



THE COVENANT VISION.

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Contents.

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Editorial.	1.
The Heritage of Israel.	Pt. 14.		4.
C.V. News.	15.
A Walk Through the Gospels.	...		Pt. 16.		16.
Heroes of Faith.	...	...	...		29.
Our Protective God.	...	...	Pt. 10.		38.
Study in Zephaniah.	...	...	Pt. 3.		46.

**“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.

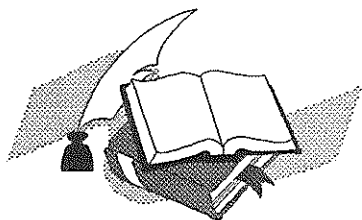
Denominational doctrines and differences are not our concern, and it is not our intention to enter into such arguments. There is not enough time left to waste it on such unproductive, and indeed, destructive, exercises. We are concerned **ONLY** with what we believe the Word of God says and teaches.

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 you're got a pain in your neck, don't worry. It's not your tonsils. It's the noose tightening around your throat. This thought made me wonder what the Bible has to say about the "throat", so I brought up my Bible Programme on the computer and entered a search for the word "throat". It is mentioned just seven times in the entire Bible. And the references were quite fascinating. Space doesn't permit the printing of them all, but what about these?

Matt. 18:28-30 "But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt."

Somehow, that seems to have a ring of familiarity about it. We are literally being taken by the throat and are forced to pay every debt which our leaders can devise in order to destroy us. And we have been placed into permanent captivity until we achieve the impossible.

But who should we really blame for this situation? Well, in the first instance, we had better look at what we ourselves are doing. We read in Jeremiah 2:25; (NIV);

"Do not run until your feet are bare and your throat is dry. But you said, 'It's no use! I love foreign gods, and I must go after them.'"

In other words, we are masochists. We know jolly well what the problem is, but we are too stupid and apathetic to do

anything about it. We won't give up the things we love, even though they choke us to death. And will we take some sensible advice? We're joking, of course.

Proverbs 23:1-5; *"When you sit down to dine with a ruler, Consider carefully what is before you; And put a knife to your throat. If you are a man of great appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, For it is deceptive food.*

Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, Cease from your consideration of it. When you set your eyes on it, it is gone.

For wealth certainly makes itself wings, Like an eagle that flies toward the heavens."

Furthermore, we are greedy. We are prepared to get into bed with anyone who promises us the world - plus 10%, of course. How many times have we been taken in by the promises of our beloved leaders? Think GST! Think of "how good it is going to be for Australia". Think of all the promised support for the poor and needy! They give it of course, but to everyone else but our own people. Think of the unemployment situation, which naturally is improving. True, if we are talking about the third world countries who are now manufacturing most of what we used to do ourselves. They are specialists in deceit. I'm sure they must have to do a special secret course in it before they take up their positions. **"You CAN fool all the people all the time"** as long as you remain faithful to the global leaders and their multi-national policies.

But the real problem lies in our leadership. We the people are like sheep. Sheep always follow the shepherd. But when the shepherd is really a wolf in sheep's clothing, we find out too late that we have been placed in mortal danger. And the 'wolves' are certainly not there by accident.

What we must realise is that what they are forcing down our throats is what is coming from their own throats. We're like the little chicks in the nest, greedily gulping down every morsel of food our benevolent "parents" have themselves swallowed, and then regurgitated down our collective throats. And the Bible has something to say about them as well;

Psalm 5:9 *"For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue."*

Psa 69:1-4 *"Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty:"*

Perhaps Paul's assessment in Romans 3:11-18 says it all;

"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."

I'm sure that the following prayer would not go amiss, from Psalm 5:8, 10-11;

"Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face. Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee. But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee."



Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

These are the things which defile a man.

The Heritage of Israel.

By Frank W. Dowsett.

Part Fourteen.

The Covenant & The Promises. Part 9.

The Abrahamic Covenant. Part 6.

As you read, please keep in mind that we are now studying those who falsely claim to be the recipients of God's Covenants and Promises. You will no doubt recall that in our previous study, we found that there were three very definite, but different titles referred to by the apostles John and Paul, and our Lord Jesus Christ. They were; "anti-Christ", by John; "the man of sin" by Paul; and "the synagogue of Satan" by our Lord. It was pointed out that neither of these titles were made by any other writer, and that there was thus, no apparent second or third witness as required by the Scriptures..

Unless, of course, these three titles referred to the very same entity.

So in this study, we will have a close look at this possibility, by studying the separate descriptions given of them in God's Word.

Anti-Christ.

References to this are only found in the writings of John, as recorded in his first and second epistles. They read;

"Little children, it is the last time. And as ye have heard that ANTI-CHRIST shall come, even now are there many ANTI-CHRISTS; whereby we know that it is the last time.

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. But they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth,

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ.

He is ANTI-CHRIST, that denieth the Father and the Son.

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father, but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father."

(1 John 2:18-24)

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God. Because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.

And this is that spirit of ANTI-CHRIST whereby ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them. Because greater is He that is in you, than he which is in the world."

(1 John 4:1-4)

"And this is love, that ye walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

For many deceivers have entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.

This is a deceiver and an ANTI-CHRIST.

Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. But he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not unto your house, neither bid him God-speed.

For he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

(2 John vs. 6-11)

As usual, in studying any portion of God's Word, it is imperative that we establish the context in which the particular passage in question was written or given. In this instance, there are three important factors which should be recognised. Firstly, it is clear that "anti-christ" is not just one person or thing. There is no such statement, in this passage, or anywhere else in the Bible, as THE Anti-christ. The only phrases mentioned are "Anti-christ", "AN Anti-christ", and "that SPIRIT of Anti-christ". We are also told that there are "MANY anti-christs". I suggest that this makes quite a mess of the commonly held theory that we are to expect the rise of some grotesque

individual sometime in the future. Secondly, we have the timing of the operation of this particular entity, that is, the period of time during which the activities of these anti-christs would be evident. John clearly states that at the time he was writing that particular epistle that they were already operating. He also makes the very important statement that the fact that they were then operating was in itself proof of the fact that the people of his own time, as he wrote, were living in 'the last time'. If 'anti-christ' was not to appear until some two thousand years later, how could its existence then prove that the 'last time' had commenced in John's own day? The Greek word here translated as "time" means "a definite, limited, determined period", and I suggest it refers to the 'Christian Age' in which we are now living, which we know is of a definite pre-determined length, because our Lord Himself stated that He would shorten, or determine, its length so that all flesh would not be destroyed. But we should also note that if 'anti-christ' was evident at the time of John, then it must have commenced at some time before he wrote. Thus, the 'time frame' of the operation of anti-christ starts at some time prior to John's statement, and concludes with the return of our Lord Jesus Christ at the end of this age or dispensation. This fact alone must surely rule out the Roman Catholic church as being the complete, or even the main, manifestation of anti-christ. There is no doubt at all that some of the statements regarding anti-christ can be applied to this particular church. There can also be no doubt but that this church fulfilled this role up to a certain extent, and for a certain period of time. But this should not be surprising when we consider that she is the ecclesiastical section of the overall system of which she is only a part, the system identified in Revelation chapter 17 as "The Great City Babylon" and represented by the woman seated on the beast. This section of the Book of the Revelation takes on a whole new meaning when we realise that Babylon, which includes the Roman church, is controlled and supported by the beast which itself represents anti-christ.

Now I realise that many of my very good friends and fellow-servants in Christ will tend to disagree with me in this matter, and I can only trust that they will not take offence. But I am convinced that Satan has brilliantly deceived God's people by employing the age-old tactic of subterfuge. He has allowed us to see only part of our enemy, and has managed to convince

THE COVENANT VISION.

us that this part is all there is, when in fact that is not the case at all. By convincing us to direct our attention, and our efforts, and indeed our resources to fighting what is in fact no more than a part of the enemy, he has completely deceived us, and drawn our fire away from the enemies' remaining forces. Thus the main body of anti-christ has been relentlessly pressing forward until it is now in complete control over us. Whilst we have been fighting very necessary and important battles in this religious front, our attention has been diverted from the main battle, which involves not just one section of Babylon, but the whole system in its entirety.

The third point to be noted is that John was referring, similarly to Paul, to an enemy that was known about at the time of writing. Not only this, but the expression used by him described the enemy in a way that would be understood by those to whom he wrote. Believe me, they were not at that time confused by theological terminology and speculation as we have become today. Their whole understanding of his statement would be entirely based on the Scriptures, (the Old Testament), and the teaching of Jesus and the disciples to that time. The Roman Catholic church did not come into being until some hundreds of years later.

We should also note the meaning of the word "anti-christ". Dr. Bullinger, in his 'Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament' defines it thus: "An opponent of Christ. That which sets itself in the place of Christ, which appears as Christ in opposition to Christ, as distinct from a false hypocritical representation of Christ". Vine's 'Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words' says: "It can mean either against Christ, or instead of Christ, or perhaps, combining the two, one who, assuming the guise of Christ, actually opposes Christ".

A further point which is of the utmost importance is an understanding of the word "Christ". This word is the English translation of the Greek word "*Christos*", which actually means "anointed". Now there is absolutely no doubt but that this refers to Jesus as the "anointed One of God". But it can be, and sometimes is, used in reference to "the anointed People", that is, Israel. Thus in its fuller and broader sense, anti-christ is not only opposed to "the anointed **ONE**", but is also opposed to "the anointed **PEOPLE**, Israel".

