to him in faith and receive the life-giving bread, for it was the will of his Father that they should do so. Men's blindness cannot frustrate the saving work of God. God is at work by his grace in the world, and those who come to Christ come to him by the 'sweet constraint' of that grace. And when they come, they find that Christ undertakes the entire responsibility for their full and final salvation. He does not turn them away when they come, nor does he subsequently disown them. At a later stage in John's Gospel he claims to have lost none of those whom the Father had given him, apart from that one who deliberately severed himself from Christ (John 17:6-12).

John 6:39 "*And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

41 *The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.*

42 *And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?"*

On this occasion ‘the Jews’ must be the synagogue congregation in Capernaum, or rather the leaders of the congregation. The phrase is used more generally here than in John 5:18, where it was the teaching establishment in Jerusalem that was so incensed by the way in which he spoke of God as his Father. He was a visitor in Jerusalem, but he was a resident in Galilee; that was what offended his hearers. How could a man with whose family they were well acquainted make such a claim as he did? How could he provide, much less be, the food of immortality. How could he be the bond between heaven and earth.

Here, as in John 1:45, Jesus is known as ‘the son of Joseph’, whereas in Mark 6:3, in Nazareth, he is known as ‘the son of Mary’. The words ‘and mother’ are lacking here in some authorities, including the first of Sinaiticus, but they are present in the overwhelming majority of witnesses, including the oldest of all, Papyri 66 and 75. The audience’s language need not imply that Joseph was still alive: it means ‘We know who this man’s parents were; how could he have come down from heaven?’ (That Jesus’ family was known in Capernaum has been indicated in John 2:12). John and his readers understand that the Capernaum congregation had no inkling of the mystery of the Incarnation - of the fact that Jesus, while he entered life by a real birth, was at the same time the eternal Word.

John 6:43-44; “Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Their complaint was not directly addressed to Jesus, but it is from him that the answer comes. He urges them to stop this scandalised criticism; they would not arrive at the truth that way. The first clause of verse 44 repeats in different language the thought in the first clause of verse 37. Those who come to Christ are here described as being drawn to him by the father; in

John 12:32 it is Christ who, by being 'lifted up from the earth', draws all without distinction to himself. One way or the other, the divine initiative in the salvation of believers is emphasised. The responsibility of men and women in the matter of coming to Christ is not overlooked (cf. John 5:40); but none at all would come unless divinely persuaded and enabled to do so. And everyone who comes to him will gladly acknowledge:-

**He loved me ere I knew him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus he bound me to him.**

Then for the third (but not the last) time in this discourse the resurrection of the believer is emphasised as the final and crowning stage of the saving work which Christ undertakes to accomplish in every one who comes to him.

(To be continued).



Editorial. Concluded from Page 2.

Christ was actually born at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, around the end of September to early October. If we need to celebrate His birth, why not then, by which we would be completely disassociating ourselves from all its present heathen trappings, and at the same time, together with our children, rightly glorifying Him for Who He is, the One who, in the words of Matthew, came to save His people. The coming year will almost certainly be a time of real testing for us, so it is our sincere prayer that we will all be found faithful to our Great God and Saviour, who gave His life that we may be like Him.



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THE BEAST SYSTEM.

by

Frank W. Dowsett.

Part Eleven.

The Mark of The Beast.

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."

(Rev. 13:16-18).

We come now to what must be one of the most talked about, and most argued about, aspects of the Word of God; that of

The Mark of the Beast.

But before proceeding to our study, allow me to make the following observation. There are several widely held beliefs and teachings as to the nature of this "mark of the beast". Foremost among these is that of the implantation of a computer chip in the back of the right hand, or more preferably under the skin in the forehead. Scientists tell us that the area of the forehead at or about the hair line, is the most receptive place to insert this chip. Other less popular opinions include the use of tattoos. I have no intention of entering into an argument with highly qualified scientists regarding the technicalities and technics involved in the implementation of this computer chip. Furthermore, I have no doubt whatsoever that this is the system which the leaders within the ranks of the One World Government movement intend to implement. The fact that this system has already begun to be used in the identification of animals is enough proof of this conclusion. If it works on our domestic pets, then you can be sure that it will work on us. And the fact that there may be many very obvious benefits to this system is not argued. For instance, it would be a real boon to police departments in keeping track of criminals. But don't ever allow ourselves to be fooled by all the brainwashing of this sort which will inevitably accompany the introduction of this system. The reason for the introduction of such a scheme is nothing short of complete control of the entire world population, and you can bet that it's not going to be for our own individual personal benefit. Irrespective of any other factor, the powers behind the scenes are fulfilling the very words of prophesy of which our Lord informed us nearly 2,000 years ago. He didn't go into the technical details of how this would happen. He just told us that it would.

