

The British-Israel-World Federation Victorian Branch

AUSTRALIAN PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS ARCHIVE

TITLE: BIWF VIC HQ Monthly Notes 1996
ORIGIN: Victoria
LOCATION: Victorian Bookroom Archive

CONTENTS:

March 1996
April 1996
May 1996
June 1996
July 1996
August 1996
September 1996
October 1996
November 1996
December 1996

DATE PREPARED AND SCANNED:
22.10.2024

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British-Israel World Federation

(Victorian Headquarters)

No: 536

March, 1996.

MONTHLY NOTES

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THE RISEN CHRIST

The pious Jew has always longed for the epoch of the Messiah when gathered Israel will be an holy nation in receipt of all the blessings of God. However, this can only become a reality under the sovereignty of Jesus Christ the Messiah Who the Jews continue to reject.

And what is true for the Jews is also true for the so-called "Christian" Israel nations of today who have fallen into increasing apostasy, rejecting in the main God, His Law and His Son, the one and only Saviour of men, Jesus Christ. Many individuals not only live in unbelief but follow, as in the early days of Israel, the gods of the nations round about.

Rejection of the Son of God means rejection of the Father also. Our Lord said: *"He that hateth Me hateth My Father also."* (Jn. 15:23) He also said: *"...He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father."* (Jn. 5:23) and *"...Ye neither know Me, nor My Father: if ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also."* (Jn. 8:19) In 1 John 2:23 we read: *"Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also."*

Let us pray fervently that all true Israel will soon repent of their unbelief and their rejection of their Saviour Redeemer and soon coming King.

The Jews have accepted the false Messiahs of the past because they offered kingship, a kingdom and freedom from oppression. As David Davidson wrote: "The Jews....accepted every "Messiah" but Christ. Every Messiah but Christ claimed to lead by physical prowess. Christ led by service and sacrifice and claimed to be the "lamb" of prophecy." (P.307 Grt. Pyr.)

Neither did the disciples of our Lord's day understand the work of the ATONEMENT hence their deep distress after His Crucifixion. They expected the soon establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth not realizing that the redemption of Israel had to be accomplished and that the Times of the Gentiles and other prophecies must be completed first.

"The disconsolate, disillusioned company were in the throes of doubt and unbelief. The great crowning fact of Christ's Death (despite His mystic language which foretold His Resurrection), cast a shadow upon all their hopes in Him, and upon the things He had done and said. To them, was He not the key to the opening up of the whole vista of that promised to their fathers? The component parts of the Kingdom of God they knew. Had not the nation been created, and did they not know that around them were those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin?

Were they not acquainted with the fact that of the dispersion, even as the prophet Isaiah had pronounced, there were some in the uttermost part of the earth, even in the Isles of the West, carried there by the ships of Solomon which engaged in commerce for his kingdom?

It may not have been easily apparent to their minds how the thing would take place, but that it could have been accomplished by the personal presence, in the flesh, of Jesus the Messiah; with Him, they were sure, and the rest would be easy. He had but to ascend the throne, call in the "diaspora" of Israel to join hands with their brethren of Judah, and proclaim the Kingdom of God. It was not merely a question of dealing with the hated Roman, but a far greater concern to see the vindication of all the prophets and the Word of their God, upon the basis of which the prophets spake.

But now He had been crucified, He was no longer in the flesh, He had passed over to the other side. No longer could He demonstrate His Messiahship, for the Messiah must sit upon the throne of David. With them there was no confusion as with their 20th century fellow disciples, between the throne of David and the throne of God the Father. They knew the latter was in Heaven, and the former, the throne of David, was upon earth. He had not sat upon that throne in the flesh, and now having died, so they reasoned, He could not.

No wonder, then, that we find two of them leaving the city in perplexed and troubled hesitation, making their way to Emmaus. While these two men journey on their way, and are discoursing upon the events of the last few days, another, a third person, catches up to them and joins them. Enquiry from him elicited their true state of mind, which is summed up in their closing remark (Luke 24:21):

"We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel."

He who had joined them, walks with them and then begins to expound the Scriptures. There was nothing to their eyes and ears about Him that was unusual or ethereal. To all intents and purposes He might be a stranger travelling as they were, with an ability to expound the Scriptures concerning the Christ, that caused their hearts to burn within them. He continued with them throughout the whole journey to their destination, walking and talking as one of themselves. And, having arrived at Emmaus, He sat at table with them, and did break bread.

It was here that the first unusual thing took place, He vanished out of their sight.

Treating the disciples as ordinary human beings like ourselves, there is no question but what they would be quite certain that it was an abnormal and supernatural disappearance. Here was a man who had walked and talked, expounded the Scriptures, and eaten bread as one of themselves, who to all intents and purposes possessed a body like to their own, and

yet had disappeared at will. It was this extraordinary phenomenon, or at least presumably the actual change at the moment, which caused the eyes of the disciples to be opened that they should know Him.

Let us hurry back with the Emmaus disciples to Jerusalem where are the other disciples, safely secured against intrusion in an upper room. Within the room with the door again securely fastened, they disclose what has happened to them, and there follows the usual discussion arising from the mixed reception of the credulous and incredulous. Let us pause a moment to get the atmosphere and state of mind in that room. One, whom they had all loved, revered and followed has, but three days since, to their certain knowledge, died and been entombed. Here have come some of their brethren declaring the same thing as that which they had already regarded as the product of certain hysterical women.

And now, while they talk, behold Jesus stood in their midst. No door was open, no bolts or bars had been moved by or for Him. Without their aid, here was the Lord in their midst.

Let us not judge the disciples, for had we, who had but three days since seen for ourselves the death and burial of one well known and well loved, beheld that One standing in our midst, then should we have had a like reaction to theirs. And what was their reaction? They were filled with fear, and said: "It is a spirit." In other words, they could not conceive one who had passed over and so was dead, returning again, except in spirit form. Is modern thought any better than theirs?

With infinite consideration for them and their fearful reaction to this so startling phenomenon, He does not chide, yet makes a statement which, when comprehended, must have been even more startling than His appearance. They thought Him to be a spirit, but with pregnant words He makes clear who and what He is: **"A SPIRIT HATH NOT FLESH AND BONES AS YE SEE ME HAVE"** (Luke 24:39), and as if to emphasise the statement by practical demonstration, He further asked: *"Have ye here any meat?"* and they gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and an honeycomb.

Here was One who, because He had died and been buried, they thought was a spirit, present in a body which He Himself declared to be a body of flesh and bone, eating fish and honeycomb in their presence, and talking with them. A more amazing phenomenon demonstrating the condition of the Lord's post-resurrection life could not be conceived.

It is well here to pause and to notice that the Lord does not say "a body of flesh and blood," but "a body of flesh and bone." Why? A biological fact is given to us in Leviticus 16:16: *"The life of the flesh is in the Blood."* Cause the blood stream to cease to flow and the tissue of the flesh begins to decay. It is the life of the flesh.

The passage in Leviticus proceeds to say: "And I have given it upon the altar to make an atonement for the soul." This is prophetic of the words of Isaiah when speaking of the Lord: *"He poured out His soul unto the death."*

The word "soul" here is the same as that translated in Leviticus as "life", and the fact is that Jesus Christ poured out His life unto the death on Calvary, there making eternal redemption. Hence death ensued, the body became a corpse, and was buried in the tomb.

Then by what life was He raised from the dead, and by what principle of life did He maintain a body of flesh and bone, capable of eating, walking and talking as any ordinary human body; yet nevertheless capable of appearing and disappearing at will?

He was put to death according to the flesh. He was raised again according to the Spirit, and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus was that new biological principle, brought into operation, whereby He could maintain His body in such condition.

We come now to the last recorded scene of the post-resurrection life of our Lord on earth. We have seen Him walking, talking, expounding the Scriptures, eating and even cooking by the seaside. We have heard His startling declaration concerning His body and its nature. Now together with the disciples let us walk with Him up the Mount of Olives, discoursing on the matter that was ever uppermost in their minds, the establishment of the Kingdom of God in and through Israel.

They had lost Him, and with Him their hopes of the Kingdom. He had returned to them, on the earth, in the flesh, what mattered now? What further hindrance could possibly come?

"Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?"

But times and seasons were in the authority of the Father. For them it sufficed that they should receive equipment and go forth declaring the Kingdom. In effect, that attitude of the disciples was, "Lord, since now we have you again in the flesh, here with us on earth, is there any hindrance to the setting up of the Kingdom?"

Despondency and doubt had gone with the return of the Lord, and assurance that He was not just a spirit, but inhabiting a body that was tangibly flesh and bone.

"...they beholding Him, He was taken up, and a cloud withdrew Him out of their eyes. And as they were intently looking into heaven as He was going, behold also two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, 'Men, Galileans, why do you stand looking into the heaven? This Jesus Who was taken up from you into heaven, thus will come in the manner ye behold Him going in the heaven.'" (Acts 1:10-11. Greek)

The disciples had probably become used, by now, to the appearances and disappearances of the Lord, and were not so seriously disturbed by this going away. But let us note, since we know that He did not return manifestly to the earth again, that when He went, He did not leave the body of flesh and bone behind. This is important. By whatever means, and whatever laws were brought into operation to create the effect, that fact remains that when Jesus ascended from Olivet, *He ascended with His body, the body He Himself described as flesh and bone.*

Further, the declaration of the angels makes clear that, just as He went, so should He come. Did He ascend from the earth to the Heaven? He shall descend from the heaven to the earth. Was He seen rising until a cloud withdrew Him from the sight of those watching from earth? Then shall He come with clouds, and every eye shall see Him. Did He ascend with a literal body of flesh and bone?

**THEN SHALL HE DESCEND TO THE EARTH AGAIN
IN THAT BODY"**

(Extracted from "The Coming of Christ" by Rev. R. C. Thomas)

IS THE BIBLE HISTORICAL?

During late December and through into January, a number of letters appeared in the correspondence columns of the Herald-Sun newspaper. These letters expressed the opinions of a number of people that the Bible was not written until the return of the captive Judeans from Babylon. It was also alleged that the source material for the record flowed from ancient traditions passed on from parents to children over many centuries. It was also proposed that the origin of these traditions really came from an alleged foundation of myth and fable, whereby an uncultured and unlettered people gathered round their camp fires and meditated upon their ancestors and came up with the idea that a mythological hero named Abram (who was known in the civilized cities of Mesopotamia) was in fact their own. The writers also pointed out that there were discrepancies in the Bible that cast great doubt upon its accuracy.

Not one of these critics suggested that he had read the original Hebrew text! Nor did they refer to recent archaeological discoveries and translations of ancient written documents which establish the cultural pattern of the second and third Centuries BC. Relying as they apparently did upon the English Authorized or King James Version, they also misunderstood the linguistic differences between Elizabethan English and modern English wherein some words are either obsolete, or the understanding of the words has changed. However, the main thrust is still intelligible, although comprehension requires effort and sometimes needs reference to later revised translations. No mention was made of scholars with high academic qualifications who have demonstrated that the original Hebrew and the English translations in fact reflect a true and accurate picture of the civilization and culture of Egypt, Palestine, Northern and Southern Mesopotamia, including the cities of Ebla, Nuzi, Mari, Nineveh, Calah, Larsa, Ur, Kish and Babylon, and many others. It is true that one correspondent wrote in defence of the Bible, and quoted some recognised authorities by name. In the limited space available, he was unable to quote their findings.

It is obvious that the critics relied heavily upon the 19th Century arguments of Wellhausen and his followers, and some upon the more recent theories of Form Criticism espoused by Bultmann and Ladd. The destructive and rationalist nature of these criticisms appeal to the atheist and to the agnostic mentality of natural people, for rationalists deny all things that cannot be observed, measured, dissected or evaluated by themselves. For this reason they accept the unproved theory of evolution beginning with a "primal atomic globule" as W. S. Gilbert once wrote of PoohBah's ancestry.

Archaeology does not however "prove the Bible", as some think. Logically, archaeological discoveries may and do establish the complete accuracy of historical events recorded in the Bible. The records of Nuzi and Mara date from about 2000 BC, while at Ebla the earliest is dated at 2200 BC. The earliest written document from Sumer goes back to 3500 BC. Writing in Egypt is definitely proved to have existed before the Pharaoh Menes who began his reign in 3100 BC. This date is now accepted by ALL Egyptologists, following Davidson's analysis of the written calendar records of the first twelve dynasties. It is also accepted that Israel resided in Egypt, and that they were "thrust out" at the Exodus. The account of the sojourn in Egypt, in particular that of Joseph, is completely in accord with known Egyptian customs, as these are derived from Egyptian records. Now, it is inconceivable to think that Israel, in community with a cultured and lettered people, did not

learn the art of writing over the period of some 200 years. There is evidence that the tribal houses of Asher and Dan were engaged in international trade, and a discovery of a stone in Sardinia with the letters "SD" or "SHD" may well be the origin of the names of city of Sardis and of the Island Sardinia. This implies that Asher-Dan trading posts were established in various parts of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Now, the Biblical date for the Call of Abram is 1916 BC or thereabouts. The history of Abram refers to many events that are mirrored exactly within the customs of the region as established from the legal and contractual documents of Ebla, Nuzi and Mari. And indeed, analysis of the Ebla records proves that the people there spoke a dialect known as Old Canaanite which bears a relationship to Hebrew.

Also at Ebla, written records include texts in Akkadian, the language of Ur and other cities of Sumeria. Ur has yielded documents including school exercises in the art of cuneiform writing and subjects such as mathematics. The name Abram has also been found in many tablets of that period - in other words, it was not exclusively an Hebrew name. Again, Abram was for 75 years a citizen of Ur. No doubt he was educated in his youth in common with other citizens. Thus he too was acquainted with the art of writing. Writing was not unknown in Phoenicia, and in the area of Ras Shamra, where there was written correspondence between that city and Egypt, especially in relation to incursions of the Hittites into Egyptian controlled territory in Palestine.

From these established facts we must conclude that at least the educated classes in Israel were well able to record events, contracts, legal documents, and historical documents. Critics in reply say that no such documents have been found, and therefore the people could not write. In answer, we must consider the climate of Palestine and the availability of materials. First, Egypt provided paper in the form of papyrus reeds. Second, later Israel writings were inscribed on skins (leather). Third, the Bible indicates that stones were plastered over before records were inscribed. None of these materials is as permanent as clay tablets.

