



THE COVENANT VISION.

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

THE COVENANT VISION.

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

In presenting this magazine, it is not our intention just to indiscriminately add to the number of Christian journals already available. Our only purpose is to present the Word of God in its fulness as we feel God has revealed it to us, in order that the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob may be glorified.

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

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

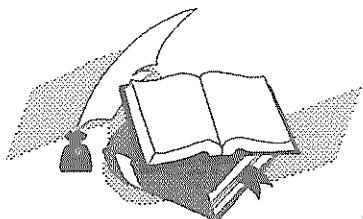
Denominational doctrines and differences are not our concern, and it is not our intention to enter into such arguments. There is not enough time left to waste it on such unproductive, and indeed, destructive, exercises. We are concerned ONLY with what we believe the Word of God says and teaches.

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

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

We proclaim the absolute necessity for all who would faithfully serve God to 'receive the power from on high', which can only

(continued on inside back cover)



Editorial.

"If My People . . ."

In II Chronicles 7:14 we read of the only solution given to us by God, whereby we are able, as a nation, to turn the present tide of evil and corruption that now utterly consumes us. It reads;

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

As we come to the end of another year, I feel it pertinent that we take good stock of what is happening to our once great Christian Nation of Australia. Irrespective of our Christian doctrinal or political differences, it must surely be apparent to any thinking person that something very dreadful has happened to us over the course of this century. Australians have always been a very hardy race. Many of our real patriots and statesmen have been what we might call "rough diamonds", as distinct from other countries where the leadership came from an aristocratic background. I have travelled the world quite extensively during my 75 year sojourn, five times round the world, another eight times just to America, and several visits to Singapore and Hong Kong. I've lived for many years in Papua-New Guinea, and travelled extensively through the outback of Australia.

One of the more noticeable aspects I have experienced is the momentary hesitation of so many folk from other countries to understand our form of expression. To them we are very 'laid back', almost to a point of disrespect, and what they see as being very lacking in what is called 'the social graces'. The average Australian has always been a hard working, honest man, trusting

to a fault, but always willing to help a mate in need. But things are so very different from the early days. Australia isn't Australia any more - or at least the Australia that we knew back then.

What has happened to so gradually and surreptitiously change our way of life so much? We might look back at history for a possible answer to this question. The history of the downfall of the Roman Empire could give us a few clues. Three of the reasons for Rome's fall, as stated by historians, were the elevation of sports, excessive taxation, and the decline in the people's religious beliefs. The first two of the above mentioned are so apparent that no further comment should be necessary. But there is no doubt in my mind about the relevance of the third condition when we apply it to our own modern history. Most families went to church on Sunday, some two or three times in the one day. Shops were closed on Sundays. There was a much greater reverence for God, and the things of God, even allowing for differing opinions within doctrinal matters. One could walk the streets, particularly at night, without any worry. We hardly ever even locked the door when we went out.

But "progress" has overtaken us. We now do our own thing. Parents all too often have little if any control of their children, and mainly because of the economic climate, I must admit, leave the up-bringing of their children to others. The family unit, as we once knew it, is rapidly disappearing. Crime is rampant, as is all forms of immorality and sexual perversion.

The big question is, 'How do we remedy this situation?' Politicians are patently hopeless. Theologians are, in the main, helpless. Everyone does that which seems right in their own eyes, as the Bible so aptly puts it. So what do we do? Is there actually an answer to our present woes?

Yes! There is, and irrespective of people's objection to bringing religion into the subject, the only answer for us, as a nation, is the implementation of the verse with which we commenced this article.

1. We must recognise and accept the calling of God upon us.
2. We must humble ourselves. This means getting rid of the pride we place on those things which we consider to be of such irreplaceable importance, and which we have placed first in our lives in preference to obedience to God.
- 2.

3. We must pray. That's not the same thing as saying our prayers. It means that we must stay in continual contact and communion with our God.
4. We must seek His face. This is the only means by which we will find and understand His will and purpose for us. We must seek His will in our lives, not justification for what we want.
5. We must, both individually and nationally, repent and turn from the evil of our present ways, most of which are abominations in God's sight. We must replace man-made laws with God-made Laws. Only through obedience to these laws are we ever guaranteed peace and security and happiness.

If we agree to do these things, and actually put them into practice, then God has guaranteed that He will hear us, forgive us, and that He will heal our land. In other words, obedience to God will rid us of all the evils which now beset us, and which are increasingly destroying our people. And never conclude that this is an impossibility. God has made it quite clear, that under the terms of the New Covenant which He has made with His people, that irrespective of whether we like it or not, He IS going to be our God; that we ARE going to be His people; and that He IS going to place His Laws in our minds and write them upon our hearts.

There has never been a time in our history when we needed God as we do now. We have reached, if not passed, the point of no return. Our very future, and the future of our children depends now, as we enter another year, on our reaction to these requirements. There is NO other answer but to heed God's plea:

"If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

The Heritage of Israel.

By Frank W. Dowsett.

Part Twelve.

The Covenant & The Promises. Part 7.

The Abrahamic Covenant. Part 4.

We have previously gone to some detail in this series of studies to show how the basic promises which God made to Abraham regarding his descendants becoming a great nation and company of nations has been literally fulfilled. But these were not the only promises included in the Abrahamic Covenant. So in this study we will look at these aspects, prior to studying in our next issue, God willing, the position of those who falsely claim to be the recipients of these wonderful Promises.

It should be kept in mind that many of these promises are found applicable to other nations. For instance, there have been many nations which have been "great". There have been several "maritime" nations. But we find that ALL the promises are found evidenced in only one nation and company of nations, viz. The Anglo-Saxon-Celtic Western Christian Nations headed

up by the descendants of Joseph, through his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. So let us have a look at these “Marks of Israel”.

1. They were to be a Great and Mighty Nation.

Gen. 12:2; “And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great;

2. They were to be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

Gen. 12:2-3; “. . . and thou shalt be a blessing.” “and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

3. They were to be a company, or commonwealth, of nations.

Gen. 35:11; “And God said unto him, (Jacob), I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee.”

Gen. 48:19; “He (Manasseh) also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother (Ephraim) shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

Eph. 2:12; “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”

4. They were to be the chief among the nations.

Gen. 27:29; “Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee.”

Deut. 7:6; “For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.”

Deut. 15:6; “For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.”

Amos 3:2; “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.”

Psalm 147:19-20; “He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any (other) nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.” (Amplified Bible).

II Samuel 7:23; “And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for

a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?"

I Chron. 17:21-22; "And what one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem to be his own people, to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people, whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt? For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever; and thou, LORD, becamest their God."

5. They were to be a maritime nation, having command of the seas.

Numbers 24:7; "He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters."

Psalm 89:25; "I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers."

6. They were to be a missionary nation.

Gen. 22:18; "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Isa. 43:21; "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise."

Isa. 49:6; "And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

7. They were to be the custodians of God's Word.

Psalm 147:19; "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel."

Isa. 59:21; "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever."

8. They would be a just nation.

Gen. 18:19; "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

6.

Lev. 19:15; "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour."

Deut. 1:17; "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it."

Zeph. 3:13; "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid."

9. They would be God's instrument in destroying evil.

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

Dan. 2:34-35; "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

10. They would be an undefeated nation.

Isa. 54:17; "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD."

Micah 5:8-9; "And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.

Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off."

11. They would be blind to their identity.

Isa. 29:10-12; "For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the

prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned."

Isa. 42:16, 19-20; "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

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

Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not."

12. They would possess the gates of their enemies.

Gen. 22:17; "thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;"

Gen. 24:60; "And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them."

13. They would have multitudinous seed.

Gen. 13:16; "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered."

Gen. 15:5; "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be."

Gen. 22:17; "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore;"

14. They would possess the wealth of the earth.

Gen. 27:28; "Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine."

Gen. 49:25-26; "Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth

under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."

Deut. 3:13-16; "And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren."

15. **They were to receive strangers and refugees.**

Lev. 19:33-34; "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."

Isa. 14:1; "For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob."

Zech. 8:22; "Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD."

16. **They would lose all trace of their lineage.**

Hosea 1:9-10; "Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God."