So who was this enemy of which they had already heard, and of which John himself, as well as other writers, had already written and taught? In the Phillips Modern Translation we read these words:-

"But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said, 'Who warned you, you serpent's brood, to escape from the wrath to come? Go and do something to show that your hearts are really changed. Don't suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We are Abraham's children'. For I tell you that God could produce children of Abraham out of these stones.'"

(Matthew 3:7-9, Luke 3:7-8)

"You serpent's brood, how can you say anything good out of your evil hearts? For a man's words flow out of what fills his heart. A good man gives out good, from the goodness stored in his heart. A bad man gives out evil from his store of evil."

(Matthew 12:34-35)

"Alas for you, you hypocritical scribes and Pharisees! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look fine on the outside but inside are full of dead men's bones and all kinds of rottenness. For you appear like good men on the outside, but on the inside you are a mass of pretence and wickedness.

What miserable frauds you are, you scribes and Pharisees! You build tombs for the prophets, and decorate monuments for good men of the past, and then say, 'If we had lived in the times of our ancestors we should never have joined in with the killing of the prophets.' Yes, 'Your ancestors'. That shows you to be sons indeed of those who murdered the prophets.

Go ahead then, and finish off what your ancestors tried to do!

You serpents, you viper's brood, how do you think you are going to avoid being condemned to the fires of destruction?

Listen now to the reason why I sent you prophets and wise and learned men. Some of these you will kill and crucify, others you will flog in your synagogues and hunt from town to town.

So that on your hands is all the innocent blood spilt on the earth, from the blood of Abel the good to the blood of Zachariah, Barachiah's son, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.

Yes, I tell you that all this will be laid at the doors of this generation."

(Matthew 23:27-36)

Now it is important to note two things about the above readings. Firstly, the people to whom these accusations were made were identified as being 'the seed of the serpent' as distinct from those who are identified as 'the seed of the woman'. This surely takes us right back to Genesis 3:15 where the enemy of God, the 'seed of the serpent', is first mentioned and identified. The second thing which we should understand is that the word 'generation' used here does not just refer to a period of time as so many seem to think. That is to say, it does not just refer to a time period of 40 or 70 years from the time when those particular people lived, and when the actual statement was made. The original word translated 'generation' means "progeny, or offspring, from the point of view of race". Thus it is the 'race' or 'children' of this 'serpent's brood' who are implicated and condemned and identified here by our Lord Jesus Christ.

And this judgment and condemnation was not to be subject to any restriction of time. Christ's own enemies themselves confirmed this very principle when at His trial they said, "*His blood be upon us, and on our children*". (Matthew 27:25)

But let us proceed to another of our Lord's statements, as recorded in John's gospel. Speaking to the Pharisees and their followers, He said:-

"I know that you are descended from Abraham, but some of you are looking for a way to kill me because you can't bear my words. I am telling you what I have seen in the presence of My Father, and you are doing what you have seen in the presence of YOUR father."

'Our father is Abraham!' they retorted.

'If you were the children of Abraham, you would do the sort of things Abraham did. But in fact, you are looking for a way to kill me, simply because I am a man who has told you the truth that I have heard from God. Abraham would never have done that. No. You are doing YOUR FATHER'S work.'

'We are not illegitimate!' (or born of fornication) they retorted. 'We have one father, God.'

'If God were really your father', replied Jesus, 'You would have loved me. For I came from God, and I am here. I did not come of my own accord. He sent me, and I am here. Why do you not understand My words?

It is because you cannot hear, (learn, or be informed by), what I am really saying.

Your father is the devil, and what you are wanting to do is what your father longs to do. He always was a murderer, and has never dealt with the truth, since the truth will have nothing to do with him. Whenever he tells a lie, he speaks in character, for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

And it is because I speak the truth that you will not believe me.

Which of you can prove me guilty of sin? If I am speaking the truth, why is it that you do not believe me?

The man who is born of God can hear the words of God.

And the reason that you cannot hear, (understand), the words of God is simply this;

THAT YOU ARE NOT THE SONS OF GOD!!"

(John 8:37-47. Phillips Translation.)

(Emphasis added.)

"Then came the dedication festival at Jerusalem. It was winter-time, and Jesus was walking about inside the temple in Solomon's cloisters. So the Jews closed in on Him and said, 'How much longer are you going to keep us in suspense? If you really are Christ, tell us so straight out.'"

'I have told you', replied Jesus, 'and you do not believe it. What I have done in My Father's name is sufficient to prove My claim.

But you do not believe,

BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT
MY SHEEP!"

(John 10:22-26)

The above words from the gospels of Matthew and John are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. They are spoken to, and about, His enemies. And it is these same enemies of whom John is speaking in 1 John 2:19, which I will quote from three separate translations:-

"They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. But they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

(Authorised version.)

"Those rivals of Christ came out of our own number, but they had never really belonged. If they had belonged, they would have stayed with us. But they left us, to prove that not one of them ever belonged to us."

(Jerusalem Translation.)

"These men went out from our company, it is true, but they never really belonged to it. If they had really belonged to us, they would have stayed. In fact, their going proved beyond doubt that men like that were not 'our men' at all."

(Phillips Translation.)

Added to all this, we have the identity of 'anti-christ' quite clearly stated by John as being those who:-

1. Deny that Jesus is the Christ, that is, **THE ANOINTED OF GOD**.
2. Deny the existence of **BOTH** the Father and the Son.
3. Deny that Jesus Christ, (the Messiah, or Anointed One), is come in the flesh.

When we add this to what has already been recorded of Christ's own statements as to the real identity of the Scribes and the Pharisees and their followers, there would appear to be no room for any further doubt as to who **ANTI-CHRIST** really is today.

One further point. The present followers and supporters of Judaism, the religion of the Pharisees, claim to worship the God of the Old Testament, thus claiming, and being credited by today's Christian leaders, with being the foundation upon which is built our Christian belief and ethic. This principle is called "the Judaeo/Christian Ethic", and is a complete deception, being a lie straight from Satan. The statement is a downright contradiction in terms, Judaism being founded on 'their father the Devil', whilst Christianity is based on 'the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'. The purpose of Judaism is to deceive God's people, by associating themselves with Christianity, and confusing them as to the true identity of God's enemies.

Consider the following.

- **Question.** "Who is the God of the Old Testament?"
Answer The God of the Old Testament is **JEHOVAH**.
- **Question.** Who was Jesus Christ before He took the form of man and came to this earth to pay the price of redemption and salvation?
Answer. Jesus Christ in the Old Testament was, and in fact still is, **JEHOVAH**.

STATEMENT.

- If Judaism and its followers reject Jesus Christ, then they must be rejecting Jehovah.
- If they reject Jehovah, they reject the True God of the Old Testament.
- If they are rejecting the real and true God of the Old Testament, then under no circumstances can they be worshipping the real and true FATHER!

Question

What 'god', and what 'father' are they then worshipping?

Answer

Read John 8:44.

*God willing, in our next issue, we will look at the subject of
"The Man of Sin".*

(To be Continued).



Covenant Vision Fellowship.

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

You are cordially invited to join us in fellowship and worship at
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C.V.NEWS.

This issue we have some bad, and some good news. The 'bad' news is that about the middle of March I started to have regular chest pains. As most of you will know, in 1984 and 1986 I had two open heart operations, with a total of seven by-passes. So this development caused us a bit of concern. This wasn't alleviated by the fact that grafts of this nature, according to the doctor, are given a normal life of about 14 years, which I would reach by the end of this year. An ECG and blood test showed that I had not had a heart attack to date, but my specialist put me through a stress test. Unfortunately, the result of this test was not as good as the one I did some eight months previously, so he booked me into hospital for an angiogram. I subsequently spent Tuesday, March 28, in hospital having this operation. But now for the 'good' news. Just before I was discharged, the doctor came to see me with the basic results. He told me that every one of my by-passes was working perfectly, and in answer to my question, expressed the opinion that they should last quite a bit longer than 14 years. So we have a great deal to be thankful for to our Heavenly Father, to Whom we had committed the entire situation. Naturally, we couldn't let everyone know what had happened, but we certainly appreciate the prayers of all those whom we were able to contact. As one of our members said, "The Lord hasn't finished with me yet." Unfortunately I won't have the full details prior to this issue going to press, but we feel quite sure that the cause of the chest pains will be discovered and suitably treated.

However, it would be most foolish of me not to heed the warning, and I have already slowed down somewhat. So if you don't receive replies as quickly as you would wish, please realise that there is very good reason. What I can't do this week will just have to wait till next week. Better 'late' than 'never'.

Finally, our sincere thanks to those who so unselfishly continue to support us. The present economic situation is not very conducive to financial giving, and like so many other Identity groups, we are noticing a marked decline in support. Whilst the Lord is still graciously providing for our needs, He depends on the faithfulness of His followers to support those from whom they receive what they believe to be the Truth of His Word. The manner in which you apportion your tithes and offerings is just as important as the giving itself. Always remember that to give your financial support to those whom you believe are NOT giving forth the truth as you believe it, is to give your support to the teaching of error. So please pray diligently about this. □

THE COVENANT VISION.

A WALK THROUGH THE GOSPELS.

PART 17.

By Bruce Horner.

JESUS DECLARES HIMSELF TO THE JEWS.

Last month we left the account by John at the point where Christ was addressing the Jews with these words.