The thing which we must appreciate is the fact that there is a definite plan to introduce such a system. But our responsibility as Christians is to correctly discern the difference between man's system and what man is planning, and God's system and what He is planning.

For many years I have expounded the principle of "The Law of First Mention" when it comes to our study of the Bible. This simply means that when we come upon any particular statement or doctrine of the Scriptures, in order to come to a proper understanding of that doctrine, we should refer back to the first time it is mentioned. This will give us an understanding of the initial meaning, and more importantly, the initial application, of what ever we are studying.

The subject of “The Mark of the Beast” is no different. So with this in mind, let us look at what the Scriptures have to say about the subject of this “mark”.

Firstly, let us define what the word “mark” means. It does NOT mean a brand or a mark burnt in, such as a tattoo, a theory which is deliberately disguising the real meaning and application of this ‘mark’. It means ‘something graven or sculptured - man-made.’ This is well illustrated in Acts 17:29;

“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.”

This reminds us of Daniel’s statement to King Nebuchadnezzar regarding the “stone cut out without hands” in chapter two of his prophecy. We also recall that the stones of the altars which Israel built in their worship of Jehovah were to be uncut by human hands. In other words, these things were to be God-made, not man-made.

This ‘mark’ is mentioned in six chapters of the Book of the Revelation.

1. Rev. 13:16-17, referring to its usage or purpose.

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

2. Rev. 14:9-11, referring to judgment on those who receive it.

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for

ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”

3. Rev. 15:2, referring to the reward for those who reject it.

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.”

4. Rev. 16:2, again referring to judgment on those who receive it.

“And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.”

5. Rev. 19:20, referring to judgment on those who initiated it.

“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

6. Rev. 20:4, again referring to those who reject it.

“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.”

In light of the above references, it must surely be obvious to the most casual of students that this ‘mark’ occupies a very important place in the overall purposes of Almighty God.

In identifying this ‘mark’ we must understand the context in which it is used. And in order to do this, we must understand the symbology and meaning of the places in which we are informed that it will, or should, be placed.

Rev 13:16 which we quoted above, tells us that this ‘mark’ is to be placed in “their right hand” or “in their forehead”.

What do these two areas represent? The ‘right hand’ represents our working ability, or our strength. As we read in Psalm 89:13;

“Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.”

On the other hand, our forehead - which incidentally means “the space between the eyes” - represents our thinking capacity, or our power of thought. Thus we find in Ezek. 3:8;

“Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads.”

It is neither accident nor coincidence that these are the very two aspects of our lives over which this iniquitous Beast System seeks to gain control. If it can control our actions and our thoughts, it has complete control over every aspect of our lives.

When we revert to “the Law of First Mention” to which we previously referred, what we read is again, no accident or coincidence. The very first reference to a sign upon the “hand” or upon the “forehead” is found in Exodus 13:9;

“And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord’s law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt.”

This is repeated in Deuteronomy 6:1-8, and 11:13-21;

“Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it:

That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.

Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

"And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,

That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.

And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full.

Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; And then the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.

Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.

And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates:

That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.”

What was it that the Lord required to be bound upon our hands, and as frontlets between our eyes, that is, upon our foreheads? In each reference, it is clearly and concisely identified as **“The Law of God” !!**

What is it that the Beast System is trying to bind upon our hands and foreheads? It is **“The law of man” !!**

**The original usage refers to the placing of God’s Laws
“as a sign upon our hand and forehead”.**

**On the other hand, the ‘mark of the beast’ constitutes
replacing the Law of God with the laws of Satan.**

It is of special interest to note that the word ‘forehead’ is quoted 8 times in the Book of the Revelation. Four of these refer to where the ‘mark of the beast’ is placed, as follows;

(Rev 13:16 KJV) *“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:”*

(Rev 14:9 KJV) *“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand”*

(Rev 17:5 KJV) *“And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”*

(Rev 20:4 KJV) *“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.”

The remaining four references refer to where the ‘God’s mark’ is placed, as follows;

(Rev 7:3 KJV) “Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.”

(Rev 9:4 KJV) “And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.”

(Rev 14:1 KJV) “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.”

(Rev 22:4 KJV) “And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.”

Thus we see the real meaning and application of “The Mark of the Beast”. It represents the power and love of money, which replaces our faith in the provision of God which comes as an automatic result of obedience to God’s Laws. We read in I Timothy 6:10;

“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

And again in 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.”

It is ultimately the acceptance of, and the dedication to, Satan's system as opposed to God's System.

It constitutes the dedication of our physical capacities - the hand - and our mental capacity - our forehead - to Satan and his beast system, instead of to God and His system of righteousness.

The penalty for following Satan's Beast System is traumatic, resulting in rejection by God, and ultimate death.

But the reward for following God's Righteous System, and rejecting Satan's subterfuge is truly wonderful, even to qualifying to be kings and priests ruling with our Lord Jesus Christ at His return.

