

“Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps, set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest” (Jer. 31:21)

The Living Way

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**Upholding the Original Christadelphian Faith concerning:
“The Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12)**

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“I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat up on him had a bow: and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Rev. 6:2)

The Israelitish Nature of the Coming Kingdom of God

In speaking of the Acts of the Lord's Apostles, the Spirit records how that Philip was engaged in "preaching the things concerning *the Kingdom of God*, and the name of Jesus Christ" - and that those who heard and believed his sayings "were baptised, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). This illustrates the vital importance of "the things concerning the Kingdom of God" - they are principles which formed half of what the Apostles taught as the Gospel! And in the case of Philip's preaching, they were "things" to be accepted and believed as a prerequisite to Baptism - by implication therefore, they are "things" to be the object of faith, in order that Forgiveness and Salvation might be received.

But they are not simply doctrines to be believed; they are fundamental principles for daily living. Our Lord Jesus taught that the primary things to be sought after in this life, are those "things" pertaining to the Righteousness of God, and His Coming Kingdom: "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God*, and his righteousness ..." (Mat 6:33). The Kingdom of God then, must feature predominantly in our daily prayers, thoughts and meditations. No matter what evils the day brings - and they may be many - they are but the transient affairs of this life of mortal travail and sorrow. But "the things" of the Kingdom are eternal, and whilst being hidden from the natural eye, they present themselves to those that believe in bold relief - a glorious picture of coming reality. So it is, that with the Apostle Paul, "we look not at the things which are seen, *but at the things which are not seen*: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor 4:18).

It is important therefore, to correctly understand the nature and extent of the Kingdom to come - to not understand these things, is to not understand the Gospel that Philip and the Apostles taught!

The Kingdom will be thoroughly Israelitish in nature. Some say the territory of the Kingdom of God will be worldwide, but as we shall see, the Bible teaches that the Kingdom is specifically Israel, being the central and dominant nation in the earth at that time. The Christadelphian Statement of Faith (BASF) expresses it thus:

" XXI.—That the kingdom which he will establish will be the kingdom of Israel restored, *in the territory it formerly occupied*, viz., the land bequeathed for an everlasting possession to Abraham and his seed (the Christ) by covenant - Mic 4:6-8; Am 9:11,15; Ezek 37:21,22; Jer 23:3-8; Gen 13:14-17; Heb 11:8,9; Gal 3:16; Lev 26:42; Mic 7:20.

Here, the BASF states that the actual kingdom will be Israel restored, which will exist "in the territory it formerly occupied". Other kingdoms will continue to exist in the earth, whilst being subject to Israel: as it is written, "the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (Isa. 60:12). Again Psalm 72 speaks of the kings of those nations: "... all kings shall fall down

before him: all nations shall serve him” (Psa. 72:11, also Psa. 2:10-12). And Daniel 7:12 proves that the other kingdoms will be permitted to exist external to that territory, as nations in their own right – albeit with their “dominion” taken away.

It is therefore inaccurate to speak of “the kingdom” being world-wide. In the passages cited above, we are specifically told that other nations and kingdoms will continue to exist - albeit being subject to Israel, and her King. Having their dominion taken away, they will be part of a world-wide Empire. In *Elpis Israel*, John Thomas wrote concerning the difference between a kingdom and empire:

“A kingdom is the dominion of a king. An empire is also the dominion of a king, but with this difference: the kingdom proper, or “the first dominion”, is restricted to a regally constituted territory; while the empire, or secondary dominion, though belonging to the same king, extends over other peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, than those of the royal domain. This is illustrated in the case of the British kingdoms and empire. The kingdoms are restricted to England and Scotland, which are by constitution regal territories; but the empire is a secondary dominion of the same united crowns, extending over Canada, Hindostan, and other parts of the globe, with all the nations, languages, and people, they contain.

There are various elements necessary to the constitution of a well-organized kingdom. In the first place, a kingdom must have a territory. This is only saying, in other terms, that something must be somewhere. To maintain the opposite would be to contend that something is nowhere. A kingdom is not located in feeling, or in heart; though a belief of its future existence, a comprehension of its nature, or an attachment to it, may exist there. It must have a place, a locality, as well as a name.”

