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British-Israel World Federation

(VICTORIAN HEADQUARTERS)

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MONTHLY NOTES

January, 1994

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President: Mr. E. B. CLEMENTS, 42A, Roslyn Street, Middle Brighton, 3186
Phone: 592 2483

Hon. Secretary: Mrs. J. W. PIERCY, 38, St Andrews Street, Brighton, 3186
Phone: 592 0877

Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. V. HOOPER, "Glenwood", Woodend-Romsey Road, ROMSEY, Vic. 3434
Phone: (054) 270 573

Bookroom Manager: Mr. J. L. B. WALKE, 6, Palmerston Street, Camberwell, 3124
Phone: 882 4256

A STUDY IN MATTHEW

The writer of the first gospel in the New Testament of the Bible was St. Matthew, also named Levi, a Galilean Jew tax gatherer under Roman oppression therefore one of the hated publicans of ill repute. His gospel is traditionally dated A.D.37. The theme of the book is given in its first verse "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham, (Matt. 1.1) immediately connecting him with two of the Old Testament covenants. i.e., the Davidic covenant of kingship and the Abrahamic Covenant of promise. (2 Sam. 7.8-16; Gen. 15.18)

Following after the order indicated in its first verse, he writes first of the King(David's son), then Abraham's son, obedient unto death; a type of Isaac.(Gen. 22.1-18; Hebrews 11.17-18). It is of Jesus in His two-fold character that Matthew records his gospel. However, the prominent character of Christ in the gospel of Matthew is that of the covenanted King, David's "righteous branch" (Jer. 33-5; 33.15) Matthew records Christ's genealogy, His birth in Bethlehem; David's city; (Micah 5.2) His forerunners, (Malachi 3), the King Himself 's ministry, His rejection by the Jews, and predictions of His Second Coming in power and great glory.

Following this discourse, Matthew reviews the earlier covenant, recording the death of Christ - a gospel for the whole world. St. Matthew's gospel has three main divisions:-

1. The manifestation to Israel and the rejection of Jesus Christ, born "King of the Jews" (1.1-25, 46). This section of sub-divisions are:
 - (a) The official genealogy and birth of the King. (1.1-25)
 - (b) The infancy and later obscurity of the King. (2.1-23)
 - (c) The kingdom "at hand" (3.1-12). The order of this sub-division's events is indicated in the text.
 - (d) The mysteries of the Kingdom. (13.1-52)
 - (e) The ministry of the rejected King. (13.53; 23.59)
 - (f) The promise of the King's return (second advent) in person and glory. (24.1-25, 46)
2. The sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Abraham's son. (26.1-28, 8)
3. The risen Lord's ministry to His own. (28.9-20).

These events (recorded in Matthew, according to Ussher) cover 38 years.

Christ (Christos-anointed), the Greek form of the Hebrew 'Messiah', (Dan. 9.2) is our Lord's official name, (as Jesus is his human name. (Luke 1.31; 2.21))

His name (or title 'Christ' connects Him with the entire Old Testament foreview of a coming prophet (Deut. 18.15-19); Priest (Psalm 110.4) and King. (2 Sam. 7.7-10) These were typically anointed with oil (1 Kings 3.16; Mark 1.10-11; Luke 3.21, 22; John 1.32-33); Jesus officially becoming "the Christ".

One of His Divine Titles (Psalm 10.16) used in "church" worship (Tim. 1.17) is "the King", but NEVER "king of the church" but Lord or "Head of the church" (Eph. 1.22) which is His BODY, an assembly of called out ones. Israel was a true church(called out of Egypt and assembled in the wilderness. (Acts 7.8). The only point of similarity between Israel and the New Testament church was that BOTH were "called out" by the same God. All else is contrast.

In Matt. 16.20 "Then charged He (Jesus) His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ. "From thenceforth Jesus informed His disciples concerning His own future program. They had been proclaiming Jesus as the Christ. i.e., the covenanted King of a kingdom promised to Israelites (Jews?) and "at hand". Contrarily, the church was to be, in Jesus as crucified, risen from the dead, ascended, and made "head over all things to the church". (Eph. 1.20-23)

The former testimony was ended, the new testament was not yet ready, because the blood of the new testament was not yet shed, but our Lord begins referring to His death and resurrection (v.21) It is a tremendously significant turning point. (C/f Matt. 11, 14; Mark 9.11-13; Luke 1. 17; Malachi 3.1;4.5 and 6).These passages should be considered together.(a) Jesus confirms a specific and as yet unconfirmed prophecy of Mal. 4. 5-6; Elias shall truly first come and restore all things". Here, as also in Mal. 4, the prediction was fulfilled in John the Baptist, and yet to be fulfilled in Elijah, are kept separate and independent. (b) but John the Baptist had already appeared and with his ministry so fully in the spirit and power of Elijah's future ministry (Luke 1.17-26) that in a specific and typical sense it could be affirmed "Elias is already come". (c/f Matt. 10. 40; Psalm 12. 17) where similarity of identification, while preserving personal distinction, occurs. . (c/f John 1. 27)

Peter opened the door of Christian opportunity to Israel at Pentecost. (Acts 2. 28-42) and also to gentiles in Cornelius' house, (Acts 10. 34-46). Peter, nor anyone else, did not assume priority .(Acts 15.7-11) In the council James, not Peter, seems to have presided . (Acts 15.19 c/f Gal. 2.11-15) Peter only claimed to be an apostle by gift (1 Peter 1.1) and an elder by office (1 Peter 5.1) The other disciples SHARED the power of binding and loosing. (Matt. 18.18; John 20. 23) This did not assume the determination of the eternal destiny of souls (Rev. 1.18). Christ alone holds the keys of death and the place of departed spirits.

1. Dominion over the earth before the call of Abraham:-

1.1 Dominion over the earth was given to the first man and woman. (Gen.1.26) who in the fall lost this, Satan becoming "prince of this world" (Matt; 4.8-10; John 14.30) 1.2 After the flood, the principle of human government was established under the Covenant with Noah, responsibility resting upon the whole race, Jew and gentile, until under the Palestinian Covenant, (Deut. 28-30.1-10) Occasioned by the Judgment of the captivities when the "times of the gentiles" (Luke 21.24; Rev. 16.14) began, world government passed exclusively into gentile hands. (Dan. 2. 36-45; Luke 21.24; Acts 15.14-17) Both Israel and the gentiles have governed for self, and not God, as any Bible reader can observe.

The judgment of the confusion of tongues ended the racial testing; the Israelitish, ended with the captivities; the Jewish with Christ's earthly habitation; the gentile testing ends in the smiting of the Image (Dan. 2), and the judgment of the nations (Matt. 25.31-46) soon to occur, still the charter of all gentile government. E.B.C.

OUR PROVIDER

"Take no thought of the morrow, what ye shall eat, what ye shall drink, what ye shall put on, for your heavenly father knoweth ye have need of these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (food, drink and clothing) shall be added unto you. "

The more I read and study Scripture, the more I marvel! This is an imperative for day to day living, real living, not just existence, which so many of mankind tolerate Let's analyse that statement from Matthew 6.30-34).

So many of today's population are completely occupied with their fears for tomorrow, their wherewithall. What am I going to eat? What will I wear? For many it becomes an obsession.

Let's look at that above text, commencing with the second statement "For your heavenly Father KNOWETH ye have need of these things". All the essentials have been taken care of, they need not concern the believer. God will provide, as He has always been able to do, as so many believers have found out over the centuries.

To obtain such benefits and blessings what needs to be done? "Seek ye first". The first imperative is to first seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. What is that kingdom, and His righteousness?

The motto of England "God and my right(eousness) tells us what it is and where it is. So we must first establish why this motto belongs to a people and a nation; and its location on earth. And that involves considerable research and acceptance of certain fundamentals that are necessary.

This, most people will not do, for lack of knowledge or of belief, so there exists an impenetrable barrier that is otherwise impossible to penetrate or pierce.

The first advice any Christian (Christ believer) should give to a fellow citizen is to consider that which is really necessary for a successful, problem-free existence, is to believe and understand such advice. Find out WHAT the "government" or the "church" means, what it is, where it is, and to make it a priority IN YOUR LIFE, and the blessings (food, drink, and apparel) are yours for the taking and the enjoyment thereof. The provider, God, knows everyone's NEEDS (not necessarily one's wants) is able to extend His bounty to ALL, and will do so without exception, if requested to do so. And there are no strings attached, or price to pay, only the requirement to accept what

is so generously offered, and be thankful of the provision. It is only in my latter years that I have learned to understand and accept what He requires of me, and try to conform to His will concerning my person.

In that situation and relationship, anything becomes possible, and peace is a normal and natural result.

What is the good of having a father who is unreliable when you need his affection and care. Absolutely none! And so the message of the church of the 20th century is insufficient for the world's needs and faith.

E.B.C.

WHY THE SABBATH SHOULD BE KEPT.

In Matthew verses 20 to 24 of chapter 11, is recorded how and why judgment was to be meted out to the cities of Chorazim and Bethsaida because of the "mighty works" which had been done in those cities without comparable response from the inhabitants thereof. He stated that it *shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you". He also berated Capernaum (in verse 23) for lack of recognition for the "mighty works which have been done in thee", stating that if similar works had occurred in Sodom, they would still be in occupation.

Such is real caustic criticism of Chorazim, Bethsaida, and Capernaum and persuades the reader of the depths to which their inhabitants had degraded themselves. Some of the inhabitants of quite a number of 20th. century cities are little better, if not much worse.

Notice, judgment was meted out because they had rejected the warnings that had been given. Jesus advises that he was meek and lowly of heart, that we should be like Him, and find rest therein.

Although the "kingdom of heaven" was announced as "at hand" "by John the Baptist; by the King Himself (Jesus) and by the twelve apostles, and attested by mighty works, it has been morally rejected. The places chosen for testing of the nation (Chorazim, Bethsaida, etc.) having rejected both John and Jesus, the rejected king now speaks of judgment. The final official rejection is later recorded in Matthew 27.31-37, with the accusation set up over the head of the crucified Christ "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews".

With this new message of Jesus, the rejected King now turned from the rejecting nation and offers, not the Kingdom, but rest and

service to such in the nation as are conscious of need; a pivotal point in the ministry of Jesus.