"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.

But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

In everything that we do; In every decision that we make; let us be sure that we have not sold ourselves to Satan's system of deceit and disaster.

(To be continued).



**The Israelite without his Shepherd
is meat on the plate for the alien.**

**But with his Shepherd,
the Israelite is invincible.**

OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION - The Proof

1. The empty tomb:- Luke. 24:3, 12; John 20:4-9.
2. The witness of the angel:- Matt. 28: 2-7.
3. The appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene:- John 20:11-18.
4. His appearance to the women:- Matthew 28:9.
5. His appearance to Peter:- Luke. 24:34.
6. His appearance to the two disciples:- Luke 24:13-35.
7. His appearance to the eleven:- Mark. 16:14.
8. The witness of Thomas:- John 20: 24-31.
9. The appearance of Jesus in Gallilee:- John 21:1.
10. His appearance to James:- 1 Cor. 15: 7.
11. His appearance to five hundred brethren:- 1 Cor. 15:6.
12. His ascension:- Act 1. 9.
13. The coming of the Holy Spirit:- Acts 2:32-33.
14. The witness of the apostles:- Act. 2:24-36; 3:15, 4:10, 33; 5:30-31; 10:40-41; 13:30-37.
15. The existence of the church:- 2 Cor. 5:15-17; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:10; Col. 3: 1-3.
16. The appearance of Jesus to Stephen:- Acts. 7:55-56.
17. His appearance to Paul:- 1 Cor. 15:8,
18. His appearance to John:- Rev. 1:10-19.
19. The witness of Christ:- Rev. 1:18; 5:5-10.
20. The witness of Scripture:- Luke. 24:44-45; John 20:9; Eph. 1:20-22; 4:9-10; Heb. 1: 3; 10:12; 1 Peter 3: 21-22.

OUR PROTECTIVE GOD.

By Bruce Horner.

PART 2.

THE REFORMATION.

Jn my last talk I spoke about King Alfred. Everybody has heard of King Alfred burning the cakes! But how many know that he said: 'There is only one way by which to build any kingdom, and that is on the sure and certain foundation of faith in Jesus Christ, and in Jesus crucified, and it is on that foundation that I intend to build my kingdom'?

How many understand, too, with what great resolution and determination he sought to do this, as soon as God had given him final victory over the Vikings? He so painstakingly laid the Christian foundations, that the effect of them has lasted till this day.

I want to move on now to the period of the English Reformation which occurred when Britain was once again going through a period of intense spiritual darkness.

As we have already seen, the form of Christianity which came to Britain from Ireland, had travelled with Patrick from its source in the Eastern Mediterranean without reference to Rome. It is this which became known as 'Irish' or 'Celtic' Christianity, and in order to understand what happened subsequently, we need to look at the background more closely.

Under Patrick's leadership, this Celtic Christianity had taken the form of loosely knit communities of devout Christians who had separated themselves from the rest of mankind and lived in beehive huts made of wattle, clay and turf, the huts often being grouped together in a fortified village under the supervision of an outstanding Christian leader on some rocky mountain or remote island.

The purpose of this separation was to so build themselves up in the faith that they could go out and convert whole areas and regions to Jesus Christ. These Christian communities were, by nature, missionary bases, and in essence, this form of Christianity was independent. It was not, in this early period, associated in any way with the universal organisation of the Papacy.

The devout life which these Christians lived, caused this Irish or Celtic form of Christianity to produce a rich crop of saints, of whom perhaps the greatest and most typical was Columba. He was born half a century after St Patrick's death, and was an offspring of his church. He founded his cluster of beehive huts on the island of Iona off the west coast of Scotland round about 563, and from there his missionaries had come over to northern Britain.

Now the papacy, from a very early stage, had followed with deep interest the results of St Columba's labour in Scotland and the north of England. It had seen, with thankfulness, that this was an ardent Christian movement which was breaking out in the northern parts of the far-off islands of Britain, and one which was full of fervour. Rome was also excited about the spread of the Gospel there. But she became deeply disturbed because the faith seemed to have been separately planted. She viewed with deep concern the fact that, from the very outset, it was independent of the papal throne.

Pope Gregory was the true founder of the mediæval papacy and was the first of the great popes. These were the days when it was the first care of the Bishop of Rome to see that all Christians in every country should be brought under one earthly head. Therefore Gregory, and the ecclesiastical statesmen who were at that time gathered together in Rome, had sent Augustine to England in 596, to bring about an effective union between British Christians and what, in the Roman view, was the main body of the church. Following the conversion of King Ethelbert of Kent, and after he had founded the see of Canterbury and made it the solid base for the subsequent spread of Roman Christianity over this island, Augustine set about this other task of bringing about the desired union of British Christians with Rome. From the outset, his attention became focused in a westerly direction, for his first thought was directed towards the British church which, during the barbarian invasions, had been so miraculously preserved behind the Welsh mountains.