Isa. 42:16; "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

Rom. 11:25; "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that there will be many who have read these verses who will immediately say that whilst these things all happened to Israel some time in the past, that many of them were now not applicable. And you would be quite right. Some of these promises were totally unconditional. These included the original covenants made with Abraham. But quite a number of them were conditional promises, in that their fulfilment was dependant upon Israel's obedience to the Laws of God. It always was, and still is, God's intention to fulfil all these covenants and promises in and to His people Israel. The fact that they are no longer in operation, or at least full operation, is the result of our disobedience. It has never been a matter of them not being fulfilled, but a matter of when they would be fulfilled. If the nation of Israel had continued in obedience to God they would never have ceased to experience all these blessings and promises. But of course, we knew better than God, and decided to "do it our way". The result was catastrophic. The blessings turned into curses. Freedom turned into bondage and slavery. Joy turned into sorrow and mourning. Wealth turned into poverty. Victory turned into defeat. Life turned into death. And we have been so utterly full of our own importance and invulnerability that we have totally ignored the cause of our present condition.

So we ask ourselves, in view of all the wonderful promises that we have read above, "Did God know about our present condition when He made these promises? What went wrong with His promises? Why has He allowed this to happen?"

The answer is "YES". God was very much aware of what was going to happen, and He gave us very timely warning about it in His Word. In Deut. 32:29-36 we read;

O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!

How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?

For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.

For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter:

Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.

Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?

To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.

For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.”

Again in Daniel 12:7 we read;

“And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.”

During all these centuries we could have experienced the blessings which our loving God had so wonderfully proved. But we rejected them. This is why we are in such a disastrous position today as a nation. But be well assured friends. God's Word will not return unto Him empty. He shall accomplish that which He has promised. It has all been taken care of under the terms of the New Covenant wherein He has promised that He is to put His Laws into our minds, and write them in our hearts. He will then be our God, and we will in very truth be His people.

The gifts and callings of God are still without repentance. His voice still rings out to us; “I am the Lord. I change not. Therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

(to be continued).

C.V. NEWS.

Well, here we are again at the end of another year. If you're wondering where this year went, please let me know when you find out. This is the 14th time we have signed off to another year, and we can't help wondering just how many more times we will be doing so. May it please the Lord that He will return to restore justice and righteousness to His people before too many more issues.

We apologise for the fact that this issue comes to you a little late. We would have preferred to have posted it somewhat earlier because of the Christmas mail rush, but as we announced in our last issue, Betty and I have been away for a break, and only returned for the last few days of November. We had quite a good rest, although the weather wasn't that good for much of the time. But it gave me a chance to catch up on a lot of reading, together with selecting articles for our Covenant Watch publications. We holidayed at Tuncurry, next to Forster, on our mid-north coast. We took the opportunity of visiting several of our friends and "country members" in the area whilst there. Sadly, one of our very long standing friends, whom we had hoped to visit, Mr. Lawrie Alley, passed away in his sleep just a few days after we arrived. I'm sure that his widow Joan would appreciate your prayers for the Lord's comfort during this sad time for her and their family. We also visited their son and daughter-in-law, Steve and Margaret, and their two children, Matthew and Rebecca. Matthew is a very brave and happy lad, despite the fact that he suffers with serious spina bifida, and requires full-time attention from his very loving and devoted parents. He practically lives in a special wheel chair which was provided by the Variety Club. His sister Rebecca is practically back to normal following the severe burns she suffered a few years ago, so we are most thankful for the Lord's mercy in their lives. We also had a very pleasant time of fellowship with Stan and his wife Daphne, the elder brother of Lawrie who passed away. We spent four days in Coffs Harbour visiting Betty's brother Doug and his wife Rita. Doug has been in poor health for some time, and would also appreciate your prayers. Whilst in Coffs, I had the opportunity of speaking at a meeting at the home of Mr. John Smith, the recently retired mayor of Coffs

Harbour. John is a fine Christian gentleman, and a sincere believer in our Israel Identity. He was recently forced out of office by the vilification and persecution brought upon him by the same reporter for the Sydney Morning Herald and Melbourne Age who has been so prominent in persecuting myself and our mission. We just have to face the situation that we are not at all popular with certain elements within present-day Jewry. We know who we are, and we know who they are. The problem is that they know that we know, and it makes them as mad as hornets. It's not Frank Dowsett or John Smith that they're afraid of, but the TRUTH which we teach regarding the activities and identity of the sworn enemies of the Lord God of Israel. But with all their money and clout through the media which they control, they are still absolutely blind and indifferent to the fact that the One to whom they must eventually answer has much more clout than they ever dreamed of having. To save space in this report, we have printed a more detailed account of their most recent activities in the "Covenant Watch" supplement enclosed in this issue.

We still receive occasional requests as to when subscriptions are due. For those in doubt, just look at the figures in brackets after your name on the address label. You will see something like (12/99) which means that your subscription is paid to December - the 12th month - 1999, and is due for renewal thereafter. Subs and donations can be sent by personal cheque, Money Order, or cash. We do not handle credit cards.

We must express our sincere thanks to all those who have so faithfully supported us over the year, both with their offerings and their prayers. We don't expect the coming year to become any easier for us. The enemy has us in their sights, and even our web site could be under real danger of being banned. So your continued support in all areas of our needs is becoming more vital than ever, and we thank you all in advance for your commitment to the ministry to which the Lord has called us. Don't forget that we are all fellow workers together.

Finally, we give grateful thanks to our Heavenly Father for the continued privilege He has given to us to witness for Him and His Kingdom in these final days. We pray that His mercy and grace will be upon you all, and that we will all be found faithful to the One who has done such great things for us. May we continue as faithful servants of our Great King. □

A WALK THROUGH THE GOSPELS.

PART 15.

By Bruce Horner.

THE LATER JUDEAN MINISTRY.

**THE COMING OF JESUS TO THE
FEAST OF TABERNACLES CREATES
INTENSE EXCITEMENT CONCERNING
THE MESSIAHSHIP.**

Part Two.

INTERLUDE: ATTEMPT TO ARREST JESUS.

(John 7:32-36)

John 7:32 *The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring like this about him, and the Chief Priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him.*

Those members of the crowd who wondered how the Messiah, when he came, could possibly perform greater signs than those being performed by Jesus in their midst, did not dare voice their thoughts aloud, but exchanged them under their breath with one another. But the religious authorities knew what they were thinking and saying *sotto voce*. If then, in spite of the authorities' refusal to recognize him as a teacher sent from God, so many of the common people were convinced that he was not only a teacher, but the Messiah in person, more drastic steps

must be taken. The Sanhedrin (for so we should understand 'the chief priests and Pharisees') sent members of the temple police to arrest him. The chief priests were the members of the most wealthy and powerful priestly families, from whose ranks the high priest was regularly selected. They were the dominant figures in the party of the Sadducees, the majority party in the Sanhedrin. The temple police were responsible for the maintenance of law and order within the temple precincts. They were a picked body of Levites, and their commander (the 'captain of the temple') was an official wielding high authority, next only to the high priest, and he too was usually drawn from one or another of the leading chief-priestly families.

John 7:33-34 *So Jesus said, 'For a short time I am still with you; then I am going to him who sent me. You will search for me, but you will not find me, and where I am you cannot come.'*

After being told about the sending of the police to arrest Jesus, the readers are left in suspense regarding the outcome of their mission. Before John tells how they fared, he relates further words spoken by Jesus at the festival. These words plainly refer to the fact that Jesus had but a short time left before the completion of his earthly mission and his return to the Father. But they are (as so often) misunderstood by his hearers. We, of course, understand them better because we know the sequel, as the people in the temple court naturally could not. If those who looked for him before he arrived halfway through the festival week had such difficulty in finding him, and if his opponents had such difficulty in arresting him before 'his hour' had come, they would have even less chance of finding him when once he had returned to the Father.

John 7:35-36 *So the Jews said one to another, 'Where does this man plan to go that we shall not find him? Does he plan to go to the dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What is the meaning of his saying, "You will search for me and*

available to all who would receive it from him. The offer of this water had gone forth centuries before in the words of the prophet, *'Ho, every one who thirsts, come to the waters'* (Isaiah 55:1); but now it is repeated with a personal reference: *'If any one is thirsty, let him come to me.'*

Bruce tells us that there are good reasons for revising the traditional punctuation of Jesus' invitation, so that it runs:

If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me;
And let him drink who believes in me.

Both the rhythm and the rhyme of the resultant couplet echo with remarkable faithfulness the rhythm and rhyme of the original Aramaic utterance so far as it can be reconstructed from the Greek text. Jesus had already told the Samaritan woman of the superior properties of the living water: *'Whoever drinks from the water that I shall give him will thirst no more: the water that I shall give him will become a spring of water within him, bubbling up to eternal life'* (John 4:14).