(Elpis Israel. p. 221)

There are those who characterise our position as saying that the rule of Christ will be over Israel only, and that the nations will be free to do as they please. That, however, is not our position at all – and it is significant that our adversaries have to distort and misstate what we teach in order to discredit it. Our position – as taught by the BASF, Brother Thomas, and Scripture itself – is that the territory of Messiah’s kingdom will be Israel, but that he will rule over the other kingdoms as part of his world - wide empire. And this is what the Bible teaches as part of the Gospel message. To quote Brother Thomas again:

“Indeed, the testimony concerning the territory and throne of the kingdom are so intimately connected with the gospel, that a person cannot believe the gospel and be ignorant of it; for the territory and throne are principal subjects of the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the covenant made with David. These are “the covenants of promise” which the ignorant, and consequently unbelieving, are “strangers from.” It is useless to talk about believing the gospel, and at the same time to be ignorant of these and of their true import; for they contain the gospel as we have shown abundantly in Elpis Israel. They define not only the locality and throne of the

kingdom, but its subjects, the line of its king's descent, his humiliation and exaltation, &c., the duration of the kingdom, the contemporary blessedness of all nations, and so-forth. But we cannot particularize everything here. He that studies the word will find the things of the kingdom shining forth from the writings of all the prophets and apostles. The more he understands the more he will see. We will only add here at present *that they teach that the territory of the kingdom of the heavens is the land in which Abraham dwelt with Isaac and Jacob*, and tended his flocks and herds; the subjects of the kingdom, Abraham's descendants in the line of Isaac and Jacob; the King, one of his seed, the antitype of Isaac when he died and rose again "in a figure;" the throne, David's in Zion and Jerusalem; the empire, all the nations of the earth in a state of blessedness; the duration of the kingdom, like its king "for ever."

(Herald of The Kingdom 1852 Vol. 2, p. 33)

The CMPA publishes a booklet entitled "The Kingdom of God Upon Earth – God's Plan for the World". Although it appears to begin by speaking about Israel, so far as this booklet is concerned, they are merely part of the mortal population of the Kingdom, who are "allowed to live" in the land. So we read of the mortal inhabitants:

"... the second group will consist of the mortal peoples of the world who, at Christ's return, survive the judgements on the earth and are willing for Jesus to be their king. ***This will include Jews who are allowed to live in Israel***" (page 8, emphasis ours).

Very little else is written there regarding Israel. The BASF however, is very clear that it will not only be the case that the Jews will be "allowed to live in Israel" – the Kingdom itself will ***be*** Israel "in the territory it formerly occupied." This is why the Bible hope is styled "the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20), and is also the reason why in this special issue, we will focus on the Israelitish nature of the kingdom, and the reasons why this feature is so important.

Christopher Maddocks

The Time and Manner of Christ's Appearing

The following article was penned by Bro Thomas in response to a correspondent, and published in The Herald of the Age to Come for 1854

In relation to the question proposed by our worthy correspondent concerning the time of Christ's appearing, I would reply, that he will appear to destroy Gog's army on the mountains of Israel, and then to establish the kingdom.

That he will appear to destroy Gog's army is manifest from Ezekiel's testimony, which says, "My fury shall come up into my face ... and all the men that are upon the face of the land *shall shake at my presence*, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the

towers shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord; every man's sword shall be against his brother" (Eze. 38:18-21). This is clearly an answer to the prayer of Israel prophetically inscribed in the sixty-fourth of Isaiah, saying:

"We are thine, O Lord; thou never barest rule over our adversaries; they were not called by thy name. Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire turneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!"

The prophet then refers to the great event of former years, when the Lord did come down to Sinai, as an illustration of his future descent to save the nation, by making his Name known to his adversaries. Then, in the fourth verse follows that notable passage, quoted by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, showing that when the Lord shall descend to throw down the mountain-dominions of the Gentiles, and to make the nations tremble, he will bring "*The things prepared for them that love him.*" Isaiah's words are these:

"Since the beginning of the world they have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, nether hath the eye seen, O God (or Messiah) beside thee, what he (or Jehovah) hath prepared *for him that waiteth for him.*"

"THE THINGS PREPARED"

In commenting upon the phrase "*what Jehovah hath prepared,*" Paul denominates it, "*the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery,*" which he says, "*we speak;*" that is, he and Sosthenes: and which, in his letter to the believers in Rome, he styles, "the gospel of Christ, *the power of God for salvation to everyone that believes*" (Rom 1:16) "*the things concerning the kingdom of God,*" which he spake boldly of, disputing and persuading for three months in the school of one Tyrannus at Ephesus (Acts 19:8).