The main tenet of Higher Criticism and of Form Criticism is that the people of Israel were unable to write. The discoveries in the region prove that writing was a well known and wide spread art everywhere. To say that Israel alone of all the surrounding peoples was unable to write defies logic. We therefore conclude that the Bible is not based on tradition and myth, but upon ancient records faithfully transcribed and passed on to later generations. The known Massoretic formula for transcribing the Scriptures included numerous checksums, calculated to avoid scribal errors as much as possible. In this, form critics may be right in trying to eliminate glosses and errors that have crept in. Essentially, however, we are convinced that the Scriptures are a faithful and true account of the dealings between God and Israel. One point is worth mentioning, and that is the influence of the Holy Spirit. Paul therefore writes (2 Timothy 3:16):

"ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, For reproof; for correction, For instruction in righteousness." Peter also wrote about the teaching of the Bible (for prophecy is not limited to foretelling the future, but really means teaching). 2 Peter 1:19-20:

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (V. A. Proposch)



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THE MAJESTY OF GOD

*"Let favour be shewed to the wicked,
yet will he not learn righteousness:
in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly
and will not behold the majesty of the Lord."
(Isaiah 26:10)*

Majesty is the quality or state of a person which inspires awe and reverence. In human terms it involves supreme authority, awesome greatness, stateliness, loftiness of person or mien, dignity, grandeur, magnificence, pomp and splendour. Sadly the majesty of human princes today derives more from wealth and position than from attributes of character and example.

Writing in 1961 A. W. Tozer comments on the "loss of the concept of **majesty** from the popular religious mind", the loss of awe and of the fear of God. He says, "The Church has surrendered her once lofty concept of God and has substituted for it one so low, so ignoble, as to be utterly unworthy of thinking, worshipping men." He considered at that time that the Christian conception of God was decadent, amounting almost to blasphemy. This is doubly true today. Unfortunately this change in society's perception of God has happened gradually and subtly, and has been unobserved by most Christians.

The Lord God of the Prophets and Apostles, and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has become the God of the philosophers, humanists and New Age thinkers, and this has resulted in a whole new philosophy of Christian thought, life and spirituality. Gone is the reverence and respect for God and His Word which for years permeated Western society. Humanist philosophies have encouraged the flouting of God's laws and the relinquishing of His moral standards. The so-called science of evolution has induced many Christians to view the Bible as unscientific and therefore open to many "private interpretations", while a rash of modern translations has changed and distorted the Word of Truth. Men and women are being encouraged to look for God within themselves rather than in the pages of Holy Writ.

But “God” as conceived in the minds of men can only be a “God” created after man’s likeness. Mr. Tozer makes the point that such a “God” will conform to “the moral state of the mind from which it emerges” and can “be no true likeness of the true God” of the Bible.

God says of the wicked, *“Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself”* (Psalm 50:21). How dangerous it is to misrepresent the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth! Wrong ideas about God lead men to believe and act wrongly as is vividly demonstrated today. The Bible teaches that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and we are enjoined to serve Him with fear. When men lose their fear of God they sin without remorse so sin proliferates to the detriment of society. On the other hand the keeping of His Commandments and Statutes results in society’s happiness, health and prosperity.

In reality God’s Person and Nature are unfathomable, unknowable and totally beyond the comprehension of fallen man, except as He reveals Himself to us. This He has done by the great works of Creation, in His Written Inspired Word, by and through the Person, life and work of His only-begotten Son, and through the inspired guidance of the Holy Spirit Who leads us into “all truth”.

Creation by itself demonstrates the wisdom and power of God, His artistry and perfection of order. *“The heavens declare the glory of God:”* writes the psalmist, *“and the firmament sheweth His handywork.”* (Psalm 19:1) Man can never duplicate the wonder of Creation. He can copy, utilize, modify and harness its powers but he cannot create. However, instead of attributing the incredible forces which synchronize and uphold the fabric of the universe to the wisdom and power of Almighty God, modern man sees them only as “laws of nature”. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 11:33-36: *“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out (untraceable)..... For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory forever. Amen.”*

The truths which God has revealed about Himself we speak of as God’s “attributes”. These attributes are facets of His Being to which we give names. Because God is infinite and perfect His quality of Being stands far apart from all created beings. Paul writes of God as:

*“.....the blessed and only Potentate,
the King of Kings and Lord of Lords;
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. Amen. (1 Tim. 6:16)*

Yet because He is limitless He is omnipresent - present everywhere, close by us and immediately accessible in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ to all who believe “that He is” and approach Him in faith.

*“Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there:
If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall Thy hand lead me
And Thy right hand shall hold me!” (Psa. 139:7-10)*

God is omnipotent possessing limitless power and sovereignty. King David rejoicing before the Lord said,

*“Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory,
and the victory and the majesty:
for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine;
thine is the kingdom, O Lord,
and thou art exalted as head above all.” (1 Chron. 29:11)*

God is omniscient: all-knowing and knowing all.

*“O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.
Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
thou understandest my thought afar off.
Thou compassest my path and my lying down,
and art acquainted with all my ways.
For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord
thou knowest it altogether.” (Psa. 139:1-4)*

God is holy and absolutely pure. We who are so used to unholiness can have no conception of a moral condition of true holiness and purity. Holiness is moral health and this is what God requires for His Universe. For this reason He must destroy evil which is moral disease and ultimately destroys all that it infects. “God’s wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys.”

*“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven
against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” (Rom 1:18)*

God is immutable. *“I am the Lord I change not...”* Though men’s moods change, their affections cool and their enthusiasm wanes God’s attitude towards us is always the same. His attitude to sin is the same today as when He drove the sinful pair from the Garden of Eden but, towards the sinner it is the same today as when He sent His beloved Son to die for the sin of the world. Though God is perfectly just and absolutely good He is of boundless mercy and grace. A. W. Tozer writes:

“We should banish from our minds forever the common but erroneous notion that justice and judgment characterize the God of Israel, while mercy and grace belong to the Lord of the Church. Actually there is in principle no difference between the Old Testament and the New. In the N.T. Scriptures there is a fuller development of redemptive truth, but God speaks in both dispensations, and what He speaks agrees with what He is. Wherever and whenever God appears to men, He acts like Himself. Whether in the Garden of Eden or the Garden of Gethsemane, God is merciful as well as just. He has always dealt in mercy with mankind and will always deal in justice when His mercy is despised.”

*“Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,
neither let the mighty man glory in his might,
let not the rich man glory in his riches:
but let him that glorieth glory in this,
that he understandeth and knoweth me,
that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness,
judgment, and righteousness, in the earth:
for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.” (Jer. 9:23-24)*

The great gift of God through His Son to believing man is Eternal Life to be spent in fellowship with Himself.

*“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God,
and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent.” (John 17:3)*

We can never in this life understand the full meaning and the magnitude of the Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, He Who veiled His Glory, was “made sin” and bore the spiritual torment of separation from His Father, in order to reveal and make available to men God’s loving kindness, mercy and grace. What a wonder it is that men can have access to such a Being as the Great Creator God of the Universe.

How can we think of the Majesty of God with anything but amazement, awe, reverence, love and gratitude. Let us, therefore, in all humility

*“Fear God, and keep His Commandments:
for this is the whole duty of man.”*

*For God shall bring every work into judgment,
with every secret thing,
whether it be good or whether it be evil.” (Ecc.12:13)*
(Asst. Ed.)

THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

*“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip saying arise,
and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from
Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.*

*And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia,
an eunuch of great authority under Candace
queen of the Ethiopians,
who had the charge of all her treasure,
and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,
Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.
(Acts 8:26-28)*

Here Philip encountered the Ethiopian eunuch who was reading from the Prophet Isaiah. When Philip explained the Scripture to him he believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Then they came “unto a certain water” and the eunuch was baptized.

The ancient Philistine city of Gaza was three miles from the coast where there was an oasis with 15 wells of fresh water - enough to support broad gardens and a large population. It was situated on the intersection of trade routes to Egypt, Southern Arabia and Petra. In 96 B.C. Alexander Jannaeus besieged Gaza, laying waste the whole oasis and putting its population to the sword.

During the next century numerous writers describe it as having been left desert. New Gaza was built near the coast on a new site and became an important Greek city attached to the Roman Province of Syria. But Old or “desert Gaza” was never wholly abandoned as the trunk road to Egypt still passed by it and there was abundant water there. In later centuries it was restored to a great city once again.

The directions given to Philip were to go “toward the south ... Down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert”: “which is desert” applied to Old desert Gaza not to the way, as there is no route from Jerusalem to Gaza which could be described as desert.

"Here is water", the eunuch said. There was plenty of water at Old Gaza. The baptism therefore took place at Old Gaza on the Philistine Plain instead of among the hills of Judea, where tradition asserts. From thence Philip was next found at Azotus (Ashdod). He then travelled along the coastal plain preaching in all the cities until he reached Caesarea. These were the ancient Philistine cities to which Greek immigration after Alexander the Great had brought the characteristic form of Greek civic community. They were democratic and independent although often subject to the great conquering powers.

By our Lord's day the Greeks on the coast had absorbed the old Philistine cities and though the bulk of the common people were from the old stocks of the country and spoke Aramaic, the upper classes were Greek and the official language of the cities was Greek. The native deities were amalgamated with the Greek and Roman gods and were worshipped by both the common people and the governing classes. There were flourishing schools and notable philosophers in every city. The early Christians of Philistia dwelling among such paganism were to endure their persecutions and produce their martyrs. (Ref. "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land" by G. A. Smith, p. 1894.)

The baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch has always presented a problem because if, as is often maintained, the eunuch was a native Ethiopian he was baptised prior to Peter's vision commissioning him to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts. Ch. 10) This happened just after the Church had been scattered abroad because of the persecution of believers in Jerusalem. Believers scattered throughout Judea and Samaria preached the Gospel to all who would listen. Stephen had just been martyred and Philip, Peter and John had been preaching to Jews and proselytes in Samaria.

The following excerpt which comments on this anomaly is taken from "The History of the Hebrew Commonwealth from the Earliest Times to the Destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 72" Translated from the German of John Jahn, D.D. (Formerly Professor of the Oriental Languages, of Biblical Antiquities, and of Theology, in the University of Vienna) 1840, p. 550-552 (with sources listed).

"It has been supposed that Judaism was introduced into this country (Ethiopia) by the queen of Sheba, and that it was established as the national religion, under the reign of her son by Solomon. It is asserted, with much confidence, that this religion was preserved from age to age simply by tradition, without the aid of books. The monarchs of Ethiopia are styled *kings of the Israelites*; and the princes who are exiled to the mountains of Ghesen, on account of state jealousies, are called *Israelites*. The Ethiopians produce ancient genealogies by which it appears that their kings are descended from Solomon.

They now profess Christianity but the vestiges of Judaism are still very apparent among them. Although many learned authors, who have investigated the history and customs of Ethiopia, have felt satisfied that the queen of Sheba introduced Judaism into that country I can hardly persuade myself that she ever ruled over that kingdom, or that Judaism was preserved for so many ages by tradition only, without the aid of books. *It is very clear that Ethiopia was first peopled by the Egyptians, and that the Jews who were settled in Egypt for many years, propagated Judaism in that country.*

It is difficult to fix the period when these events took place, However it is enough for us to know, that the eunuch of queen Candace, who was baptized by St. Philip, came from Ethiopia. Baronius advances the opinion, that this eunuch professed the religion of the Ethiopians, which did not differ materially from Judaism, or even Christianity. But the native Ethiopians were grossly idolatrous. The temple of Jupiter Ammon was situated in their country. They worshipped barbarous gods, and uniformly deified their great men after death. Erasmus wittily observes, that the eunuch who was baptized by Philip while he was travelling, and without witnesses, took by stealth the blessing which appropriately belonged to the Jews alone. He thinks by his pleasantry to escape from the difficulties of the subject.

The gospel was not preached to the Gentiles until God had disclosed his will to St. Peter by a miracle. How then came St. Philip to baptize the pagan eunuch, long before the gospel was sent to the Gentiles as well as the Jews? But this eunuch must have been either a Jew or a proselyte to Judaism, who had, in accordance with the customs of the dispersed Jews, gone up to worship at Jerusalem. There can be no doubt but there were many Jews in Ethiopia who exerted themselves to make proselytes. The sacred books of the Jews must have been in common use in Ethiopia; for we find this eunuch reading Isaiah, and manifesting a readiness to acknowledge the Messiah, whose advent was predicted by the prophet. The dominions of Candace must have been that tract of country called Merge for the inhabitants of other parts of Ethiopia excluded females from the succession to the throne. From the vicinity of this kingdom to Egypt, it appears very probable that Judaism was introduced into Ethiopia from that country. Philostogius and Procopius assure us, that in the reign of Constantius there were many Jews dispersed among the idolatrous worshippers of the sun in Ethiopia; and in later times several distinct nations have been found who profess Judaism." (Asst. Ed.)

SPECIAL OFFICE BRIEF

23rd February, 1996.

A Most Grave Warning

"It is imperative to warn again. This office knows from authoritative sources that Sinn Feinn - IRA will refuse any terms which the Unionists can accept. It is therefore futile to go on and on about all party talks. The IRA is financed, trained and supplied by two powerful foreign countries neither of which care one cent for Irish Tribalism, still less about theological differences between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Their aim is to knock the British Isles out of the Atlantic strategic system. It has only recently become an attainable objective as such. That is because it is now possible to supply Terrorists with quite simplistic nuclear devices and the supply thereof has become quite practical from the Russian Black Market which the Russian Government cannot now control even if it so wished or was placed under NATO threat to do. Once the IRA has completed its training and supply arrangements it will be too late. A device no larger than a baseball carried in a briefcase can devastate city after city both in Ireland and on the mainland. The British Isles would be put out of commission for decades - at least. There exists one and only one solution. Regardless of all liberal political policies the UK and Irish Governments must forthwith allow to be used the SAS to take out the entire IRA command and its assistants. If that be not done a catastrophe will occur. This office is fully informed and indeed we know that the highest expert authorities have so warned The White House. Forget conventional terrorism. The danger is now nuclear terrorism.....The issue is the Atlantic strategic system to the crucial extent which it depends upon the effective integrity of the British Isles....."