He summoned a conference of its British Christian bishops and Welsh representatives at the mouth of the River Severn. But the British bishops were in no mood for throwing themselves into the strong embraces of Rome. When Augustine claimed to have supremacy over all Christians in Britain by virtue of his Roman commission, they adamantly rejected his claim. They had defended the faith for so long against all the terrible cruelties and oppressions which the barbarians had levelled at them, and had remained independent, so why should they now subject themselves to being controlled from overseas? When Augustine threatened that if they did not submit, the Saxon armies in England would be used to bring the whole influence and prestige of Rome against them, they saw Rome in its true light. This was one of the earliest indications that she intended to get what she wanted by force of arms if necessary. That finished the matter as far as the British bishops and Welsh representatives were concerned, and the conference broke up in enmity.

Augustine's attempt to bring about a union had totally failed and, with it, Rome's very first step in the direction of making Britain a Roman Catholic country. All further efforts by Augustine were virulently repulsed.

A second attempt was made by Rome more than half a century later, and this one was far more successful. It was levelled at the Celtic Christian missionaries operating in the north.

Once again Rome had become disturbed by the success of an ardent, evangelistic type of Christianity which was working independently of her. This time the leader was Aidan, Columba's successor. Aidan had founded the monastery of Melrose in East Scotland, and from there the surrounding districts of East, West and Mid-Lothian beyond Northumbria were evangelised. The monastery of Lindisfarne on Holy Island off the Northumbrian and Lothian coast was also founded and Aidan became the head of the Christian missionary community there. Then, at the invitation of King Oswald, Aidan began a mission to King Oswald's kingdom of Northumbria in 635. This mission proved very successful. Indeed, strong bands of Celtic missionaries, under Aidan's dynamic leadership, not only reconverted Northumbria (which had relapsed) to the Christian faith, and not only evangelised the Kingdom of Mercia which was just to the south, but they also continued in a southerly direction, penetrating to the south-east coast and bringing back East Anglia and Essex to Christianity. In fact, some of these Irish Christians

even established groups of their beehive huts as far south as Sussex, which was still heathen. They were winning victories wherever they went.

We are told that the ascetic yet cheerful life of these lovable, ardent, unworldly apostles of Jesus, who tramped the moors all day in order to preach to people in the evening, won the hearts of the men of the north. I am sure this was also true elsewhere. Indeed, it was said that Christianity had never, since its earliest years, appeared in more attractive guise.

All this was undoubtedly a work of the Spirit. But it has always been true, all down the history of the Christian Church from the Day of Pentecost, that wherever a genuine work of the Spirit breaks out, there are always those who want to bring it under control.

And so it proved to be in this case. The success of the Iona and Lindisfarne missions on English soil revived the dispute between the Celtic and Roman churches. So long as the Celtic church had remained in Celtic territory - beyond the border of Scotland - Rome could afford to overlook its remote existence. But when it broke out down south, and spread to the east and south-east coasts of England, in Rome's eyes a rivalry for the possession of Saxon England had begun.

Saxon England was Rome's preserve! Whatever happened, this independent Celtic church must submit to Rome. The issue could no longer be evaded. So once again the two streams of the Christian faith met in England and a struggle for supremacy began all over again. The tragedy was that all this was coming to a head at the very time when Anglo-Saxon England had turned away from the worship of Thor and Woden and had definitely rallied to the Christian faith. Indeed, this was the time of which it has been said: 'There was now no kingdom in which heathen practices prevailed. The whole island was now Christian.'

The issue was no longer whether the island should be Christian or pagan, but whether the Roman or Celtic view should prevail; whether British Christianity should conform with, or submit to, the Roman form of Christianity - which by now, under the Bishop of Rome, dominated Christendom - and whether it should remain independent and free, and continue to be expressed through the type of Christianity on which the Celtic churches of the north had been founded.

To settle the matter, Oswy, King of Northumbria and brother of Oswald, now deceased, summoned the Synod of Whitby in 663. It hung for a long time in the balance, but in the end, King Oswy, who had championed the Celtic church of Iona since his brother's death, was tragically influenced by his wife, and gave his judgment that the church of Northumbria should be a definite part of the church of Rome and of the Catholic system. It may be of interest here, to look at this Synod more closely, to see how great issues can sometimes be decided quite foolishly.