John 8:31-32 *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will come to know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'*

To 'remain' in Jesus' 'word' is to adhere to his teaching - to direct their lives by it. The power of what he said had already moved some of his hearers to believe in him, but discipleship is something continuous; it is a way of life. A true disciple has an affinity for his teacher's instruction and accepts it, not blindly but intelligently. The teacher's instruction becomes the disciple's rule of faith and practice. What Jesus taught was the truth; his disciples, by paying heed to him, received the truth. False belief holds the minds of men and women in bondage; truth liberates them. Truth by its very nature cannot be imposed by external compulsion, nor can it be validated by anything other than itself. One either sees the truth for what it is, or one does not. When we bear in mind the meaning of 'truth' in this Gospel, where the concept finds its embodiment in Jesus himself, it follows that for his disciples to know the truth 'they must not only hear his words: they must in some sort be united with him who is the truth.

John 8:33 *They answered him, 'We are Abraham's offspring, and have never been enslaved to any one. How can you say, "You will become free"?''*

The controversial tone of the exchange which now follows between Jesus and his hearers makes it difficult to think of those

hearers as confined to the Jews who had newly believed in him. At some point early in the exchange the circle of his questioners widens; by the time verse 37 is reached, it is unbelieving Jews who are addressed. The present question calls for explanation of Jesus' words: 'the truth will set you free'. People who need to be set free are bound or enslaved, but the speakers have no consciousness of bondage. They repudiate the suggestion: they are Abraham's free-born descendants, and have never been held in slavery. True, their ancestors had been set to forced labour in Egypt and (later) carried captive to Babylon; but these experiences were temporary chastisements. Although their land was now under Roman occupation, their resultant situation was scarcely one of bondage: at the time of Jesus ministry they retained internal autonomy, and even when John's Gospel was written (after the abolition of their commonwealth in AD 70), they still enjoyed religious independence. The ancient blessing pronounced through Abraham and through his offspring (Gen 12:3; 22:18, etc) would have been pointless if Abraham's offspring were a race of slaves. The promise to Abraham spoke of blessing for his descendants, and freedom was an essential element in that blessing.

John 8:34-36 Jesus answered, 'Indeed and in truth I tell you: every one who practises sin is a slave of sin. He who is a slave does not remain permanently in the house; it is the son who remains there permanently. So, if the Son sets you free, you will be really free.'

Jesus reminds them that there is another kind of slavery than social or economic slavery. Sin is a slave-master, and it is possible even for people who think of themselves as free to be enslaved to sin. The words 'of sin' may not be part of the original text, but the context makes it clear that 'a slave of sin' is what is meant. The teaching here is quite similar to Paul's in Romans 6:12-23.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

However, I think the commentators have missed out on something in this interchange between Christ and the Jews. These Jews have made a statement regarding their ancestry

COVENANT VISION MINISTRY.

which shows that they do not have everything in common with other Jews, and especially with the Galileans.

OUTLINE OF BIBLE HISTORY

John Hyrcanus and his successor Aristobulus I (104-103) set about creating the conditions that existed in the time of Jesus. Idumea (the Edomite kingdom established in southern Judah after the exile) was forcibly converted to Judaism, Galilee was made into a predominantly Jewish area, and the Jewish presence in Perea in Transjordan was consolidated. Following the reigns of Alexander Jannaeus (103-76) and his wife Salome Alexandra (76-67), rivalry within the ruling family brought the downfall of the Hasmoneans and the arrival in 63 BC of the Roman General Pompey.

ROMAN RULE TO THE CLOSE OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE (963 BC - C.100 AD)

The first decades of Roman rule in Judea were complicated by the struggle for supremacy in Rome itself (Pompey was defeated by Julius Caesar, after whose assassination there was a struggle between Mark Antony and Octavian) and by the attempt of the Hasmoneans to regain power. In 40 BC Herod, an Idumean, was appointed King of Judea by the Romans, and ruled from 37 to 4 BC. His reign was a time of peace, and of massive building projects, which established Caesarea as the principal city of the province, and which transformed Jerusalem into the city that Jesus knew. The temple, built under Ezra and Nehemiah, was also enlarged and virtually rebuilt. On Herod's death the kingdom was divided between three of his sons. Herod Antipas (the Herod of the Gospels who imprisoned and executed John the Baptist) ruled over Galilee and Perea until he was deposed in 39 AD, Philip ruled over the northeastern territories, while Archelaus was given Judea, Idumea and Samaria. Archelaus was deposed in 6 AD, and his territories were ruled by Roman procurators, including Pontius Pilate (26-36 AD). The rule by procurators was broken briefly when Herod Agrippa I, who had succeeded Herod Antipas in 39 AD as ruler of Galilee and Perea, was made king over Judea, Idumea and Samaria. He ruled thus from 41 AD to his death in 44, after which the government reverted to

that of Roman procurators. As the rule of the latter was often corrupt and tyrannical, growing unrest led to the outbreak of the First Jewish Revolt in 66 AD. In the campaign that the Romans mounted in response, Jerusalem and its Temple were destroyed in 70 AD, and the last survivors of the rebels committed suicide at Masada in 73 AD rather than surrender.

MANY JEWS WERE IDUMEANS

We can see from the above three important facts. Firstly the Jews were ruled by an Idumean king. Secondly the Idumean state had been forcibly incorporated into the Jewish state and the population forcibly converted to the Jewish religion. Even some of the temple duties and the priesthood had been taken by these Idumean Jews. Thirdly, these Idumean Jews would thus be descendants of Esau, who despised his birthright and to whom God said that he would have war from generation unto generation, as they tried, and are still trying, to regain the birthright that they lost. If they were descendants of Esau, then naturally they were also children of Abraham, but without the birthright. But Esau's sin included the sin of miscegenation. He married a number of foreign wives, which disgusted the Lord.

His offspring became known as the kingdom of Edom, and lived at Petra, and they certainly did not live through the experience of enslavement in Egypt, nor were they taken captive to Babylon.

Christ did not pursue the subject of bondage, but reminded them of the slavery of sin. Verse 35 is probably a parable in parenthesis. A slave, no matter to whom he belongs, has no permanent standing in his master's house. He can very easily be sold to someone else; he is then in bondage to his new owner. But it is different with a son. He has a place in his father's house as of right: once a son, always a son. Verse 36 has a closer relation to verse 34: the sinner is enslaved, but he can be liberated. His liberator is the Son - not the son of his slave-master, but the Son in the sense in which this designation is used throughout the Gospel of John. The son in a free household, when once he comes of age, can act with authority because of his status within that household: the Son of God acts with supreme authority because 'the Father loves the Son and has given everything into his hand' (John 3:35). If, acting on the COVENANT VISION MINISTRY.

authority with which the Father has invested him, the Son emancipates a slave, that slave henceforth is 'really free'.

John 8:37,38 'I know that you are Abraham's offspring. But you are seeking to kill me, because my word has no place in you. I, for my part, speak the things which I have seen with my Father; you do what you have heard from your father.'

Jesus agrees that they are Abraham's descendants in the natural sense, but, noticeably, without specifying the descent. But, he goes on to point out, moral relationship is more important than natural relationship, and Abraham's true children are those who follow Abraham's example. The charge that those whom he is addressing are still looking for an opportunity to put him to death rules out the possibility that they are the Jews who had believed in him. They are rather those who are described in John 5:18 as plotting to kill him soon after the healing incident at the Pool of Bethesda. In them his teaching found no root, no acceptance; to those who believed in him, on the other hand, he spoke encouragingly about 'remaining' in his word (verse 31).

Jesus' claim to speak the things which he had 'seen' in the Father's presence (verse 38) echoes his language in John 6:46: 'he who comes from God, he has seen the Father'. The truth which he teaches is heavenly truth, although it is presented for acceptance by men and women on earth. But no one can speak of heavenly realities except one who has come down from heaven and imparts to his hearers on earth what he has seen and heard in that transcendent realm (cf. John 3:11-13).

It is possible to treat the verb 'do' in the second half of verse 38 as imperative: 'as for you, do the things which you have heard from the Father' (the possessive pronoun 'your' is absent from several witnesses to the text, including Papyrus 66 and Codex Vaticanus). In that case the things which they had heard from the Father would include the things which Jesus taught with the Father's authority. This, however, is not what they understood Jesus to mean. That does not prove that it was not what he meant: in this Gospel Jesus is quite frequently misunderstood. But on the whole it seems more probable, says F.F. Bruce, that he means that, while his own works are in keeping with his Father's character, their works are in keeping with their father's character.

John 8:39-41a *They said to him in answer, 'Our father is Abraham.' Jesus says to them, 'If you are Abraham's children, you would do Abraham's works. But as it is, you are seeking to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I have heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You do your father's works.'*

They may have failed to grasp immediately what Jesus meant by his reference to their father: they claim, however, as any Jew would do, that Abraham is their father par excellence. 'Abraham our father' is the regular Jewish way of referring to Abraham (compare 'Moses our teacher' and David our king'). But Jesus insists explicitly now that moral kinship is the only kinship that matters: to cherish murderous intentions against someone who has imparted the truth of God to them is not the mark of children of Abraham. Abraham welcomed the word of God and obeyed his commandments. God himself testified: Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes and my laws' (Genesis 26:5). No: their father, the one whose work they perform, is a very different person to Abraham.

John 8:41b *So they said to him, 'We have not been illegitimately born: we have one father - namely God.'*

If Jesus would not allow their claim that Abraham was their father, he could not surely disallow their claim to be children of the heavenly Father. It was God himself who said, 'Israel is my firstborn son' (Exodus 4:22), 'I am a father to Israel' (Jeremiah 31:9). But they protested against Jesus' denial that they were children of Abraham in any true sense: this implied the taint of illegitimacy in their lineage, and they resented any suggestion that they were born 'of fornication'.