British-Israel World Federation
(Victorian Headquarters)

No: 538

May, 1996.

MONTHLY NOTES

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**THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT
IS IT CONDITIONAL?**

It has been asserted that the absolute promise made by God to Abram and his descendants is invalid in view of certain stipulations placed on Abraham. Critics cite five passages, viz., Gen. 12:1; 17:1; 17:9-14; 22:16 and 26:5. The first of these passages, which includes the Promise of God, reads: *"Now the Lord had said unto Abram,*

*Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred,
and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee:*

*and
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 I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curses thee
and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*

*So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him;
and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old
when he departed out of Haran." (Gen. 12:1-4)*

Does the Lord's command imply or specify a definite condition? The answer is that the command is an imperative but the emphasis is placed on the following phrases which are inspirational clauses of *promise* that highlighted *God's intention* rather than *Abraham's obligation*. The same grammatical construct is used in Genesis 30:28 in relation to Laban's intention, and in Genesis 45:18 setting out Joseph's intention for his brothers. Rather than setting a precondition to the words of blessing, the Promise runs parallel with the pre-existing FAITH and OBEDIENCE of Abram.

The five-fold Promise sets forth three personal elements:

1. To make of him a great nation;
2. To bless him;
3. To bring greatness to his name, i.e., renown and repute.

The history of Genesis and subsequent ages has witnessed the ambitions of tyrants and rulers who wilfully imposed their wills for the purpose of gaining fame and superiority. But, in contrast, God gives these things to one man of His own choice and in pursuit of His own Great Plan and Purpose.

The last clauses of *blessing* use the same emphatic construct. They speak of Abraham being a blessing; of blessings to those who bless Abraham and of curses upon those who despise Abraham and his God. The final clause relates to the consequent blessing of mankind in and through Abraham.

This first promise of blessing flowing out from Abraham did not at that time specifically refer to the "Seed" (descendant) of the woman Eve Who, in Genesis 3:15 is promised as the coming Saviour - the One Seed of the woman Who would destroy the power of evil. In Genesis 12:6-7 the promise of "seed" is made to Abraham. *"And Abraham passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land; and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him."*

It is of interest to observe that there were obstacles in the path of the promise. The barrenness of Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel appeared to create an impossible situation. Isaac's birth to Sarah in old age was indeed miraculous, the bodies of both Abraham and Sarah being rejuvenated to allow the conception and birth of the child in whom Abraham's seed was to be called.

In Genesis 17:19 the promise of "seed" is passed on to Isaac. *"And God said, 'Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.'" This was, in turn, passed on to Jacob. "And God Almighty bless thee.....and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee..." (Gen. 28:3-4). The collective nature of the word "seed" relates to the successive generations thenceforth and must include all descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob as a corporate entity.*

However, in Genesis 21:12 *"....in Isaac shall thy seed be called"*, which specifies the seed line which God had selected for blessing, the ancient promise of the One "Seed" is directed to Abraham, the word "seed" being in the singular (cf. Dr. Bullinger's note). This is confirmed by Galatians 3:16 *"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, 'And to seeds,' as of many; but as of one, 'And to thy Seed,' Which is Christ."* Hebrews 2:16 speaking of the glorified Jesus says: *"For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham."*

But the One Seed, Who is to be the ultimate heir of all the promises, was the Seed upon Whose Sacrifice the fulfilment of the promises depended. *"For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen....."* (2 Cor. 1:20) He is also the Seed of David. *"Hath not the scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David,..." (John 7:42) to whom "....the Lord God shall give ... the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:32-33).*

The next issue raised by the critics as to the conditionality of the Promise is found in Genesis 17:1. *"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly."* Once again we have the imperative command. This is followed by emphasised promises as before. The same grammatical argument applies to refute the idea of a conditional promise. It is not even a command to CONTINUE in faith and obedience or else the promise will be withdrawn. There is no penalty attached! Later in the same chapter we read of the SIGN of circumcision (v. 9-10) *"And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised."* This is clearly the SIGN and not a condition. This argument of the critics is therefore based on false premises and false readings of the text. In addition, the promise had been proclaimed several times beforehand. However, v. 11 settles that matter: *"And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, AND IT SHALL BE A TOKEN OF THE COVENANT BETWEEN ME AND YOU."*

Some difficulties seem to be apparent in the last two texts. Genesis 22:16-18 reads: *"By myself have I sworn, says the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."* There does appear to be a conditional sense applied here, but this is not fixed on the promise, but rather on the person who benefits, i.e. Abraham. In the absence of faith, Abraham's benefit will be reduced, but he will still be the agent carrying the promise to his heirs. Faith must always be accompanied by obedience originating in that faith.

The final text is found in the blessing to Isaac (Gen. 26:2-5) *"And the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."* There is no condition here! First we have a command to Isaac to stay where he was. The reason for this command is not disclosed, but history demonstrates that at that time Egypt was in turmoil after their War of Independence from the usurping Hyksos Kings who had forced Egypt into submission and tyranny. This was NOT a condition attached to the Promise of God given to Isaac, which repeated and extended the Promise to Abraham. Note that Abraham was commended for his obedience to the CHARGE - THE COMMANDMENTS, THE STATUTES, AND THE LAWS OF THE LORD GOD.

The purpose of the election of Abraham by God was not limited to the blessing to Abraham and his heirs, but also required him and his house to *"command his children and his household after him, and they shall*

keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken of him." (Gen. 18:19)

Thus we conclude that any proposals that the Covenant was truly conditional have failed. The arguments are not convincing. Now the Promise to Abraham imported the Promises to Adam, to Noah, and to Shem (Gen. Ch. 9). As they stand, they are absolute. In transition to the Mosaic Covenant, the Law and obedience to the Law was clearly a determining conditional factor imported into the Covenant. However, we now discover that the Law of the Lord predated Moses, whose codification was consequently a rewriting of the recognized Law of the Lord. The formula is exactly the same. The transition to the Rule of the Lord Jesus is now seen to be the Divine progression of the Promise to Adam and to Abraham unto the SEED Who is heir to all things. Let us give praise to the Lord for all His benefits and all His mercies. May we everyone come to the Lord Jesus and accept Him and His wonderful salvation in His precious Blood which was shed on the earth to REDEEM and to SAVE.

(V. A. PROPOSCH)

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

Called The Feast of Weeks in Israel, this Festival was held at the time of the first harvest. The Feast was legislated in Leviticus 23:15-17: *"From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to the LORD"*.

The Passover was on the fifteenth day of the first month, which day was counted as a Sabbath. On the following day, Nisan 16, the priest brought a sheaf of the earliest spring harvest (barley), and symbolically waved this before the LORD. This reminds us of Paul's identification of Christ as the first-fruits, in 1 Corinthians 15:22-23: *"For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him."*

Mathematical calculation shows that the Feast was held on the day following the seven weeks counted from the Wave sheaf offering, i.e., on the fiftieth day. This falls on the seventh day of month 3 of the Hebrew Calendar. This year, the day after the Passover fell on Saturday, April 6. The 50th day thereafter - Sunday, 26th May, 1996 - is the Day of Pentecost.

The word Pentecost is from the Greek meaning 50th day but in earlier Christian terminology, Pentecost was called Whitsunday. It is of interest to observe that this year, these Festivals fall on the exact anniversaries, in both the Hebrew and modern Calendars, of the Passover and Pentecost of AD 30, the year of Our Lord's Death and Resurrection. The interval is exactly 1966 years, that is 1300 plus 666 years.

The number 666 is applied in Revelation 13:18 as follows: *"This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666."* (NIV Translation). Read with the addition of 1300, the number 13 being identified by Dr. Bullinger as holding the spiritual significance of rebellion against God, we see symbolised one hundred fold rebellion!

The significance of 666 applied to this time is related to the numerological significance of the Birth of the Lord Jesus in 4 BC. The chronology of the Bible, assessed on its own terms and from its own record, without reference to modern assessments of Assyrian, Egyptian and Babylonian secular documents, specifies that the Date of His birth was 3996 years from the Epoch of ADAM. This number equals 6 times 666.

The meaning of the relationship from Adam to His birth leads one to conclude that the Birth of the Lord Jesus was a Divine intervention into the world ruled by the "beast" system. This must be designated as part of the Divine Plan and Purpose of God to eventually destroy that system. This may be confirmed by the fact that 9 times 666 years from the Epoch of Adam ended on the day of the Feast of Tabernacles on 10 October, 1995. Dr. Bullinger considers that 9 is the number of Finality or of Judgment. This date therefore may represent the beginning of Divine Assessment and Judgment of the World system that the Bible calls Babylon the Great. The Hebrew CIVIL year beginning in 1995 ends at the Feast of Trumpets, 1996.

When the modern calendar is carried backwards for reference, Pentecost also occurred on 26th May in AD 30. The astonishing events of that Pentecost are related in Acts 2:1-21 (NIV):

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven, when they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs - we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!' Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?' Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.' Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: 'Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!

No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'."

Many students of Scripture have examined the current times, and the signs of the times, and are confident that the day of the Return of the Lord Jesus is near, even though that day and hour are unknown. This feeling is widespread in the Bible Belt of the United States, and among Bible believing (so-called "fundamental") Christians in many other lands, including Australia. I am one of these. But I do not know, nor can I know, the day and the hour of His coming. The Lord Jesus told us there would be signs of the times, and the Scriptures do provide many clues that indicate the fulfilment of certain events preliminary to the Coming of the Lord.

The end of 6000 years from the Scriptural date of the Epoch of Adam falls on the eve of the Feast of Trumpets, on 17 September, 2001. The Feast of Trumpets at the Jubilee began the year of the release of all debt, and the return of lands to the inheritors of their original holders. Although 2001 is not a Jubilee Year in the Hebrew Calendar used by Ancient Israel, wherein the Sabbatical and Jubilee Years began in the year of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, there is a real application to the Sabbath of Rest referred to in Leviticus 25:4:

"But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard."

In Deuteronomy 15:1-2 it is recorded: *"At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. And this is the manner of the release. Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD'S release."*

The effect of these chronological relations appears to anticipate the Return of the Lord Jesus as King. He is to rule over the New Covenant Israel, the literal nation of All Israel wherein the Church which is the Body of Christ is the Spiritual Temple in Israel. The contract or covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah of necessity implies a mutual agreement in some form similar to that of the acceptance of the Old Covenant at Sinai.

To this end, Malachi has foretold the return of Elijah the Prophet: *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."* (Malachi 4:5-6) In some way his work will bring repentance to Israel. Perhaps this will take the form of another Pentecost outpouring of the Spirit shortly before or coincident with the return of the Lord Jesus, the Messiah or Anointed One, in Power and Great glory. What a day that will be! Let us remember these things on the Day of Pentecost this year.

V. A. PROPOSCH



British-Israel World Federation
(Victorian Headquarters)

No: 539

June, 1996.

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SON OF GOD AND SON OF MAN

THE TRINITY IN UNITY

The Deity of the Lord Jesus is so closely interwoven with the existence of the Holy Trinity that any consideration of the one, without the other, is extremely difficult, if not absolutely impossible. For if Jesus was God from all eternity, and is now God to all eternity, there must obviously be at least two Persons within the Godhead. The Bible, however, goes further, because it reveals the existence of a Third Person; and this revelation comes primarily from the Son of God Himself, who constantly referred to this Third Person as the Holy Ghost. Indeed, on one occasion, He spoke of all Three Persons in one sentence, when He said, "*The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*" (John 14: 26).

While each of these Three Persons has His own particular sphere of influence, none has any existence apart from the other two. They are not three independent and isolated Personalities, but rather three different manifestations of one supreme Being. In other words, this Trinity of Persons is also a complete and perfect Unity. Every action of the Unity is an action of every Person of the Trinity; and, conversely, every action of any Person of the Trinity is also an action of the Unity.

CREATOR OF THE WORLD

As the Second Person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus has always been actively concerned in all the operations of the Godhead from the remotest ages of eternity to the present day. His victorious mission as Redeemer of Israel and Saviour of the world is the outstanding theme of the whole Bible; and rightly so, for the wonder of it still fills every understanding heart with thankfulness and praise. Yet, surely, that same paean of praise must vibrate with even deeper emotion when it is realized that the innocent victim, who hung in helpless misery upon a felon's cross, was none other than the designer, creator and maker of the whole stupendous Universe.

In the book of His Revelation the ascended Christ makes Himself known, by name, as 'The Word of God' (Rev. 19: 13); and the Apostle John opens his Gospel narrative with these simple, but majestic words
"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

*The same was in the beginning with God.
All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."* (John 1: 1)
Paul is equally emphatic when he speaks of
"The mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." (Eph. 3:9)
Elsewhere Paul develops the same theme:

"But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." (1 Cor. 8: 6).
*"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.
For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him:
And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."* (Col. 1: 15-17)

The Epistle to the Hebrews not only exalts the Lord Jesus as the Creator of the Universe, but makes it clear that He still sustains and controls its ordered existence.

*"God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds;
Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.
For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."* (Heb. 1: 1-3; 2:10).

Supported by so great a wealth of evidence, the Christian can confidently declare his steadfast belief in the

**'One Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
Begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,
Begotten not made,
Being of one substance with the Father;
By whom all things were made.'** (Nicene Creed)

THE WORD MADE FLESH

It is often assumed that the Lord Jesus continued to enjoy all the attributes, prerogatives and powers of the Godhead during His brief sojourn in mortal flesh; and it is claimed that support for this assumption can be found in Paul's statement,
"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2:9).

Paul, however, was writing many years after the Ascension; and it will be noted that he used the present tense. He was, in fact, simply saying that the Ascended Christ was, at the moment when he wrote, endowed with all the fulness of the Godhead in His own glorified, immortal human body.

That Paul was not ascribing all the fulness of the Godhead to Our Lord during the thirty-three years of His earthly ministry is evident from another passage in which he comments upon the Incarnation in the following words:

*"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.
And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death."* (Phil. 2: 6-8).