There were two particular differences in practice between the two Churches. In baptism, the Roman Church plunged the child three times beneath the water in the name of the Trinity, while the Old British Church immersed the child once only. They had different methods of calculating the date of Easter and sometimes the discrepancy between the two dates can be as much as a month. It was in fact this question which brought the issue between the Churches to a head. In 664 King Oswy, who followed the Old British system, found that he would be celebrating Easter the day his Kentish wife would be keeping Palm Sunday. So he called the conference at Whitby at which both sides could put their case with learned argument. Colman of the Old British Church claimed the example of the Apostle John for their practice. Wilfred of the Roman Church claimed the authority of the Apostle Peter and added, "to whom our Lord said, I give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." King Oswy interrupted to ask, "Did our Lord really say that to Peter?" When everyone agreed that he did, the King closed the conference without more ado, explaining that he dare not decide against the doorkeeper of Heaven, lest Peter refuse to let him in!

Henceforth Northumbria followed the Roman teaching in regard to Easter, and other points of difference between the two Churches, and in this it was quickly followed by Mercia and Essex. As East Anglia, Wessex and Kent already followed the Roman usage, and Sussex had not yet been evangelised. This left only the Celts of Cornwall, Wales and West Britain; and in due course these, too, were induced to conform.

Thus the decision of the king at the Council of Whitby opened the way for the jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome to be extended throughout the whole country.

The leader of the Celtic Church and the remainder of his followers returned to Iona in disgust. When these Christians of Iona saw that their Northumbrian friends had so tragically turned

against them, they realised that they could no longer maintain the struggle for their particular stream of Christianity in England, and so they withdrew.

The way was now open for a complete reorganization and unification of the branches of the Church under the control of Theodore of Tarsus, the Greek Archbishop appointed by the Pope to the vacant See of Canterbury. At a time when England consisted of seven separate kingdoms as well as the Britons or Celts in the west, kingdoms which were frequently at war with each other, Theodore drew the Churches of these kingdoms together under his jurisdiction. The first National Synod of the Church of England was held at Hertford on 24 September 673, and thus there was one unified Church, under one Archbishop, using the same prayers and ceremonies throughout the whole land, fifty years before England existed as a unified country.

In the course of succeeding generations Scotland, Wales and Ireland gradually came into line with Roman Catholic Western Europe. And this is the state of things which we find just prior to the Reformation.

It must be said that to bring under control a work of the Holy Spirit is to quench the Spirit. To quench the Spirit - especially over a long period of time - is to extinguish the light, and extinguishing the light inevitably leads to darkness - sometimes to great darkness, which is exactly what happened in England.

The Church of England study on the Reformation tells us that in the centuries which followed, many of the worst features of the Roman Catholic Church on the Continent took root in England, including the decline on the standards of life in the monasteries and the worship of "relics of the saints". After the Norman Conquest of 1066, the land was flooded with foreign clergy who took over many of the parishes, and one by one vacant dioceses were given to Norman Bishops. The Normans tied the Church of England even more closely to Rome, and it now lost what little independence it had enjoyed from the direct control of the Pope. Great spiritual and moral darkness followed not only in Britain but also all over the continent of Europe, and wherever the Roman Catholic Church held sway. So by the time the Tudor period arrived, Britain had almost entirely lost her original - and essentially biblical - Christian foundations. Furthermore she was a nation without a Bible in her own native tongue.

To understand that, is to understand what the Reformation was all about.

God will not allow the light of his truth to be covered up and buried indefinitely. He always has a way of deliverance.

Martin Luther's eyes were suddenly opened to the glorious truth that rather than a man having to earn his salvation by his own personal efforts and merit, as Rome had taught, God's plan was that he could be saved eternally from the guilt, power and eternal consequences of his sin by simply trusting in what the Lord Jesus Christ had done on the cross to atone for his sin. Luther put his entire trust in this revelation of light, his whole life and outlook were completely transformed, and he became filled with the Holy Spirit of God. This experience sparked off the Reformation in Europe.

It spread from Wittenberg to Geneva, began to take root in Scotland, and then spread to England.

Historians record that the movement so sparked off by Luther was so dynamic, that within the space of a mere ten years it had overrun the Continent.

For centuries, the Scriptures had been denied to everyone but the priests, and even then they were in Latin. John Wyclif, 'the Morning Star of the Reformation', with the help of at least 5 other scholars, had been instrumental in undertaking the work of translating the Bible into English and then making copies, all by hand.

But before him, The Venerable Bede (673-735), a monk in the north of England, translated the Gospel of John into the English of the time, reputedly finishing it the day he died.

Alfred the Great (849-901) translated the Decalogue and part of Exodus into English, and also began an English version of the Psalms. The Anglo-Saxon versions which have come down to us comprise little more than the Psalter, the Pentateuch, some of the historical books of the Old Testament and the four Gospels. Of the Anglo-Norman versions little is known.

Wyclif, aided by Hereford and others, produced the first complete English version about 1382. Of Wyclif's work, Henry Knighton, writing his Chronicle about 20 years later, complains that John Wyclif had translated the Gospel into the English tongue and made it more plain to the laity and to women than it formerly was even to the learned amongst the clergy, thus throwing the Gospel pearl before swine!!