It is now suggested that this upspringing well not only refreshes one's own soul but flows out to refresh the lives of others. *'As the scripture has said, "Rivers of living water shall flow from his inmost being".'* But where exactly does scripture say this? In the context of the book of Zechariah we are told that in the day of the LORD *'living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem'* (Zechariah 14:8). Ezekiel, giving further details about these waters, adds that *'everything will live where the river goes'* (Ezekiel 47:9). It is from no earthly Jerusalem that the living waters go forth; it is from the dwelling place of God in lives that are consecrated to him, in believing hearts where Christ has taken up his abode. And lest there should be any failure to grasp Jesus' meaning, the Evangelist adds an explicit note for the guidance of his readers: *'He said this with regard to the spirit.'*

Isa 12:1 *And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.*

2 *Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.*

3 *Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.*

4 *And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. (KJV)*

It is here made plain that the living water promised by Jesus was the gift of the Spirit - a gift that could not be imparted in its fullness until Jesus was 'glorified'. This was the first of several references in John to the glorification of Jesus; from some of the later references it becomes clear that his glorification was his crucifixion - his being 'lifted up', to use another characteristic expression of John. In the upper-room discourses Jesus emphasizes that the Comforter cannot come to his disciples until he himself takes his departure: 'If I go', he says, 'I will send him to you' (John 16:7). The first fulfilment of this promise is recorded in John 20:22.

The best attested reading of the second-last clause of verse 39 is simply '*Spirit was not yet*'. This does not mean that the Spirit did not yet exist; we have seen him active already (e.g. in John 1:32). It means that the Spirit was not yet present in the form which Jesus promised, or (as RSV has it) '*as yet the Spirit had not been given*' - i.e. to the followers of Jesus.

John 7:40-42 *So some of the crowd, hearing these words, said, 'This is surely the prophet.' Others said, 'This is the Messiah.' But the other side said, 'Why, is it out of Galilee that the Messiah is to come? Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is to come from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?'*

Just as Jesus' feeding the multitude in the wilderness suggested to the people that he was the second Moses, the coming prophet of **Deuteronomy 18:15** (cf. **John 6:14**), so now his offer of living water suggested the same identification afresh, for many remembered how Moses had brought water out of the rock for their forefathers to drink (**Exodus 17:6**; **Numbers 20:11**).

As appears in the attempts made to identify John the Baptist with some figure of eschatological expectation (**John 1:20** f.), so here the Messiah is evidently distinguished in the popular mind from the prophet like Moses. They were clearly distinguished in the expectation of the Qumran community, which looked for a great prophet to arise at the end of the current age alongside the lay and priestly Messiahs. The early Christians may have been the first to identify the prophet like Moses with the Messiah of David's line and they did so because they recognized in Jesus the one who fulfilled what was written of both these expected figures. But those Jerusalemites who on the present occasion identified Jesus with the Messiah were different from those who identified him with the coming prophet. Others, however, could not entertain the idea that the Messiah could be a Galilaean; such an idea was revolutionary, clean contrary to all that they had been brought up to believe. It was generally accepted that the messianic King for whose advent they longed would be a descendant of David. This was implied in the promise of God communicated to David by Nathan in **2 Samuel 7:12-16**, and it was confirmed in such prophetic oracles as **Isaiah 9:7**. The 'sure mercies of David' (**Isaiah 55:3**) could not be realized except in a prince of the house of David. Moreover, there was the express declaration in **Micah 5:2** that Bethlehem in Judah would be the birthplace of the coming 'ruler in Israel'; it was most appropriate that great David's greater Son should be born in David's own native town. Here we have a signal instance of Johannine irony. John knew well enough, and so did many of his readers, that Jesus was

indeed 'born of the seed of David according to the flesh'. (Romans 1:3), and that Judaean Bethlehem, not Galilaean Nazareth, was his birthplace. The fallacy inherent in this objection to the possibility of his being the Messiah was plain; no need to point it out in so many words. If we infer from this passage that the fourth Evangelist either did not know or did not accept Jesus' Davidic descent or nativity in Bethlehem, we expose our own failure to appreciate his delicate handling of this situation.

John 7:43-44 *So a division took place in the crowd because of him. And some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.*

From now on the division in the crowd on Jesus' account becomes a recurring note in the narrative (cf. John 9:16; 10:19); people range themselves inevitably on this side or that according to their estimate of him. As in verse 30, the renewed attempt to arrest or restrain him comes to nothing.

UNBELIEF IN HIGH PLACES.

(John 7:45-52)

John 7:45-46 *So the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, 'Why have you not brought him?' The officers replied, 'No human being ever spoke as he does.'*

The attempt to lay hands on Jesus, mentioned in verse 44, reminds the readers that a detachment of temple police had already been sent by the Sanhedrin to place him under restraint (verse 32). John knows how to use the device of suspense effectively; he now returns to those members of the police force and tells how they came back to the authorities empty-handed. The authorities naturally demand an explanation.

Although the actual terminology of witness is not used

here, these police officers add their contribution to the cumulative witness borne to Jesus and recorded in this Gospel. The words which they heard him speak made such an impression on them that they could not bring themselves to execute their commission and arrest him. 'No one ever spoke like him.' Such authority (cf. **Matthew 7:29**), such grace (cf. **Luke 4:22**), they had never found in any other speaker. Their testimony was expressed in few and simple words, but it has stood the test of nineteen centuries..

John 7:47-49 *So the Pharisees answered them, 'Have you also been led astray? Has any one of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd does not know the law; it is accursed.'*

The rank and file of the populace might be carried away by Jesus persuasive speech, the Pharisees implied, but it was surprising that disciplined police officers, whose duty was simply to carry out their orders, should also succumb to the persuasiveness of his words.

The question, 'Has any one of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him?' was intended to be a telling argument. As with the previous question, so with this, the form in which it is cast implies that the only reasonable answer is 'No'. Surely, if Jesus were indeed the Messiah, or even a genuine prophet of God, some of the rulers of the people would have acknowledged his claims, some of the religious experts would have recognized his true character. As it was, the argument suggested, only ignorant people could suppose that his claims had any substance. The argument was not so sound as they imagined: for one thing, Nicodemus was there to testify that at least one of the rulers, a Pharisee to boot, was well-disposed to Jesus; and for another thing, Jesus himself had declared that the truth about his person and mission had been concealed from the wise and understanding and revealed to babes (**Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21**). God habitually chooses

the weak and foolish to confound the wise and mighty.

The disparaging judgment pronounced on the crowd expresses a characteristic attitude of many Pharisees towards the common people. The common people - 'the people of the land', as they called them - simply could not be expected to master the details of the oral law, the 'tradition of the elders', and therefore they were always liable to infringe it. Even the liberal Rabbi Hillel, of the generation before Christ, summed up this attitude when he said, 'No member of the common people is pious'. From the Pharisees point of view, the common people could easily be misled by any plausible teacher, because of their shocking ignorance of the true interpretation of the law.

John 7:50-52 Nicodemus - he who came to Jesus on a former occasion, and was one of their number - said to them, 'Does our law pass judgment on any one before it first hears from him and learns what he is doing? They said to him in answer, 'Are you from Galilee too? Search and see: no prophet arises from Galilee.'

Nicodemus, introduced in **John 3:1** (on the occasion when he came to Jesus by night) as 'a man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews', now speaks up and protests against this condemnation of Jesus in his absence. Whatever might be said of the ignorance of the common people, here was a man who knew the law and could cite it authoritatively, as beffitted 'the teacher of Israel'.

The rule to which Nicodemus appealed is formulated thus in rabbinic literature: 'Flesh and blood may pass judgment on a man if it hears his words; if it does not hear them, it cannot establish its judgment.' Roman law agreed with Jewish law on this point, as is evident from the words of Festus in **Acts 25:16**. In both codes, the accused must have the opportunity to speak in his own defence before the verdict of the court is reached.

But even Nicodemus's protest could only call forth from the angry majority the contemptuous suggestion that he too had become a Galilaean. No prophet could be expected from Galilee, they argued, because no prophet had ever come from there. Even if they were right on the point of historical fact, they might now be faced with an exception to the rule. But there had been exceptions to the rule before: no less a prophet than Elijah came from Gilead (Galilee beyond Jordan). But it was generally felt in the south that only in Judaea could pure religion be looked for - a heritage from the days immediately following the return from the Babylonian exile. The fact that Jesus was actually born in Judaea (cf. Verses 41, 42) may not have been known to them.

(to be continued).

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THE SEED OF ISAAC.