Light may be thrown on this remark by their later charge (verse 48) that Jesus was a 'Samaritan'. The Jews and Samaritans each disputed the others' right to be regarded as genuine Israelites. The Jews had their account of the mixed origin of the Samaritans. We cannot speak with certainty of the details of the Samaritans' account of Jewish origins. But there is evidence of a legend that viewed Cain as the fruit of the devil's seduction of Eve, and if some Samaritans charged the Jews with COVENANT VISION MINISTRY.

being descendants of Cain, not of Seth (the only son of Adam whom he is said, according to Genesis 5:3, to have begotten 'in his own likeness'), several allusions in the present exchange between Jesus and the unbelieving Jerusalemites could be explained. Their protest that they were not born 'of fornication', for example, might be due to a suspicion that Jesus was referring to a calumny which was current among Samaritans; this in truth, was far from being Jesus' intention.

John 8:42, 43 *Jesus said to them, 'If God were your father, you would love me, for I came forth and have come from God. I have not come on my own account; it was he who sent me. Why do you not recognize what I say? It is because you do not hear my word.'*

Jesus insists on using the terms 'father' and 'children' in an ethical sense: the children are those who reproduce the father's qualities. Those with whom he engages in debate have claimed to be children of Abraham (by natural descent) and children of God (by adoption). He has already told them that Abraham's children might be expected to do Abraham's works; now he denies their claim to be children of God because nothing of the heavenly Father's character is to be seen in them. In particular, he is the unique Son of God; those who call themselves the children of God might be expected to recognize him, and indeed to love him, for a family feeling would bind them to him in affection.

John puts it like this in 1 John 5:1-2 (Williams). *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves His child, whether the child be the Son par excellence or any other member of the family of God.*

As the one sent by the Father, he delivers the Father's message. Those who were truly children of God would recognize their Father's message on the lips of Jesus. But these people were manifestly incapable of such recognition; this showed that they did not know him whom they claimed as their Father (cf. John 7:28).

Westcott translates verse 43 thus. *'They could not perceive the meaning or the source of His speech, because they*

could not grasp the purport of His Word, the one revelation of the Incarnate Son in which all else was included.'

That is, they did not understand his outward speech (lalia), which the ear could pick up, because they did not hear the word (logos), the message it expressed, which could be apprehended only by the enlightened mind.

John 8:44, 45 *'You are (the offspring) of your father the devil, and you are resolved to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning; he never stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he utters what is false, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of lying. But because I speak the truth, you do not believe me.'*

As before, it is an ethical relationship that is implied. Jesus' enemies had tried to bring about his death; they showed themselves incapable of accepting the truth which he brought. In both respects they made it plain that they were children not of God but of the devil. God is the life-giver and the fountain of truth; the devil is the life-destroyer and the father of lies.

What is meant by the statement that 'he was a murderer, a man-slayer, from the beginning?' Probably that by his deceiving our first parents he 'brought death into the world, and all our woe'. *'Through the devil's envy death entered into the world, and those who belong to his party experience it'* (Wisdom of Sol 2:24). And as for his being the archetypal liar, his first recorded utterance not only calls into question, but flatly contradicts, what God has said. 'You shall surely die' said God (Genesis 2:17) ; 'You shall not "surely die",' said the serpent (Genesis 3:4), which is viewed in the NT, and indeed earlier, as the mouthpiece of the devil. What God says is 'the truth'; what the devil says is 'the lie', because it contradicts 'the truth'. So Paul speaks of idolaters as 'exchanging the truth of God for the lie' (Romans 1:25); elsewhere he says of those who refused to receive 'the love of the truth', that 'God sends on them a working of delusion, to make them believe "the lie" ' (2 Thess. 2:11). The devil utters falsehood as naturally and spontaneously as God utters truth; if 'it is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18), equally it is impossible for the devil to speak the truth - even when he chooses to 'quote scripture for his purpose'.

The children of God, then, will be characterised by their love of the truth; the children of the devil by their refusal to accept the truth. Jesus does not say, 'although I speak the truth, you do not believe me', but 'because I speak the truth, you do not believe me'; in view of the spiritual lineage of his opponents, the fact that what he said was the truth was sufficient reason for them to reject it.

John 8:46-47 'Who among you convicts me of sin? If I speak the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is (a child) of God hears the words of God. This is why you do not hear (them): you are not (children) of God.'

They had supposed that Jesus was guilty of a double sin; sabbath-breaking and blasphemy (John 5:18). But would this accusation procure a conviction against him in the one court that finally mattered - the heavenly court? When he defended himself against the double accusation, his defence served only to add fuel to the fire of their hostility, but he was confident that it would be admitted in the presence of God.

Again he tells them that the reason for their refusal to accept the truth which he declares is that they are not children of the God of truth. If 'he whom God sent speaks the words of God' (John 3:34), so whoever is a child of God will give evidence of that fact by hearing - and recognizing - the words of God. Jesus' present words anticipate what he was to say later to Pilate: 'Everyone who is on the side of truth listens to my voice (John 18:37).

John 8:48 The Jews said to him in reply, 'Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan, and demon-possessed at that?'

As was suggested in the comment on verse 41, Jesus' denial that they were children of God reminded them of the aspersions cast by the Samaritans on the Jews and their origin. But in using such language Jesus did not even have the excuse of being Samaritan by race; for a Jew, as he was, to speak like this about his fellow-Jews was sheer madness, a token of demon-possession (cf. 7:20).

John 8:49-51 Jesus answered, 'I am not demon-possessed; I honour my Father, and you dishonour me. I

seek no glory for myself; there is one who seeks it, and judges (rightly). Indeed and in truth I tell you: whoever keeps my words will never see death.'

Jesus' words are far from being the product of demon-possession; they are the words which his Father has given him to utter (cf. John 3:34; 17:8, 14), and in uttering them Jesus glorifies his Father, just as in refusing them his hearers dishonour him - and, through him, his Father (cf. 5:23). It is his Father's glory that Jesus seeks to promote by obediently delivering his message; he is not concerned for his own reputation. He can trust his Father to take care of that, and in fact he, above all others, receives 'glory that comes from the only God' (John 5:44). He need not be disturbed by the adverse judgment of those who cannot judge righteously because they judge 'according to outward appearance' (John 7:24); so long as he enjoys his Father's approval, he is well content.

In the synagogue at Capernaum, on the morrow of the feeding of the multitude, Jesus said of the words that he spoke, 'they are spirit; they are life' (John 6:63). Now he emphasizes again, with his double 'Amen', the life-giving potency of what he says: 'Anyone who keeps my word will never see death.' To 'see' death, like 'seeing the kingdom of God' (John 3:3), means to enter into it, to experience it. As Peter had already confessed, Jesus has 'words of eternal life' (John 6:68). The message which he brings delivers those who hear and keep it from eternal death.

John 8:52, 53 The Jews then said to him, 'Now we know that you are demon-possessed. Abraham has died, and so have the prophets, yet you say, "Whoever keeps my word will never taste death." Are you greater than our father Abraham, who has died? The prophets also have died. Whom do you make yourself out to be?'

Jesus' opponents in the debate continue to display what John's readers are intended to recognise as crass literal-mindedness. While the readers know that death of the body (a matter of small importance in Johannine thinking) is not what is meant, the opponents suppose that it is. Abraham heard the word of God and obeyed it.; yet Abraham died. The word of God came to the prophets of Israel, and they delivered it faithfully to their contemporaries; yet the prophets also died. If

COVENANT VISION MINISTRY. 25.

the word of God did not preserve from dying those who heard it and kept it, how can the word of this man serve as medicine against death? If he believes that, they reasoned, he is the victim of an illusion, and a demonic illusion at that.

To 'taste death' (cf. Mark 9:1; Hebrews 2:9), like to 'see death' in verse 51, means 'to experience death'.

John 8:54-56 Jesus answered, 'If I glorify myself, my glory is of no account. It is my Father who glorifies me - the one of whom you say, "He is our God". You do not know him, but I know him. If I say that I do not know him, I shall be a liar, like you. But I know him, and I keep his word. Abraham your father looked forward with exultation to see my day, and he saw it and rejoiced.'

As a testimonial to oneself is no testimonial (John 5:31), so praise of oneself is no praise, and even in a community of mutual admirers one may wonder if the admiration is entirely prejudiced (John 5:44). Perhaps our politicians should take this to heart. The only glory that matters in Jesus' eyes is the 'glory that comes from the only God'. Jesus opponents in the present debate acknowledge this God, for they claim him as theirs - is he not the God of Israel? But perhaps he is more particularly the God of those in Israel who, like Nathanael, are Israelites indeed (cf. John 1:47). To Jesus, indeed, he is more than the God of Israel; Jesus knows him as 'my Father' - a designation to which, because of what it seemed to imply on his lips, his opponents took special exception (cf. John 5:17, 18). They took the greater exception during the present debate, because he denied it to them. When they said 'We have one father, even God', he told them that their actions belied their claim (John 8:41, 42).

When Jesus says to them, 'You say, "He is our God", and yet you do not know him', he echoes the insistence of the great prophets of earlier days, that their contemporaries' claim to be the people of God, and indeed the children of God, was an empty claim, because they had rejected the knowledge of God (cf. Hosea 4:1; 6:6).

Jesus's claim to know God is founded not only on his being from eternity the Son of the Father, but also on his perfect obedience to the Father's will. Disobedience is a bar to the knowledge of God, 'in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life'. "I know him, and I keep his word" are two correlative

clauses, but there is the underlying implication: 'I know him, because I keep his word.' If eternal life is to know God (John 17:3), it is made equally plain here that to keep his word (as communicated through his Son) is the way to eternal life. What does Jesus make himself out to be? That which he essentially is: the living and lifegiving Word.