The Sabbath (cessation) appears in Scripture as the day of God's rest in the finished work of creation.(Gen. 2.2,3) For 2500 years of human life absolutely no mention is made of it. Then the Sabbath was revealed (Ex. 16.23; Neh. 9.13-14), made a part of the law(Exod. 4.8-11) and invested with a "sign" between Jehovah and Israel; and a perpetual reminder to Israel of separation to God.(Exod. 31.13-17) It was observed by complete rest (Ex.35. 2-3),and by Jehovah's express order a man was put to death for gathering sticks on the Sabbath day.(Num. 15.32-36) Apart from maintaining the continuing burnt offering (Num. 28.9) and its connection with the annual feasts, (Ex. 12.16; Lev. 23.3,8; Num. 28.25), the seventh day Sabbath was never made a day of sacrifice, worship, or any manner of religious service. It was simply and only a day of complete rest for man and beast, a humane provision for man's needs. In the words of Christ "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath".(Mark 2.27) Our Lord found the observance of the day encrusted with rabbinical evasions (Matt. 12.2) and restrictions, wholly unknown to the law, so that He was Himself called a Sabbath-breaker by the religious authorities of that time. The Sabbath will once again be observed during the kingdom age. (Isa. . 66. 23) The Christian first day perpetuates in the dispensation of grace the principle that one-seventh of the time is especially sacred, but in all other respects is in contrast with the Sabbath. One is the seventh day, the other is the first. The Sabbath commemorates God's creation rest, the first day - Christ's resurrection. On the seventh day God rested, on the first day Christ was continuously active.

The Sabbath commemorates a finished creation, the first day, a finished redemption, The Sabbath was a day of legal obligation; the first day one of voluntary worship and service. The Sabbath is mentioned in the Acts, only in connection with the Jews, and in the rest of the New Testament but twice. (Col. 2.16; Heb. 4.4) In these passages the seventh-day Sabbath is -to be to the Christian not a day to be observed, but a type of the present rest into which he enters when "he ceases from his own works" and trusts Christ.

Editor.



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March, 1994.

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THE KINGDOM DISPENSATION

This is recorded in 2 Samuel ch. 7 vs. 4-29. If words mean anything, the words of the Bible convince me that they cannot be taken lightly. They are clear, fundamental, specific and verifiable, and constitute the basis of past, present and future history of the people known as Israelites. As part of the Old Testament of the Bible, which is not read very much these days, these verses make a significant contribution to that history, and what in the future will become history.

2 Samuel ch. 7 vs. 4-29 read as follows:

"And it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan (the prophet), saying Go and tell My servant David, Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.... Now therefore so shalt thou say unto My servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel: And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth.... Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime.... Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt

sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son, If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

Then went King David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come.... Wherefore thou art great O Lord God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their God.

And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.... Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed forever."

In these words, perpetuity is given to the throne of David, and to his progeny, NOT JUST FOR THOSE TIMES, BUT FOREVER! Now, forever is a long time. Note what Dr. Scofield has to say on this in his edition of the Bible.

"The Davidic Covenant - This covenant, upon which the glorious kingdom of Christ 'of the seed of David according to the flesh' is to be founded, secures (1) A Davidic 'house', i.e. posterity, family. (2) A throne, i.e. royal authority. (3) A kingdom, i.e. sphere of rule. (4) In perpetuity, forever. (5) And this fourfold covenant has BUT ONE condition, disobedience in

the Davidic family is to be visited with chastisement, but not to the abrogation of the covenant. (Refer 2 Sam. 7:15; Psa. 89:20-37; Isa. 24:5; 54:3) The chastisement fell first in the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam and finally, in the captivities (2 Kings 25:1-7). Since that time, but one king of the Davidic line has been crowned at Jerusalem, and He was crowned with thorns. But the Davidic covenant confirmed to David by the oath of Jehovah, and renewed to Mary by the angel Gabriel, is immutable, (Psa. 89:30-37) and the Lord God will yet give to that thorn-crowned One 'the throne of his father David' (Luke 1:31-33; Acts 2:29-32)."

At the present time most of the people of the children of Israel (the Anglo-Saxon and kindred people of the world), both in "church" and "nation", foolishly dismiss the statements of 2 Samuel chapter 7. I find it difficult to understand how so many people who purport to believe in God could be so deceived, particularly among our clergymen and church congregations.

According to the Word of God the throne of David will endure forever, the final incumbent being our soon returning Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, great David's Greater Son. His return as King of Kings has been promised in the Bible and will come to pass almost certainly, in my opinion, before this century closes.

Put your armour on, pray every day to God that He will send Jesus Christ, and soon! E.B.C.

LETTER TO THE QUEEN

The following letter was sent to Her Majesty from B.I.W.F. Headquarters, Melbourne, on November 11, 1993.

Her Majesty,
Queen Elizabeth,
Buckingham Palace,
LONDON, ENGLAND, U.K.

Your Majesty,

We have been very saddened to read and hear the false information about the Australian people wanting Australia to become a Republic. We would like to inform you that this is not the truth, and that most Australians are against becoming a Republic. We are the silent majority. Unfortunately, it is Mr. Keating and those in favour of a republic who get the coverage in the news media.

Those of us who love our flag, the Crown and the Monarchical System realize how fortunate we are to have such a stable system of government ruling over us in this world of turmoil. We also appreciate the wonderful example you have been to your subjects during your reign. As you know we believe that you are the present occupier of the Throne of the Lord, and we also believe that we can all look up in hopeful anticipation to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ very soon now.

Yours sincerely,

J. W. Piercy
(Hon. Secretary.)

This reply was received from Buckingham Palace.

3rd December, 1993.

Dear Mrs. Piercy,

I am commanded by The Queen to write and thank you for your letter about the current debate in Australia on constitutional change, sent on behalf of the British Israel World Federation.

Her Majesty was grateful to you for writing on this subject and has noted your comments. The Queen's constitutional position remains that she will act on the formal advice of her Australian Ministers, as this is a matter for the Australian people as a whole to decide by democratic means. Nonetheless, it was most helpful to have your views.

Yours sincerely,
(Simon Gimson)

DEATH

Death is a condition that most people fear but is expected to be the lot of all mankind. Death may be defined as the TERMINATION of LIFE and involves both physical and spiritual aspects.

Death is the EFFECT OF SIN which brings about the death of both soul and body.

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die...." (Ezek. 18:20)
"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" (Romans 5:12)

Sin separates man from God "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. (Is.59:2) and culminates in the SECOND DEATH. (Rev.2:11;21:8)

But though the "wages of sin is death..the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23)

Thus the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross has made it possible for man to avoid the SECOND DEATH and be restored to everlasting fellowship with God.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

"For the wages of sin is DEATH; but the gift of God is ETERNAL LIFE through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. 5:21)

"In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins...." (Eph. 1:7)

"Jesus said unto her (Martha), 'I am the resurrection, and the life: he that BELIEVETH in Me, though he were DEAD yet shall he LIVE.'" (John 11:25).

Death, however, will continue until after Satan's rebellion at the end of the one thousand years of the Millennium or coming "Kingdom Age".

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are

in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are....

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away....

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of Life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.....

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. 20: 7-15)

Here is the DESTRUCTION OF DEATH the final enemy which brings us to the gateway of the coming ages of perfection when

"...there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21:4)

Man will no longer be separated from God.

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Rev. 21:3)

How blessed are those who BELIEVE ON THE SON OF GOD for

"As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. 2:9)

E.B.C.



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STUDY IN ZECHARIAH

The second last book in the Old Testament was written by Zechariah (meaning 'remembered of Jehovah') a prophet to the remnant of the House of Judah which returned to Judea after the 70 year period of their Babylonian captivity. The nation which developed in Palestine from this remnant is often referred to as the Seventy Weeks Nation or the Nation of the Jews.

It was this small section of the Israel peoples that was eventually to bring forth THE MESSIAH Whose sacrificial work on Calvary as the Perfect Sin Offering was carried out during the Roman occupation of Palestine. His rejection by the Jewish Nation of His day was to herald the final casting out of Israelite people from God's land until their regathering under MESSIAH the returning KING towards the end of this age or millennium.

Zechariah's first prophecy is dated the 8th month of the 2nd year of Darius (Hystaspes, the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther) which, according to Davidson's dating was the year 520B.C., the year after work on the Temple had been resumed. His last prophecy was given in 518 B.C., two years before the Temple was finished and three years before Esther was made Queen in Shushan.

The Book of Zechariah falls into the following divisions:-

Ch. 1:1-6 A literal statement of events. God had cast His people out because of their wickedness and apostacy, just as He had repeatedly warned them He would.

Ch. 1:7 - 6:15 Eight symbolic, prophetic visions:

1. With the gentile nations at peace, Jehovah's intention is to restore Judah and Jerusalem. (1:7-17)
2. Judgment is decreed upon the four nations who scattered Israel and Judah, viz., Egypt, Syria, Assyria and Babylon (1:18-21)
3. Jehovah's ultimate purpose for Zion - He will dwell there

4. among His restored people. (2:1-13)

5. The vision of Joshua the High Priest cleansed and arrayed in a change of raiment (robes of state) and surrounded by his colleagues signified the **THE COMING MESSIAH** (My servant the BRANCH) ruling over His Kingdom and bringing peace and prosperity to His people, the vine and the fig being symbolic of Israel and Judah as well as typifying spiritual and national privileges. (3:1-10)

6. Reinstitution of the True Worship within the new nation by the Spirit of God as a witness to the True God and His future dominion in the earth. (4:1-14)

7. The Flying Roll signifies the WRITTEN WORD (the oracles of God Rom.3:1-2) The Old Testament scriptures were completed after Judah's return from Babylon and were guarded and preserved by the Jewish Nation. The New Testament was completed around the middle of the 2nd Century A.D. It has been during the Church Age that the whole Bible has spread worldwide showing forth God's requirements for righteous behaviour. The O.T. Law revealed man's sinfulness while the N.T. showed how faith in the Sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus Christ saves us from the consequences of breaking God's Law, while the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives gives us the power to keep the Law in the same measure as we submit our wills to His. The size of the roll is 20 cubits by 10 cubits. This is the same area as the Holy Place in the Tabernacle which measured 20c x 10c x 10c typifying the 2000 years of the Church Age, the Most Holy Place measuring 10c x 10c x 10c and typifying the 1000 years of the coming Kingdom Age or Millennium. Zechariah's vision is of the rebuke of sin by the Word of God. The two sins mentioned transgress both tables of the Ten Commandments - to steal setting aside a neighbour's rights, and to **swear (falsely)** setting aside God's claim to reverence. God's Word promises blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience. As man is unable to keep the Law in all its aspects, without the sacrifice of Christ our Saviour the Law can only curse. (5:1-4)

8. The horses and chariots typify four spirits or angels sent among the outside nations in judgment. Again **MESSIAH** is symbolized by High Priest Joshua who is now crowned, being both Priest and Ruler. This portrays the two offices of Priest and King to be combined in **ONE PERSON - THE MESSIAH** - Who will build the Spiritual Temple (true Church) and ultimately rule in peace upon His Throne as Priest and King in Zion. (6:1-15)

The Jewish Nation was ruled by the High Priest until the time of High Priest Simon the Just, the last hereditary H.P./Ruler in whose life time the compilation of the Books of the O.T. was completed. When he died in 292 B.C., as his son was too young to become High Priest, the position was given to his brother who became High Priest only. The presidency of the Sanhedrin or Parliament - the rulership of the nation - was conferred on Antigonus Socho, a learned man not of the Aaronic Priesthood but steeped in Greek Learning and Stoic Philosophy. He was the first of the Mishnical Teachers who interpreted and gave authority to the Oral Law (Traditions of Men). From this time Judaism, as distinct from the ancient faith of Israel, developed together with the separation of Church and State in contravention of God's stated order.