By William H. Curtis. MEd., PhD.

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There is, in this land of ours today, an awareness that all is not right in the areas of politics, economics and religion. How can one begin to describe the scene in contemporary America? Where does one begin? Shall we talk about "usury" which is nothing more than avarice on a gigantic scale? Maybe the place to begin is with the media, as they flood us with the most UN-godly material in the history of the world; not to mention the news spins of current events that are levelled at us daily, which for all practical purposes are "one-sided" and sometimes so distorted that truth is hidden and not to be known. Politics might be the best place to start as we all know the benefits of being in office ... any office. We are faced with a constant barrage of lies, false promises and downright thievery in all quarters of political life. Have you ever met a truly *honest* politician? I have met only one, here in my home state, and indeed he is a credit to all that our country stood for in its early history. Life in Washington or any State Capital is like a Disneyland experience, a world of fantasy. The expectation of most incoming politicians is that of "perks" and "what's in it for me."

Life in these United States (or any other Israel country) is not what it was in former years. Our Constitution and Bill of Rights have come to be meaningless as a guide to Freedom and Liberty. The "politically correct" gang have changed the meaning of moral righteousness into "live and let live" and "if it feels good ... do it" mentality. As "they" come out of the closet, we are asked to go "into the closet" with our opinions of homosexuality. Our young people are exposed to every form of

debauchery and evil on the internet and TV; and in the schools, history has been rewritten so that the politically incorrect information that was once proudly learned and revered is either missing or distorted. We are now the 30th in the world in regards to educational proficiency. Someone once called this the "dumbing down of America." Lack of discipline and permissiveness is rampant in all our schools and promiscuity is at a level as never before in history. I could go on and on with the current conditions in secular America but that is not the purpose of this article. I am just setting a background that you are already familiar with, as it is to any man on the street in this nation of ours.

We now come to the next area of interest which is, of course, *Religion*. Sometimes I try to imagine what it would be like for a person to arrive here in this great land of ours who has never heard the words, God and Christianity, and is trying to determine the best fellowship to join with. Put yourself in his shoes and see before you all the denominations, cults, sects, groups and religious sub-fragments of each. How would you weed through all the statements of faith, beliefs, doctrines and bylaws of all these groups? How would you make a determination as to which (if any) held the TRUTH of God? How did we accumulate all these different belief systems? In our historic beginning, we had only one Protestant church, that of the Pilgrim/Puritan religion. How did all this happen to us? Do we blame Immigration of other peoples? Has our outreach to the nations of the world brought a plethora of religions upon us? May I say at this point that we are a country in *confusion and darkness*. We have forgotten our origin and the reason we were brought to these shores in the beginning. Anglo-Saxon Americans have either forgotten their history or have never really learned the truth of their beginnings. Is it any wonder, then, that most Americans today do not attend any "church" or worship the God of our fathers?

The one instrument of inspiration and instruction, The Bible, has been a "dust collector" and, when it is used as a book for instruction in matters of life, it is held in derision and distortion. Correct Biblical interpretation is very rare and found in only a small percentage of groups who would study it for the purpose for which it has been given to us by our gracious God. We that have been enlightened as to the truth of Holy Scripture and understand our heritage are truly blessed, in spite of the black

backdrop which I have just painted. Yes, we do have a deplorable situation here in this country but the fact that I can write these things to you without the fear of facing a "firing squad" or imprisonment says much. We still enjoy a good measure of freedom but there are those who would tell us that we should not settle for what we have, in spite of what we see in other nations of the world regarding freedom and liberty. They tell us that we should rebel and arm ourselves in an effort to "take America back." Their shouts of "Wake up America" are militant and demanding. Their call is to "kick the bums out of office" and "throw the races out of OUR land." They have a large litany of grievances against our government and those in economic power.

Much of the rhetoric of our "patriot" brethren is borne of ignorance and misinformation. We hear on the airways, in literature and various gatherings how the conditions in this country are somehow the fault of "THEM" (whoever them is). Much in the way of false doctrine involving "Satanic seed-lines" and incorrect concepts of revealed truth has led these "Identity" people into "conspiratorial" thinking and beliefs, instead of searching out the REAL reason why we are in the state that we find ourselves. It is so easy to condone one's behaviour if we can shift the "blame" on to another person or group (even race). Sadly, this is being done on a national level, so that the true Israel Identity of the Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, Germanic and kindred people is marred and scorned by not only the anti-Christ element but by those who profess Christianity as well. This kind of hate and antigovernment rhetoric does more to hurt the cause of Christ and the true understanding of the Kingdom of God than anything else in the world. Sometimes I wonder about the level of comprehension these people have regarding the PLAN, and WILL of the Almighty God. Do they really understand that God operates with His people on a National as well as Individual level? America is in the predicament it is in because of NATIONAL as well as individual SIN.

You can call it what you will, or name it what you might, or blame whoever you can, but the bottom line is still national and individual SIN. "*All we like sheep, have gone astray*" and we have nobody to blame except ourselves, Israel in the wilderness, rebellious, self-serving and Godless. When we are ready to face the truth about ourselves, and admit that what has befallen our

nation is none other than the JUDGMENT of God, then we have taken the first step to the proper understanding of what it is all about. The only literature or book I care to study on this subject is The Holy Bible, for it is here where we find the answers to all our questions AND the remedy for the situation.

Please do not misunderstand me, no one realises more than I that America has enemies. It is a fact that we have been invaded and imprisoned, if you will, but there are reasons for this that most do not understand. Enemies, yes; conspiracies, yes; unfair control of our lives, yes; but WHY? This is where we must look for answers and not in more rebellion, hate and finger-pointing. The ADL, the Southern Poverty Law Association, the Federal bureaucracy and indeed the incumbent administration of debauchery and evil are all real and a "thorn in our sides." But if this is all in the plan of God for our chastisement and ultimate good, why must we try to thwart His plan and purpose for our lives and that of our country? We are certainly in captivity to Mystery Babylon, which consists of all three "frogs" - Religious, Economic and Political. I think it is time now to look into the Word and try to get an understanding of the plan and purpose of God for our lives and this nation. Keeping in mind that God chose to blind His chosen seed line from the knowledge of their heredity, He nevertheless gave them instructions through Divine Law as to how they might live according to His plan for their well-being and good. The Covenant promises given to Moses in Deuteronomy 28 are perhaps the best example of His will and purpose to the sons of Isaac. Let's look there:

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field."

(Dent. 28: 1-3).

Then the list of blessings goes on for ten more verses enumerating all the benefits and abundance for obedience to His commands, but note particularly verses 13 & 14:

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“And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; And thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; If that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them: And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.”

May I say that we have not only gone away from His commandments, but in reality have gone after “other gods” to worship them, instead of being faithful to the Sovereign God of Creation. We may not bow down to idols of gold or wood, but we certainly have a “love affair” with the things of the world. Our god is money, property, automobiles, sex, and anything else that we revere as the most important thing in life to us, including OURSELVES. We worship power, acclaim, position, and people. Though we have been told not to love the things of the world or indeed the world itself, the fact is that our whole devotion is focused on the world and its contents. John’s first epistle says it all very plainly:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the father, but is of the world.” (1 John 2: 15-16.)

Now, the other side of the story is the consequences for failure to keep what God has commanded His children to do. A bilateral covenant is a contract between two parties; that is, the One making the covenant and the party of the second part who agrees to keep the contents in such a legal agreement. The children of Israel said to Moses, after he spoke the words of the law to them, *“all that the Lord has said, we will do.”* You know the rest of the story and the consequences of their failure to keep their part of the contract. They were to wander for forty years in the wilderness. We, in this Zion-America, are under the same judgment as were our progenitors. We are, for all intents and purposes, wandering aimlessly in the wilderness of a world

that has overtaken our land and our lives. He told us it would happen and it has. Just look at the “buts” in the aforementioned contract:

“But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.” (Dent. 28: 15-16.)

Then the list of curses goes on, it seems more than the list of blessings. What I find particularly disturbing is the language of verse 33:

“The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed away.”

Please note verse 43;

“The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low.”

Does this have a familiar ring for our Isaacsons here in America, (and all our Israel lands)? The role “reversal” that we have experienced is blatantly plain for the serious Bible student to see. The prophet Isaiah puts it another way when he calls us, who were once the “head” but are now the “tail.” All of this chastisement has come upon us for the reasons which I have stated above. It is God who has sent the judgment on our nation, and no one, no not anyone, whether politician or “patriot” or Priest, will ever thwart the plan or purpose of God. It is His good will and purpose and it will stand, until He and He alone enters into the scene to show His perfect Grace and favour to the sons of Isaac. Let’s see just how this will play out in prophetic history. The prophet Isaiah gives us God’s agenda for the future “rescue operation” that will eventually lead to the “restitution of all things,” where God will be “All in All”:

“Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even

God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." (Isa. 35: 4-5.)