'Abraham your father exulted to see my day' (paraphrased here 'Abraham your father looked forward with exultation to see my day') seems to point to a particular experience in the life of Abraham. But which experience was it? Various rabbis, toying with the statement in Genesis 24:1 that Abraham 'was advanced in years' - literally, 'entered into the days' - suggested that Abraham foresaw outstanding days in the history of Israel, such as the crossing of the Red Sea, the giving of the law, and so on into the age to come. So the idea that he foresaw the messianic age would not be unacceptable to Jews. But when did he 'exult' to see the day of Christ? Perhaps when he said to Isaac, on the way to the place of sacrifice, 'God will provide himself with a lamb for the burnt-offering' (Genesis 22:8). The incident of the 'binding of Isaac' played a prominent part in Jewish religious thinking, especially where the doctrine of atonement was in view. But Jesus did not say that Abraham saw 'the day of Christ' or 'the messianic age'; he spoke of him as seeing 'my day', and it was this personal way of putting it that caused offence and excited ridicule.

John 8:57, 58 So the Jews said to him, 'You are not yet fifty years old. Have you seen Abraham? Jesus said to them, 'Indeed and in truth I tell you, Before Abraham was born, I am He.'

They chose to understand Jesus' words as though they meant that he and Abraham were contemporaries. Such a claim was too absurd to be treated seriously. He had not said that he had seen Abraham, but that Abraham looked forward and saw his day, and that the sight filled Abraham, with joy. But, said Jesus' opponents, he was born only the day before yesterday (so to speak); he was younger than many of themselves were: how could Abraham have seen him, or he Abraham? It is interesting that there are but ten references to Abraham in this Gospel, and together they hold together the dialogue in verses 31 to 58. Bullinger tells us that ten is one of the perfect numbers, and

COVENANT VISION MINISTRY.

signifies the perfection of Divine order. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.

The 'fifty years' estimate of his age is a round number. True, he was much less than fifty years old, but in comparison with the antiquity of Abraham the difference between thirty and fifty was negligible.

Jesus' reply to their protest repeats the affirmation 'I am He', used twice already in this chapter (verses 24, 28), and does so in a way which underlines the magnitude of the claim which it expresses. He echoes the language of the God of Israel, who remains the same from everlasting to everlasting: "I, the Lord, the first, and with the last, I am He" (Isaiah 41:4). How can a man who is 'not yet fifty years old' speak like that? Only if he speaks as the Word that had been with God in the beginning and was now incarnate on earth. Abraham looked forward to the time of his incarnation, but he himself existed before his incarnation, before Abraham was born, before the worlds were made. The Word of the eternal God cannot be other than eternal. So much, in this context, is conveyed by *ego eimi* (I am He). Bruce goes on to say that if we suppose that the conversation was carried on in Aramaic or even in Hebrew, then Jesus could have uttered the very words 'ani hu, as though he were applying them to himself.

John 8:59 Therefore they took up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

If Jesus claim was not well-founded, then his words were openly blasphemous: he was using language which only God could use. His hearers were horrified: their natural reaction was to inflict on him summarily (though informally) the penalty prescribed for the blasphemer: 'all the congregation shall stone him' (Leviticus 24:16). The verb 'hid himself' is literally 'was hidden' (*ekrybe*, passive), as also in John 12:36. The passive of *krypto* is repeatedly used in a reflexive sense, as in Genesis 3:8, where Adam and his wife 'hid themselves'. A variant reading says that Jesus went through the midst of them and (so) passed by' - which prepares the reader for the opening words of chapter 9: 'and as he passed by'.



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HEROES OF FAITH.

Part One.

By Frank W. Dowsett.

Creation and Abel.

In previous studies on the subject of faith we have examined what it is, and most importantly, how we obtain it. We read in Romans 10:17;

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing from the Word of God."

The word "hearing", we discovered, means "to be informed". Thus, we obtain our faith by being informed by the Word of God, and not just from the traditions or teachings of man. To the sincere Christian student, this Word of God must be our **ONLY** primary source. There are many other avenues of information, but they can only be accepted as they agree with God's Word.

But the phrase the "Word of God" cannot be restricted to the written Word, or the Bible. The saints of old had no written word as we have today. Their faith - or conviction - was based on; (a) The Word which was literally spoken; and (b) their full and complete acceptance of the integrity of the One who was, and is, **"The Word."** When He spoke, that was the end of the matter. God spoke, and it was so! They did not have the "benefit" of the advice of theological experts on which they could form their conclusions. Let us read the basis of their convictions of the might of the God in whom they believed. We read in Genesis chapter 1, and verses 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, and 26;

- 3 **And God said,** *Let there be light: and there was light.*
- 6 **And God said,** *Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.*
- 9 **And God said,** *Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.*
- 11 **And God said,** *Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.*
- 14 **And God said,** *Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:*
- 20 **And God said,** *Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.*
- 24 **And God said,** *Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.*
- 26 **And God said,** *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

Here are EIGHT specific instances in which it is recorded that God SPOKE every phase of creation into existence. We know that the actual Person of the Godhead who thus spoke, was no other than the One whom we know as Jesus Christ, and it is no coincidence that the number of times He spoke these

commands was the number associated with His Name. We note also the following supporting references;

Psalm 33:6-9; *"By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.

Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."

John 1:1-3; *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."*

Rev. 19:11-13; *"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God."*

It is fitting and proper then, that the very first recorded "act of faith" in this eleventh chapter of Hebrews should be an unqualified conviction in CREATION!

Heb. 11:3; *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."*

Rom. 1:20; *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:"*

II Peter 3:3-7; *"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

But the introduction and acceptance of the doctrine of "the evolution of the species" became the primary destroyer of "the faith once delivered to the saints". We read in Romans 1:21-23;

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."

This depraved doctrine opened the doors for the saints to emulate the practices of the heathen, and worship the habits and activities of animals. And why not they asked, seeing that they were our ancestors.

The subject of "Faith" is no different in principle to any other Bible subject. We must start at the beginning. We cannot possibly have "Faith" if we are not absolutely assured in the integrity of the Creator of Faith. If we can't have faith in His creative works, then all we have is a forlorn hope that things will somehow turn out right. Thus, "Faith" commences with our full and unqualified acceptance of the fact of Creation.

It is only then that we can turn to the study of the faith of the individuals who became our "Great Cloud of Witnesses".

The first mentioned of these Heroes of Faith is

Abel.

The account is found in Genesis 4:1-4;

"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:"

Now let us look carefully at this first verse. There is a theory held by some, referred to as "The seed line theory", that teaches that Cain was the child born to Eve as a result of her having sexual intercourse with the serpent. This theory finally develops into the conclusion that the Jews all descended physically and literally from Satan, mainly supported by the statement of our Lord Jesus Christ to the effect that "they were of their father the devil". I wish to go on record that neither I, nor most Identity teachers and believers whom I know, support this theory which I personally consider to be totally evil and Satanic. Look at verse 1 above. The progression of events is quite clear. Adam had sexual intercourse with his wife Eve. As a result, Eve conceived. As the logical conclusion of this conception, she bore Cain. As a result of this birth, Eve gave thanks to God for His gift of life. How anyone in their right mind can twist this plain, unambiguous statement to mean that

Satan was the father of Cain is quite beyond my understanding. But there is a further statement to be considered. In verse 2 we are told "*And she again bare his brother Abel.*" Note that there is no statement of a further conception made in regard to Abel. The account records only ONE conception, but TWO births. If she conceived two children by two different fathers, then we could logically ask as to why God did not clearly indicate two conceptions, especially as one of them would have been by His arch-enemy. Personally, I believe that Cain and Abel were twins, Cain being the first born of the two lads, both being the sons of Adam.

We then note that when they grew to manhood, each of these lads followed different callings. Abel, we are informed, was a keeper, or feeder, of sheep. On the other hand, Cain tilled the ground. Strong's definition (#5647) is interesting in that it defines "to till" as "to work, be a bondman, dress, serve, worship".

We also note that both these men were religious. Both acknowledged the Lord. Both brought offerings to the Lord. In present-day terminology they would both be considered as good Christian lads. Cain brought a gift of the fruit of the ground which he tilled, whilst Abel brought an offering of the sheep which he tended. But something was wrong here, at least as far as God was concerned. We must ask ourselves the question; "On what basis did God make this decision to accept Abel's offering, and reject that of his brother Cain?" We can reasonably conclude that the Lord had spoken to both the lads and their parents as to the only way by which access to God could be restored. Otherwise, there could be no legal or moral ground upon which God could make this judgment.

The whole point and purpose of this incident being recorded in detail, both in Genesis and in Hebrews, was to reveal the one and only way by which we can regain access to God, and to the "Tree of Life" which had been forfeited in Eden.

God's Way involved the death of a substitute. The automatic and inevitable result of sin was, and is, death. We read of this in Ezekiel 18:4 and 20;

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die".

The "Laws contained in Ordinances", which were the sacrificial ordinances performed under the terms of the Old Covenant, were entirely designed and practiced on the God-Ordained principle of the offering, and acceptance, of the death of a designated animal as a substitute for the life of the sinner, whereby the sentence of death was remitted. As we read in Hebrews 9:22;

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

Both Cain and Abel must certainly have known this! Otherwise, why would one have obeyed the requirement and not the other?

Abel obeyed God's Way. He believed God. His faith was made manifest by the fact that he believed the Word of God; that is, what God had said! And don't let us forget that there were no theologians around to convince him that God meant something different to what He said.