A closer and more exact translation of the original Greek is given to us in the Revised Version, where the expression 'made Himself of no reputation' is replaced by the words 'emptied Himself'.

From this we learn that Jesus, before His incarnation, was, as He always had been, God in His own right, and an equal partner in the Holy Trinity. But, by that supreme act of self-sacrifice, He emptied Himself, or divested Himself, of that prerogative of the Godhead which we may call His immunity from the power of death; and He did this in order that He might be made man, and become subject to death.

It cannot, therefore, be claimed that the Lord Jesus retained all the fulness of the Godhead when He came down to earth as mortal man. Further light is shed upon this 'emptying' in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where we read:

*"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same;.....
For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.
Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren.
For in that He himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.
"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Heb. 2:14, 16-18; 4: 15)

To which may be added a highly significant verse from the Epistle to the Romans.

"God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. 8: 3).

Had Jesus taken upon Him the nature of an angel He would assuredly have subjected Himself to an astounding sacrifice. But He did not stop there. He chose to become like unto His brethren of the seed of Abraham in all things. He took upon Himself flesh and blood exactly like theirs, with all its vulnerability to temptation. And He did this in order that He might be tempted in every respect just as we are, and yet emerge from the ordeal undefiled by sin.

If He had retained all the attributes of the Godhead He would have been beyond the reach of sin; and His triumphant victory over all temptations would have furnished an example which man could not even attempt to follow. But, of course, the most authoritative testimony comes from the lips of the Incarnate Christ Himself:

"The Son can do nothing of Himself.

I can of Mine own self do nothing.

I do nothing of Myself." (John 5: 19, 30; 8: 28.)

Statements such as these cannot be ignored, or brushed aside. They must be faced honestly and sincerely, because they are a definite, distinct and explicit declaration from the Son of God Himself that He did not possess the supernatural powers of the Godhead during His earthly ministry. He had laid those powers aside for a definite purpose; and He did not lay claim to them again until that purpose had been accomplished.

On the night before His crucifixion He made an appeal to the Father which admits of no misunderstanding:

*"I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.
And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."*

(John 17: 4-5)

Not until He had sacrificed Himself for the sins of the whole world, not until He had risen from the dead, did He make the resounding claim,
"All power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth." (Matt. 28: 18).
Accepting His testimony, as indeed we must, we shall not make any claims for Him, as Son of man, which He did not make for Himself. Otherwise, we shall belittle the greatness of His sacrifice in becoming truly man; we shall tarnish the brightness of His faith in the Father; and we shall underestimate the fierceness of those trials and temptations over which He triumphed so gloriously.

HIS WORDS AND WORKS

In view of Our Lord's emphatic statements concerning the effect of His incarnation, the question naturally arises as to how He performed all those mighty works which are recorded in the New Testament. Once again, He leaves us in no doubt as to the truth:

"The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." (John 14: 10).
This statement takes us back to the very beginning of His ministry. After some thirty years of blameless life, concerning which we are given very few details, Jesus received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This was the same kind of baptism as that which fell upon the Apostles at Pentecost, in accordance with their Master's promise,

"John truly baptized you with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." (Acts 1: 5, 8).

In the power of that Baptism the Apostles healed the sick, and even raised the dead. That baptism of power was given to Jesus, not 'by measure', but in its fullest capacity. As He Himself said:

"He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." (John 3:34)

The power of the Holy Spirit permeated His very being; and from that moment His communion with the Father became closer and more intimate every day. By rigid self-discipline, fervent prayer, and intense faith He perfected Himself for His great mission.

These three things were absolutely necessary, as He explained on one occasion, after He had cast out an evil spirit. His disciples, who had tried to do it themselves, wanted to know the reason for their failure. "Why", said they, "could not we cast him out?" To which question Jesus replied: "*This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting.*" (Mark 9: 28-29). In other words, He told them that miracles of the kind which they had just witnessed were only accomplished by Him through faith in the Father, after a preparation of prayer and self-discipline.

Night after night He spent in earnest prayer, recharging Himself, as it were, with power for the work He had to do; night after night His spirit soared to highest Heaven, into the very presence of God Himself; and by this constant communion He was drawn into so intimate a relationship with the Father that He could speak and act in His name, and even grant forgiveness of sins on His behalf.

Nor was this all. Acting for the Father, He could not only forgive sins Himself but He could also delegate the same power to the Apostles. On the day of His resurrection He appeared in their midst and said:

*"Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.
And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.
Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."* (John 20: 21-23).

So close indeed was this communion that His spirit, which was the spirit of the Son of God, could transcend the limitations of the flesh, as and when He willed, by virtue of His perfect unity with the Father.

PHASES OF HIS EXISTENCE

The story of Our Lord's earthly ministry bulks so large in the New Testament that the fullest recognition is not always given to the different phases of His existence. These may be summarized under four heads.

Firstly, His state before the Incarnation, when He was God in His own right, and an equal partner in the Holy Trinity.

Secondly, His state during the thirty-three years, or thereabouts, of His earthly life as mortal man.

Thirdly, His state during the forty days after the Resurrection, when He rose from the dead, still man, still bearing the marks of His Crucifixion, but clothed anew in a glorified, immortal, human body.

Fourthly, His state after the Ascension, when He was restored to all the glory which He had enjoyed with the Father and the Holy Spirit before the world was; the same in every respect as He had been before His incarnation, but with this amazing difference, that He had taken His manhood with Him into God.

These four phases are separate and distinct. But through them all runs the unbroken thread of His identity. He could empty Himself of all the attributes, prerogatives and powers of the Godhead in order to become truly man; but He could not divest Himself of His identity as the only-begotten Son of God.

He may have learnt of His identity at His mother's knee; He may have been aware of it at the age of twelve, when He said,

"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?";

but He certainly knew it at His baptism, and later at His transfiguration, when the Father spoke to Him from Heaven, saying,

"This is my beloved Son."

Knowing His identity, He could speak of His past existence, and also of His future existence, in the present tense. One instance only need be given by way of illustration. He could say,

"As the Father hath life-in-Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life-in-Himself." (John 5:26).

Looking back into the past, and forward into the future, He could make that statement at the very moment when stripped of His essential immortality, He was about to pass through the gates of Death.

When this aspect of Our Lord's teaching is fully understood, apparent inconsistencies and seeming contradictions are reduced to their true proportions.

EPILOGUE

In conclusion, then, the Lord Jesus was God from all eternity, vested with all the attributes, prerogatives and powers of the Godhead. Of His own free will He laid aside those powers, in order that He might clothe His identity, as the only-begotten Son of God, in mortal flesh. He did this for a definite purpose; and when that purpose had been accomplished, He rose from the dead with a glorified, immortal human body. In that body He ascended into Heaven, thus taking His manhood with Him into God.

Restored to all His previous might, majesty, dominion and power, He now sits at the right hand of the Father, very God of very God, equal partner in the Holy Trinity, for ever -

SON OF GOD, and also SON OF MAN.

(R. Llewelyn Williams, 1957)

THE HOLY TRINITY

"In the Scriptures the three Persons are shown to act in harmonious unity in all the mighty works that are wrought throughout the universe.....The work of creation is attributed to the Father (Gen. 1:1), to the Son (Col. 1:16) and to the Holy Spirit (Job 26:13 & Ps. 104:30). The incarnation is shown to have been accomplished by the three Persons in full accord (Luke 1:35), though only the Son became flesh to dwell among us. At His baptism the Son came up out of the water, the Spirit descended upon Him and the Father's voice spoke from heaven (Matt. 3:16-17). Probably the most beautiful description of the work of atonement is found in Hebrews 9:14, where it is stated that Christ, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God; and there we behold the three Persons operating together. The resurrection of Christ is likewise attributed variously to the Father (Acts 2:32), to the Son (John 10:17,18), and to the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:4). The salvation of the individual man is shown by the Apostle Peter to be the work of all three Persons of the Godhead (1 Pet. 1:2), and the indwelling of the Christian man's soul is said to be by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-23).

(A. W. Tozer 1961)



British-Israel World Federation
(Victorian Headquarters)

No: 540

July, 1996.

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PEACE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

"We looked for peace, but no good came;
and for a time of health, and behold trouble!" (Jer. 8:15)

The Webster's New 20th Century Dictionary of the English Language, 1945, defines the word "PEACE" in the following way:

1. A state of quiet or tranquility. Freedom from disturbance or agitation.
2. Freedom from war. Cessation of hostilities.
3. Public tranquility, quiet, order, security such as is **guaranteed by Law**.
4. Freedom from mental agitation or disturbance, as from fear, terror, anger, anxiety, etc.
Quietness of mind; tranquility, calmness, quiet of conscience.
Here the Dictionary quotes: "Great peace have they which love Thy law." (Ps. 119:165)
5. Harmony; concord; a state of reconciliation between parties at variance, especially a treaty between nations.
6. Spiritual calm or repose.

It mentions certain well known phrases such as:

"Peace of God" - a term used in legal documents to signify a state of order and conformity to law.

"To keep the Peace" - means to conform to public law and order.

"To be at peace" - is to be reconciled; to live in harmony.

"To make one's peace with" - to effect a reconciliation.

The Dictionary gives the following as synonyms for peace:

quiet; tranquility; calm; repose; pacification; order; calmness; reconciliation; harmony; concord.

Thus the state of "peace" must be considered from the individual and social point of view as well as from the national.

The man in the street in the Western world today would probably consider that he is living at peace because the word 'peace' has come to imply chiefly the absence of war. However, though Western nations are not themselves actively committed in hostilities with other nations, our societies and the individuals within those societies are certainly not living at peace in the true sense of the word. Even in the days of my youth although nationally we were at war with Germany and Japan society was generally peaceful and acts of violence were rare. We could walk in the streets and parks and travel on public transport at night with little chance of molestation. We could leave doors and windows unlocked with little risk of theft. Young people could safely attend the local dance, a theatre or a party without the need for adult protection. Our society was Christian, homogeneous and in the main non violent.

Today, however, society is continuously disturbed and agitated by serious, escalating social and economic problems, religious and racial tensions and by the imposition of laws originating outside our countries. Public tranquility supposedly guaranteed by law is constantly disturbed by murder, rape, sadistic cruelty to man and beast, abuse of women and children, maiming and death often due to the abuse of drugs and the motor car, and even the infrequent mass slaying of innocent victims. Anxiety, fear and anger are aroused by the threat of terrorist activity, by repeated philosophical attacks upon the basis of our way of life and beliefs, while the permissiveness of society, which requires the toleration of all kinds of moral perversion and spiritual decline, has contributed much to social disorder and discord. As Christian values become more and more eclipsed by Humanist doctrines society is urged to accept unrestrained sex, the murder of unborn babies, euthanasia for the old and the right to suicide.

Despite the frequent references to peace by politicians worldwide, by the media and the Churches it would be true to say that there are few people anywhere in our modern day world who are truly at peace.

Why is it that true peace is so difficult to achieve in these times of so-called enlightenment? The answer to this is found in the Bible.

The Law given to Israel at Sinai was in a sense a Covenant of Peace because obedience to it ensured peace not only for the nation in its relation to other nations, but within society as a whole.

In Lev. 26 verses 3 - 12 we read:

If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. (Economic security)

And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. (Social security)

And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. (National security)

For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new. And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. (Spiritual security)

God's peace then, embodies security, prosperity and physical welfare, mental and spiritual health and happiness. It was obtainable for Israel by obedience to God's Commandments and Statutes, (Exod. Chs: 20-23) which demonstrate the necessary principles for observation by human societies if they are to be successful.

The Old Testament speaks of the requirement for obedience to God's Law if peace, well-being, rest and security are to be enjoyed. This was demonstrated in the life and works of King David who brought the nation of Israel as a whole to love God and obey His Commandments. King David though not by any means perfect as an individual, always gave God His rightful place and fitting adoration.

"Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all." (1 Chr. 29:10-12)

King David taught the people to know God and to serve and obey Him. In his last speech to the People after he had prepared all the building materials for the House of the Lord, David said: *"I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee."* (1 Chron. 29:17) And we are told: *".... all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord, and the king."* (1 Chron 29:20)

Realising the requirement for national obedience to God and His Law David prayed:

"O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee: and give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace (the Temple), for the which I have made provision." (1 Chron. 29:18-19)

During the first part of his life Solomon remained faithful to Jehovah, ordering his Kingdom wisely and the riches of the Kingdom increased to such an extent that silver became of little value. Thus was fulfilled God's promise to his father David: *"Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days."* (1 Chron 22:9)

In 1 Kings 4:24-25 it is recorded:

"For he (Solomon) had dominion and he had peace on all sides round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon."

It will be noted that Judah and Israel are still mentioned as separate sections of the Israelite people at the time of Solomon, i.e., after their union under King David and before their political cleavage at the time of King Rehoboam.

Unfortunately, corrupted by riches and power, Solomon in his old age fell away from the requirements of worshipping Jehovah alone, and keeping His Commandments and Statutes. From this time peace began to be taken from Israel and economic problems, civic unrest, civil wars, and enemy invasion ensued. Unlike his father King David, who we are told *"died in a good old age, full of days, riches and honour"* (1 Chron. 29:28) King Solomon's days were not prolonged. He is thought to have died at only 58 years of age.

2 Chron. 15:3-6 describes the condition of the northern House of Israel only about 35 years after they had left the Worship and Law of Jehovah for the idolatry of the Golden Calves set up by King Jeroboam (2 Chron. 13:8&9): *"Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law..... And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries. And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity."* (2 Chron. 15:3-6)

Peace - security, well-being, and rest - are blessings from God.

Psalms 4:8 - *"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."*

Psalms 29:11 - *"The Lord will give strength unto His People; The Lord will bless His People with (His) peace."*

Jer. 16:5 defines the peace of God as His loving kindness and compassion -

"...I have taken away My peace from this people, saith the Lord, even loving kindness and mercies".

In order to enjoy the Peace of God a nation or an individual must remain faithful to God and obedient to His Commands. Though at times guilty of grievous sin for which he bitterly repented, King David retained his unflinching faith and confidence in God, and lived in harmony with the priesthood and the prophets, acting justly and seeking always to glorify God.