In 1526 Tyndale brought out his translation of the New Testament, based on the Greek New Testament of Erasmus. Though banned in England, it was printed on the continent and copies were smuggled across the channel. He continued work on the Old Testament, but was not destined to complete this translation. Tyndale's work may be traced through to the Great Bible of 1539 and through that to the Authorised Version of 1611.

Coverdale, friend of Tyndale and one equally felicitous in the use of English, though not a Hebrew scholar, completed the translation of the Old Testament from Joshua, where Tyndale left off, translating largely from the German and from the Latin Vulgate.

In 1535 Coverdale's Bible appeared, the first completed Bible to be printed in English.

Tyndale was regarded by Henry VIII as a Reformer, and so a heretic. It was not safe for him to carry out the work of translation and publication in England. But the conception of a wide-spread distribution of a readable edition of the Bible had determined for him his life-work which he would pursue at all costs, and if it were not safe for him to stay in England he would grapple with his enterprise on the Continent.

Here he found a refuge, but even the Continent became unsafe for him. The unrelenting arm of the persecutor reached after him as a heretic. Agents of an unknown foe in England tracked him down and secured his imprisonment, and in 1536 he died a martyr's death in Antwerp. It seemed as if the longing of a lifetime was to go unfulfilled. But to the end Tyndale endured in faith as seeing Him who is invisible, and a few minutes before he was strangled at the stake he prayed in the hearing of his executioners, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

Meanwhile, in England, amongst the common people a movement was taking place that could not be silenced. Over a considerable period Tyndale's translations had been smuggled into England, often in bales of merchandise. When they were able to lay hands on them the bishops bought them up and publicly burnt them, but nevertheless many reached the hands of the laity. Their mental and spiritual appetites were whetted for the revealed truth of God to man and they petitioned the King to authorise an English translation of the Bible. On the second petition he yielded, and in 1537, the year following Tyndale's death, there appeared Matthew's or Rogers' Bible.

Matthew was either a pseudonym of John Rogers or the patron of John Rogers, who was a friend of both Tyndale and Coverdale. Tyndale left behind in manuscript form completed translations of the books from Joshua to Chronicles, and these Rogers incorporated into his Bible, which was virtually a reprint of Tyndale from Genesis to Chronicles, and of Coverdale for the remainder of the Old Testament, and of Tyndale for the whole of the New Testament.

Next came the Great Bible of 1539. This was a revision of Matthew's Bible printed under the direction of Coverdale, and ordered to be set up in churches throughout the realm. Every church in the land had a Bible chained to the lectern, and the King, backed by his government, enjoined the clergy to encourage Bible reading.

Six copies of the Bible were set up in St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and multitudes thronged to the cathedral all day to read them, such was the hunger for the word of God. Furthermore, when these people could find anybody with an audible voice to read aloud, their enthusiasm knew no bounds.

Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Miles Coverdale, friend and pupil of the deceased Tyndale, and Thomas Cromwell, Chief Secretary of State, had been determined that the Bible should become nothing less than a national institution. The obvious thing was to introduce it into the parish churches in England. The King was again approached and royal consent given. For this purpose a large volume would be required rather than the small quarto and octavo ones previously published for private reading. Better paper was to be obtained in Paris than in England, so Cromwell despatched Coverdale to France to see the new work through the press. When on the point of completion the mission almost ended in disaster, for agents of the Inquisitor-General of France seized the press and Coverdale had to flee for his life. Then by a miracle of providence the entire press and completed sheets, as waste paper, were purchased and transported to England, where the first copies of the Great Bible were bound.

Tyndale's prayer - a lifelong prayer - had been wonderfully answered. His very translation, proscribed by the King, hated by the clergy, and burnt by the bishops, was now published under another name with royal permission given in the most systematic and influential way possible by insisting, despite its cost, that each parish in the land should procure its own copy.

The seventh Bible was the Geneva Bible, in 1560. In this Bible the complete system of verse-divisions first met the eye of English readers. This was produced by English exiles in Mary's reign at Geneva, the principal English versions available for their use being Tyndale's, Coverdale's, Matthew's and the Great Bible. It was characterised by a body of notes which reflected the views of the Genevan Theology.

Bible number eight was the Bishop's Bible in 1568. This was a revision superintended by Archbishop Parker and takes its name from the fact that most of the contributors were bishops. The basis of translation was the Great Bible as to style and turn of phrase. Certain improvements found in the Geneva Bible were incorporated.