On the other hand, **Cain did things his own way.** He disbelieved God, in that he took no notice of God's clearly defined requirements. It was the same story of his mother's temptation; "Did God really say that...?" His lack of faith was equally manifest. He invented what he considered to be a "better way" He offered to God the fruit of his own works - the fruit of the ground which he had tilled. But as we read in Genesis 3:17, God had placed a curse on the ground. Thus, Cain's offering was the fruit of a source which had been cursed by God!!!

But the source of Abel's offering, on the other hand, had the Lord's blessing, because it was the Lord's appointed way.

These are the "Two Ways" which have controlled the descendants of Adam ever since.

The "righteous" - the few - have followed God's Way, having "gone the way of Abel", even to persecution and death.

The "unrighteous" - the many - have "gone the way of Cain", as we read in Jude 1:10-11;

"But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core."

Cain introduced a "new theology". Its basic principle was that "man must do something". It is still in almost universal favour and practice today! But it is the "Way of Cain".

As we read in Proverbs 14:12;

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Man can do nothing of himself to restore his communion with God.

All that has to be done has already been done!

Perhaps it would be opportune to conclude this study with the words recorded in I John 3:7-14; (NIV)

"Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous."

Abel learned and understood the Way of Righteousness through Obedience. Like so many who have followed after him, he possibly didn't even properly understand the full implications of what God required, nor even of what he had himself done.

He Just Believed God.

And in his faith, he never knew the example which he had set for God's children for centuries to come.

**He sowed the seed of Faith, and reaped
the reward of becoming one of God's
"Great Cloud of Witnesses".**



OUR PROTECTIVE GOD.

By Bruce Horner.

PART 10.

THE BOERS, AND THE BATTLE OF BLOOD RIVER.

Part One.

In 1652 Jan Van Riebeeck landed at the Cape of Good Hope to establish a refreshment station for passing Dutch ships. By the eighteenth century the Cape settlement had become the nucleus of a small colony of people calling themselves Boers who were gradually taking up land in the interior and along the east coast. Their expansion was still continuing when the British took control of this settlement during the Napoleonic Wars and instituted policies which caused bitter resentment among the Boer inhabitants.

The British freed Hottentot slaves on whom the Boers relied for cheap labour, and placed them on a footing of legal equality with Europeans. They imposed stricter government control over land, and a law of 1832 provided that Crown lands would be sold by auction and not be granted indiscriminately as in the past. Resentment of these British measures led to a planned and organised migration in 1836 into the interior, known as the Great Trek, which aimed to find land for settlement free from British control. This meant dispossessing the Bantu tribes who then held the land.

In this flight from the British and in the constant warfare waged against the Bantu, the Boer had nothing to rely on but his gun and Providence. He took with him his only link with western culture, his large Dutch Bible, whose words the Boers interpreted in such a way as to justify their dispossession and enslavement of the Bantu. They insisted that the black races of Africa were Canaan's descendants on whom Noah, with God's approval, had placed his curse. They cited other passages which

proved to them that these races were forever destined to be 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' in service of the white man. This is the germ of Nationalist Boer feeling, a belief in inequality imposed by God on the races of the world; in the subordination, imposed by Providence, of the black to the white race; and in the responsibility of the master to impose with justice his Christian trusteeship over the lower races. From these beliefs stemmed the Boer's sense of a national mission, and a fierce pride in his race. At least, this is the position as taught in the 2nd Volume of World History since 1789 edited by James Hagan of Sydney Teachers College and published in 1961. British Israel teaching has always been very strong among the Boers of South Africa, and it is believed by them and us that we both share a descent from the Israelites of Bible times. Be that as it may, they have always had a faith which overcomes all obstacles, in the Almighty and His Book. Allowing for the usual differences of opinion among all racial groups, the description of their beliefs is probably fairly accurate.

Strange to say, it was the new humanitarianism in England that first sowed discord between Britain and Boer. One result of the great stirring of the conscience in England was the realisation of the responsibilities of civilised towards uncivilised men, and this became apparent in the great expansion of the missionary movement as well as in the abolition of the British slave-trade in 1807 - that is, almost immediately after the second British occupation of the Cape. There was, as a matter of fact, but little opposition among the Boer farmers to the abolition of the slave-trade. But the activities of a large number of the newly -arrived missionaries - many of whom regarded it as their most sacred duty to protect their coloured 'flock' from 'exploitation' by their Boer masters - gradually became a source of almost unendurable exasperation to the Cape Dutch. The situation that arose was an extraordinary one, for the Boers themselves were a most God-fearing people, to whom, in the ordinary course, no body of men would have been more welcome than the missionaries, and their treatment of their slaves was almost invariably humane.

The missionary view, however, 'was based upon the conception of all men's equality before God; starting therefrom, and paying all too little regard to present differences between a civilised people and those who were still emerging from

barbarism, they emphasised ideas of social and political equality which could not be acceptable to those who had, as a result of their practical experience, convinced themselves of the Black man's inferiority'. (so says the historian Hofmeyer).

In fact (in the words of Professor Walker), 'the Evangelical missionaries stood for a colour-blind liberty and equality that went dead against the Boer's instincts, traditions, and inclinations;....'

Those most affected by the activities of these missionaries were the isolated stock-farmers strung out along the wild borderland that barely separated the still primitive civilisation of the Cape from the actual living savagery of the Matabele and the Zulu. These Boers were an intensely religious people. Their mouths (says Professor Walker) 'were full of Scripture, as full as had been the mouths of Cromwell's Ironsides....The Bible was the one book they could all read, or half read, half recite; it was their daily, most often their only, literary exercise. Early in the morning and again at evening the whole household would meet for prayers; only under stress of the most unusual circumstances would these ceremonies be relaxed. Christians, that is, Europeans, would sit round the table, the slaves and Hottentots would squat against the wall. Always there would be a psalm sung very solemnly and slow, and the reading of a portion of Scripture; perhaps also extracts from a book of sermons, then another psalm and a blessing.'

There was much disastrous friction between the Boers and Missionaries, but one event still lingers in Boer memories as the 'Black Circuit'. Some members of the London Missionary Society caused a large number of influential and respected farmers and their wives to be arraigned before a new Court Circuit to answer charges of cruelty towards their native servants. Many witnesses were called, both black and white, and the farmers were put to intolerable inconvenience, but when the evidence had been collected, so many of the charges were so obviously false that the Court actually took it upon itself to rebuke the overcredulous missionaries. The Boers themselves, however, had been profoundly shocked, and the indignity they had been called upon to suffer was never forgotten or forgiven.

This disagreement between missionaries and farmers became deep-seated and permanent, and events moved rapidly towards a climax. On the 1st December 1834, by the law of England, all slaves in Cape Colony became 'apprentices' of their

owners - as a preliminary to complete emancipation (four years later they were to become absolutely free). But this extravagantly sudden transition from slavery to complete freedom seemed to the Boers an act fraught with incredible folly, which was bound to be not only financially ruinous to themselves, but quite fatal, in their eyes, to the prestige of the white man, in a land where prestige and personal safety were generally synonymous. Especially was this so in the case of the frontier farmers - and this frontier region comprised four-fifths of the total area of the colony.

The Boers therefore put forward an alternative liberation scheme designed to ensure the more gradual abolition of slavery, but the British Public would have nothing less than the immediate and universal liberation of every slave within the Empire. The crisis came, in fact, on Christmas Day 1834, when Kaffir tribes suddenly burst over the Cape frontier in incredible hordes, burning farmsteads, murdering their inhabitants, and carrying away their cattle. Nearly a thousand farms were damaged, pillaged, or destroyed; a quarter of a million cattle were stolen; the atrocities suffered by the farmers were unspeakable; and the future was seen to be, if possible, even more threatening still.

Sir Benjamin D'Urban, Governor of the Colony, when this tragic news at length reached him in Cape Town, immediately dispatched Colonel Harry Smith (later the world-famous Sir Harry Smith) to the frontier with full civil and military powers.

We can see here the great value of having a good Governor, as opposed to a set of politicians. He himself planned to follow at the earliest possible moment. Colonel Smith at once initiated plans for the dispatch of stores and troops by sea and land to Grahamstown, and all was ready by New Year's Eve (1834). Colonel Smith left Government House at midnight, mounted his horse and began that six-hundred-mile ride to Grahamstown which at once became historic.

I wish I could spend the time telling his story, so magnificent it is. Six days at one hundred miles a day. Crossing dozens of rivers, wet through constantly, under a blazing sun by day. His horse broke down as he approached a mounted Boer farmer. He pleaded for a new mount, but his story was so incredible that the man did not believe him. Driven to desperation he knocked him down, mounted his horse and rode

off. The last stage of his incredible journey found the whole countryside in the wildest state of alarm. "Everything that moved near a bush was a Kaffir".

He at length reached Grahamstown. All the streets were barricaded, and consternation was on every face. Everyone was armed. News was coming through from all along the frontier of fear and despair - the aftermath of the fearful atrocities that had been committed by the savages of the interior.

In spite of this, Smith's arrival worked wonders. His drive, his methodical and practical measures for defence of the town, and his unruffled calm worked wonders. Again I do not have space to tell of his adventures. He then, with his newly organised troops, overran the entire territory and took their great chief, Hintza, captive. Hintza, however - a truculent black Goliath - in spite of his being held as a hostage, was cunning enough to doublecross the authorities, for even while he was being detained as an honoured prisoner he succeeded in arranging for his tribe to drive the Boer cattle well out of reach. Then occurred one of the many dramatic individual exploits with which the history of South Africa abounds. Hintza undertook to take them to a spot where the cattle could be handed back. Suddenly he escaped. Smith galloped in pursuit, and there developed a thrilling race which eventually developed into a breath-taking hand-to-hand encounter. The two horses thundered on, the rider of the foremost adorned with a leopard skin and armed with assegai, the other in the uniform of an officer of the 95th Regiment gripping a pistol.