This shows that Isaiah's "*what Jehovah hath prepared*" refers to the thing expressed in our Lord's saying, in the twenty-fifth of Matthew, as "*the kingdom prepared.*" Jesus, as well as Paul, preached the glad tidings, or gospel of this kingdom (Mat 4:23); and in so doing proclaimed that "when the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, THEN shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." (Mat 25:31). He also associated his coming in glory with his coming in power. Thus, in the twenty-fourth of Matthew, "All the tribes of the land shall mourn (see Zech 12:12) and *they* shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven *with power and great glory.*"

THOSE WHO DID NOT PERCIEVE

Before leaving the text from Isaiah, we may notice that Paul makes "the princes of this age," that is, of the age he lived in, the nominative to "have not heard nor perceived;" for he says, "*had they known,* they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

Then again, he omits the words “*O God, beside thee;*” because when he quoted Isaiah’s words, “what Jehovah hath prepared” to be manifested when the nations tremble at the presence of his Son, was known to very many beside the Lord Jesus. It was not so in the prophet’s time. The “wisdom of God *in a mystery*” was previously known neither to the prophets nor the angels; but in Paul’s age it was a subject well understood by the saints in Christ Jesus: hence, he says to those of them residing in Corinth, “God *hath revealed them* unto us, by his Spirit ... which we have received ... that we might know the things ... which we speak in the words the Holy Spirit teacheth.”

The things unknown to the princes of the Mosaic economy, and revealed by the Spirit in the mystery, are on record in the New Testament; so that if we do not understand them the fault is not God’s; but referable to our neglect of the Scriptures, or to our indoctrination into Gentile “philosophy and vain deceit,” commonly called “theology,” or to both (Col 2:8). Let us then “search the Scriptures;” and eschew the divinity of the schools, martextually distilled in the pulpit oratory of our day, as we would the poison of asps mingled in golden goblets of sparkling wine. It is mere “superfluity of naughtiness;” therefore abandon it, and “receive with meekness *the engrafted word* which is able to save your souls!” (Jas 1:21).

Another idea is worthy of note in connection with this text in Isaiah. The prophet says that the things referred to, God “hath prepared for him that *waiteth* for him:” but Paul renders it in his quotation, “for them that *love* him.” It is evident therefore, from this, that the apostle considers that *they who love the Lord are waiting for him*. Hence, in his writings he emphasises much upon this point:

“The Lord,” says he, “direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the *patient waiting for Christ*.” Again, he says, “Ye turned from idols to God, to serve the living and true God; and *to wait for* his Son from heaven,” and in another place, he says, “We through the Spirit *wait for the hope* of righteousness by faith:” and again, “The testimony of Christ was confirmed among you; so that ye come behind in no gift; *waiting for* the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And Jesus himself commanded the apostles to “Let their loins be girded about, and their lamps burning; and themselves like unto men that *wait for* their Lord, when he shall return on account of the nuptials.” And lastly, Daniel says, “Blessed is he that *waiteth* and cometh to the thirteen hundred and thirty five days;” because when these years shall expire, Michael, the great prince of Israel, shall be revealed, and his waiting saints shall be made like their Lord.

But, it is not all who profess to believe in the personal and visible revelation of Jesus, that love or are waiting for him. No-one loves him in a scriptural sense, who does not believe and do what he teaches: for, besides that “love is the fulfilling of the law,” (Jas 1:21), Jesus says, “*if a man love me he will keep my words ... He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings.*” This is so much in point, that one would suppose that no man reading it would be able to impose upon himself the notion, that he loved the Lord, while he was living in neglect, and, therefore, on the supposition that he is intelligent in the word of the kingdom, in contempt of his doctrine and commandments.