Ch. 7 & 8 Literal Prophecy.

God's People had been scattered because they would not keep the Law or listen to the Prophets. (Ch. 7) Ch. 8 looks toward the final restoration of Jerusalem with Judah a righteous people witnessing to the beneficence of God.

Ch. 9:1 - 10:12 Literal Prophecy (1st Burden or Divine Declaration)

Ch. 9:1-8 speaks of Zion's deliverance from enemies during the period leading up to the First Advent. Ch. 9:9 foretells **MESSIAH'S FIRST COMING** in righteousness and salvation.

The whole Church Period lies between verses 9 and 10.

Ch. 9:10 tells of **MESSIAH'S SECOND COMING** resulting in His dominion over the whole earth. Ch. 9:11-17 shows Zion's people returning from their captivities and Jehovah's protection as **ALL ISRAEL** (represented by 'Judah' and 'Ephraim') is restored to Zion. Ch. 10:1-12 The final deliverance of **ALL ISRAEL** from all enemies is to be accomplished.

Ch. 11:1-17 Zechariah typifies a Good Shepherd who cared for the flock having two "staves" - the only implements possessed by a shepherd, viz., a crook for helping the sheep and a club for their defence. Zechariah's staves are named : **BEAUTY - GRACIOUSNESS** - for help, and **BANDS - UNION** - for defence.

While God's People remained in Covenant relation with Him they could rely on His help in time of trouble provided they turned to Him in repentance and faith.

And while the Houses of Judah and Israel were united as one kingdom they enjoyed peace, but once their union was broken both Houses were invaded by other nations.

With the final rejection by the Jewish Nation of their Covenant God in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Mosaic Covenant was irrevocably broken and the Promised Land denied them. And with the Ten Tribed House of Israel scattered and their identity lost to the world the brotherhood or union between Israel and Judah was impossible.

The nation is warned by Zechariah of the "foolish" or worthless shepherds (evil leaders) who would destroy the flock which was destined for slaughter. This culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. and again in 135 A.D. when the false Messiah Bar-Cochebas had obtained possession of the ruins. The city was obliterated, and for 200 years passed out of history, no Jews being permitted to approach it.

It is interesting that a section of Jewry is today recognizing the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic Peoples as descendants of the Ten Tribes and is looking for closer ties with these peoples. However, the brotherhood cannot be restored except under the returning **MESSIAH**.

According to Zechariah their failure to recognize Jesus Christ as the Messiah extends until His return.

Ch. 12:10-11: ".....and they shall look upon (unto) Me (Him) Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn, In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem...."

The recognition of identity is of little value without the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as the Messiah and the Only Saviour of men.

Chapters 12, 13 and 14 of Zechariah have an end time application and are still to be fulfilled. But the message of these chapters is clearly to "Judah and Jerusalem" and the "houses" of David, Nathan, Levi, etc., the unbelieving descendants of these men who form a section of Jewry today. While the attacking armies surround His land God promises to cleanse and protect His own (one third of the inhabitants Ch.13:8&9) who will recognize Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

Chapter 14 describes the great climax as Our Lord's return is accompanied by an earthquake which changes the topography of the land. The invading nations are dealt with conclusively and the Lord is recognized as the universal Sovereign. (Ch.14:9)

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THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS

The Hebrew text uses numerous names to represent God, viz., EL, ELOHIM, ELYON, EL SHADDAI, ELOAH, JEHOVAH, etc., which portray different aspects of His Character, Personality and Attributes. The English Bible, however, mostly translates these names as "God" or "The Lord" thus failing to portray all the depth and meaning of the text.

The name JAH portrays Jehovah in a special sense and relation. The name Elijah means "Whose God is Jehovah" while Isaiah means "The salvation of Jehovah".

Ps. 118:5 reads, "I called upon the Lord (JAH) in distress.

He answered me with deliverance."

& :14 "The Lord (JAH) is my strength and song,
 And is become my salvation (or my saviour).

JAH therefore, portrays Jehovah as THE SAVIOUR.

In Hebrew the name OSHEA or HOSHEA means SAVIOUR or SALVATION. With JE prefixed it means HE BY WHOM JEHOVAH WILL SAVE. So the meaning of the Hebrew name Jehoshua or Joshua is JEHOVAH OUR SAVIOUR or JEHOVAH WHO IS SALVATION.

After the Babylonian Exile "JOSHUA" assumed the form "JESHUA" from which "JESUS" derived. (Joshua is actually referred to as "Jesus" in Acts 7:45 and Heb. 4:8 in the A.V.)

Just prior to the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ the Angel of Jehovah spoke to Joseph in a dream saying,

"Joseph thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for That Which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS (i.e., JEHOVAH OUR SAVIOUR) for He shall save His People from their sins."

Under the name JESUS Jehovah took on humanity in order to save from the power and penalty of sin. As perfect, sinless man He was able to pay the price for our sin by His death and then rise again as conqueror over death forever.

Col. 2:9 "For in Him (Jesus the Lord) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, bodily (in bodily form)."

That is, the essential nature of the Godhead was embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But why was He also named CHRIST?

CHRIST means ANOINTED: it is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word "MESSIAH". "Christ" means, therefore, that He was anointed or consecrated to His great redemptive work as Prophet, Priest and King. JESUS CHRIST means JESUS THE ANOINTED ONE - THE MESSIAH.

The name Jesus Christ establishes Jesus the Son of Joseph and Mary as the Anointed One of the O.T., the Great Deliverer, the divinely appointed, commissioned and accredited Saviour of men whose coming and mission was prophesied over and over again from the Garden of Eden.

WAS ABRAHAM A JEW?

The following are excerpts from an article which appeared in the United Israel Bulletin Vol. 35 No. 2, 1978, a N.Y. Jewish publication.

p. 2 "No less an historic figure than Queen Victoria believed that the British originated from ancient Israel and that she herself was a descendant of the Royal House of David. This writer, who has devoted much time and research into this intriguing subject, believes that the British Israelites among others do have a powerful case for their claims. Let's look at the picture.

First, in order to approach this strange issue correctly, it is most important that we understand the basic meanings of the terms "Hebrew", "Israel" and "Jew".

These designations, which have a significant bearing on our analysis, are not necessarily synonymous."

"Abraham was not a Jew!

Don't let this statement shock you. Historically and ethnologically, he was not a Jew. Neither was Isaac nor Jacob.

Moses was not a Jew!

Neither Joshua nor Joseph.

How? you may ask. Let's look at the facts:

Eber, the great grandson of Shem, was the first Hebrew, as his very name Eber (Eberi in Hebrew) signifies. His descendants, therefore, including Abraham, were all Hebrews.

As yet, the terms Israel and Jew (Jehudi) were unknown in the world. Abraham begat Isaac and Isaac Jacob - all Hebrews. Even at this juncture there were no Jews or Israelites on the scene.

The Bible record shows that Jacob was surnamed Israel (Yis-sar-El - God will rule), because he "had ruled with God and man and prevailed" (Exodus 32:29). Thus Jacob was the first Israelite in the world. He was also a Hebrew." [Genesis 32:28]

"The word "Jew" was still unknown. Jacob, or Israel, as he was surnamed, had twelve sons through four wives: Rachel, Leah, Zilpah and Bilhah. Each son became the head or progenitor of his own tribe.....

Now while the twelve sons of Jacob (Israel) were all children of Israel, or sons of Jacob, as also Hebrews, only one of them, Judah, was a Jehudi or Jew; more correctly, the progenitor and founder of the tribe of Judah or the Jews.

Judah, therefore, was the first Jew on the world scene.....

Thus, Abraham, Isaac, Moses and a host of others, while they were Hebrews could certainly not have been Jews."

"The same must apply to the other eleven sons of Jacob including Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Menasseh. They, too, of course, could not have been Jews. In order for them to be Jews, they would have to be the sons of their own brother, Judah, an utter impossibility.

All of Jacob's sons, however, including, of course, Judah the first Jew, were Hebrews and Israelites.

It now becomes possible to see the terms Hebrew, Israel and Jew in their true perspective."



British-Israel World Federation
(VICTORIAN HEADQUARTERS)

No. 516

MONTHLY NOTES

July, 1994.