At first Smith gained rapidly, and as soon as he was within range fired, but Hintza was unharmed. Smith's mount began to tire, and he realised he had over-ridden him, he therefore nursed him carefully for a quarter of a mile, and began to close again. At last he drew level, closed with him, and struck at him with the butt-end of his pistol, Hintza in return making furious lunges with an assegai. Still the horses kept up their speed, until Smith suddenly noticed that they were riding straight into a collection of Kaffir huts. He shouted to Hintza to stop before it was too late, but Hintza was beside himself with frenzy and both continued their headlong career. At this very moment Smith fancied he heard a whisper in his ear which said: "Pull Hintza off his horse!"

'I shall not,' wrote Smith in his memoirs, 'nor ever

could, forget the peculiarity of this whisper.'

Thus prompted, Smith rode so close to his adversary that the assegais were comparatively harmless, and at last he was able to seize Hintza by the collar of his leopard-skin cloak and shake him in his saddle. By a supreme final effort he drove his own horse in front of Hintza's and succeeded at last in hurling the black giant to the ground.

Up to this moment D'Urban's object had been merely to restore tranquillity, recover the stolen cattle, and secure adequate compensation for the farmers, whose material losses alone were conservatively estimated at upwards of 300,000 pounds. Now, however, he began a campaign which not only eventually freed the whole of what was then regarded as Cape Colony from the invaders, but also drove the invaders themselves across the Kei, in all of which operations the Boers rendered him the most heroic and invaluable service.

Now, at last, British prestige began to revive; in fact D'Urban and Colonel Smith had great hopes of removing the friction between Briton and Boer. With sympathetic collaboration on the part of the Home Government they might well have succeeded. But, alas! in due course, a despatch reached South Africa from the Colonial Secretary (then Lord Glenelg), the fatal effects of which have been felt to this day. Lord Glenelg was closely associated with the 'Clapham Sect'. His father had been one of the founders of the Church Missionary Society, and he himself was keenly and actively interested in the work of that body. That he should have shared the views of the missionaries in South Africa, and that he should be 'negrophile' in sentiment, is not in the least surprising. On the other hand, it is little short of a paradox that so intensely Christian-minded a Colonial Secretary should have sown the seeds of such deadly enmity between England and a people who were in no way less conspicuous than the English for the depth of their religious feeling.

Yet this is precisely what happened. The Colonial Secretary anathematised in the harshest possible terms the manner in which the Governor and Colonel Smith had dealt with the emergency. "Through a long series of years", this notorious despatch ran, "the Kiffirs had an ample justification of the war into which they rushed; they had to resent, and endeavoured justly, though impotently, to avenge a series of encroachments; they had a perfect right to hazard the experiment, however

hopelessly, of extorting by force that redress which they could not otherwise obtain; and the original justice is on the side of the conquered, and not of the victorious party."

Lord Glenelg's despatch killed once and for all any remaining hope of reconciliation between the Imperial Government and the Boer farmers. To heap such intolerable abuse upon them for a war which originated in an invasion by the Kaffirs themselves, who, in overwhelming numbers, had harried and ruined their prosperous farms, burned their homes over their heads, and butchered, to the accompaniment of the foulest atrocities, so many of those who were nearest and dearest to them, was (the Boer farmers themselves indignantly declared) to add "the grossest of insults to the deepest of injuries".

Hence, presently, all along the frontier, the same ominous words were to be heard in the broad dialect of the Taal: "It is time to trek!"

A certain amount of 'trekking' would have taken place even without this last provocation - for there were many and great grievances, as well as a condition of 'land-hunger' on the part of some. Even the financial losses and dislocation that were bound to follow the rapidly approaching emancipation of the slaves would have been sufficient to drive many to drastic action. But whatever causes there may have been, it was (says a South African authority) the Glenelg despatch that gave to the Great Trek 'the magnitude which was to lend it historic importance'.

Throughout the colony, farmers and their wives began to pack their wagons with clothes, furniture, ploughs, tools, food, and gunpowder; farms were sold one after the other for the proverbial song, and at last the great hooded wagons, each drawn by anything up to sixteen oxen, moved deliberately on and out into the unknown.

We hear no more of Sir Benjamin D'Urban and Sir Harry Smith, since, naturally, they remained behind, but it is not without interest to recall that the beautiful city of Durban in 1835 was named after this most popular Governor, and that the memory of Sir Harry Smith lives in the name of Harrismith, as does that of his beautiful Spanish wife, Juana, in Ladysmith.

Thus began the 'Great Trek', a vast exodus of 10,000 discontented people from British territory. It was not, however, a single 'great trek' under one leader, but a number of 'treks', some small and some of considerable size, the Boers leaving

different parts of the colony at different times, taking different directions, their paths at times crossing, while on occasion they met and joined their forces.

But however diverse may have been the reasons that had uprooted them from their homes and sent them out into the wild and perilous neighbourhood of the Matabele and the Zulu, 'common to all', says Professor Walker, 'was a determination to live no longer in a colony where the divinely appointed colour-bar was so flagrantly disregarded'.

In other words, this Great Trek, which was destined to divide Briton and Boer and to lead to the foundation of hostile Boer States in South Africa, was almost solely the outcome of the great humanitarian development in England which had led to the rapid expansion of the Missionary movement, as well as to a new and powerful 'negrophile' policy, and to a fixed determination on the part of the British people to wipe out the stain of slavery in all British possessions without brooking the smallest further delay for any reason whatever.

Yet - even so - it was more than that. It was but one more example of the hopeless inability of the old-time politicians to appreciate the problems and trials of far-distant peoples whose surroundings had no parallel in the British Isles.

Lamentably, therefore, these sturdy, heroic farmers set out on their dangerous 'trek' towards the unknown North, filled with deep resentment in their hearts against 'Whitehall'. Accompanying them, but nerved to face even the horrors of conflict with the black hordes of Msilikazi and Dingaan, were their wives and their children - those very children who used to read a portion of the Scriptures to their elders at every meal. Most significant of all is the fact that among these children was a boy of ten whose name was Paul Kruger.

(To be Continued).



**Stand for something,
or you'll fall for anything.**

ZEPHANIAH.

Part Three.

A Study by
Frank W. Dowsett.

Chapter Two.

We now turn to the second chapter of our study in this series. Having touched, albeit briefly, on the circumstances of the Day of the Lord, we find the prophet Zephaniah concentrating on warning God's people and pleading with them to repent of their evil ways. In vision, he can see the awesomeness of this Great Day of the Lord, and the nature and extent of God's judgment upon a nation which, though chosen and nurtured and loved so much, has turned it's back on the God Who formed them, and called them to what can only be described as the highest calling to which any person, or any nation, could ever attain - that of being the servant people and nation of the Most High God.

Thus we read in the verses 1 to 3;

*"Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired;
Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger come upon you.
Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger."*

This is not just a general call to all and sundry. It is directed specifically to Israel as a "nation". It is a fitting example of what should be, but what is not, happening throughout our lands today. To turn the individual to repentance

is highly commendable, and quite necessary. But to do this at the expense of calling for national repentance can be totally disastrous. It may help the individual, but if it is divorced from the necessity for national repentance, it can, and mostly does, develop into what one might call a very self-centred and parochial attitude. Most Christians cannot understand this fact because they have no concept of the national message of the Bible. They have no concept of the fact that God did not restrict Himself to individuals in respect of being His witnesses. He called a nation for this purpose. Isaiah makes this abundantly clear. In his 43rd. chapter we read these unmistakable words;

V1: "But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."

V10: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me."

V12: "I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God."

V21: "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise."

But what had happened? This nation had placed itself in a position of becoming, in God's sight, undesirable. Strong's #3700 gives the meaning of this word as; "to become pale, i.e. (by impl.) to pine after; also to fear:--[have] desire, be greedy, long, sore." Need any more be said? And times haven't changed one iota.

The command is, "Gather yourselves together"! In other words, "assemble yourselves and get your act together". But this phrase has another very unexpected meaning. The prime root of this word 'gather' comes from the Hebrew #7197

“qashash, kaw-shash”; a primary root meaning; to become sapless through drought; to forage for straw, stubble or wood; fig. to assemble:--gather (selves) (together).”

We have become as dry as a sapless tree after drought. Our situation is vividly illustrated by the conditions in Israel as set forth in Exodus 5: 7, 11 and 12, and I Kings 17: 10 and 12;

7 “Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves.”

11 “Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished.

12 So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw.”

10 “So he (Elijah) arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.”

12 “And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.”

Thus, as stated in verse 2, we are commanded to repent before God’s decree of judgment comes to pass; before the “Day of the Lord’s Anger” comes upon us.

Verse three requires us to seek after three things;

“Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger.”