I want to go back a little and talk about King Henry V111. It is important to note that Henry revolted against the authority of the Pope being exercised in England, and not against the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. Henry would have been amazed at the present propaganda of the Roman Catholics that he started the Church of England and instituted the Reformation in England. The plain fact of the matter is that during Henry's reign the same congregations met in the same church buildings under the same clergy who conducted the same services containing the same doctrines. In these circumstances it seems ludicrous to speak of Henry founding a "new" church.

What Henry did was to break the direct control of the Pope in England. It is true that Henry sometimes lent his aid to the reformed party to some extent in order to make things difficult for the Pope. But Henry V111 was never a Protestant. Though he rejected the claim of the Pope, in his will he commended his soul to the Blessed Virgin, and left money for masses to be said for him. Further evidence of Henry's position is found in Bishop Gardiner's assertion that, although the Reformers were claiming the example of Henry, they really had no right to claim him, for, as Gardiner put it, he "went to heaven in his own way".

Though he rejected Papal authority in England, Henry lived and died a Roman Catholic. In Henry's reign the conflict with Rome was a national and political movement, and though there was a growing reformed party within the church, there was little they could do while Henry lived. There were two things, however, which the Reformation drew from Henry's reign: freedom from the control of Rome, which left the way open for

doctrinal reform after Henry's death; and an open Bible in English, which provided the basis upon which reform was to proceed. Henry's revolt against Rome was occasioned by his desire to have his marriage with Katherine of Aragon declared null and void, as he was in love with Anne Boleyn. Mary was his only child, six others having died in infancy, and he sought remarriage on the pretext that the absence of a male heir would probably cause civil war.

The agent whom Henry employed to this end was his minister, Wolsey, who endeavoured to get a commission from Pope Clement V11 for himself and Cardinal Compeggio to try the case in England. But the request was fruitless as it came at a time when the Pope was a prisoner in the hands of the Emperor, who was a nephew of Katherine. Angered at Wolsey's failure, Henry turned on him, and Wolsey died on his way to be tried for treason.

Henry thought well of a suggestion of Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556), then a teacher in Cambridge University, that the opinion of the European Universities be sought. This pleased the King, who sent him to the Italian and other European Universities in 1530, some of which decided in the King's favour, though the Pope continued to suspend decision.

Meanwhile Henry prepared to act independently of the Pope, and cleared the ground by seeking to reduce the power of the Pope in England.

He did this in four steps.

Firstly in 1531 he indicted the clergy. By this he asserted his authority over the clergy by charging them with supporting papal jurisdiction in recognising Wolsey's authority as papal legate, and a great sum, the price of pardon, was exacted from the convocations of York and Canterbury, ie. the synods of the clergy of these provinces into which England was divided.

Secondly he made claim to be "Supreme Head", and these same convocations were compelled to recognise the King as Supreme Head of the Church of England.

Thirdly in 1532 by "Submission of the Clergy". The Convocations of York and Canterbury now promised not to meet henceforth without the King's writ, and not to enact any new canon without his consent.

Fourthly with the Annates Act in 1532. By this Act, archbishops and bishops were to refuse to pay first-fruits to the Pope, save with the King's consent.

Henry was to use this Act in order to force the Pope's hand in the recognition of his appointment of Cranmer as Archbishop.

Having thus entrenched himself behind legal authorisations which themselves had the backing of the English patriotic spirit, Henry was now ready to ignore the Pope in the matter of his marriage.

In 1533, Cranmer, who was still on the Continent, was recalled to take up the office of Archbishop of Canterbury in place of Warham who had died, the object being to secure a sympathetic archbishop. In the same year an acknowledgment was secured from the convocations of York and Canterbury that the marriage with Katherine was illegal. This decision was followed by a trial of the case in the court of Archbishop Cranmer at Dunstable, and the same verdict secured. The secret marriage of Henry with Anne Boleyn, which had taken place earlier in the year was legalised. In the following September, Anne bore a daughter, the Princess Elizabeth, later to be Queen. In the same year, 1533, the pope retaliated by declaring the marriage with Anne void and that with Katherine valid. A breach between Pope and King had been made.

Henry replied by obtaining the following enactments:

1. In 1534 he put pressure upon Parliament to provide new legislation, the most important of which was the famous Supremacy Act, by which Henry and his successors were declared "the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England", and with full power to redress heresies and abuses. This was not understood as giving spiritual rights, such as ordination or the administration of sacraments. But in all else it practically put the King in the place of the Pope.
2. In 1534 he secured in the Convocations the declaration that "the Bishop of Rome hath not by Scripture any greater authority in England than any other foreign Bishop".
3. In 1536 he secured an Act of Parliament which required an oath that every clerk and layman holding office should renounce the Bishop of Rome and his authority under penalty of high treason.

The breach with Rome was complete. Henry had made himself absolute master in his own territory by removing the one outside power that had interfered all through the Middle Ages. For the rest of his reign neither Parliament nor Church dared lift a hand against him.