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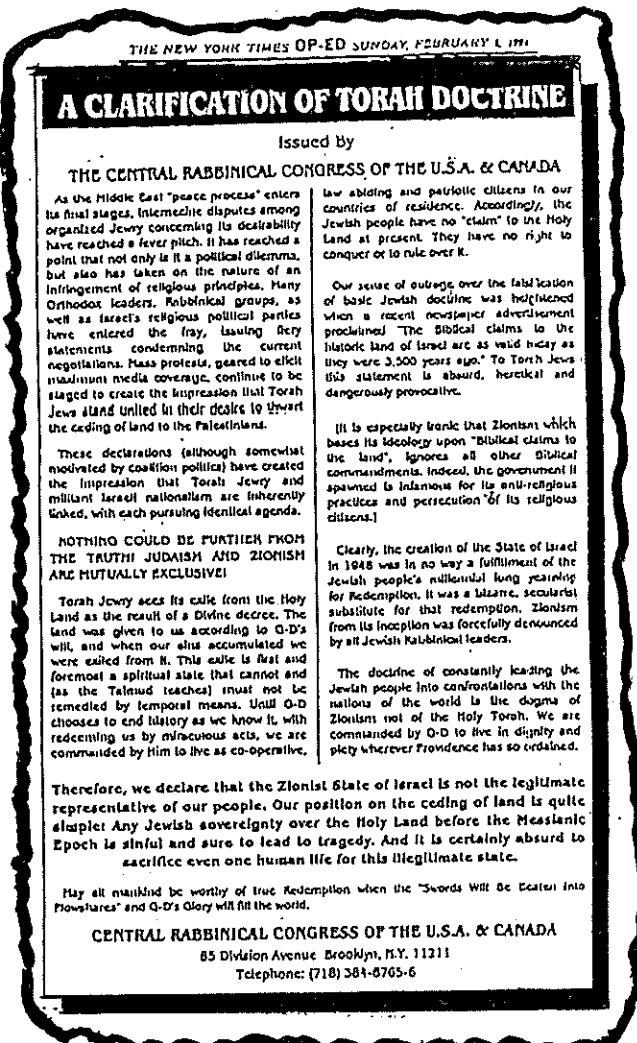
"GOD A NEW AGE PERSON"

As reported (from the Daily Mail) in the Herald Sun Newspaper on July 14, p.13, the Church of England will rewrite prayers and services to remove references to God as "Him" or "He" so that the feelings of feminists can be considered in acts of worship. This is a further step in the demise of "organized" Christianity.

How far it is from the practical faith and missionary zeal of the Early Church whose sons and daughters thought little of their own feelings but greatly of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Whose love and sacrifice they proclaimed far and wide with selfless courage. They braved the tortures of pagan powers, the wilds of unknown lands and peoples to bring the Gospel of forgiveness and salvation to those in spiritual darkness. Their's was a vital, living faith based on the Word of God as expressed in our Bible. Their example and teaching led to changed hearts and lives, to compassion for the weak, the love of truth and the building of a great civilization. The doubt and disbelief in many churches today which leaves people to grope after an undefined Deity did not exist in the Early Church. They knew God in the Person of Jesus Christ Who faithfully showed forth His Character of Perfect Grace and Truth and revealed Him not only as the all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present Spirit "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting." (1 Tim. 6:16) but as our Loving Heavenly Father to Whom we can turn at any time for forgiveness, help and blessing just as confident of a loving response as a little child who turns to an ideal father.

It is this relationship of confidence, dependence and trust that is expressed in the Fatherhood of God, not whether God is male or female. Archaeology has revealed that ancient primitive peoples worshipped a "mother goddess" in their endeavour to understand the miracle of birth. How blessed we are to have had the Mighty, Living God revealed to us. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4:6)

CONDEMNATION OF ZIONISM FROM WITHIN JEWRY



The above notice appeared in the New York Times dated Sunday, February 6, 1994. It reads as follows:

A CLARIFICATION OF TORAH DOCTRINE Issued by

THE CENTRAL RABBINICAL CONGRESS OF THE U.S.A. & CANADA

As the Middle East "peace process" enters its final stages, internecine disputes among organized Jewry concerning its desirability have reached a fever pitch. It has reached a point that not only is it a political dilemma, but also has taken on the nature of an infringement of religious principles. Many Orthodox leaders, Rabbinical groups, as well as facets religious political parties have entered the fray, issuing fiery statements condemning the current negotiations. Mass protests, geared to elicit maximum media coverage, continue to be staged to create the impression that Torah Jews stand united in their desire to thwart the ceding of land to the Palestinians.

These declarations (although somewhat motivated by coalition politics) have created the impression that Torah Jewry and militant Israel nationalism are inherently linked, with each pursuing identical agenda.

NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH! JUDAISM AND ZIONISM ARE MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE!

Torah Jewry sees its exile from the Holy Land as the result of a Divine decree. The land was given to us according to God's will, and when our sins accumulated we were exiled from it. This exile is first and foremost a spiritual state that cannot and (as the Talmud teaches) must not be remedied by temporal means. Until God chooses to end history as we know it with redeeming us by miraculous acts, we are commanded by Him to live as co-operative, law-abiding and patriotic citizens in our countries of residence. Accordingly, the Jewish people have no "claim" to the Holy Land at present. They have no right to conquer or to rule over it.

Therefore, we declare that the Zionist State of Israel is not the legitimate representative of our people. Our position on the ceding of land is quite simple: Any Jewish sovereignty over the Holy Land before the Messianic Epoch is sinful and sure to lead to tragedy. And it is certainly absurd to sacrifice even one human life for this illegitimate state.

May all mankind be worthy of true Redemption when the "Swords will be beaten into plowshares" and God's Glory will fill the world.

CENTRAL RABBINICAL CONGRESS OF THE U.S.A. & CANADA
85 Division Avenue Brooklyn, N.Y. 11211
Telephone: (718) 384-6765-6

Our sense of outrage over the falsification of basic Jewish doctrine was heightened when a recent newspaper advertisement proclaimed "The Biblical claims to the historic land of Israel are as valid today as they were 3,500 years ago". To Torah Jews this statement is absurd, heretical and dangerously provocative.

(It is especially ironic that Zionism, which bases its ideology upon "Biblical claims to the Land", ignores all other Biblical commandments. Indeed, the government it spawned is infamous for its anti-religious practices and persecution of its religious citizens.)

Clearly, the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 was in no way a fulfilment of the Jewish people's millennial long yearning for Redemption. It was a bizarre, secularist substitute for that redemption. Zionism from its inception was forcefully denounced by all Jewish Rabbinical leaders.

The doctrine of constantly leading the Jewish people into confrontations with the nations of the world is the dogma of Zionism not of the Holy Torah. We are commanded by God to live in dignity and piety wherever Providence has so ordained.

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH AS REVEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

(Comment by Dr. Scofield)

"The call of Abraham involved, with much else, the creation of a distinctive people through whom great purposes of God.... might be worked out. (Gen. 12:1-3)
Among these purposes is the establishment of a universal kingdom."

This Kingdom had its beginning in the Nation Israel when the People accepted God's Law as their Constitution. (19:3-8)
The development of the Divine Rule in Israel was as follows:-

"The mediatorship of Moses. (Ex. 3:1-10; 19:9; 24:12)
The leadership of Joshua (Jos. 1:1-5)
The institution of Judges (Jud. 2:16-18)
The popular rejection of the Theocracy, and choice of a king (Saul) (1 Sam. 8:1-7; 9:12-17)
The Davidic Kingdom:
The Divine choice of David (1 Sam. 16:1-13)
The giving of the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:8-16; Psa. 89: 3-4, 20-21)
The exposition of the Davidic Covenant by the prophets (Isa. 1:25-27; Zech. 12:6-8)"

The choice set before the Israel People was to obey God's Law and worship Him only, with love and faith, thus receiving His rich blessings; or to turn away after false gods and unjust laws, and suffer the consequences. (Lev. Ch 26) They made the wrong choice over and over again until they were finally cast out from the God's Land to endure a period of punishment. However, as God's promises to the Fathers (the Abrahamic Covenant) and to David were unconditional, they will be fulfilled in God's time. This the Prophets proclaim.

"The (coming) Kingdom as described by the prophets is:

- (a) Davidic, to be established under an heir of David, who is to be born of a virgin, therefore truly man, but also "Immanuel", "the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 7:13-14; 9:6-7; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Ezk. 34:23; 37:24; Hos. 3:4-5)
- (b) A kingdom heavenly in origin, principle, and authority, (Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45) but set up on the earth, with Jerusalem as the capital. (Isa. 2:2-4; 4:3-5; 24:23; 33:20; 62:1-7; Jer. 23:5, 31:38-40; Joel 3:1,16-17.)
- (c) The Kingdom is to be established first over regathered, restored, and converted Israel, and is then to become universal. (Psa. 2:6-8; 24:22; Isa. 11:1, 10-13; 60:12; Jer. 23:5-8; 30:7-11; Ezk. 20:33-40; 37:21-25; Zech. 9:10; 14:16-19.)

(d) The moral characteristics of the Kingdom are to be righteousness and peace. The meek, not the proud, will inherit the earth; longevity will be greatly increased: the knowledge of the Lord will be universal; beast ferocity will be removed; absolute equity will be enforced; and outbreaking sin visited with instant judgment; while the majority of earth's inhabitants will be saved. (Isa. 11:4-9; Psa. 72:1-10)

(e) The Kingdom is to be established by power (God's), not persuasion, and is to follow divine judgment upon the gentile world powers. (Psa. 2:4-9; Isa. 9:7; Dan. 2:35,44-45; 7:26-27; Zech. 14:1-19)

(f) The restoration of Israel and the establishment of the Kingdom are connected with an advent of the Lord, yet future. (Deut. 30:3-5; Psa. 2:1-9; Zech. 14:4)

(g) The chastisement reserved for disobedience in the house of David (2 Sam. 7:14; Psa. 89:30-33) fell in the captivities and worldwide dispersion, since which time, though a remnant returned under prince Zerubbabel, Jerusalem has been under the overlordship of Gentiles. But the Davidic covenant has not been abrogated. (Psa. 89:33-37) and is yet to be fulfilled (Acts. 15:14-17)."

Since Dr. Scofield wrote the Jews have taken over the rule of Palestine. However, this rule is not under the Royal Line of the House of David, but is political in essence. Jerusalem still awaits her rightful King and Messiah, the soon returning King of kings and Lord of lords, our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ.

DEFENDER OF THE FAITHS

In saying he would like to be known as defender of the faiths Prince Charles is placing the Christian Religion on a level with all other religions.

The founders of Christianity believed otherwise. The Apostle Peter preached in Jerusalem saying,

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

And the Apostle John wrote:

"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is an antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the father." (1 John 2:22-23)

Today the progressives and liberals with their "interfaith" conglomeration of religious beliefs tolerate all religions but Christianity. Not only is the Name of Jesus Christ not mentioned, but the basic Christian doctrine that He was God Incarnate and the Only Saviour of men is totally rejected.