Because of his great example King David and his descendants were to be recipients of God's peace forever:

"....but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace forever from the Lord." (1 Kings 2:33)

This was established by the Everlasting Covenant made by God with David: *".....thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."* (2 Sam. 7:16) *"..... yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure."* marvelled David. (2 Sam. 23:5)

EARTHQUAKES

The writer of a letter appearing in New Dawn Magazine for November-December, 1995, p.28, warns of the interrelationship between sunspot activity and solar wind velocities which has been discovered, and the link between such solar output and earthquake activity. During the period 1963-1993 when earthquakes on Planet Earth increased from 4,000 to 22,000, solar output also was observed to have increased considerably. The writer claims that the peak danger time of all time for solar activity linked to major earthquakes is around A.D. 1999-2002. Bible prophecy also warns of increased earthquake activity at the end of this age just prior to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to begin His millennial rule on earth.

"Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven." (Ref. Luke 21:10-11; 25-33; Matt. 24:7, Mark 13:8)

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh,..... For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle;..... Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations,..... And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley;.... And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee..... And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." (Ref. Zech. 14:1-9)

SPECIAL OFFICE BRIEF

(Extract from Issue 431 April, 1996)

"When big issues surface in human affairs it always happens that a section of Public opinion becomes generally alarmed without understanding what it is all about. Numerous fringe, quasi-cultist movements form and complicate things.... We see, therefore, many eccentric movements both secular and religious. That is now to be observed in many parts of the world and in some cases quite important institutions have allowed themselves to be misled into quite absurd practices - particularly within some of the mainstream churches once of the highest prestige. This Office feels that to be very unconstructive. On the other and opposite side of this confusion (within some of the Churches), is the altogether cynical quasi-rationalist influence. It is that influence, (above all), which is alienating youth from the pews and in some cases turning it to the eccentricities of the cults. This is particularly so in England where the Bishops of the once dignified Church of England (which produced a great many very saintly theologians over many centuries) now fool about with such lunacy as sodomite "marriages" and such incredible tripe as to whether it should become a matter of International Law if an external intelligence should communicate with an inhabitant of this planet.

Should the Blessed Virgin Mary have been subject to a Roman legal opinion before replying to the Annunciation? Could nonsense - blasphemous nonsense - go further?"

Psalms 34: 13&14 enjoins us *"Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."*

Psalms 37:37 - *"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: For the end of that man is peace (well-being)."*

Prov. 3:1-2 - *"My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee."*

Prov. 16:7 - *"When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."*

From these Scriptures it can be seen that **peace and righteousness** are closely connected.

Isaiah 32:16-18 - *"Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work (tillage or cultivation) of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;..."*

Isaiah 48:18 *"O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea:"*

Psa. 85:8-11 - *"I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly. Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory (of His Presence) may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven."*

Hebrews 12:11 speaks of the **peaceable fruit of righteousness**. *"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby."*

"For where jealousy is and faction, there is confusion and every vile deed. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easily entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace." (James 3:16 - 18)

Peace, then, is the end, the product, the outcome or reward of righteousness.

Romans Ch. 3 vs. 10-18 describes the **unrighteous** as having no thought for, or fear of God, as being deceitful and having mouths full of cursing and bitterness. *"Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known....."*

Little wonder that there is so little peace in the world today - there is so little righteousness because God and His Laws are heeded by so few.
(Asst. Ed.)



British-Israel World Federation
(Victorian Headquarters)

No: 541

August, 1996.

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THE BOOK OF REVELATION - PART 1

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass...." (Rev. 1:1)

INTERPRETATIONS

Prophecy in the Bible, especially that in the Books of Daniel and Revelation, was unsealed in Revelation Chapter 6 and thereafter.

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see."
(Rev. 6:1)

However, it was not until Chapter 10 when the little open book or the open Bible was given, that the truth about the Adversary was revealed to those who have ears to hear. Though unsealed in the Book of Revelation, which was written in A.D. 96, this truth was hidden by the Church until it was revealed to the world at the time of the Reformation, which occurred after God took away the dominating power of Papal Rome when its allotted time had expired, as prophesied in Daniel Chapter 7 vs. 25 and in Revelation Chapters 12 and 13.

The Reformers without exception demonstrated how the Book of Revelation revealed the hypocrisy and falsity of the Roman System styling it the "Man of Sin", as shown in the Translators Preface to the K.J.V. Bible.

Up until Papal Rome lost its dominating power over the Christian World it had tried to prevent this truth becoming widely known. First, it burnt as many Bibles as it could but, because this failed in achieving its purpose, it tried to massacre and burn at the stake the leading witnesses of the Truth - men such as Ridley, Latimer, Cranmer, Tyndale, Huss, etc.

As both these measures failed, its next step was the deliberate misinterpretation of the Bible, particularly the Book of Revelation, which showed the Roman Church to be part of the "Beast System".

The first misinterpretation to appear was the PRAETORIST School of Alcazar, a Spanish Jesuit. This false theory declared that the Antichrist system of the Bible had already passed. It had consisted of the Roman Emperors Vespasian and Titus, who destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

This teaching was later followed by the FUTURIST School of Ribera which has influenced the thinking of the Church down to the present day. Ribera, another Spanish Jesuit, went to the other extreme postulating that the Antichrist was to be a world dictator which would appear at the end of this age thus passing right over the period of Papal Rome. In Ribera's theory all of prophecy from Revelation Chapter 6 onwards was compressed into seven years at the end-time, in fact, into only the second half or three and a half years!

THE OPEN BOOK

The "little book open" pictured in Rev. ch. 10 marked the beginning of the Reformation which began in England in the late 1300's. Wycliffe and his helpers translated the Vulgate Bible into English and sent monks out to the people, teaching the truth embodied in the Scriptures. In the 1400's many vital, God-given events occurred. Printing was invented. Early copies of Greek Bibles were taken to Europe by people fleeing from the Moslem attack on the Byzantine Empire. This enabled new light to be shed on the New Testament which was at that time represented by the Latin Vulgate. Huss promulgated the Reformation on the Continent.

THE HISTORICIST INTERPRETATION

The leaders of the Reformation who had studied the Scriptures knew that only what is called the HISTORICIST Interpretation of prophecy would fit Biblical Prophecy. In other words the Book of Revelation is revealed history (which is now almost completed).

However, as Protestant countries like England and America thrived and became prosperous as a result of their knowledge of the Truth, the Evil One fought back using the sugar coated bait of the Spanish-Chilean Jesuit Emanuel Lacunza. The Evil One could not bear to allow Protestants the possession of such a powerful weapon as fulfilled prophecy and the knowledge of the truth regarding the Roman Church.

If the Book of Revelation had been accepted as verifiable history this would have had two results.

1. The Roman Church would have been shown up for what it is, for what System other than the Beast System has made war on the saints and overcome them with power to continue 42 prophetic months as stated in Revelation 13:5-7?
2. If Revelation from Chapter 6 onwards is verifiable history in symbolic language and capable of interpretation, then the Bible would shine forth to all as the TRUTH that it is, as it would be seen from history to be miraculously true, telling the end from the beginning. But if the fulfilled prophecy of the Bible could be hidden then a very powerful weapon in the cause of Truth would be lost.

Rome, or the motivating spirit behind Rome had to hide this truth and this is how this task was achieved.

The Jesuit Lacunza produced a theory that Christ at the Second Advent would come twice; first, secretly FOR His saints; second, seven years

later, victoriously and in power, WITH His saints to rule on earth. According to his theory all the prophecy and tribulation in the Book of Revelation is crowded into this seven year period, or the second half of it, using Daniel Chapter 9 verse 27 as the authority. Manual Lacunza was ostensibly an independent thinker, but was largely in bondage to Romish teaching. He vigorously asserted that the Book of Revelation is "wholly directed to the Coming of the Lord" and did not find its accomplishment in the facts of history during the Christian period.

This is the view of the Roman Church and of those who espouse the FUTURIST Interpretation which now, unfortunately, include almost all Protestants. The Protestants of the Reformation, however, believed that the Antichrist of Scripture is not an individual, but a mighty system or body of men, animated by one spirit. They unanimously pointed to the dreadful persecutions of the Bohemians in Eastern Europe and of the Waldenses in the West. The long drawn out agony, burnings and tortures committed by soldiers of one nation after another at the behest of a long line of degraded Popes over 300 years and ending in the death of the Bible witness just before the Reformation was, the Reformers held, the fulfilment of the suffering of the Two Witnesses and their death at the hands of the Beast.

Lacunza, who wrote under the name of "Rabbi Ben Ezra" and is acclaimed by FUTURIST writers as an authority, appeared to agree in some points with the Reformers. He held, however, with Rome's Ribera School"

1. that the Antichrist and the Two Witnesses' appearance is still future; and
2. that prophecy will be fulfilled in a very short time (7 years) at the end of the age.

Lacunza's theory, first printed in 1812 on the Spanish Isle of Leon, was placed on Rome's Index of Prohibited Books and denounced by the Inquisition. This, of course, attracted the attention of the Protestants. It was translated into English a copy of which turned up in the Library of the Archbishop of Canterbury, where it became the basis of a series of pamphlets on Prophecy written by the Librarian, Dr. Maitland, in which he promoted these futuristic doctrines. The result was a growing belief that the Reformers had done the Papacy an injustice in regard to the Antichrist of Scripture - that Rome was really a sister Church!

Espoused by the Oxford Movement, Dr. Maitland's theory of a future Antichrist was one of the main weapons used in the Oxford Movement's defence of the Papacy within the Church of England, against the charges of the Reformers. The Futurist scenario, viz., the Secret Rapture followed by the reign of the Antichrist, were espoused by Edward Irving, founder of the Irvingites, now known as the "Catholic Apostolic Church", and by J. N. Darby a leader of the Brethren Movement. Since that time this teaching has spread like wildfire among evangelical Christians most of whom would have no idea of its origin.

The Book of Revelation's prophecy has now been almost entirely fulfilled, in all its detail. One can only stand in awe at its Divine Majesty revealing in sublime symbolism to the saints every event among the nations that was to affect the welfare of Israel and the Church. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7) (Dr. N. F. McLeod)

PEACE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS - PART 2

THE PEACE OFFERING

One of the stipulated offerings which featured in the Ordinances of Worship laid down for Israel in the Old Testament, and which were fulfilled by the life and work of our Lord Jesus Christ and so done away with, was the PEACE OFFERING (Lev. Ch. 3 & Ch. 7:11-21 & 28-34). While the SIN OFFERING was to make atonement for sin, the idea of the Peace Offering was peace achieved on the grounds of presenting a perfect compensation or recompense. By means of the Peace Offering the offerer demonstrated his gratitude for the blessing of that peace.

It foreshadowed our Lord Jesus Christ as the Perfect Sacrifice, and the communion with the Almighty Holy God which His perfect sacrifice has made possible. This Perfect Sacrifice was foretold by the Prophet Isaiah (Isa. 53:3-6)

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

The joyous communion now possible between the repentant, believing man and God is foreshadowed by the instructions given concerning the Peace Offering. The offerer himself was to kill the animal thus, in symbol, presenting the Perfect Recompense. Part of the animal was accepted by God by burning it on the Altar, and part became food for the High Priest and his children. Part was given to the officiating priest while the remainder was feasted on by the offerer, his family and friends, joyfully before the Lord.

He Who was the Perfect Sacrifice has thus made peace for us with God with Whom the believer can, by faith, now commune, offering gratitude, praise and worship, and in turn receiving His loving kindness and tender mercies, i.e. His PEACE.

Among the items listed as the spiritual armour of God we read: *"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;..."* (Eph. 6:15) i.e., the Good News of the Peace of God - the loving kindness and tender mercies to which we have access through the Perfect Sacrifice of His Son.

We are told in Romans 5:1 that being justified by faith the believer has Peace with God (i.e. peace of conscience) through the Lord Jesus Christ. In Colossians 1:19-20 we read: *"For the whole fulness was pleased to dwell in Him: and through Him to reconcile all things unto Him, having made peace through the blood of His cross: through Him whether the things upon earth, or those in the heavens."* (Panin N.T.)

This peace made by our Lord Jesus Christ applies, therefore, to the whole of God's Creation not just to this earth and those upon it. And because of this peace we can come to know God as the Scriptures

declare Him, i.e., as the: God of truth (Deut. 32:4), God of Glory (Acts 7:2), , God of hope (Rom. 15:13), God of patience (Rom. 15:5), God of love (2 Cor. 13:11), God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1:3) God of all grace (1 Pet. 5:10) and **God and Lord of peace** (2 Thes. 3:16):
"Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means."

Peace is also spoken of as the **state of mind or heart** in which a believer is kept in relation to the circumstances in which life places him. When the Lord Jesus left the earth He left to the disciples His peace -
"I leave you peace; my peace I give to you:.... Let not your heart be troubled, neither be it fearful. (John 14:27 Panin N.T.)"
The Prophet Isaiah records: *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."* (Isa. 26:3) while Philippians Ch. 4 verses 6 & 7 advises us:
"In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Panin N.T.)

What a wonderful privilege this is, and what a contrast to Isaiah Ch. 57 verse 20 & 21: *"....the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace", saith my God, "to the wicked"*. On the other hand Romans 14: 17 states:
"..... the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

KING OF PEACE

The earliest reference to the link between righteousness and peace is indicated in Scripture rather than stated. In Genesis Ch. 14 is the account of Abram's rescue of Lot and his family and possessions from the Mesopotamian kings who had attacked Sodom and its neighbouring cities. On his way home Abram was blessed by "Melchizedek, King of Salem" who is described as the "priest of the Most High God".

The name "Melchizedek" is prophetic, meaning "King of Righteousness". He was the King of Salem (the ancient name for Jerusalem) which means "King of Peace". Thus the person of Melchizedek was prophetic of the expected 'Seed', the Messiah, Whose dual role as Priest and King would usher in an era of peace and righteousness on earth.