The seed of Isaac will see the situation in TRUTH and turn to the Saviour for Divine guidance and direction. Christ will lead His people to victory and peace over the "powers" that now keep us in bondage and captivity. This promise is reiterated again in Isaiah 42: 16:

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

The very next chapter (43) gives us more reassurances of the coming intercession by God for our sake. He will deliver us out of this present day of darkness and tribulation. This day of "Jacob's Troubles" will end with the shout of victory and the enlightenment of His people:

"Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness.... This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise." (Isa. 43: 18-21.)

There is a new day coming, my friends, a day which will herald in the coming of the New Jerusalem. Though Jesus "wept" over the city of Jerusalem in days of old, and weeps even now over Jerusalem in the wilderness, we know that "weeping may endure for a night; but joy cometh in the morning."



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OUR PROTECTIVE GOD.

By Bruce Horner.

PART 8.

THE GREAT AWAKENING.

Part One.

The Moral and spiritual tide in England immediately prior to the time of Wesley and Whitefield was at an extremely low ebb. In many ways the condition of England was very similar to the condition in which we find ourselves today.

Like the days of the Old Testament, in the days before Whitefield and Wesley, the rot had set in right from the top. The first two Georges of the royal House of Hanover were unfaithful to their wives and had irregular attachments with other women. Yet there was no outcry in the land. In fact, more than one historian has observed that one of the saddest comments on the condition of the country was that such disregard of moral sanctions in the royal house could be accepted by most people without question. Neither was there a John the Baptist to take these Sovereigns to task.

When corruption in a nation sets in at the top, it is soon reflected all the way down the line. Thackery said of George II's moral laxity: 'No wonder that the clergy were corrupt and indifferent amidst this indifference and corruption.'

The rot had also started to affect the church, and basic Christian doctrines began to be discarded one by one. First, there was a departure from belief in the authority of Scripture. Men preferred to build their beliefs on their own reasonings than on the authority of the Word of God. With this vital anchor cut, the nation was inevitably precipitated into an age of drift, and when other vital changes in Christian belief began to be made, these

were regarded with comparative unconcern.

The nature and character of God began to be attacked. So-called Christian leaders and theologians began to deprive Him of His essential attributes, making Him to be a God after their own likeness. The person of Jesus Christ came under attack. He was declared to be no more than a man, and therefore no longer to be regarded as God.

When once these three foundational Christian doctrines had been so seriously affected in the circles that mould Christian thought, the next thing that followed was that the supernatural and miraculous were almost entirely removed from Christian belief and outlook, with the result that the essential New Testament was reduced to nothing more than humanism. Christianity, thus robbed of all that makes it dynamic and powerful, soon became a 'dead' religion. The salt had well and truly lost its savour, and Bishop Butler asserted that Christianity was wearing out of the minds of men. It was everywhere being held up to ridicule, and all that it stood for was being made the object of scorn. This, in turn, inevitably had its effect on the nation. Unbridled immorality, practised quite openly and unabashed, followed hard in the wake of a total disregard for God and of the widespread national ridicule and scepticism with regard to religion. Men glorified in their shame, and did so openly. Indeed, so openly defiant were they of decent moral laws and standards that they actually wanted to be known as loose and lawless.

Jeremiah said it all when he said

Jer 6:15 *"Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush."*

Stories abound of incredible vices and crimes being committed in the streets; robberies and brutal murders were being carried out wholesale. Violence was on every hand, and the name of Englishman was made to stink in the nostrils of men of other nations.

All this is very familiar. Both then and now, the steps in our national decline are seen to be very much the same. Our

literature, art, theatre, and almost all our culture, were so corrupt that they shocked even the most hardened visitors from overseas. And against all this appalling evil the Christian church, as is also true today, was a totally powerless and ineffective weapon, either to fight against it or to stem the tide. England, therefore, in the early days of the eighteenth century had witnessed a decline in religion and public morality not to be matched in the history of the nation. We had reached an all-time low, and had become a nation ripe for judgment.

Then, just at the point when things were at their worst, God began to move again in England. In 1735 the Spirit of God took hold of three men - George Whitefield, Howell Harris, and Daniel Rowland - in such a way that all were converted to Jesus Christ in the same year, although none of them knew this about the others at the time. Their itinerant ministry was to bring about a great spiritual awakening in England, Scotland and Wales. This awakening is now referred to as the great Eighteenth-Century Revival, and by the time that George III came to the throne in 1760, this great Evangelical Revival had swept the land. And so mercy had intervened in Britain instead of judgment.

George Whitefield's dynamic new life began as the result of reading a book called *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*. Whilst reading it he entered into an experience of the new birth and so became a man indwelt by the Holy Spirit. As a result of his being repeatedly 'endued with new power from on high', the impact which his life and teaching made on Britain and on North America was tremendous.

People often refer to the awakening in England at that time as 'Wesley's Revival', but John Wesley was not then converted, neither was he to be for a further three years, and by that time the revival was well and truly under way. No, it was George Whitefield, and not John Wesley, who was used of God to BEGIN the revival in England. And for this reason Whitefield has gone down in history as 'the Great Awakener'.

Yet Whitefield had few indications of the remarkable way in which he was going to be used of God in England when, in 1736, a year after his conversion, he committed himself to go
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out across the Atlantic as a missionary to Georgia. In fact, just before his ordination as a deacon in the Church of England, he found he was not even able to compose a sermon!

All this was God at work. Like Ezekiel, he had the experience that 'Thou shalt be dumb, but when I speak unto thee, then thou shalt speak.' On the day of his ordination in Gloucester Cathedral he found he was still not able to preach; but the very next morning, some words from the New Testament came with great power to his soul: 'Speak out, Paul'!

Whitefield was not disobedient to this divine commandment. He preached the following Sunday to a crowded audience with as much freedom as if he had been a preacher for years. That sermon meant that the Great Awakening in England had now started, although Whitefield was not to know it at the time. God then brought him to London although, to Whitefield, this move was only to make preparations for his forthcoming journey overseas. But God had other plans for him and for England before he could set out. In the providence of God, and due to unforeseen circumstances, Whitefield was to be kept in England for the whole of the following year.

Detained in London, Whitefield preached with great power in Bishopsgate Church and then in the Tower Chapel, which soon became crowded on Sundays as he continued there. So great was the response to his ministry in London that he stayed on for two months, preaching whenever and wherever he had an opportunity.

A new message was now shaking Britain, as it was yet to shake North America: 'You must be born again.' it was a message which was entirely fresh to the majority of the people in Britain. They had never heard it before. At least that generation had not. It was new because the true, dynamic Christianity of the New Testament which Britain had known in former days had become completely lost. So when people heard it being proclaimed again in the power of the Spirit, it literally startled them.

There was another element also. Each time Whitefield preached this 'new' message he was endued with great power from on high. That power came upon the crowds as they listened, and it

brought about a mighty response.

Whitefield returned to his University - Oxford - and there the fire was kindled all over again in his heart.

From Oxford he went to Gloucester, merely, as he thought, to get his bishop's advice about going abroad. But God kept him in Gloucester for three weeks, preaching twice each Sunday, and we read that every time he preached, 'the power of God attended the Word.' There was this 'unction' which was given him from above, and the congregations in Gloucester became very large.

Whitefield went on to Bristol, but merely to take leave of some of his relatives before going overseas to North America. On reaching Bristol and attending a week-day service, as was his custom wherever he went, he was invited to come from his seat and preach.

The sermon startled his hearers. Next day he was invited to preach in another church, and many came to hear him. So great was the reaction to his sermon this time, that on the following Sunday many flocked from the other churches in Bristol to hear him.

All Bristol was now astir, and this widespread reaction to the 'new message' resulted in the mayor inviting Whitefield to preach in the presence of the Bristol Corporation. So Whitefield continued in Bristol for some time after this, preaching on weekdays and twice on Sundays, mainly on the doctrines of new birth and of justification by faith in Jesus Christ alone. Again we read that during all this time 'the mighty power of God attended the Word.'

God now began to use the power of the printed word also, for the people in Bath and Bristol were so stirred by Whitefield's discourses that many asked if he would have his sermons printed, in order that they could both study them for themselves and also distribute them widely in the area.