British-Israel World Federation
(Victorian Headquarters)

No. 517

MONTHLY NOTES

August, 1994.

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THE LITTLE FLOCK

In the early days of Christianity the faith was spread by small groups of believers of great conviction whose lives were guided solely by their faith in God and their love for their Saviour Jesus Christ. From such groups who worshipped and prayed in homes and in the open air, the Church grew to become organized into congregations governed by clergy and meeting for worship and teaching in special buildings.

Membership of the Organized Church has varied throughout history. In times of unpopularity and persecution (physical and spiritual) only those who are strong Christians by conviction remain faithful. But in times of popularity many join the Organized Church for reasons other than conviction of belief. Some are weak believers who put other "gods" of fame, popularity, riches, entertainment, material comfort, etc., before their duty to God. Some are Christians because of family ties, some because it is fashionable or politic and others because the Church brings them into social contact with people from whom they can gain some advantage, and so on. In such periods the Organized Church has many PROFESSING Christians as members but fewer DEDICATED Christians who live and teach the whole Word of God.

In times of revival the numbers of dedicated Christians increase and the witness of the Church becomes strong and fruitful. Unfortunately, following generations tend to fall gradually into apostasy as faith and dedication wane. However, there is always a core of individuals (the "little flock") who remain faithful to the teachings of Scripture and are not seduced by the fashions, politics or thinking of the day, nor deterred by persecution. These are described in the Book of Revelation Ch. 2 & 3 as those who "overcome" during the seven periods of Church history portrayed in the Letters to the Churches. This core is the True Church or body of believers referred to as the "body of Christ" in 1 Cor. 12:27 and Eph. 1:22/23 & 4:12. Though the witness of the Organized Church has waxed and waned over the centuries the witness of the True Church has never been extinguished.

"But rather seek ye the kingdom of God;
and all these things shall be added unto you.
Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure
to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:31/2)

A/Ed.

PSALM 19 (NIV)

The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they display knowledge.
There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.
Their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,
which is like bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.
It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is hidden from its heat.
The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.
The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever.
The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous.
They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.
By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great
reward.
Who can discern his errors?
Forgive my hidden faults.
Keep your servant also from wilful sins;
may they not rule over me.
Then I will be blameless, innocent from great transgression.
May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

GOD. THE MIGHTY LORD.

Recent events upon the planet Jupiter give rise to thoughts about the Majesty of the LORD God. This thing happened within the created order of the Solar System, itself part of the totality of the Galaxy. The Galaxy is itself one of a cluster of galaxies, called the local cluster. Astronomers, aided by powerful telescopes, have mapped thousands of similar galaxies throughout the visible universe. The immensity of the visible heavens extends beyond normal imagination. Yet the Bible teaches that all that we see or can see is created by the One Lord, the only God.

In the Book of Genesis 1:1, we read these words: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Then in verse 15 ff, the text is: "And God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons, and days and years. God made two great lights - the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars."

We are taught by the Bible that God exists. As Christians, we accept this by faith. But many people either deny His existence altogether, or apply human philosophy to argue against His relevance in the world of mankind. Some people are practical atheists, some are agnostics. The Bible knew of atheists. "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no god!'" So wrote David (Psalm 8:1). In Hebrew culture pattern, the word fool did not mean idiotic or silly, but rather applies to **one deficient in morality**. There are many rationalists in the formal churches who try to explain away the idea of an All-Powerful Creator God. Some place Him in the heavens, saying that He is unconcerned about the earth; that He has left us to follow His way on our own. Others deny supernatural things, such as resurrection, or the miraculous.

This was not the teaching of Christ Jesus. He recognised God as Father, and claimed that He himself is the Son of God. Admittedly, the spiritual implications of the divine words "Father" and "Son" are far beyond human understanding. In all languages, there are inherent limitations, so that familiar words are used to express otherwise incomprehensible ideas.

When we accept the Scriptures, and read them in faith, we find that God **has** revealed His attributes. He has not left Himself completely unknown. In one sense, the fullness of God is far beyond human comprehension. However, God has not left us without adequate knowledge of Himself. Therefore, we find that He is a holy God, just, merciful, and righteous. He is also All-Powerful, All-Knowing, Eternal, and is filled with love for His creation. Above all, He sent His Son, Christ Jesus,

*Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself
and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,*

*that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*

Philippians 2:6-11.

The LORD God is a God who knows all. He belongs to the Heaven of Heavens, yet at the same time is present everywhere in the created universe. In His perfect knowledge, He set the physical laws that regulate the stars in their courses, and the planets in their orbits. The recent Jupiter effect was not haphazard. It came about because the Laws of the physical universe made it so. Therefore, it was within the knowledge of the LORD God from the beginning. The time of the event was also known to God.

Now, Jesus said: "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars.", when he referred to the days immediately preceding His Coming again. Astronomers do not know whether this collision was a one-off happening, but there is some evidence to suggest that similar collisions have occurred in the past. Therefore, we are not able to say whether this is a sign or is not a sign, in the absence of further evidence in corroboration. Nevertheless, a Christian who looks to the Coming of the Lord may well think that this points to the beginning of the last days. We have been told that there will be signs in the skies and on earth.

Some of the things presently happening on earth bear remarkable resemblance to the predictions of Jesus: "On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity ... Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world ... " Luke 21: 25-26. One of the characteristics of this age is that people are running scared! They fear global warming, atomic disasters, economic collapses, etc., and in some places, severe earth-quakes, some already overdue by many years.

Whatever happens, the Lord Jesus Christ remains our hope. Paul was convinced of this. (Romans 8:38-39). Let us depend on Him and on the Lord God, the heavenly Father. Let us worship and praise the Lord our God in humble adoration. God grant that we all love the Lord our God with all our hearts, all our strength, all our souls, and all our minds!

V. A. PROPOSCH

RELIGION IN PALESTINE AT THE TIME OF CHRIST

Our Saviour was born at a time when the "learned" in theology and law were divided into many sects and parties, the three most numerous and influential being the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes, all of whom disagreed regarding the LAW OF GOD.

The Pharisees ADDED to the written Law an unwritten oral law handed down by tradition. They ascribed more authority to ancient traditions and institutions than to the commandments of God and taught a double interpretation of Scripture - a literal and a figurative. They believed in the resurrection of the body, life after death and in future rewards and punishments. They were supported by the common people but, though seeking popular applause by exhibiting an ostentatious and austere exterior, they disregarded moral and spiritual purity.

The Sadducees held only to the written Law and its literal sense. Not believing in the resurrection, future life or retributions, they were marked by iniquity and lust. They avoided political altercations and were supported by the leading men of the nation.

The Essenes sought to preserve the written Law and Covenant of Jehovah in an apostate age. They lived in remote places dispersed over Syria, Egypt and neighbouring countries, apart from intercourse with mankind, practising their religion in silence and meditation. They believed in future rewards and punishments but for the soul only, considering the body to be evil and a temporary prison of the soul. They sought virtue from a strict mode of life and observances different from the Jews of Jerusalem.

Those living in the Egyptian desert took the written Law allegorically and presented as their only sacrifice a composed mind absorbed in the contemplation of divine things. Some were celibate. Some married only to procreate. Many were fanatical and superstitious, cut off from society and marked by indolence and a dislike of their fellow man. The Essenes were linked with various sects which had arisen in Palestine opposing Official Judaism as centred on the Sanhedrin and Temple worship. One group was located in Samaria from where strongly anti-Pharisaic Samaritan groups influenced Galilee where an ancient Israelitish type of religion was practised, possibly by remnants of the Northern House of Israel, despite Judean efforts to wipe it out.

Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History says that the common people were sunk in deplorable ignorance of divine things and counted on the observation of sacrifices, oblations and other ceremonies to make themselves acceptable to God. The lack of spiritual understanding led to polluted morals and a profligate life. Pagan rites and ceremonies from the Greeks and Romans were added to God's ordinances of worship.

Many Jews were attached to Oriental philosophy in regard to the origin of the world. Secret, mystical "knowledge" involving, among other dogmas, Zoroastrian dualism (the independent and opposing principles of good and evil) had been brought back from Chaldea and adjacent countries after the Babylonian captivity.

Jewish mysticism as contained in the Cabala and dating from the first centuries A.D. was a variant of Hellenistic astral mysticism. By using meditation and magic formulas the adept claimed to travel ecstatically through and beyond the seven astral spheres seeking the Throne of God.

Founders of various Gnostic sects were Jews who held the Creator to be a different Being from the Supreme God and that the Messiah would destroy the Creator's domination over man. Gnosticism promised a secret "knowledge" of the divine realm while all matter was condemned as evil. It held that divine sparks of the Divine Being had fallen into the evil material universe and were imprisoned in human bodies. By "knowledge" the reawakened divine element in humanity could return to the spiritual realm. Emanations from the Divine Being had produced lesser divinities, one of whom (Wisdom) had produced an evil god (the demiurge) who created the universe. Gnostics identify the demiurge with the God of the Old Testament.

"Christian" Gnostics did not identify God the Father of the N.T. with Jehovah of the O.T. and interpreted our Lord's teachings in an unorthodox way, rejecting His atoning sacrificial death and the future resurrection of the body. Their ethical teachings ranged from asceticism to libertinism as they valued only their souls, considering their bodies of no consequence, and rejected the moral commandments of the O.T. Rites included hymns and magic formulas to encourage the seeing of visions. In the 2nd Century A.D. Gnostics introduced the errors of the mystery religions into Christian teaching by writing spurious scriptures which put forward their own ideas and interpretations, such as the Gospels of Thomas and Mary, rejecting other literal and traditional interpretations of Scripture. It was due to the great volume of erroneous Gnostic writings that the idea of a canon of Scripture was accepted in the 2nd Century. We need to be discerning when faced with Biblical-type literature which is not included in the canon of Scripture so as not to be influenced by spurious doctrines.

The resurgence of the above types of spiritual pollution can be identified in much of the New Age teaching of today which would have us seek God in many different ways. We need to heed the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ who said:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." and

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

A/Ed.

A GIANT DISCOVERY

(Extracted from CTA Link August 1994)

Diggers in Israel believe they have found the skull of Goliath, slain by David with his slingshot. The skull was discovered in the Valley of Elah in the Foothills of the Judean mountains where the battle between the Hebrew lad and the Philistine giant took place. "The skull is huge and clearly belonged to a man of enormous stature", said archaeologist Dr. David Martin. What is more, a stone is still embedded in the forehead. Tests indicate the skull is between 2,900 and 3,000 years old - about the time of the famous biblical battle. Surely this is another confirmation of the authenticity of the Bible. Make no bones about it.