The priesthood of Melchizedek was unique and typical of the priesthood of the coming Messiah Who was prophesied in Psalm 110:4 in which he is spoken of as *"....a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek"* and in Zechariah Ch. 6 vs.13 which says of Him, *"...he shall bear the glory (i.e., of majesty and royalty), and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both"*. The Messiah would bear the two offices of Priest and King and His righteousness and perfect rule would bring about peace upon earth, an era when the loving kindness and compassion of God would be in constant operation. His is an everlasting priesthood not the inherited priesthood of Aaron which constantly changed passing from father to son.

The first of these two offices - **the unending Priesthood** - was fulfilled in Jesus Christ when He rose from the dead in the power of an endless

life to become *"...an High Priest, Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens", "where He ever liveth to make intercession"* for us. Since the time that His Sacrifice for the sin of the world was accomplished He has been the Everliving Advocate with the Father, interceding on behalf of those who are saved through faith in Him. For Israel, national and individual, His sacrifice fulfilled and thus brought to an end the Aaronic ritual and hereditary Aaronic Priesthood. Instead He is a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, i.e., He is consecrated forever in an everlasting priesthood as was typified by the person of Melchizedek about whose earthly origin, family connections and subsequent life nothing is recorded.

The second office, **that of King**, was promised in perpetual succession to the House of David and our Lord's earthly title to the throne is firmly assured through Scripture. For example Mary was told *"...thou.....shalt call His name Jesus....and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."* (Luke 1:31-33) This He will claim when He returns to rule the earth in righteousness and peace as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Thus being as well the High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek He combines in His perfection the duties of Chief Ruler and Leader of Worship.

How then are we to understand the "covenant of peace" made with Phinehas the grandson of Aaron the High Priest which ensured his family an everlasting priesthood as recorded in Numbers 25:12 & 13 -
"Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel,.....Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood:...."
If the family of Phinehas were to have the dignity of the priesthood forever how could this be replaced by the Melchizedekian Priesthood of our Lord Who is ostensibly of the Tribe of David?

Though not stated in Scripture other sources indicate that our Lord was, through the family of Mary His mother, descended also from the line of High Priests from Aaron through Phinehas. When Aristobulus the last of the Asmonians was murdered by Herod the Great the separate Aaronic family succession of High Priests was replaced by puppets of Herod's choosing. But until that time members of the Aaronic family had married members of the House of David. For example, the father of John the Baptist was the Priest Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth was "of the daughters of Aaron". (Luke 1:5) But Elizabeth was also cousin (kinswoman) to Mary, the mother of our Lord (Luke 1:36) who was reckoned through her father as being of the House of David. (Ref. Research Handbook Serial No. 86)

The Order of Melchizedek was a **combined kingship and priesthood**, Melchizedek being typically King of Righteousness and King of Peace, i.e., **the Righteous King**, who foreshadowed our Lord Jesus Christ in His final role as the Prince of Peace, the increase of Whose "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." (Isa. 9:7)

Thus the promises of perpetual succession made to the Davidic and Aaronic families are secure for all time in our Lord Jesus Christ.
(Asst. Ed.)



British-Israel World Federation

(Victorian Headquarters)

No: 542

September, 1996.

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THE IDEAL OF KINGSHIP - PART 1

LORD make me an instrument of Thy peace;
where there is hatred let me sow love;
where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.
(Prayer of St. Francis)

THE PROMISE AND DUTIES OF KINGSHIP

God is sovereign, i.e., having supreme power, dominion and jurisdiction over His creation. Any RULER, therefore, carries grave responsibilities before God Whose representative he is, and must rule with God's approval, and in obedience to His revealed laws, if he is to achieve a society in which true peace prevails and blessing is continual.

Abraham was commended and blessed by God, not only because Abraham obeyed His voice, and kept His charge, His commandments, His statutes and His laws (Gen. 26:5), but because God knew that he would "command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do JUSTICE and JUDGMENT" (Gen. 18:19). Abraham fulfilled his responsibility by commanding (or ruling) his dependants in accordance with God's Law.

It was necessary that the righteous Way of God should be preserved and demonstrated in the earth as a witness to the perfection of His Person and the rightness of His Ways. The God-fearing line of Noah and Shem ("*Blessed be the Lord God of Shem*" - Gen. 9:26) was to be continued in Abraham and his seed through Isaac and Jacob. God's power and righteousness, loving kindness and compassion, i.e., His Peace, was to be demonstrated through His dealings with His People Israel who were to be His witnesses throughout the ages that He is God.

God promises in Ezekiel 39:7 that, finally,
".... will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel;
and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more; and the heathen
shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel."

When He first set up Israel as a nation God Himself was their King - their supreme ruler and law giver, whose laws they were required to obey. He delegated the administration of the Law to the Levites who were its custodians and teachers. He also raised up "judges" who acted with the Levites in presiding over legal affairs.

"If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment..... then shalt thou come unto the priests and Levites, and unto the judge and enquire and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do....." (Deut. 17:8-11)

For 400 years the Israel nation was ruled by God through great leaders and judges who He raised up to rule, protect and deliver the People IN HIS NAME until, in Samuel's day the Israelites, desiring the pomp and ceremony of kingship, requested an earthly king like the neighbouring nations, and God allowed this. *"And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me (Samuel), Nay; but a king shall reign over us; when the Lord your God was your king..... and, behold the Lord hath set a king over you." (1 Sam. 12:12-13).*

In His foreknowledge God had made provision for this eventuality because He had promised a line of kings to Abraham - *"And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." (Gen. 17:6)* and to Sarah - *".....Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her." (Gen. 17:15-16)* and to Jacob - *"And God said unto him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;..." (Gen. 35:11-12)* and to Judah - *"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise:....The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and to Him shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. 49:8-10)*

Even before the Exodus Israelites, principally of Zarah Judah and Dan, had left Egypt and founded kingdoms in other lands, e.g., Crete, Athens, Argos, Sparta, Spain, Troy. This colonization gave rise to ruling Houses of the Royal Judah Seed which endured for many centuries in various countries. Then, finally, God chose the House of David as the continuation of the Royal Seed of Judah from whom Israelite kings were to be drawn and of which the One Seed, the Messiah, God's Anointed, would be born: He Who would, in the fulness of time, rule the world in righteousness and peace.

The stipulations given for kingship in the Law of God, were of the utmost importance: *"And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:*

That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel." (Ref. Deut. 17:14-20)

Upon the appointment of their first king *"..... all the People shouted, and said, "God save the king." Then Samuel told the People the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord" (1 Sam. 10:24-25), thus prescribing the limits of the king's power. And the office of KING was not to be taken lightly. As their "captain" (or leader) and the representative of Jehovah, the king was to respect and apply the Law of God in his own life and in the lives of the People. Saul was told by Samuel that the Lord had chosen another to be "Captain over His People, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee." (1 Sam. 13:14)*

The Illustrated Bible Dictionary 1897 observes that "Hebrew kings did not rule in their own right or in the name of the people who had chosen them, but partly as servants, and partly as representatives of Jehovah the true King of Israel." When David became king God spoke to him saying (2 Sam. 23:3): *"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."*

Such was the standard of kingship laid down by God for the Israel peoples, and those rulers who maintained the standard brought peace and blessings to their people. Though not responsible for administering the Law, as this was in the hands of the Levites, the king had the overall duty of seeing that the whole Law - moral, economic, agricultural, legal, religious, etc. - was observed so that the blessings of the Law could be received by the people (Lev. 26:2-13)

The KINGS of ISRAEL were to be responsible, therefore, for ruling justly and in the fear of God; for the Law of God being kept and so for the consequent blessings; for keeping the worship of God pure and thus, for the spiritual condition of the people. That is, the KING was responsible for the physical and spiritual well-being of his people and their overall protection. The king was also to be of the royal seed, first of Judah and subsequently of House of David.

The results of disobedience and law-breaking are vividly illustrated in the reigns recorded of the Kings of both Israel and Judah, even in that of King David. The actions of the Kings in respect of God's Law had a direct effect on the lives of the people. Under good kings the people believed and obeyed God. Under bad kings they turned away, seeking other gods. We read of kings sinning and causing Israel to sin, thus bringing upon the People the judgments of God. But good kings, such as King Hezekiah of Judah, took the lead in religious reform bringing about the restoration of peace and security.

The institution of KINGSHIP was sacred to the Israel peoples and was to remain so even after their descent into heathenism. A People does not change its social structure overnight. There is always a considerable period of transition: ancient customs and attitudes can be passed on for many generations. The sacredness of KINGSHIP was to permeate Israelite society throughout its Pagan centuries of captivity and migration, and also under the Christian Religion which, in the future, that same society was readily to embrace. (To be cont'd.) (Asst. Ed.)

THE BOOK OF REVELATION - PART 2

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS 1 - 5

Chapter 1 is the introduction to the Book. Verses 1 - 2 proclaim that it is the Revelation of Jesus Christ given Him by God, its stated purpose being:

"To shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it unto His servant John, who bare record..."

Verse 3 mentions the blessing offered to him who reads or hears, and keeps (observes) that which is written in it, while Verse 4 addresses the Book from John to the seven Churches in Asia. Verses 5 - 6 constitute a praise to the Lord Jesus, recording the most important statement which can possibly be made anywhere or at any time, and which was acted out a little more than 60 years previous to the Revelation:

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Verses 7 - 8 deal with the Second Advent stating:

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

Verses 9 - 20 deal with the appearance to John of the Lord Jesus, with a description of the Lord in the midst of the seven candlesticks. John states that he is on the Isle called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The appearance of our Lord in Verses 13 - 16 is important. He was *"clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."*

The apparel is reminiscent of the High Priest of Israel which is Our Lord's position in regard to His Church.

Unfortunately, we read in Rev. 3:20 *"Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him., and will sup with him, and he with me."* Is this suggesting that our Lord is outside the present day Church and that individuals "hearing His voice" may approach God directly through our Lord as High Priest?

Comparing our Lord's appearance with the armour believers are exhorted to put on (Eph. 6:13-17) we see that we are to be clad for DEFENCE (shield and helmet) and OFFENCE (sword). Our Lord, however, needs not to have weapons of offence for He has already overcome the world. He is our Shield just as He was Abram's - Gen.15:1 *"Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."*

The appearance of our Lord is depicted very graphically so as to convey a host of meanings. The whiteness of our Lord's hair denotes righteousness and purity, while His fiery eyes indicate His ability to know, and to test or prove, every intention. Dr. Bullinger's note on Revelation 1:15 suggests that our Lord's feet are prepared for treading down in judgment. They may also depict His omnipresence. The "many waters" sound of His voice reminds us of Daniel 10:5-6 in which is described a "certain man", the voice of whose words are said to be "like the voice of a multitude." His countenance "as the sun" portrays His omnipotence and glory. All in all, we see our Lord as: the GREAT HIGH PRIEST AND MEDIATOR WITH THE FATHER.

In verse 19 John was instructed to: *"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter"*. Verse 20 reveals the mystery of the *stars and candlesticks*, the *seven stars* representing the *angels (messengers)* of the seven Churches, and the *seven golden candlesticks* the *seven Churches* themselves.

In verse 11 John had been told:
"...what thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia..."

Chapters 2 and 3 record *seven letters* to the seven Churches but history has revealed that these seven letters also foreshadow seven periods of Church History. Looking back over the description and behaviour of these Churches - and prophetic church periods - it would appear that we are living almost at the end of the seventh period. It is only now possible to understand this because, in retrospect, we can see how aptly the description in each *letter* fits an historical period of Church History.

Ephesus covers the Early Church years between A.D. 30 and A.D. 100. The ten-days (prophetic of ten years) tribulation of the next period, Smyrna, signifies the great Christian persecution from A.D. 303-313. Pergamos, meaning "married to power" covers the three centuries following Constantine's adoption of the Christian Religion as the religion of the Roman Empire. Thyatira means "ruled by a woman" and represents the era of Papal supremacy, approximately A.D. 606 - 1866. It is important to remember that Rome had taken over the Babylonian worship of the woman, which had sprung from her supposed miraculous power to bring forth a living child. Sardis foreshadows the period of the Reformation and Philadelphia the liberation of the Israel Church from papal domination during the period of approximately A.D. 1558-1800; while Laodicea prophesies the lukewarm attitude of the materialistic, self satisfied Church of the present day.

Eusebius in his "History of the Church" stated that he agrees with the divinity of the Book of Revelation but cannot understand it, and Luther in his Table Talk page 195 says he cannot understand the meaning of "time, times and half a time". Only with the passage of time and history are we privileged to read and understand.

Chapter 4 sets the heavenly scene for Chapter 5. The four living creatures in attendance around the Throne remind us of the Tribes of Israel camped around the Tabernacle, the four beasts named being the symbols of the four leading Israel Tribes in the order in which they

would be encamped (Ref. Num. Ch. 2). These were the lion (Judah), the calf (Ephraim), the man (Reuben) and the flying eagle (Dan), each with six wings, full of eyes and resting not day or night, praising God, saying: *"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."* (Rev. 4:9-11)

In Chapter 5 a book (scroll) appears in the right hand of Him that sat on the Throne, written within and on the backside, and sealed with seven seals. And a strong angel proclaims with a loud voice:

"Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"
 But no one was found to be worthy except the *"Lion of the Tribe of Juda, the Root of David"* who prevailed to open the book and loose the seals.

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne." (Rev. 5:6-7)

This portrays our Lord Jesus Christ newly ascended to the Father having accomplished His great Sacrifice for the sin of the world. Thunder and lightning emanated from the Throne, reminding us of the power of God. This also happened on Mt. Sinai at the giving of the Law (Ex. 19:16) when Israel needed discipline in their dealings with God and to be impressed with His Power and Majesty.

The last seven verses of Revelation Chapter 5 record, perhaps, the greatest praise to God and His Christ which has ever been written:

"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, honour, and glory, and blessing.

And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying,

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

(Dr. N. F. McLeod)



British-Israel World Federation
(Victorian Headquarters)

No: 543

October, 1996.

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THE IDEAL OF KINGSHIP - PART 2

THE KINGSHIP OF ANGLO-SAXONDOM

When the Northern House of Israel split away, politically, from the House of Judah the northern tribes did not reject KINGSHIP. But they did reject the House of David and they did reject the Levite priests, nationally turning to the worship of idols instead of the true Worship of Jehovah. But their rule by kings was to continue until the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C. and into the centuries beyond. Their priesthood, however, was not of the chosen line of Aaron and Levi but was made from the "lowest of the people" (1 Ki. 12:31) and, therefore, had neither the prestige nor power which the Levites possessed in the Kingdom of Judah.