Whitefield came to London again to make further preparations for going abroad, but God overruled again and circumstances kept him there for three weeks. He preached more frequently than before, and many came to hear him.

Soon he went down to Stonehouse in Gloucestershire, where so many came to listen that neither church nor house could contain the people, and each week the congregations increased. He said of this visit: 'I found uncommon manifestations of the power of God were granted me from above. Sometimes, like St Paul, it was as though I would be taken out of the body.'

Back at Bristol, he found a great hunger for the Word of God. The message seemed so new to them all that multitudes came on foot, with many more in coaches and on horseback. The congregations grew larger and larger. People of all ranks of society and of all denominations came flocking to hear his ministry. And the response was as great in Bath.

Whitefield was in London at the end of August 1737 to prepare to go overseas, but God intervened once more, and his departure for America was still further delayed. He preached at St Ann's Cripplegate, Wapping, the Tower, Ludgate and Newgate, and all the time the congregations increased. By September even Fleet Street had begun to take notice and to mention his name in the newspapers. After three whole months of this continuous preaching, the crowds in the churches were so thick that Whitefield felt that he could almost walk on people's heads. In fact, London by now was so stirred that the streets were filled with people going to church long before daybreak. Copies of his printed sermons were being called for, and the awakening was spreading further and further afield. He was a new phenomenon in the Church of England. His message had literally startled the nation. All eyes were upon him. By anointing his message on 'The Necessity of the New Birth,' and by anointing him, God was using Whitefield to restore England's original Christian foundations in the hearts of her people.

At this stage Whitefield had to go aboard the Whitaker for Georgia. But God had other plans, and other people, to ensure that the flames now kindled in the west country and in London did not go out while he took Whitefield to light a fire in America.

John Wesley landed in England the day before Whitefield

sailed, but as a disillusioned man. He had spent more than two years as a colonial missionary in Georgia, but was now crying out in misery: 'I went to America to convert the Indians, but, oh! who will convert me?'

Four months later came his spiritual birthday. On 24 May 1738, whilst he sat in an Aldersgate Street meeting-room listening to Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans being read, he had a transfiguring experience. To quote his own words: 'At about a quarter before nine, while Luther in his Preface was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed.

I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might...I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart.'

Like Whitefield, he was born again of the Holy Spirit of God, and was impregnated with spiritual fire that he, too, might be used to set England ablaze for God.

This was an experience that Wesley's mother and brother had experienced, and which his father, also an Anglican minister, was later to experience. It was common in the early Methodist Church, but little was heard of it in later times.

I would like, at this point, to give my personal testimony as to how I, also, was to experience this wonderful phenomenon. I was about 19 years old. I had been brought up by godly Methodist parents to attend Church and Sunday School. I left home when my father was transferred to the country just after I finished school. I had been living in boarding houses, was desperately lonely and unhappy. One night I spent hours in prayer, telling God of my terrible wretchedness, and as I lay quietly there in my room, I felt this wonderful glow and warmth in my breast, which surged through me from head to foot, and was to remain with me for a full three days before it gradually evaporated. I felt completely at ease and confident for the first time in my memory. I believed I could have undertaken and accomplished the most exacting and onerous tasks with ease, such was the enormous feeling of well-being which overtook

me. I did not have any idea of what had happened, nor did I ever tell people until very recently. I had no knowledge of what had happened to Wesley, and it was not until many years passed that I linked the experience. However, at the time it was a turning point in my life, which I will forever treasure.

The second great wave of this mighty revival really began when Whitefield returned to England at the end of 1738. Having been used of God in America to begin a great spiritual awakening there, he returned, as he thought, only in order to be ordained priest at Oxford. But God had other plans.

He landed in Ireland from America in November, having survived a violent Atlantic storm, and his preaching in Limerick and Dublin caused a considerable stir. Arriving in London during December, he was greatly encouraged by the conditions which he found there. He soon perceived that, during his absence in America, God had watered the seed which he had sown before his departure, and that as a result of the faithful ministries of John and Charles Wesley, many who had been converted under him a year ago had now grown to be strong men in Christ. A great outpouring of the Spirit followed his initial preaching at St Helen's Bishopsgate and Islington, and nothing short of a miraculous month followed. Despite the devil's activity in causing such resistance from the churches that all but four of them now excluded him from their pulpits, by the end of December Whitefield had preached in Spitalfields and across the river at Southwark, as well as at Bishopsgate and Islington, sometimes no less than nine times in one week, and with as great a power as ever he did in his life. The result was a constant stream of people coming to him for deep personal counselling between his preachings. So much was this the case that he had the firm conviction that it was only the prelude to something far bigger. There was a strong feeling within him that 'God was about to do great things amongst us.' He was not to be disappointed.

New year's Day dawned. On 1 January 1739, at about three o'clock in the morning, there was a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Whilst some of them were at prayer at a 'love feast' being held in Fetter Lane, the power of God came mightily upon them. That outpouring of the Holy Spirit proved to be the

precursor of the next wave of this heaven-sent revival. For a most remarkable year followed. One writer says, 'The new outpouring was a glorious preparation for the herculean work on which Whitefield and the Wesleys were about to enter.'

George Whitefield was indeed ordained priest at Oxford on 14 January 1739. In the afternoon he preached to a crowded congregation. 'God enabled me to preach with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power so that I could lift up my voice like a trumpet', he said. And while he preached, gownsmen of all degrees surrounded the church and stood at the windows attentive to every word.

He returned to London from Oxford and preached with great power to thronged congregations throughout the rest of January. At one church not only was the church itself packed, but there was nearly a thousand people in the churchyard. This led him to think about preaching out of doors.

The crowning day of this part of his London ministry came, when on the first Sunday in February 1739, after preaching to vast congregations at Christ Church Spitalfields, St Margaret's Westminster, St Helen's Bishopsgate, and a full meeting-house in Fetter Lane, he wrote in his journal: 'God has owned me before nearly 12,000 people this day.'

The opposition which arose amongst some church leaders and clergy against the doctrine of the new birth made it clear what it was that was opening the eyes of so many people. For after Whitefield and Wesley had talked for a long time with their opponents, Whitefield said that the latter believed only in a Christ who was outside themselves, whereas 'we firmly believe He must be inwardly in our hearts.' This is a truth which needs to be rediscovered today.

It was just as this great climax was being reached in London that Whitefield prepared to set out towards the west country to go over the same ground he had covered previously. His arrival in Bristol during the second week in February 1739 was heralded by a letter which he received from one of his opponents. It read: 'Whitefield has set the Town on fire. Now he is gone to kindle a flame in the country!'

It had been written in mockery, but it proved to be more prophetic than even Whitefield knew. His response to the letter was: 'I trust it is a holy fire that has proceeded from the Holy and Blessed Spirit. Oh that such a fire may not only be kindled, but blow up all England into a flame, and all the world over.' Certainly so far as England was concerned, he was to see his prayer wonderfully answered.

Opposition in Bristol, both from the Chancellor and the Dean of Bristol, caused Whitefield to be driven out into the open air. But in the providence of God this was in order that he might reach the colliers. To preach out in the open was the boldest step any preacher had taken at that time, but it proved to be the beginning of a great revival in the west country. First, two hundred colliers came to hear him at Kingswood; then between two thousand and five thousand people gathered; and within two weeks the crowds at Kingswood reached as many as ten thousand. Whitefield said: 'That man was right. The fire is kindled in the country, and I know all the devils in hell shall not be able to quench it.'

Going over to Hannan Mount and Rose Green Mount in his third week, the combined audiences amounted to no less than eighteen thousand in one day. After addressing fourteen thousand people at Rose Green Mount one Sunday afternoon he said, 'It was worthwhile to come so many miles to see such a sight. The more I am bidden to hold my peace, the more earnestly will I lift up my voice like a trumpet and tell the people what must be done in them, before they can be finally saved by Jesus Christ.'

God also overruled in the matter of the Bristol churches, for despite the Chancellor's opposition, when he preached at St Mary Redcliffe it was like opening the sluice gates! Said Whitefield: 'I preached to such a congregation as my eyes never saw. Many went away for want of room.' He then preached to a great multitude inside St Philip's and St Jacob's church next day, but so many thronged to hear him that thousands had to go away because there was no room for them. All Bristol was by now astir.