U.K. Jewish Telegraph

British-Israel World Federation
(Victorian Headquarters)

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MONTHLY NOTES

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WINDS OF CHANGE

The winds of change which swept Africa have become hurricanes of destruction sweeping away many beneficial social structures created by Western Civilization throughout the world. And Australia has not escaped. Our traditional "Australian way of life", and family and community values are being replaced by a very different society. The basic structure of our national existence is gradually but surely being altered by forces which are largely unseen but which have power to influence both Government policy and even the High Court towards internationalism and the formation of the Global State. The Australian Government's agenda includes moves towards major changes.

The replacing of our monarchial system of government by a republic would give the State greater control of each individual citizen than is now exercised by the Crown, which protects its subjects from the tyranny of governments. Our decentralized form of government is to be reversed by centralizing power in Canberra by abolishing the States and the Senate, and also Local Government by controlling the amalgamated councils from Canberra. From the time of the Tasmanian Dams decision High Court decisions have leaned towards the centralization of power which is against the spirit of the Australian Constitution. The promotion of State child care will increase the State's influence in developing our children's values, and the Government's introduction of "racial vilification" legislation is just one step towards the stifling of our free speech.

The internationalization of Banking would see a central world authority taking all economic and financial decisions for Australia. The push to include Australia as part of Asia economically and culturally, together with an open door immigration programme and the current emphasis on multiculturalism will result in the Christian basis of our society being overshadowed by non-Christian cults and festivals. Moves to count homosexual partners as families and the legalization of brothels is in accord with humanistic philosophy but flouts the Law of God. From The Age dated October 6, 1994, we learned that shares in a legal multi-million-dollar Melbourne brothel are likely to be listed on the Australian Stock Exchange with a projected return on investment of 15 percent.

GOD'S PURPOSE IN ISRAEL

"Because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My Charge, My commandments, My statutes and My Laws" (Gen 26:5)

Abraham is known as the great man of faith who believed and obeyed God, acknowledged His power and followed His instructions. Because of Abraham's faith and obedience he was to be used by God for the blessing of all nations. Christians know that the One Great Seed of Abraham, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, gave His sinless life to atone for the sin of the world that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). But there is another way in which Abraham and his seed were to be a blessing in the world.

God's first promise to Abraham was (Gen. 12:2&3):

"...I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing:...and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Not only was that One Precious Seed of Abraham to be THE great blessing to mankind, Abraham's natural seed were also to be used in blessing the other peoples of the earth.

During 400 years Abraham's seed multiplied greatly as promised, especially the selected line through Isaac and Jacob who became known as Israelites and inhabited the fertile land of Goshen in Lower Egypt. Through the early centuries many Israelites left Egypt to form colonies and found kingdoms in other lands - Argos, Troy, Athens, Crete, Spain and Ireland - but by the time of Moses Israel in Egypt was groaning under political and economic slavery. It was then that God manifested His great power on Israel's behalf bringing them forth from Egypt with great judgments, signs and wonders, indeed using Israel to demonstrate His mighty power and glory. Why was such a demonstration necessary?

In the time of Abraham the Living God was still known in Canaan as Abraham paid tithes to Melchizadec, priest of the Most High God, and received his blessing (Gen. 14:18-20) but by the time of the Exodus the worship of the One, True, Living God had been replaced by the pagan Canaanite religion and the Canaanites had become totally corrupt. God warned Israel that it was "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land; but for the wickedness of those nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that He may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Deut. 9:5)

By then the Canaanite gods, Baal, Hauron, Astarte (Ashtaroth) and Anat, had been "adopted into the Egyptian pantheon and identified with native deities", e.g., Baal was identified with Seth, Hauron with Horus. This had further extended the influence of the Canaanite religion which was "an extraordinarily debasing form of paganism, specifically of the fertility cult", involving "numerous debasing practices, including sacred prostitution, homo-sexuality and various orgiastic rites", resulting in widespread disease. (Ref. John Bright - A History of Israel) This multiplicity of "no gods" (Isa. 37:19) was powerless to protect the people or improve their lot in any way. Canaan in Moses' day was a patchwork of small city states ruled by petty kings subject to Egypt, whose corrupt officials milked them of their wealth.

God's intention was to use the blessing given to faithful Abraham for a mighty purpose - that the Name of the Living God might become known throughout the whole earth, His character and beneficence understood, and His Law obeyed. Speaking through Moses to Pharaoh after many warnings God says, "For I will at this time send all My plagues.... that thou mayest know that there is none like Me in all the earth....for this cause I raised thee up, for to show in thee My power; and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth." (Ex. 9:14-16)

The exodus of Israel from Egypt did indeed demonstrate God's power - in His judgments on Egypt, in Israel's deliverance through the Red Sea, in their guidance by the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night, in their protection from the perils of the wilderness and in the provision of manna and water for the multitude. Forty years later when Joshua sent spies to Jericho Rahab said to them:

"I know that the Lord hath given you the land....For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt....for the Lord your God He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." (Jos. 2:10-11)

The name of the Lord had thus begun to be known in the earth as well as His faithfulness to His People and His great power to provide for them.

God preserved Israel in order to establish them as a nation which would demonstrate the efficacy of His Law (commandments, statutes and judgments) for national or community life, as well as for the individual. God's laws were given by the Creator for His creation and are the only laws which work in harmony with it and for its total well-being. The Law was given so that men might understand what behaviour works toward good relations between individuals and a stable society, and what brings about its disintegration.

The law also taught what agricultural principles to adhere to; what are the best foods; the safest rules for hygiene and so on. The statutes and judgments showed how God requires men to act towards Him and how to deal with the various situations which arise within societies. God required of Israel "...to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul. To keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes, for thy good."

Romans 7:12 confirms the value of the law. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

Our Lord commended the lawyer who summarised the O.T. Law as: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." He said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. 7:12)

Our Lord did not come to make the law obsolete but to teach it more fully by emphasizing the spirit of the law. While the letter of the law, rightly administered, was necessary for natural society, Christians were required to go beyond this and express the spirit of the law in their lives.

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:4) The regulations of the law are necessary for those who are not "spiritually minded" but it is the believer's duty to understand and obey the principles of God's law in his everyday life, and to act in his relation to God and to other people in accordance with the spirit of the law.

Israel was to be the vehicle by which the knowledge of God and the precepts of His Law would spread worldwide for the good of all peoples and to some extent this has already happened. The modern Israel nations of western civilization have been instrumental in proclaiming the truth of the Bible throughout the world. The British Empire had the power to safeguard the activities of the Church and to provide transport and access to far corners of the globe. British law, based largely on the Mosaic Code, provided an era of peace and prosperity to many nations who are now being torn apart by violence and want. Even the Israel nations are gradually turning from God and His law as new age teaching invades the churches and humanistic socialists subvert or replace God's laws. The consequences are noticeable in the breakdown of society, economic distress and widespread illness.

But God has promised that the time will come when He will write His law in the hearts of all His People who He will regather in the land of their fathers where they will walk in His statutes and keep His judgments. At this time their witness as God's Kingdom operating in obedience to His Law will be of such a wonder to other peoples in its demonstration of true peace, prosperity and social accord that

"..many people shall go and say, 'Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths.' for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." And He shall judge among the nations..... nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isa. 2:3)

Israel's King will be their Messiah and Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ Who will return the second time as Judge of the nations and King of kings.

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, ,The mighty God, the everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

A/Ed.

THE COMPETITIVE CHRISTIAN

At the time of writing, Australian athletes are competing in the Commonwealth Games in Canada. We congratulate their efforts there, and to all who made the attempt and contributed their best, we give the utmost praise. These splendid young people, and some not so young, and some suffering disability, out of all the nations taking part in these games, point to the best elements in humankind. They applied their God-given powers to rigorous training, developing strengths and abilities of mind and muscle to look towards a prize of little intrinsic value, yet one of immense psychological worth.

They are an example to all of us. Their objectives may be applied to Christian living. Living in Christ is a tremendous challenge. The familiar hymns such as "Onward, Christian Soldiers", or "Fight the Good Fight", etc., demonstrate the fact that to follow Jesus does require struggle. We have to stand against many things. We must face a spiritual enemy of great power. Jesus himself, although Son of God, was made man, and as man suffered all things that suffering humanity faces, and was tempted in all things by which we are tempted. The Gospel accounts tell of the temptations of Satan that were placed before Jesus. These temptations were designed to appeal: 1) to his physical needs as a descendant of Adam, when he was in deep need of food, 2) to demonstrate his position as Son of God so that he would receive immediate recognition as their promised Messiah by his own people of Judah, and 3) to his future as king, ruler over all kingdoms, by providing a way to attain this without suffering and death. The subtlety of these temptations is greater than most are able to appreciate, for Jesus knew that he must die as the Passover Lamb. John declared this publicly, at the baptism of Jesus, when he cried "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29).

The Lord Jesus looked for a prize beyond compare. To this end, he suffered all that wicked men could inflict upon the body, he suffered all the mental torment of insult and rejection, but above all, he suffered something that we can never fully understand. He was attuned to God in a special way, in a relationship which *identified* him with God. But at Gethsemane and thereafter, he was *cut off* from the presence of the LORD God. That is why he cried "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Some of us have suffered loss of loved ones, or suffer with their children, but few of us deny our love for family members. The love of God was demonstrated in that the Lord Jesus died not for himself but to save all who call on his name. His death and resurrection has ensured that we who accept him will inherit the wonder of eternal life with him. This *inheritance* of those in Christ is here and is now, but at this time the glory that shall be revealed in us is unrealised, for Paul wrote "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." Romans 8:18 (NIV).

It is now that we can take an example from our athletes. Jesus said: "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart, I have overcome the world." (John 16:18). In Jesus, we are able to train ourselves like athletes, seeking a wondrous prize. Paul said: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize.

Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever." (1 Corinthians 9:24-25).

Paul also adopted the different concept of a soldier who stands in defence against the attack of an enemy. He wrote these words: "Since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet." (1 Thessalonians 5:8) He expanded this theme in his later letter to the church at Ephesus: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you may take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the whole armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit at all times of prayers and requests." Ephesians 6:10-18.