In 1970, a book entitled "The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England" by William A. Chaney, was published by the Manchester University Press, in which the author discusses KINGSHIP among the HEATHEN Anglo-Saxon tribes and its transition to CHRISTIAN KINGSHIP. However, he has no explanation as to how this "cult of kingship" arose, not associating the original Anglo-Saxon peoples with the northern Ten-Tribed House of Israel, whose Assyrian captivities resulted in their escape and gradual migration west and north-west into Western Europe and the British Isles. Mr. Chaney presents very interesting information, some of which is included in this article.

THE MONARCHIAL SYSTEM

The contributions of Rome and the Church in the development of English government is often stressed, but the English Monarchial System of government, the Englishman's traditional obedience to Law, and his love of justice and righteousness in government came from the Anglo-Saxons.

In Northern (Scandinavian) heathenism it was the RULER rather than an high priest who was the primary leader of tribal religion and who was the centre of their cult of kingship. Mr. Chaney comments that neither history nor tribal tradition records a form of government other

than **KINGSHIP** for any of the states established in England by Germanic invaders. He also says that **KINGSHIP** is the Anglo-Saxon political institution **par excellence**, having given cohesion to the realms established by the invading tribes: and that the antiquity of this monarchic institution is reflected in the developed terminology for "kingship" - 26 synonyms being used for the word "king" by the Beowulf poet alone.

The more western tribes on the borders of the Roman Empire tended to have war-chiefs and magistrates but the more eastern and northern tribes, who have been identified elsewhere as Israelites, were ruled by the **monarchical system**. Mr. Chaney states that the Suebic peoples to the south of the Angles, and the Cherusci, the most easterly people of the West Germans, were ruled by kings. He quotes H.M. Chadwick (Origin of the English Nation) as saying that in Scandinavian history and tradition **kingship is universal**, that Angles and Jutes were ruled by kings from times immemorial, and that the Saxons and Angles of Britain were probably of **common stock**. Thus the history of the Anglo-Saxons is enmeshed with **KINGSHIP** and with the religio-political nature with which that ancient office was endowed among these tribes.

DIVINE DESCENT

The king was tied into temporal and cosmic history by **DIVINE DESCENT**. The king's relationship with the gods, it was believed, saved his people as much as the gods themselves. **WODEN** or **ODIN** (Norse form) was worshipped in England by Angles, Saxons and Jutes, and was claimed as the ancestor of almost every Anglo-Saxon Royal House. All ruling houses claimed descent from a **Royal Race**.

Regarding **Woden (Odin)**, we learn from an article by Gladys Taylor, in the November 1969 issue of the National Message, that though deified in later centuries Norse sagas depict Odin, originally, as a very real person and a great leader. His sons were claimed to be ancestors of the Royal Houses of **Scandinavia** and, through marriage to Saxon women, ancestors of the **Saxon Royal Houses** also, among which the House of **Cerdic** played a dominant role. Of the reign of Odin's son **Skiold** in Denmark, it has been said, "So peaceful were those days that a man might leave a bag of gold by the roadside and find it undisturbed on his return." (C.M. Smith "Northmen of Adventure" p.24-26)

Odin's descent was from Thor the grandson of King Priam of Troy (C.M. Smith) who himself descended from Dardanos (Darda, Dara - 1 Chron. 2:6) the son of Zara, the son of the **Patriarch Judah**, who God had originally appointed to wield the sceptre (Gen. 49:10). This line of families was considered the "seed of dominance" who were the **inheritors of KINGSHIP** and whose right to rule was not questioned.

The name **WODEN (ODIN)** rarely appears in Old English literature because this was written in the Christian era when pagan gods were outlawed. There are, however, a number of place names in South and Central England that show a widespread knowledge and worship of him. **WANSDYKE** (Woden's Barrow); **WEDNESDURY** (Woden's Fortress); **WENSLEY** (Woden's Grove); **WEDNESFIELD** (Woden's Field) etc. and we have, of course, **WEDNESDAY** (Woden's Day).

The Anglo-Saxon word **CYNING** (King) is thought to have meant originally "son of the **CYN** or family" and was widely used by the

tribes before the Anglo-Saxons came to England. It was a tribal right to elect a **KING** from the **Royal Race**, **KINGSHIP** being bestowed by election rather than because of primogeniture. And because he was **Woden-sprung**, or descended from a god, the king was believed to possess charismatic power for **well being**. This power was believed to permeate not only the king but the whole "Royal Race" from which he was elected.

Christian Anglo-Saxons were to understand the authority of Christ because He was the **Son of God**, as their pagan forebears had understood the authority of the **KING** because he was believed to be sprung from a god."

When a **KING** died leaving a young son, an older relative, e.g., the king's brother, would often be chosen as **KING**, the idea being to put the ablest of the blessed line on the throne. This custom continued into **Christian times**. Saxon **KINGS** were chosen by the Witan, or counsel, but from the **Royal Seed** though not necessarily the eldest son. For example, upon the death of King Ethelred his younger brother Alfred was chosen to rule, rather than one of his two sons. This meant that three brothers ruled in succession:

Ethelbert, who it is said ruled with love and honour; **Ethelred**, the warrior saint; and **Alfred** who gave Anglo-Saxon life a firm Christian foundation and, as Gladys Taylor comments, "laid the foundations for both Magna Carta and the Reformation, the rule of the barons and of the Roman Church being a dark interlude of oppression."

Even in Christian times it was believed that the **Royal Seed** possessed special power. We are told that "All the people chose Edward the Confessor as King". This was because he was one of the few surviving members of the Saxon Royal Line. Alcuin of York writes: "Scarcely any of the ancient royal kindred remains, and by as much as their origin is uncertain, by so much is their power less!"

PRIESTHOOD OF THE KING

As there was **no strong priesthood** apart from the **RULER**, temples being private possessions, the **King himself offered sacrifices** as the intermediary between the Tribe and the gods, sacrificing for victory, good crops, **PEACE**, etc., his religious and political functions being indissoluble. He was not simply the priest, but was also the **LEADER** of the folk and the embodiment and guarantee of their "luck", who must act so that the gods may **BLESS** them. A **KING'S** riches were seen as a sign of his "luck" - and the greater his wealth, the greater the expected blessings on the folk.

While the **KING'S** "luck" was maintained, the favour of the god abode with the tribe, but when he was unable to ensure divine blessing the people replaced him by another with greater "luck". In times of distress the old **KING** was often killed, or even **sacrificed himself** for the people by, for example, jumping over a cliff.

And just as the idea of **KINGSHIP** and the knowledge that the King was responsible for the well-being of his people, carried over into the pagan period of Israelite history, so too the idea of the priesthood of the king carried over from the pagan period into the Christian period. The **Woden-sprung** ruler stood between his tribe and the tribal god whether

pagan or Christian, as a **royal priest**, sacrificing for victory, plenty and peace, as the religious head of his people.

In the Christian Era the Anglo-Saxon King speaks as a homilist in the laws, he attends clerical assemblies and signs charters at the head of both bishops and princes. Alcuin of York wrote to King Aethelred of Northumbria in A.D. 793 "In the king's **righteousness** is the prosperity of the whole folk, victory of the army, mildness of the seasons, abundance of the land, the blessing of sons, the health of the people."

TRANSITION TO CHRISTIANITY

The concept of God or Christ as **King of Heaven** was particularly congenial to Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian. This fundamental idea of God was as the **Heavenly Monarch**. Words used to describe God show that His attributes parallel those of the kings. He is the possessor, governor and counsellor, the protector of His "folk". He, like a king, is the gift-giver dispensing divine rewards to His band of followers.

As W.A. Chaney says: "The image of God which dominates Anglo-Saxon writing is of a **KING** but one whose glory and authority **outshine** those of earthly leaders of the 'folk'." In both Anglo-Saxon Paganism and Christianity "the king is the cosmic point through which is mediated divine help from above and sacrificial right relations with God from below. He is the tribal vessel between heaven and earth through which grace is shed on the folk."

Pagan Festivals were times of great drinking, feasting and sacrificial slaying of animals, when people would bring their **own animals** for the sacrifice, and food and drink for the accompanying **religious meal**. This seems reminiscent of the Peace Offering in Israel when the sacrifice was eaten with joy before the Lord. Instead, Augustine introduced the offertory at the Mass, in which laity brought their own offerings of the **elements for communion**. This custom died out with the introduction of Norman and French customs, but does still survive in the Coronation Service at which the English Monarch offers bread and wine for his/her own Coronation Eucharist.

PRIEST-KING

The Christian emphasis on **peace and justice** as ideals of **kingly government** was also in continuity with the **priestly role** of the **Peace King** of the pagan era.

As the **priest-king** of heathenism was expected to maintain the "luck" of the folk, so too the Christian **KING** had to **mediate** for the sins of his people. Alcuin says "He ought to pray to God for the prosperity of his whole people." Aelfric preached that "If the leaders do not serve God, He will manifest to them their contempt of Him, either by famine or pestilence."

The **pagan role of mediator** with the divine continued in Christian times in the bestowal of **sainthood** on many of the Christian Kings who died unjust and violent deaths. Indeed most Anglo-Saxon saints belonged to Royal families and included women. This is paralleled in 5th Century Welsh history whose ruling house was spoken of as "the most sanctified in British history" because the king and queen and their many children were considered saints.

THE ANGLO-SAXON PEACE KING

The **Peace King** in Anglo-Saxon England was to draw not only on the Christian ideal of peace but also on ancient associations of peace and plenty with the golden age and model rule among the Pagan Germanic peoples.

The **spread of Christianity** was from the English ROYAL CENTRE the Anglo-Saxon kings playing a leading role in the conversion of their folk to the Christian Religion. This, again, is paralleled by the early Christian Irish Royal Families, many of whose members became Christian missionaries of the early Celtic Church. In a sense the Anglo-Saxon Christian monarch was to fulfil the roles of prophet, priest and king.

"The crucial figure in any conversion was the sacral king, and the fact that in Anglo-Saxon England the paths of the new religion were made smooth was, in every kingdom, due to the role played by its ruler." (W.A.Chaney) The new religion was readily accepted if the folk were able to follow the sacrificial king of the old religion into the new.

The English King became the converter of his people: nowhere were the folk converted before the monarch. As in ancient Israel, royal and popular apostasy were closely related - when the king apostacized so did the people and vice versa.

The duality of Church and State was to develop later.

Edgar the Peaceable (A.D. 959-975) was the greatest example of an Anglo-Saxon **Peace King**. He was said to have improved the **peace** of the people more than any remembered king. Without battle he brought under his sway all that he wished. He ruled so prosperously that all marvelled. In accord with the ancient tradition of the **pagan king** making progresses through the realm to establish a good season, **Christian King** Edgar made progresses throughout his lands to **right wrongs**. He issued new money as old coins had become debased, struck down the unjust and guarded the good under the same rod of equity.

Unfortunately, pagan practices did intrude into Christian belief. The "luck" of the **Peace King** was thought to remain with his body after death and bless the site of his burial. Just as the burial mound of the pagan ruler had become an holy place and a tribal centre used for the assembly of the folk, so also the burial place of a Christian English monarch noted for his "heil" (luck) was declared a sacred shrine and considered to have healing powers. (e.g. the Tomb of Edward the Confessor). Even cutting up the dead body to bury pieces in different parts of the realm for good luck occurred, e.g., the body of Good Christian King Oswald, divided by the pagan Penda as a probable offering to Woden after battle, was taken by his people and buried in Lindisfarne, Bamburgh, and Bardney. Such practices were assimilated into the "saint cult" of Christianity, relics of king-saints being collected for good luck.

KING OF VICTORIES

The pagan Northern **KING** was also a bringer of **victory**, interceding with the god for victory. In ancient Israel Jehovah was believed to provide victory -

In 2 Sam. 23:10 we read "..... the Lord wrought a great victory that day."

And in 1 Chron. 29:11 "*Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory*"
When Zerah the Ethiopian came against Judah with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots, **King Asa** led his army against them. "*And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.*" (2 Chron. 14:11)

In **Christian times** the **Peace King** prayed to God for victory and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle calls the Christian God "Lord of Victories." Kings Alfred, Athelstan and Edgar were described as "victorious through God" and were paralleled with the judges of Israel. Battles were won by Christian kings "Christ aiding".

THE THRONE

The Throne plays little part in early English tradition. The first Anglo-Saxon throne to appear on a royal seal was at the time of Edward the Confessor. Veneration for the Throne came through the Irish Kings who continued the old Judah custom of being crowned on or by a "pillar". This continues even today in the Coronation Stone which is symbolic of the Throne of David.

THE HARP

In the Royal Burial at Sutton Hoo fragments of a small harp were discovered. Germanic royalty were known to have played the harp. Gelimir, the last king of the Vandals, played the harp and sang songs of his own composing. As we all know King Alfred is reported by William of Malmesbury as entering the Danish camp as a harper. King David of Israel was also a harpist of no mean talent.

THE PEACE OF THE KING

Royal devotion to the gods or to God played a part in maintaining the kingdom's "luck" or **peace**, and the idea of **peace** as the **responsibility** of the God-favoured King is reflected in the PAX coinage of the Saxon period. Coins inscribed PAX and PACS first appeared in the reign of King Cnut and continued to the reign of Edward the Confessor.

The **PEACE of the king** - his person and his residence - is an outstanding feature of Anglo-Saxon Law. Early laws are in regard to fighting in the King's house or hall, while later laws concern plotting against the King's person. Thus the **KING'S PEACE** spread beyond his immediate vicinity to the whole realm. Treachery against the king was one of the greatest of crimes and sins in Anglo-Saxon society.