The priorities here are most important;

1. We must Seek the LORD. Don’t let us ever consider that we today are any better than our forefathers. In point of fact, we

are a lot worse, in that we have the experiences of our forefathers to look back on and have deliberately and foolishly ignored them. We read in Deuteronomy 4: 25-31;

25 *"When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger:*

26 *I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.*

27 *And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you.*

28 *And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.*

29 *But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.*

30 *When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;*

31 *(For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them."*

2. **We must seek after Righteousness.** "Righteousness" simply means "Lawfulness". And herein lies the basic - if not the root - cause of all our problems. Christians today will accept without question God's command to obey our parents. We accept without question the responsibility of parents to teach their children about God. We expect them to do what we tell them. But when God, our Heavenly Father, tells us what and what not to do, we thumb our nose at Him, and do 'that which seems right in our own eyes', virtually telling God that He doesn't know what He's talking about. It's a great system. Do what you like, say you're sorry, feel real good about the fact that

you have confessed your 'sins', then get on the merry-go-round and do it all over again. **That's why we're in trouble!!!** It's abundantly clear that people, in the main, don't seek after righteousness. What they want is sympathy and support. They will go to any extremes to find excuses to justify and exonerate themselves for what they want to do. They really don't want God, or anyone else, to just tell them they are doing the wrong thing. They would rather God said; "you're doing the wrong thing, but you're intentions are quite good, and that's what really matters". Sorry!

3. **We must seek after meekness.** Meekness does not consist of agreeing with every wind of doctrine so as not to offend someone. It doesn't mean making ourselves into some form of a Christian doormat. I feel quite sure that the Lord has no time whatsoever for "pussy-footing" followers. It means that we must be humble, gentle, and unassuming in our convictions, attitudes and life-style. True humility goes hand in hand with a dedication and commitment that does not countenance evil or disobedience in any form. True meekness, or humility, requires a steadfast walk with God. And there is no way we can be walking with God if we are walking in deliberate disobedience to the Laws and Statutes He has laid down for us to follow. We read in Micah 6:8;

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

And then, of course, we have the Great Formula which our Lord has given us as expressed in II Chronicles 7:14;

"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."

Following the above exhortation, Zephaniah 2:3 ends with the words; "it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger." This phrase 'it may be' does not introduce an element of doubt into the equation, but rather that compliance with these requirements will qualify us, both as a nation, and as

individuals, to be "hid", or protected - (which is the meaning of the name 'Zechariah') - in the day when the anger of the Lord ultimately falls upon a desperately sinful and wicked people.

The balance of this second chapter, from verse 4 to 15, deals with the extent of God's judgment upon those nations who are His sworn enemies. I think it would be fairly safe to say that most Christians would read over these passages very quickly, if at all. When all's said and done, what possible interest could there be in the account of what happened to people who lived several thousand years ago. To most, it is no more than dry old history. But we have no excuse to sell God short in this way. If He inspired the writer to record these facts, then you can be sure that He had a very good reason. And we realise this reason only when we study the history of those mentioned, and in particular, the effect that they had upon the life and culture of God's Israel people.

The first group of people named, who became the object of God's punishment, are listed in verses 4 to 7 of chapter two. I will not print out the entire text because of space restrictions, but we find the following people mentioned. Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and the nation of the Cherithites. And then we find the Philistines. In verse five we read;

"O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant."

The Cherithites were people who had settled alongside the Philistines, and were thus greatly influenced by them. According to some authorities, they became an alternative name for Philistines. The other four nations mentioned, plus the nation of Gath - which is not mentioned - comprised the five main cities of the Philistines. So we find that this passage deals specifically with the nation and people known as the Philistines.

So who were these Philistines? The territory which they inhabited was known as Philistia, and it is from these two names that the modern name of 'Palestine' is derived. Genesis chapter ten lists the descendants of Ham, the son of Noah. They include Cush, who was the father of Nimrod, the founder of Babylon, (verse 8), and in verse 14, 'Philistim', who became the progenitor of the Philistines. So what, we might ask. Well, on further investigation, we find that *"The Philistines, while*

retaining a few cultural features bespeaking their foreign origin, were largely assimilated to the Canaanite culture that surrounded them." (The New Bible Dictionary. Page 990 - Culture. Emphasis added.)

Now it must be realised that the Canaanites were the descendants of Canaan, the son of Noah's son Ham. Canaan had a curse placed upon him because of the sin of his father Ham. As we read in Genesis 9:24-25;

"And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."

Why was Canaan cursed, rather than his father Ham, who had committed the sin? And what must have been the sin which had brought about such a curse? The entire account as recorded in Genesis chapter nine surely requires a better explanation than that Ham just saw his father Noah lying naked upon his bed. Why curse his, as yet unborn, son for something as insignificant as this, for which he was not responsible? The key lies in understanding the statement in Leviticus 18:7-8;

*"The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.
The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness."*

The word 'uncover' as used here, according to Strong's #1540, means "to make nude, especially in a disgraceful sense." This constitutes a deliberate act of removing a person's clothing, not an accidental occurrence. The fact that 'uncovering' Noah's nudity is classified as being the same as 'uncovering' his wife's nakedness, together with Noah's reaction when he ultimately realised what had actually happened, leaves us with very little alternative but to conclude that what had actually happened was that Ham had deliberately 'uncovered' his mother's nakedness for the purpose of having sexual relations with her, and that Canaan was the subsequent child born of this incestuous relationship. Thus the child was born under a curse. It was this incestuous trait that became a part of the very genes of his

descendants, influencing their way of life and becoming such a prominent feature of their national culture from that time forward. It was this feature that so strongly influenced the people of Israel in future years - as it still does among their descendants - and which brought down the most severe condemnation and punishment upon them from the Lord God of Israel. They were the children of incest, and as such, an abomination before the Lord. This is why God was so very emphatic about Israel having nothing whatsoever to do with these people.

But the account continues in verses 8 to 11 regarding two other nations, those of Moab and Ammon. This we must read;

"I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border.

Therefore as I live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them.

This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the LORD of hosts.

The LORD will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen."

The origin of Moab and Ammon, the progenitors of the Moabites and the Ammonites, is fairly well known to most Christians, and much more easily understood. Moab and Ammon were the two sons born of the incestuous relationship between Lot and his two daughters. Lot's two daughters, who had escaped the destruction of the city of Sodom where they lived, deliberately 'set-up' their own father for this despicable act. These sisters were a totally depraved duo, and I personally believe from the details of the account that they were closely associated and involved with the homosexual conditions and behaviour in which they lived, being themselves lesbians. I believe that Lot also knew this, and it was this knowledge that

prompted him to offer his two daughters to the perverts knocking at his door in order to save the two men, whom he had never met before, from the fate which Lot realised otherwise awaited them, very possibly explaining Lot's statement that his two daughters had never known a man. What father would make such a decision regarding his daughters if they were sexually pure and chaste. So here we have another two nations which were the descendants of incest. And like the Canaanites, they played an inordinate part in the future life, and destruction, of the culture of God's Israel people. Things have not changed one iota. This is exactly what "multiculturalism" is, and has been doing for many years, to our Christian civilisation as once found in the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic-Israel nations throughout the world. It is not without significance that God promised both Moab and Ammon, in verses 8 and 9, that although they had escaped the original destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, they would certainly not escape similar destruction which an angry and righteous God had determined upon them at a later time.

Thus we find that the major nations upon which God is about to inflict His judgment are those who are motivated by the perverted sexual genes which have been their very hallmark since the time of their forefathers. We can now readily understand how and why it is that today within the nations of Anglo-Saxon-Israel, the enemy is using this very weapon against us through every avenue of the media, and through perverse laws, in order to destroy us from the face of the earth. The enemy has indeed come in like a flood.

The remainder of the chapter, from verse 12 to 15, deals with God's judgment upon the nations associated with Babylon. Ethiopia once occupied a far greater extent of territory than present Abyssinia, becoming at times part of, or at least dominated by, both Egypt and Persia. Assyria and Nineveh are also included in this judgment. The term Assyria was sometimes applied to those territories which were subject to the control of its kings dwelling at Nineveh, Assur, and Calah, the principle cities. At the height of its power in the 8th to 7th centuries B.C. these territories included, among others, Media, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, Egypt, and Babylonia. All these places had been controlled by anti-Israel forces and leaders, and their cultures were a constant source of danger to God's Israel people. Verses 14 and 15 leave us in no doubt that the prophet is referring to Babylon, and by extension, to the entire Babylonian

system which has been used so drastically in our national destruction. Compare verse 14 with what Isaiah records about Babylon the Great in Isaiah 13:21-22;

Zephaniah 2:14;

"And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds: for he shall uncover the cedar work."

Isaiah 13:21-22;

*"But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.
And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."*

Then let us compare Zephaniah 2:15 with Isaiah 47:7-9, and Rev. 18:7-8, in regard to "the daughter of Babylon";

Zephaniah 2:15;

"This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand."

Isaiah 47:7-9;

"And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of

children: But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments."

Rev. 18:7-8;

"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

The final words of this second chapter are very pertinent, where we are informed that those who see the final desolation of this "rejoicing city" will "wag their hands". This was always done as a sign of derision. Rev. 18:20 says it all;

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her."

But in all this, never let us overlook the injunction set forth in Rev. 18:4-5;

"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.

For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

The fact that we have not obeyed this warning is born out by the condemnation and judgments recorded by the prophet in his third and final chapter, which God willing, we will study in our next issue.

(to be Continued.)



come through the infilling, baptism, and ministry of the Holy Spirit within us.

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

We proclaim the absolute necessity for each and every individual Christian to prepare themselves for the greatest event yet to be witnessed on this earth, namely,

THE RETURN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

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

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

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

With our Christian love,

Frank and Betty Dowsett.

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Then they that feared the LORD
spake often one to another:
and the LORD hearkened, and heard it,
and a book of remembrance was written
before him for them that feared the LORD,
and that thought upon his name.

And they shall be mine,
saith the LORD of hosts,
in that day when I make up my jewels;
and I will spare them,
as a man spareth his own son
that serveth him.

Malachi 3:16-17.

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