V. A. PROPOSCH.

PSALM 84

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!
My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord:
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

(Yea, the sparrow hath found an house,
and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young.)
Even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God.

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house:
they will be still praising thee.

Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee;
In whose heart are the ways of them.
Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well,
The rain also filleth the pools.
They go from strength to strength,
Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.
O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer
Give ear, O God of Jacob.

Behold, O God our shield,
And look upon the face of Thine Anointed.
For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand.
I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,
Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.
For the Lord God is a sun and shield:

The Lord will give grace and glory:
No good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly.
O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee

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MY WITNESSES

Leviticus Ch. 26 clearly states the advantages which God promised His People would be theirs if they worshipped Him only and kept His statutes and commandments: rain in due season, abundant harvests and flocks, freedom from want, peace in the land, victory over enemies, and numerous progeny. He would make them "the head, and not the tail" and they would lend to other nations but not need to borrow from them. But the opposite would be the case if they refused to reverence Him and keep His Law. Such national apostasy and decline was illustrated in the Old Testament days of the Israel peoples, particularly in the final demise of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and the Jewish Nation which rejected their Messiah and suffered a devastating end.

Sadly we are witnessing today another state of apostasy and decline which is not only happening before our eyes, it is a decline of which we are a part. Great Britain was the venerated leader of our Commonwealth of Nations setting high standards of justice and workmanship in dealings both national and international, and acknowledging God's Word as the final authority on questions of morality. But during this century a gradual decline in faith in God and in embracing Christian standards has resulted in today's tragic circumstances.

The following quote from *The Australian Magazine, April 2-3, 1994*, highlights the position in Britain today:

"During the past 15 years The top rate of income tax has been halved to 40%; \$63 billion worth of State industries have been sold to the private sector; inefficient industries have been allowed to go to the wall; exchange controls have been abolished and the financial markets deregulated; and the trade unions have been tamed to the point where fewer days are lost through strikes than at any time since records began. Yet this revolutionary program has failed to bring about any halt to Britain's decline."

Once a great manufacturing nation Britain has lost control of its manufacturing base. Where 40 years ago Britain's 5,600 freighters plied the oceans only 248 merchant ships remain. Only 14,000 of its 700,000 miners are still employed and of the many car plants based in 40 British cities the last, Rover, has been sold to Germany. Bradford's great spinning industry and Sheffield's famous heavy industry no longer exist and Britain's five huge docks have gone.

A new class of investment bankers, currency dealers, financial service advisers and corporate lawyers is getting richer while wages for the ordinary worker are lower than in living memory.

Corruption and scandal rock the establishment and the institutions of Monarchy, the Law, the Civil Service and even the Church (whose property speculation has lost it \$1.7 billion) are being seriously questioned.

Discontent, want, violence and crime have taken over as unemployment lies between 3-5 millions, replacing the honest and peaceful society of 40 years ago and leaving Britain's prison population the highest in Europe.

God said to Israel of old through the Prophet Isaiah:

"Ye are my witnesses,....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.

I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God."

Israel were to be God's witnesses throughout the centuries both in obedience and in disobedience. Their state as a nation would always reflect their attitude toward their God, whether in faith or in apostasy.

At the dedication of Solomon's Temple the people were "glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the Lord had shewed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel His People". (2 Chr. 7:10) and great was the kingdom in the days of their obedience to His Law. But God had declared that disobedience would bring judgment and destruction.

"Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded thee; And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed forever." (Deut. 28:45-46)

When the apostasy of future generations brought about the curses it would witness to the truth of God's words, so that when it was asked why the Lord had done this it would be answered,

"Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them and served them: therefore hath He brought all this evil upon them. (2 Chr. 7:22)

How well has Israel's long history demonstrated this biblical principle of blessing in obedience (national prosperity, power and social wellbeing) and judgment in apostasy (national decline and social decay).

All the Israel nations of today are in a state of apostasy. God's Ten Commandments are broken daily and not only by individuals: our national laws also violate the Commandments. "Other gods" are allowed by law in our multicultural societies. Many of our national laws which were in accordance with God's Law have been replaced by men's laws. God's authority is ignored in government, His day, the seventh day of rest is legally desecrated by commerce, sport and entertainment, His Word is rejected in favour of pagan cults, and our laws protect the adulterer, the rapist and the murderer more than their victims.

Drought, famine and disease are also part of the curses of disobedience as well as loss of life in war, all of which can be avoided if as a People we turn back to our God in repentance and obedience. He is the One Who changeth not, Who is the same yesterday, today and forever, and what He has said He does not alter. Speaking to the Prophet Ezekiel He said:

"Say unto them, As I live,I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die O house of Israel." (Ezek. 33:11)

God promised King Solomon that

"If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2 Chr. 7:14)

Jeremiah Ch. 31 speaks of a future time when the Lord will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah by which His Law will be written in their hearts, and all His People will know Him from the least of them to the greatest. By His death and resurrection our Lord Jesus Christ confirmed the New Covenant ensuring all who believe in Him as God incarnate, a part in it. But the New Covenant is finally to be made with those who remain of the Houses of Israel and Judah (all the tribes of Israel) when the soon coming Kingdom Age dawns.

Ezekiel Ch. 39 verses 22-29 speak of this time.

So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward.....And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity.....I will have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name.....after that they have borne their shame.....Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God."

Let us pray earnestly for NATIONAL REPENTANCE that our people might partake of God's blessings rather than have to bear His judgments.

A/Ed

PRAVERS FOR STATE LEADERS

(From the 14th Century Knights of the Garter Service)

O God, Almighty Father, King of Kings and Lord of all our rulers, grant that the hearts and minds of all who go out as leaders before us, the statesmen, the judges, the men of learning, and the men of wealth, may be so filled with the love of Thy laws, and of that which is righteous and life-giving, that they may serve as a wholesome salt unto the earth, and be worthy stewards of Thy good and perfect gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

(Based on the form used in both Houses of Parliament, A.D. 1661.)

Almighty God, by whom alone kings reign and princes decree justice; and from whom alone cometh all counsel, wisdom and understanding. We, Thine unworthy servants, here gathered together in Thy Name, do most humbly beseech Thee to send down Thy heavenly wisdom from above, to direct and guide Thy servants who sit as representatives of the people in Parliament. Grant, we beseech Thee, that they, having Thy grace always before their eyes and laying aside all private interests, prejudices and partial affections, and the result of that which they do may be to the glory of Thy blessed Name, the maintenance of true religion and justice, the safety, honour and happiness of the Queen, the public wealth, peace and tranquility of the realm, and the uniting and knitting together of the hearts of all persons and estates within the same, in true Christian love and charity one towards another; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

A PRAYER FOR NATIONAL REPENTANCE

(Selected)

O God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, we pray Thee for our nation at this time. Thou hast said: "Ye are my witnesses", and we pray Thee that this people may recognize the great responsibility which Thou hast placed upon them. Thou art the Lord and beside Thee there is no Saviour. Turn the hearts of the people, O Lord, to Thyself and sanctify Thyself in the eyes of all nations to Thy honour and glory. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

AT REST

Mrs. Ruth Hourigan recently passed away aged 90 years. Ruth was a long-time member and friend whose fellowship was greatly missed when she no longer felt able to take an active part in the work of the Federation.

Ruth joined the B.I.W.F. (Vic. H.Q.) in 1948 and was a regular attender at our meetings. In 1974 she was appointed to the Council on which she served until 1989. She gave valuable, regular assistance in the B. I. Bookroom in Melbourne for several years and was Secretary of the Ringwood Branch for two years. Thank you Ruth for your generosity and assistance over many years.

THE OLIVE TREE

Throughout millennia the olive tree has been so abundant in Palestine that it has been considered Palestine's characteristic tree. Olive orchards from time immemorial have provided one of the chief sources of wealth for the country's inhabitants, and one of its three chief staple products - corn (wheat and barley), wine and oil. Galilee in particular abounded in olive orchards. Gischala was previously known as Gushhalab (fat soil) and was famous for its oil. The abundance of oil in Galilee is illustrated by the use made of boiling oil in the defence of Jotapata when the defenders poured large quantities of it down on the attacking Roman soldiers. Part of the Galilee area comprised the territory of the Tribe of Asher of whom the Bible says, "Let Asher be blessed with children, ...and let him dip his foot in oil" (Deut. 33:24).

The vigorous, healthy growth of an olive tree was considered a most appropriate symbol of the righteous man flourishing under God's protection and in the enjoyment of His ordinances. It was an emblem of prosperity and beauty and of religious privilege. King David wrote, "I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever." (Ps. 52:8). It was also one of the symbols used by God in Scripture to portray His People Israel: "The Lord called thy name, a green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult He hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken" (Jer. 11:16). This symbolizes Israel's fall from faith and blessing to apostasy and punishment. But speaking of their yet future return to God in the coming Kingdom Age Hosea 14:6 says, "His branches shall spread and his beauty shall be as the olive tree..."

In its wild or natural state the olive bears very few berries and these are small and without oil. A good or productive olive tree may be created by grafting a productive branch on to a wild olive stock. Later when the tree is grown if one of the large, wart-like knobs on the trunk above the graft, which contain an embryo shoot or a small branch, is cut off and carefully cultivated it will strike out roots and grow. This new plant will be a good tree from the root and all scions taken from it will be "good by nature", bearing berries with oil. God's People Israel are depicted as a good olive as it bore "goodly fruit".

The olive tree is very slow to mature taking from seven to fifteen years to produce a good crop, but it is very long-lived and can live for several centuries whether cultivated or not. Israel has been a continuing people taking many centuries to become the "holy nation" producing the oil of righteousness and faith, which is to be their position in the soon coming Kingdom Age when the returned Christ shall reign from Jerusalem as King of kings and Lord of lords.

A profusion of small white flowers is produced each year of which less than one percent come to maturity and produce fruit. The flowers are cast off by the millions like flakes of snow. Israel has been a multitudinous people but only a relative few in any age have come to spiritual maturity and produced the oil of faith and the "fruits of the Spirit".

The flower that does mature is followed by a smooth, oval, plum-like fruit comprising an oily pulp enclosing a hard rough stone. These olives

are pressed to produce the oil, a good tree yielding from ten to fifteen gallons of oil in one season. Even a tree which has been long neglected will revive again if recultivated and begin to yield as before.