Whilst this was going on, God was moving mightily in Wales. Howell Harris had been converted in the same year as Whitefield, and God was using him to re-lay the Christian foundations there. Whitefield now went to Wales because, he said, 'I want to catch some of Howell Harris's fire.' Crowds came wherever Whitefield went to preach, and he said he had never seen congregations so melted down. When leaving the Principality on 9 March his comment was: 'I think Wales is excellently well prepared for the Gospel of Christ. I bless God's Holy Name for sending me into this country.'

He went back to Bristol, and the awakening there continued apace. Over fifteen thousand colliers came to hear him preach on the first Sunday of his return; then during the next three weeks the numbers increased until, on Sunday 25 March, he preached in the open to over forty thousand people. The peak of his two months ministry in that area came on his last Sunday, 11 April 1739, when, in all three places where he preached in the open, the congregations were larger than ever before.

It now became plain that God was bringing about an awakening in other parts of the kingdom. News had reached Whitefield of the wonderful progress which the Gospel was making in Yorkshire through the preaching of a man of God by the name of Ingham. He had seen what God was doing in Wales. Now news came to him of the way the Gospel was flourishing in Oxford. Later, he was told of how the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine had been driven out to preach in the fields in Scotland and had just spoken to fourteen thousand people! Christian foundations were therefore now being re-laid everywhere. Whitefield now entrusted the work in Bristol to John Wesley, because the time for him to return to Georgia was fast approaching. He also persuaded Wesley of the necessity of field preaching as the means most likely to reach the masses. Less than 24 hours after Whitefield had left Bristol, Wesley himself embarked on his own open-air preaching course, 'speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining the city to about 3000 souls.'

The text for this, the first of his many thousands of such field-sermons, was prophetic of the great things that lay ahead: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the THE COVENANT VISION.

broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.'

Whitefield visited Wales again and saw that the awakening there was now spreading everywhere. Then he spent the next fortnight blazing a trail back to London, via Chepstow, Gloucester, Cheltenham, Oxford and their surrounding villages, thousands turning out to hear him wherever he stopped to preach.

Arriving in London, he was once again driven by circumstances out into the open to preach. Then God worked most remarkably in London in just over a month. On the first Sunday after his return, the numbers who came to hear him preach exceeded anything he had ever seen before. As many as 20,000 came to Moorfields on the first Sunday morning, and there was never less than 20,000 every Sunday morning throughout the whole of May. On Kennington Common there were at least 30,000 people on that Sunday evening; by the next Sunday evening there were 50,000; and, a week later, 60,000. London was really being awakened.

At this stage, Whitefield was sometimes preaching for as long as an hour and a half or two hours, and multitudes of people would stand in the pouring rain, and even whilst it was snowing, in order to hear him. Rarely did anyone leave before he had finished. In fact, the people's hunger for spiritual things was so great that Whitefield said on one occasion: 'I felt they would listen all day to the Word of God being preached, if I could preach for that long.'

The climax to all of his London Ministry came on the week-end beginning with the glorious 1 June 1739. No less than 80,000 people gathered at Mayfair near Hyde Park to hear him preach on that day, which was a Friday. Then on Sunday, 3 June, he preached on Kennington Common to the largest audience he had ever seen in that place. No wonder he said at the end of this London visit: 'I have indeed seen the Kingdom of God come with power in this great city.'

And so Whitefield returned to Georgia. Hundreds, and perhaps

thousands, had been converted under his ministry during the last half-year, and together with all that God was doing through Spirit-empowered preachers in other places, the whole of the British Isles was fast becoming ablaze for God.

(to be continued).

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ZEPHANIAH.

Part One.

A Study by
Frank W. Dowsett.

Chapter One, Part One.

In commencing a new study of any particular person in the Bible, I always feel it necessary to have a reasonable knowledge of their background, as it plays a most important part in our appreciation of their message. God is always very careful in whom He chooses to speak on His behalf, and we find this principle no less followed in the choosing of His servant Zephaniah. Thus, in verse one of the book of this prophet, we find recorded his detailed genealogy;

"The word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah."

From this we find that Zephaniah was a direct descendant of King Hezekiah, the name "Hizkiah" being an alternative rendering of "Hezekiah". (See both Young's and Strong's concordance). He was therefore, like Daniel, of royal descent. The amount of detail given regarding his genealogy is rather unusual for a prophet, but this could have been deliberate in order that he is not confused with three other Zephaniahs mentioned in the Bible.

He was the last of the prophets immediately preceding the captivity, and was contemporary with Jeremiah. His prophecy was written during the reign of the Kings of Judah only, and was specifically directed against Judah.

His name means "The hidden one of the Lord" or "He whom Jehovah has hidden". He is the ninth in the sequence of the twelve Minor Prophets, and his message is one of reproof

and judgment. It has been said of him "that no hotter book lies in all the Old Testament". Herbert Lockyer, in his book "*All the Men of the Bible*" comments;

"What a graphic picture of Judah's spiritual pride this prophet of judgment paints! Worshippers of God were found sprawled on their house tops worshipping the moon and the stars. The spirit of practical atheism had possessed the people, and their religious leaders had lost their moral seriousness. Zephaniah sees no way out of such departure from God but judgment, so he announces the day of the Lord, denounces idolaters, waverers and apostates, and pronounces doom on wrongdoers. Much that he predicted has been partially fulfilled, but ultimate fulfilment is still future."

There is no doubt that if Zephaniah was around today, thundering forth the same message, that he would be right at the top of the enemy's "hit list". As we will discover, the conditions which he so roundly condemned in his day are exactly the same as we find in our nation today, and the passage of time makes our present behaviour no less serious and objectionable in the sight of the Lord.

It is interesting to note the similarity in this respect to all the prophets. Without exception they proclaimed God's wrath and judgment on Israel because of their own national and individual sinfulness. But they also pronounced God's wrath and judgment upon the heathen nations because of their evil effect upon God's Israel people. As now, the nation was infatuated with the customs of the heathen, and the penalty has been the same. We have been literally invaded with foreign customs and religious practices, to the extent that even many Christians seem to see no wrong in mixing our Christian Faith with these heathen beliefs. The doctrine of 'Multiculturalism' is destroying our nation, simply because we have refused to obey God's command to "be separate". And the root of this attitude can be found to a large degree in the paranoid opposition which comes from the churches as to the identity of God's true Israel people, and thereby removing the necessity for us to live in strict obedience to God's Laws, Statutes, Commandments, and Judgments. This is very well illustrated by an experience I had many years ago. The pastor of the church that we then attended, totally disagreed THE COVENANT VISION.

with my belief that we should still be governed nationally by God's Laws. He did not accept the fact of our Israel Identity, but told me that if I was correct in my belief that the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic people were in fact the people of Israel, then he agreed that we should be obeying God's Laws. So much for five years of theological training.

The final matter which we must keep in mind is that the prophecies of Zephaniah, no less than those of all the prophets, only become meaningful as we apply them to the latter days in which we are now living, and as we apply them to the actual people to whom they are directed.

Verses 2 to 6 of Zephaniah chapter one commences the list of recipients of God's Judgments. The first is directed against the land generally, and its evil practices and humanity, as found in verses 2-3;

"I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD.

I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD."

The word "consume" means "to take away, to make an end of." "Stumblingblocks" means "ruins, as those created by idols and idolatry." "Man" refers to "humanity generally".

So we find that as a first general statement, God intends to totally eradicate the entire practice of idolatry, in all its forms, that has caused so much ruin and godlessness right up to our present day. Israel is to be cleansed of all these abominations. But don't let us become deluded into thinking that this applies solely to idols in so many of our churches, and the idolatrous worship that is associated with them. An "idol" is anything that we place before our obedience to, and worship of, God. It can be anything from sports, physical activities and recreation, family, work, hobbies, or anything else which takes precedence in our lives over the things of God. Not that there is necessarily anything wrong with any of these things in themselves. But we must always be careful to put them in their right place. If they interfere with our Faith, then they have become idols.

Our Lord Jesus Christ put the principle very simply when He stated in Matt. 10:37-39;

*"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.
And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.
He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."*

In verses 4 to 6, Zephaniah then turns his attention to Judah and Jerusalem;

*"I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests;
And them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship and that swear by the LORD, and that swear by Malcham;
And them that are turned back from the LORD; and those that have not sought the LORD, nor inquired for him."*

As we read in Psalm 144:1-2;

*"When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;
Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion."*

Judah was the tribe from whom came the throne which was to reign over all Israel. It became known as "The throne of David", and is very clearly identified as God's Throne over Israel in 1 Chronicles 29:23;

"Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him."

Furthermore, Jeremiah 3:17 informs us;

"At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the

name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart."