Henry now used his position to accumulate wealth, and to direct the religion of his people along the old paths. His instrument for a few years was Thomas Cromwell, who gave effect to the King's wishes as Vicar-General, which made him superior in authority to the Archbishops and enabled him to preside in Convocation.

In 1536 the dissolution was ordered of all the monasteries which had an income of less than £200. There were 320. This led to an insurrection in Yorkshire, known as the Pilgrimage of Grace, which fired almost all of the northern counties. The rising was sternly repressed, and 50 leaders were executed in Lincolnshire.

Next was the removal of images and shrines. Spoliation of the Church occurred when Cromwell's injunctions of 1538 forbade images and declared superstitious shrines to be forfeit to the King. The shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury, for instance, yielded two complete wagon-loads of gold and jewels.

This was followed by the completion of the Monastic Dissolution in 1539. As the money gained by the suppression of the smaller monasteries did not prove sufficient for royal purposes, recourse was had to the larger monasteries. In 1539 an Act was passed vesting all monastic property in the King. Glorious architectural splendours of the countryside were plundered, and the very buildings ruthlessly demolished for their timber, lead and iron. Their relics still remain here and there, like bones picked clean by vultures.

Cromwell succeeded, as he had promised, in making his monarch the richest prince in Europe. But he overreached himself when, in order to effect an alliance with the Continental Protestants in a great Protestant league, he tried to induce the King to marry Anne of Cleves. The lady was plain and dull and Henry described her as the "Flanders Mare". Cromwell was accused of high treason in 1540 and beheaded.

Henry's attitude was that of Catholic orthodoxy, except that he substituted his own authority for that of the Pope. In England the Pope's power was broken. Henry departed from this attitude of orthodoxy when dangers of attacks from abroad compelled him to seek possible political support from the German Protestants. He drafted 10 Articles of Religion in which he made some concessions to Protestantism.

In addition, the clergy were to denounce the Bishop of Rome in Church.

This was followed by the Six Articles Act, 1539.

When the Pope demanded a joint attack by France and Spain upon England, Henry diplomatically sought to show the world that he was an orthodox Catholic save in regard to the Pope, and put pressure upon Parliament to pass the Six Articles Act, the "bloody whip with six strings", which declared that;

1. If anyone taught or held that after consecration bread or wine remained, he should be burnt.
2. If anyone held that Communion should be administered in both kinds;
3. that a priest might marry;
4. that a monk or nun might marry;
5. that private masses for the dead were not expedient; or
6. that auricular confession was not necessary; he should forfeit all his goods and be imprisoned at the King's pleasure, and if convicted a second time, be hanged as a felon.

Under this statute, a priest named Lambert was condemned and executed, Archbishop Cranmer himself being his judge.

The foregoing changes in England were primarily those of ecclesiastical politics rather than religious conviction..

Nevertheless, in spite of the movement being occasioned by the King rather than by a Luther, a Calvin or a Zwingli, the real causes of the Reformation were deep-rooted in the nation's experience. Englishmen welcomed their freedom from the oppressive dominance of a foreign power, and were penetrating below the superstructure of medieval religion to the foundations of their faith. The disturbed state of the country gave opportunity for the development of this deeper movement of which the characteristics were that it followed Wyclif in looking to the state to reform the Church, and also in stressing the need for the circulation of the Bible, which it considered to be the standard of doctrine and ceremony.

I am indebted to the Moore College notes of a study on Church History for much of the above, and am convinced that they provide a true picture of the events that transpired.

I think that we do not appreciate how our heritage has been providentially provided for us, and how no other manner except the harsh measures often prescribed would have availed, and also how these measures must emanate from the top, principally the Throne.

(To be Continued).

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.

Whilst the production, publication and distribution of this magazine is undertaken as a faith ministry, it is totally dependant on the tithes and offerings of our readers. We are happy to continue sending it freely to all who wish to receive it but genuinely cannot afford to contribute in any way. However, we do request an offering to at least cover the cost of postage, especially for overseas readers. But in order to be faithful stewards of the offerings sent to us, at the end of each year we will be obliged to remove the name from our mailing list of anyone who has not contributed or contacted us within the past year. The financial assistance and prayers of those who read it, and are blessed by it, are therefore vitally necessary for its continuance and growth.

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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Behold, I will make Jerusalem
a burdensome stone
and a cup of trembling
unto all the people around about.
All that burden themselves with it
shall be cut in pieces.

Zechariah 12:2-3.

Produced and distributed by
THE COVENANT VISION MINISTRY.
P.O. BOX V192, MOUNT DRAUIT VILLAGE
N.S.W. 2770 AUSTRALIA

National Library of Australia Number
ISSN 1031-8135
Print Post Approved. PP242587/00039.

Printed by *The Covenant Vision Ministry.* (02) 9833-3925.