Israel's history has been one of long periods of apostacy and spiritual decline interspersed by periods of repentance and spiritual awakening, thus the nation's spiritual "cultivation" has been intermittent during the centuries. But the knowledge of God and the understanding of His Word have been preserved by the few faithful "olives" during the times of apostacy, while in times of national repentance and religious revival the Israel Peoples have produced an abundance of "olives" (faithful servants of the Lord). This has been reflected in the national life of the people which has during such periods exhibited the oil of righteousness, justice and mercy, equity and peace.

The olive tree grows best in the calcareous soil of rocky hills and plains driving its roots deep into the crevices from where it draws its best oil. Deut. 32:13 speaks of Jacob as sucking oil out of the flinty rock. The rock is used in Scripture as a symbol of God as the provider of refuge, security, strength, spiritual sustenance and salvation.

"Unto thee will I cry. O Lord my rock." (Ps. 28:1)

"For who is God save the Lord?

And who is a rock save our God." (2 Sam. 22:32)

"The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer;

My God, my strength, in Whom I will trust." (Ps.18:2)

"There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside Thee:

Neither is there any rock like our God." (1Sam. 2:2)

"He is the Rock, His work is perfect;" (Deut. 32:4)

Isaiah 17:10 speaks of God as the "Rock of thy strength" and, referring to King David, Psalm 89:26 reads: "He shall cry unto Me, 'Thou art my father, My God, and the rock of my salvation.'" Psalm 95:1 also speaks of the "rock of our salvation".

Israel in the wilderness is spoken of in 1 Cor. 10:2-4 as eating supernatural food (manna) and drinking water from a supernatural rock (the smitten rock from which water flowed to quench the thirst of the multitude). We are told "...that Rock was Christ". He is called the Rock metaphorically as He is the source of our supply of "living water". Speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well : "Jesus answered and said unto her, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, 'Give me to drink;' thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.....Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:10-14) "And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17).

When Israel's roots are deeply embedded in the Word of God, and the life of the nation is drawn from His precepts the nation brings forth righteous people who produce abundant oil. This has been but feebly demonstrated so far, but Israel in the Millennium Age will be "a kingdom of priests (a royal priesthood) and a holy nation" demonstrating to the world the great power and beneficence of their Great Rock of Salvation and the necessity to walk in His ways. A/Ed.

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Israel's great Covenant God led them through the wilderness for forty years "to humble them and to prove them to know what was in their heart, whether they would keep His commandments or not". He allowed them to become afraid as Pharaoh's army pursued them, then miraculously parted the Red Sea for their safe passage and destroyed their pursuers. Their fear turned to praise in the demonstration of His mighty power. He allowed them to hunger, then provided manna from heaven, and to be thirsty, then provided water from the rock. Throughout all the trials of the wilderness journey they learned to trust their great God. Those who didn't, died.

Psalm 91, which is thought to be written by Moses, details the agencies of their trials: the terror by night, the arrow that flieth by day; the pestilence in darkness, the destruction (contagion) at noonday; the lion and the adder. Wild animals and adders which infested the wilderness posed a constant danger, particularly during their nighttime journeys (Num. 9:21). They were also attacked by tribesmen of the wilderness and suffered plague as a judgment for doubting God. But none of these things affected the faithful (Psalm 91 : 7-13):

"A thousand shall fall at thy side,
And ten thousand thy right hand;
But it shall not come nigh thee.
Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold
And see the reward of the wicked.
Because thou has made the Lord, Which is my refuge,
Even the Most High, thy habitation;
There shall no evil befall thee,
Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
For He shall give His angels charge over thee,
To keep thee in all thy ways.
They shall bear thee up in their hands,
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder;
The young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet."

Israel learned to follow the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night no matter when or where it led them, and to remain entirely dependent upon God whether moving or at rest. By the time they reached the Promised Land only the faithful and the young remained to take possession of it. They had learned not only to believe in God's existence and power, but to trust Him for every detail of their lives, to accept the disciplines through which He had put them and to obey His Commands. All this was to the end that Israel might understand and demonstrate that "man doth not live by (eating) bread (food) only but by (obeying) every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord..." (De.8:2-3)

The Ten Commandments were spoken by the mouth of God in the hearing of the People as they gathered before Sinai and obedience to these words alone creates peace, order and security within society. Having enough to eat and drink does not ensure social well-being but obedience to God's words - His Law in all its aspects - results in an abundant natural life of physical and mental well-being. Through His Law God's blessings are experienced in the natural realm as well as in the spiritual. The Ten Commandments provided the great moral basis upon which the Law of the Lord was constructed, and the society governed by that law and permeated by that morality has been demonstrated to be the most productive of freedom, equity, abundance and stability of all societies in world history, both in the faithful days of David and Solomon and in the devout days of the British Empire before doubt and apostacy began its decline.

The Christian life is also a wilderness experience in which God tests us individually to know if we will trust Him totally for the needs of this life and allow His Commandments to rule our thoughts and actions. Our Lord said, "If ye love me (ye will) keep my commandments". All the circumstances of our lives and all the people with whom we come in contact provide opportunities to test our willingness to react in accordance with His Will rather than our own. We are not to render evil for evil no matter how badly we are treated but to "ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men." (1 Thess.5:15)

We are exhorted to rejoice always, pray constantly and "in all things give thanks for this is the will of God concerning you." Not only are we to accept and endure our problems but we are to thank Him for them, knowing that through them He is working His will in our lives and moulding our natures for our spiritual benefit. Proverbs 3:11-12 is quoted in Hebrews 12:5-6: "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of His correction; for whom the Lord loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." But Hebrews 12:10 assures us that His chastening is "for our profit that we might be partakers of His holiness."

Israel in the wilderness endured the correction of the Lord to train them in faith and obedience for the conquest of Canaan but, once settled in the Promised Land and inhabiting Canaan's great cities, their faith and obedience gave way to apostasy until every man did "that which was right in his own eyes" rather than following the precepts of God's Law; and we are told that God "was grieved for the misery of Israel" (Judges 10:16) Further periods of discipline ended in the Philistine oppression of Israel from which King David released them. Again Israel became a faithful people worshipping the Lord God only, and practising His Law. A great and richly blessed kingdom developed under King David and

King Solomon until widespread apostacy again dragged it into gross decline. Finally the national depravity reached such dimensions that God cast His People out of His land to undergo SEVEN TIMES (7 X 360 = 2520 years) of national punishment.

But despite Israel's periods of faithlessness and correction the individual within the nation has always had access to God through individual repentance and faith. In O.T. days it was faith in what the sacrificial ordinances prefigured and in N.T. days it was faith in the fulfilment of these ordinances, viz., the sacrificial death of our Risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Each individual is accountable to God for himself or herself regardless of national circumstances and has the opportunity to take part in that approaching miracle, the First Resurrection, when the faithful throughout the centuries will be raised to meet the returning Lord in the air and so ever be with Him. (1 Thess. 4:14-17) These faithful individuals are destined to live and reign with Christ during the Millennium or Kingdom Age when He will rule the world from Zion with great power and glory. (Rev. 20:4-6)

Let us be His faithful and obedient servants regardless of the apostacy of our day and pray constantly that all the Israel peoples will turn once again in heartfelt repentance to their great Covenant Lord, seeking forgiveness for their unbelief, blasphemy, disobedience and moral depravity. May they be made ready to welcome with joy Our Lord Jesus Christ when He returns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

"As many as I love I rebuke and chasten:
be zealous therefore, and repent."
(Rev. 3:19)

A/Ed.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee."
(Ps. 55:22)

Child of My love, Lean Hard,
And let Me feel the pressure of thy care;
I know thy burden, child, I shaped it;
Poised it in Mine own hand, made no proportion
In its weight to thine unaided strength;
For even as I laid it on, I said,
I shall be near, and while he leans on Me,
This burden shall be Mine, not his;
So shall I keep My child within the circling arms
Of My own love. Here lay it down, nor fear
To impose it on a shoulder which upholds
The government of worlds. Yet closer come;
Thou art not near enough; I would embrace thy care
So I might feel My child reposing on My breast.
Thou lovest Me? I knew it. Doubt not then;
But, loving Me, Lean Hard.

"Casting all your care upon Him;
for He careth for you."
(1 Pet. 5:7)

THE MAJESTY AND WISDOM OF THE LORD

O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.
from the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise
because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.
When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
what is man, that you are mindful of him,
the son of man, that you care for him?
You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honour.
You made him ruler over the works of your hands;
you put everything under his feet;
all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea.
all that swim in the paths of the seas.
O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
(Psalm 8 N.I.V.)

Professor C. L. Totten, who believed the Bible, once wrote about Joshua's "long day" and of the events associated with it. He said that the record of Joshua 10 of the battle at Gibeon against the kings of the city-states of Southern Canaan was true history. Israel defeated the confederate armies as they attacked the city of Gibeon, forcing them to retreat down the road to Azekah.

The orderly withdrawal was turned into a rout when "The LORD hurled large hail-stones down on them from the sky." (Jos. 10:11) The military situation before this battle is interesting. The road to the North was dominated by the cities of Ai and Gibeon. After an attack upon Ai, wherein Israel was defeated through Achan's disobedience, Joshua ordered a renewed attack, for Ai must be secure before Israel could march to the ceremonial renewal of the covenant at Mt. Ebal. The second attack was successful, and Ai fell. But the people of Gibeon by a stratagem allied themselves to Israel. The other cities were determined to punish these traitors.

When Professor Totten looked at the record, he considered that this fall of stones may well have been a meteorite shower. This is just as plausible as the alternative proposition of a localised thunderstorm. The events happened soon after the Passover, that is in the Spring, when thunderstorms are unusual. In either case, something completely exceptional happened. If Professor Totten is correct, the implications are amazing, for the comet or other system within which the meteorites were held by gravitational forces was subject to natural physical laws of motion, and had been so ever since the Solar System took shape. For hundreds of thousands of years the swarm had moved in its own orbit, while the sun and the moon and the planets also followed their own orbital paths. Yet, on one special day, after millions of years, the orbit of the earth intercepted the orbit of the swarm at just the right location, and at just the right time, and the stones fell at just the right position, to wreak havoc upon the enemy but not upon Israel!

The same considerations apply to the extreme severity of a thunderstorm