We thus see that primarily, the Lord's judgment is to be directed against the leadership under the House of David, in that it has allowed these abominations to take root and continue within the lives of His people. God targets no less than six recipients of His judgment.

1. The remnant - or name - of Baal.

Not too many Christians today have the faintest realisation of the fact that much of our present so-called Christian doctrine is nothing short of Baal worship. Ever since the worship of Baal was inaugurated under the leadership of Nimrod nearly four thousand years ago, it has been introduced cunningly, insidiously, and very deliberately, into the true worship of the Lord God of Israel. So much so, that most Christians today will fight tooth and nail to preserve what they see as "true Christian doctrine", totally refusing to acknowledge the proven fact of the introduction of Baal worship into the Christian faith. Our Lord Himself warned us of this very situation when He stated in John 16:2;

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

The intent of God is clear. He intends to remove all false doctrine from our midst. From that time onward we will indeed worship Him as an entire nation in both spirit and truth.

2. The name of the Chemarims with the priests;

It's interesting to examine the meaning of the word 'Chemarims'. According to Strong's Concordance, #'s 3648 and 3649, it means "an ascetic; as if shrunk with self-maceration; to be shrivelled, as with heat; deeply affected with passion; an idolatrous priest." The Oxford dictionary defines an 'ascetic' as "one who is severely abstinent, and who is ever in self-discipline." It defines 'maceration' as "to make, or become, soft by soaking - to reduce to thinness by fasting." I never cease to

be amazed by the intensity of the wording of the Scriptures, and the constant necessity for us to really study the meaning of the words which the Lord Has inspired His servants to use. Where would we find a more apt description of so many of our present religious leaders and their doctrines? These idolatrous priests, especially within the Church of Rome, have caused God's Word to become soft and thin through the soaking they have given it with all their heathen intrusions into the real truth of what God has said and done. Their false doctrines have become a passion. Millions of true and faithful Christians have been put to agonising deaths in the name of these god-less doctrines. And equally, millions are presently having their faith destroyed by this watered down form of so-called Christianity, taught by shrunken shrivelled up false ascetic priests. Is it any wonder that George Adam Smith referred to the Book of Zephaniah as being "the hottest book in all the Old Testament."

3. Those that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops.

Nothing seems to have changed, has it? Since the earliest days, even long before the formation of Israel as a nation, people were being taught to refer to the heavenly bodies for signs as to what they should or should not do at any particular point in time. It all commenced, as far as the Biblical record is concerned, with the construction of the Tower of Babel, whose top was inscribed with the signs of the Zodiac in a specifically chosen sequence which was contrary to the sequence intended by God. Understood in the sequence which God had intended, the people would have learned of the only way to eternal life. By using Nimrod's methods, they learned the ways of death. As we have said, nothing has changed. People are still fed with all this astrological garbage through just about any and every magazine and newspaper printed today. The true meaning of the signs which God has placed in the heavens has become almost completely obliterated through the false teaching and worship of "the host of heaven". God condemns this no less today than He did right from the very beginning. The following Scriptures make this quite clear;

Deut. 4:19;

"And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven."

Deut. 17:2-5;

"If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant,

And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded;

And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and inquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel:

Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die."

Reading the above makes one realise why people today are not interested in the Law of God. Its introduction would certainly go a long way to solving the over-population problem. How we could do with another Josiah today when we read in the following account of what he did. How we pray for the Lord to give us some righteous leaders.

II Kings 23:10-14;

"And he (Josiah) defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathanmelech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the

altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men."

4. Those who worship and swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham.

Now I'm sure that the obvious question will be, "Who is Malcham?" In this context, he was one of the gods of the Ammonites. The word means "a king-god" or "king-idol". The New Bible Dictionary defines him as being the chief god of the Ammonites, and identifies him as the god named Milcom, Molech or Moloch. It points out that all these terms have the basic root *mlk*, which conveys the idea of kingship. In order to fully realise the seriousness of the charge made against the Israel people in "swearing by Malcham", we need to read what the Lord had to say about them. In I Kings 11:5 and 33, and II Kings 23:13 in regard to Milcom, we read;

"For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites."

"Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father."

"And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the

abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile."

Of Molech, or Moloch, we read in Leviticus 18:21, I Kings 11:7, and Jeremiah 32:35;

"And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD."

"Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon."

"And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin."

I have quoted these Scriptures not only in order to show the seriousness of swearing by these false idols of the heathen Ammonites, but to emphasise one very important feature. Let me quote from the Amplified Bible's translation of Zeph. 1:5, where we read;

" . . . and those who [pretend] to worship the Lord and swear by and to Him, and yet swear by and to [the heathen god Molech or] Malcam [their idol king]."

The New American Standard Bible, in the same passage reads;

"And those who bow down and swear to the Lord, and yet swear by Milcom."

Smith and Goodspeed renders this passage;

"And those who prostrate themselves before the Lord, and swear by Milcom."

Here we find a direct reference to the fact that the people were worshipping both the Lord God of Israel, and the god of the Ammonites, at the same time. In other words, to use a good Australian expression, they were having two bob each way. They were deliberately and knowingly mixing Truth with lies which God designated as "abominations." And once we do that, the Truth suddenly ceases to be Truth, and becomes a deception.

That is one of our greatest problems today.

What was once the truth, has now become a lie, and as God's Word says, "and my people love to have it so." No wonder the prophet was so upset. No wonder the Lord pronounced the most serious judgment upon His people. And if they didn't get away with it in those far off days, you can be absolutely assured that they will certainly not get away with it today. The sad fact is that today, God's people are doing absolutely the same thing. We claim to worship the Lord God of Israel, but we also want all the refinements of the heathen. It just doesn't work that way as far as God is concerned. We obey His commands, or we pay the penalty. We find it in Rev. 18:4;

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

As they say, 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating'. We are most certainly partaking of every plague imaginable. Thus we must have violated the cause. It is almost beyond belief that we could be so utterly stupid as to try to mix the worship of the one and only true God with that of heathen abominations. Yet, this is exactly what we have done, and are still doing. No wonder the Lord refers to us as blind, stubborn, and stiff-necked.

5. Those who are turned back, or away from, the Lord.

One of the most pitiful sights, as far as I am concerned, is to see those who have once followed the Lord, but have then turned away from Him.

I'm sure that many who read this, know people in this situation. It's very difficult to accept what has happened, but the evidence is before our eyes. I well remember a young man who once attended our every meeting. Something went very wrong in his life, and at one of our prayer meetings he virtually abused God because something didn't turn out the way he wanted it to, walked out of the meeting, never to return. The last I heard of him was that he had returned to his former life of drink, gambling, and whatever. He had broken one of God's cardinal laws, and freely admitted that he had done so. Yet he expected God to make an exception for him, and let him get away with it. Sadly friends, it just doesn't work that way with God. What ever we reap, we sow. There was no repentance, so there was no forgiveness or relief. God's righteous judgment automatically comes into operation if and when, having tasted of His goodness and mercy, we deliberately turn from it and despise Him. This is what has happened to His Israel people. As a nation we have turned our back upon the Lord. In doing so, we have brought upon ourselves His righteous judgment, and we are now paying a dreadful price. One day soon, God willing, we will awaken to our utter stupidity, and realise what we have done.

6. Those who refuse to seek the Lord.

Doing our own thing, in our own way, and in our own time, doesn't, in the final analysis, work out.

The Word of God is full of references to the necessity of seeking after God and inquiring as to His will in what we are about to do. Regretfully, the most serious defaulters in this are our leaders, the very ones who most require His leading and advice. God's Israel people are referred to as 'sheep', and He is referred to as a 'shepherd', for a very special reason. Sheep are made to follow a shepherd. That's what they do automatically. They instinctively follow their shepherd. But Israel has changed all this. We no longer seek His advice. We no longer thirst and hunger after righteousness. We no longer commend our cause to Him in times of national emergency. We receive not because we ask not. And the judgments continue to fall upon us, culminating in the inauguration of "the day of the Lord", which, God willing, we will examine in our next study.

(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.

Phone: (02) 9833-3925. FAX: (02) 9833-4397.

E-Mail: fdowsett@idx.com.au

Web Site: <http://homepage.idx.com.au/fdowsett>

**This book of the law shall not depart
out of thy mouth;

but thou shalt meditate therein
day and night,

that thou mayest observe to do
according to all that is written therein:
for then thou shalt make thy way
prosperous,
and then thou shalt have good success.**

Joshua 1:8.

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