The **coalescence of religion and law** was shown by the fact that "God's laws had Royal sanction, and Royal laws had divine sanction". Excommunication for breaking Royal law cut the offender out of earthly society as well as the Kingdom to come. But as **Grace** holds open the door of heaven to the sinner, so for the criminal the **King's mercy** may bring pardon and 'PEACE'. The **PEACE** of certain places and the right of asylum stemmed from the sacred rather than constitutional realms. That royal and ecclesiastical sanctuary were inviolable is seen from the Laws of Edward and Guthrum which stated:- "Sanctuary within the walls of a church and the protection granted by the king in person shall remain equally inviolate." (To be continued) (Asst. Ed.)



British-Israel World Federation
(Victorian Headquarters)

No: 544

November, 1996.

MONTHLY NOTES

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THE IDEAL OF KINGSHIP - PART 3

KINGSHIP IN ANGLO-SAXON LAW

It was the **KING'S** responsibility to look after the morals, etc., of the people by **issuing laws** so that God would bless them with **PEACE AND PLENTY**.

J. M. Wallace-Hadrill is quoted by Mr. Chaney in his "The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England" as claiming that behind the barbarian laws there lies the Book of Deuteronomy. "The Anglo-Saxon tribes of the new Dispensation often found their prototype in the Tribes of Israel, and, as they turned their paraphrases of Old Testament Scripture into reflections of their own society, so their laws often reflect those of the warlike tribes of Israel more than they do the generalized legal principles of a Roman Universal State."

No **written** Germanic **CODES OF LAW** are known to exist before Christianity. The **Roman Church** introduced the idea of **written laws**. But although influenced to some extent by Roman Law and Christianity, the **first Anglo-Saxon written codes** state what **tribal practice** has been. They used the vernacular as the terms used needed to apply to specific Anglo-Saxon practice, which terms the Roman nomenclature did not provide.

Combining the three great formative elements of the early Middle Ages - Rome, Christian and Anglo-Saxon, these laws intermeshed Church and State, ecclesiastical and lay authority, envisioning the **co-operation** of sacred and secular spheres.

Aethelred in his 10th Code states:

"Frequently and often it has come into my mind that sacred precepts and wise secular decrees promote Christianity and strengthen royal authority, further public interests and are the source of honour, bring about **PEACE** and reconciliation, put an end to strife and improve the whole character of the nation."

The laws portray the king as the embodiment of the State, reflecting the ancient Germanic royal role of the judge, the breaking of whose laws brings the wrath of God down on the offender.

The famous Code of Alfred the Great was "prefaced by excerpts from O.T. Law, a history of Christian Councils in the early Church and in England, and reference to the Law-giving of Ine, Offa and Aethelberht. His laws give a sense of the continuity of law but display an even higher view of Christian monarchy and of its role in relation to the Church, than do the earlier English dooms." From the time of Alfred the English became a notably law-abiding people which characteristic was to be retained throughout succeeding centuries.

The last laws of the Anglo-Saxon period were the two codes of King Cnut. Even the laws of the first Norman King, William the Conqueror, were largely the same as Edward the Confessor before him had observed, and contained little that might not have been prescribed by an Anglo-Saxon king.

In old pre-Christian times the king's descent from the gods was more important than his political authority. This holiness of monarchy is still reflected in Christian laws, the King being seen as Christ's deputy who must avenge offences against Christ and against heaven. The King, before responsible for the Tribe's right relationship with the divine, is now responsible for the SINS of the people.

Archbishop Wulfstan of York wrote:

"It is very rightly the duty of a Christian King to be in the place of a father to a Christian nation, and in watch and in ward Christ's vicegerent, so as he is accounted. And it is also his duty, with all his mind, to live Christianity, and shun heathenism, and everywhere to honour and protect God's Church..... Lo! through what shall PEACE and support come to God's servants and to God's poor, save through Christ, and through a Christian king?"

In Anglo-Saxon government there is no separation of the royal and ecclesiastical spheres: both are areas of royal jurisdiction. The Anglo-Saxon legal world is one under the king, not divided into separate secular and religious responsibilities. The Anglo-Saxon KINGS had great faith in the efficacy of LAW. The RULER as Christ's deputy must legislate on all matters for the well-being of his whole kingdom under God.

DUALITY OF POWERS

However, the laws were written down in order to "integrate the new religion into the already existing societal structure. The elevation in law of the King and Church created a duality of powers by which the Church was given an equal position to the king; bishops and priests having equal rights in law to the king and his servants. The now Christian Tribal King is seen as the counterpart of the new High Priests and with parallel privileges.

In England royal authority and ecclesiastical authority were not in conflict but were seen as mutual pillars supporting the realm in its safety and health. Leadership of the nation was in King and Church "yet the power was one, and vested in a God-blessed, Woden-sprung and

Church-protecting monarch." The separation of religion and Royal function was as unthinkable in Christian Anglo-Saxondom as it was in paganism.

"Thus," writes A. W. Chaney, "by the 10th Century the royal 'Deputy of Christ' held more firmly than ever the headship of the realm of the Anglo-Saxons. This he had gained not by a struggle for power against the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Christianity but by the tradition which hallowed his role as vicegerent of God. He is the leader of a victorious faith and its protector in his dooms. Earthly law and divine law - the dooms of the King and Gospels of Christ - were not in rivalry but were pillars of the same world. Because the king had been absorbed into the new system of salvation, there had been no major opposition to it in England. The key to pagan tribal religion had been the KING and the clan. With the conversion of the former and the blessing of his power, the folk was led by its royal pastor into the new religion, and his sacral role flourished in it as it had in the old."

But the incorporation of the Church into Anglo-Saxon Kingship led to a separation of ROYAL FUNCTIONS, "the sacrificial-priestly role of the Anglo-Saxon tribal monarch going to the Church hierarchy, and that of sacral protector remaining with the king. Unfortunately, as the Church of Rome gradually usurped the priestly function of the monarch the IDEAL OF KINGSHIP diminished. Ultimately, of course, the monarch was to lose not only his sacred function and spiritual influence but his power as well.

When Henry VIII made himself head of the Church in England he was, in a sense, seeking to restore the role of the Anglo-Saxon Peace King. That the king should assume responsibility for the faith of his people was not something new in English society.

THE COVENANT OF PEACE

It is many years now since the days of the Anglo-Saxon Peace Kings when peace and blessing were believed to be, and seen to be, the outcome of righteousness. Even the lessons of the Reformation have been forgotten which taught the way to Salvation in Jesus Christ, and instilled in the Israel Peoples a national respect for righteousness and a love of peace. Our modern teachers would have us turn away from our God and His ways to walk in the ways of men which, so far, have produced economic and environmental chaos and chronic social malais. A future under man's control would seem to have little to recommend it. How apt are the words written by Jeremiah the Prophet:

"Thus saith the Lord, "stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." (Jer. 6:16)

However, we who trust in the Word of the Lord know that there is to be a future, a future of peace and blessing, abundance and security, because we have the Promise of God that He will make a Covenant of Peace with His People.

Peace - the loving kindness and compassion of God!

We who are so used to living under His judgments, brought upon us by our own continued unrighteousness, find it difficult to imagine such a

future when the abundant blessings of our Great and Bountiful God will be constantly experienced. But this is what the Prophets proclaim.

Isa. 54:8-13

"For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called..... For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.

For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.....

And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." (Ref. also Ezek. 34:22-27)

Ezek. 34:22-27

"Therefore will I save My Flock

And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David;..... and I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it.

And I will make with them a covenant of peace,..... and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.....

I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.

And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them."

Ezek. 37:21-28

".....Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.

Neither shall they defile themselves any more..... but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.

And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel"

Heb. 13:20-21

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(Asst. Ed.)

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

Accompanied by a friend earlier this year I spent some weeks in Britain after an absence of 23 years. I was privileged to enjoy the fellowship of old B.I. friends and to again attend the Swanwick Convention. A warm welcome was extended at the "new" B.I. Bookroom at Putney.

The highlight of London was my visit to Buckingham Palace although it was with nostalgia and some sadness that I passed by 6 Buckingham Gate on my way to join the queue. The palace property was originally acquired for the Crown in 1761 by George III and was converted into a palace by George IV to provide a place to hold his courts and conduct the official business of the monarchy. This was completed in the reign of William IV who never actually lived there. Buckingham Palace was first lived in by Queen Victoria who moved in soon after her succession in 1837. She initiated extensions as it was too small for state functions and family life. Edward VII had it redecorated before he moved in two years after coming to the throne in 1901. Under King George V and Queen Mary the front of the palace was re-faced and the approach to it remodelled. "Queen Mary took a keen personal interest in the interiors of all the royal palaces and initiated many improvements and schemes of restoration. Perhaps her greatest contribution to Buckingham Palace was the rearrangement and restoration of historic contents..... The informed and historically accurate approach, initiated by Queen Mary, has conditioned the upkeep and presentation of the royal residences and their contents down to the present."

Two corps of the Yeomen of the Guard compose the Royal guards for ceremonial occasions. The Royal Bodyguard is the oldest in the world having been initiated by Henry VII in 1485. Guardsmen still wear the Tudor uniform. The Gentlemen at Arms Corps, who wear scarlet and gold 19th century pattern uniforms with plumed helmets of polished steel, was founded by Henry VIII in 1537.

Today "Buckingham Palace has 19 state rooms, 52 royal and guest bedrooms, 188 staff bedrooms, 92 offices and 78 bathrooms. Some 450 people work in the palace and 40,000 people are entertained there every year." It is a "fully occupied working royal palace." (Extracts from the 'Official Guide')

The state rooms occupying the ground and first floors of the west wing overlooking the garden and the lake are open to the visiting public who enter through the Ambassadors' Court in the south wing and leave through Grosvenor Gate. Visitors walk through at a leisurely pace well able to enjoy the beauty and grandeur of the surroundings. This was a most enjoyable and memorable experience.

Another highlight of London was the privilege of speaking from the Rev. Augustus Toplady's pulpit in the Orange Street Congregation Church situated between Leicester Square and the rear of the National Gallery. This little church has an interesting history being founded by Huguenots after the religious persecution on the Continent in the 17th century. Opened and dedicated on Easter Eve 1693 it was known as the "Temple of Leicester Fields", at that time indeed a district of fields. Sir Isaac Newton who lived next to the church attended regularly.

During the Wesleyan revival Orange Street Church passed from French

to English Protestantism and the well known hymn writer, the Rev. Augustus Toplady, became its minister. His best known hymn, "Rock of Ages", was first sung at Orange Street. In 1787 the church changed from Church of England to Congregational. The present church continues as a member of the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches. Mr. H. Stough who has been its Pastor since 1986 continues to proclaim from there the Gospel of the Kingdom, providing an important centre of Kingdom teaching in the heart of London.

Apart from an important family celebration a highlight of Scotland was a visit to the enigmatic Rosslyn Chapel near Edinburgh which is unique and famous worldwide for the exquisite beauty and mystery of its carvings. These carvings which are wonderfully executed are "endless in variety and full of symbolism". Subjects include Biblical stories and themes, Freemasonry and pagan symbols. "There are also carvings of plants from the New World (cactus and sweetcorn) which predate the discovery of that land by Columbus by 100 years". This could be explained by the fact that Rosslyn Chapel was built in 1446 by William St. Clair, third and last Prince of Orkney. The St. Clair family are of Norse descent and the New World was visited by Norsemen long before Columbus' day. (Asst. Ed.)

AT REST

Mrs. Evelyn Walke passed away peacefully at Mont Calm Nursing Home on July 1 this year aged 92. She was the much loved and respected mother of John and Val who have her to thank for their knowledge of God and His Salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, their faith in Scripture as the Word of God and their early instruction and lifelong fellowship in B.I. teaching.

Evelyn came to know the B.I. message at the age of 18 years when she and her mother became convinced of its truth. She joined the Victorian Headquarters in 1939 beginning a 55 year membership. She served as a Council Member from 1951 to 1985 and also filled the office of Treasurer for 12 years. Between 1951 and 1968 when monthly Sunday House Meetings were held as well as the Thursday evening weekly meetings in Melbourne, Evelyn's was one of the homes used regularly for this purpose. From 1979 she hosted the regular Sunday monthly meetings of the Ringwood Branch and when the Ringwood Branch amalgamated with the Victorian Headquarters in 1993 her home became the official venue for all meetings of the Victorian Headquarters.

Thank you Evelyn for many years of faithful service.

Quote from: "On Target" Vol. 32 No. 29"

William Jennings Bryan, American Presidential Candidate early this century in one of the most famous election speeches in modern history - "The money power preys upon the nation in times of peace, and conspires against it in times of adversity. It is more despotic than monarchy, more insolent than autocracy, more selfish than bureaucracy. It denounces, as public enemies, all who question its methods or throw light upon its crimes. It can only be overthrown by the awakened conscience of the nation."



British-Israel World Federation
(Victorian Headquarters)

No: 545

December, 1996.

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WHY WAS HE BORN?

At Christmas time the so-called anniversary of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ is celebrated by many people for many different reasons. Some for the doubtful pleasures of eating and drinking to excess, some for the pleasures of family reunions and holidays, while some enjoy the sentimentality of simply celebrating an ancient custom but without perceiving its full meaning. Others, however, with heartfelt gratitude and spiritual discernment, take the opportunity to praise and worship their Heavenly Father for His supremely important gift of His Son Who gave His sinless life to pay the penalty for sin, and conquered death by His resurrection.

While on earth our Lord demonstrated by His actions that He was indeed the Son of God. The writer of Acts portrays Him as "*Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him...*" (Acts 2:22) and Romans (1:3&4) states that though born of the seed of David (through Mary) He was marked out powerfully as the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead: "*Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*" The resurrection of Jesus Christ laid the foundation for what His incarnation had been destined to achieve - the restoration of all things.

Before the New Testament was written the Old Testament recorded promises of the coming Messiah. "Messiah" means "anointed one", i.e., one anointed with the Spirit of God. He was to be: the **Seed of the woman** who would finally bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15); the **Star out of Jacob** who would have final dominion (Num. 24:17-19); the **Righteous Servant** (Isaiah 53); the **Child** born to govern from the Throne of David (Isaiah 9:6-7); **Messiah the Prince** who would be cut off but not for Himself (Daniel 9:25-26) - He would die but His body would not remain in the grave but rise to the right hand of God (Psalm 16:8-11). He would be the **Branch** from the roots of Jesse who would be the future **Righteous Judge** of all and rule in glory as the **Priest King**