Now, Jesus preached the gospel of the Kingdom, and commanded those who believe it to be baptized, and thenceforth to walk worthy of the kingdom and glory the gospel calls them to. But who among “the pious” who profess to love Jesus do this? They believe not the gospel he preached; like our friend Storrs, if they believe it, they refuse to be immersed, and denounce immersion as sectarianism. Why then do they not hear Jesus? Do they think he is to be mocked with impunity? That he does not mean what he says when he affirms that they who keep not his sayings *do not love him*?

How little do men appreciate the character of him with whom they have to do. They seem to consider him as one who has as little regard for his sayings as they have for theirs. But if they will lie, “*God cannot.*” (Tit 1:2). What has been spoken by his command is irrevocable, and as living now as on the day it was spoken. His word changeth not; and is “magnified of him above all his name”. Hence, says the Apostle, “If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: ... the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” (Jno 11:47,48).

He then who believes the gospel of the kingdom, and has therefore been immersed, and walks worthy of the kingdom and glory to which he has been called, and is patiently expecting the revelation of Jesus, is the person who is waiting for, and loving him, in the sense of Isaiah and Paul.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A KINGDOM

Having disposed for the present of this interesting passage of Isaiah, we will return to a more particular consideration of the question before us. *The Lord descended to Sinai for the purpose of setting up his kingdom under the Mosaic constitution.* He organized it in the midst of a hostile world, by *first*, delivering his nation from Egyptian bondage; *secondly*, delivering to them a law in the wilderness; and *thirdly*, by driving out the seven nations of Canaan with fire and sword; and the planting of his own nation there in their stead. This was a great work that was not accomplished in a moment. It was the work of a generation; beginning with the proclamation of the gospel to Israel, and the delivery of Jehovah’s message to Pharaoh, and ending with the rest from war procured for the nation by the victories of Joshua, a period of nearly fifty years.

In the first stage of this process, the condition of Egypt was awful. Moses, Jehovah’s servant and visible representative, and the great type of Israel’s future Deliverer, was in the midst of it all. Egypt, the residence of Jehovah’s nation, was filled with dead bodies, and its waters turned into blood; frogs, lice and flies, swarmed in the land, and a grievous murrain destroyed their beasts; hail was thundered down, and fire ran along the ground; the land was darkened with locusts, so that the earth could not be seen; and three days’ darkness impended over the country, even a darkness that might be felt. This was the way God operated upon the hardened enemies of Israel through and in the presence of his servants. Nothing in Jerusalem and the Holy Land can be worse than these plagues when the prophet like unto Moses shall come as “Jehovah’s servant,” in power and great glory, to “bring the third part through the fire,” in the day of his indignation upon Israel’s foes.

Isaiah has taught us to regard the Lord's ascent to Sinai as representative of his whose type was the angel in the blazing bush, to Olivet on the east of the Holy City. Jesus, "whom God hath made both Lord and Christ," will descend *for the purpose of setting up Jehovah's kingdom again under the New and Better covenant (Acts 25:16).*

STAGES OF ORGANISATION

He will have to organize it in the midst of hostile nations, or extreme sensibilities respecting "the balance of power," which by such an event will be utterly destroyed. Though he comes with power and great glory, as the angels did to Sinai, the work of re-establishing the kingdom will be as formidable an enterprise, and require nearly as much time for it's accomplishment as did the original institution.

The reorganisation of the kingdom demands the deliverance of the Twelve Tribes from bondage in the Roman Habitable, "*pneumatically styled Sodom and Egypt*" (Rev 11:8): *secondly*, the delivering to them a law that shall go forth from Zion to them sojourning in "the wilderness of the people" (Ezek 20:35); and thirdly, the subjugation of the seven toe-kingdoms of "iron unmixed with miry clay," that they may be able to march into Canaan, and obtain an everlasting national rest from all their sorrows under Messiah, the prince of Israel, Joshua's antitype, and the Ruler of the World promised to Abraham and his Seed (Rom 4:13). These events will be the work of a generation, as were those which ultimated in the original establishment of Israel's commonwealth and Jehovah's kingdom, in the Holy Land.

This appears from Micah's testimony as well as from the magnitude of the work to be accomplished. After stating that the land should be desolate, the prophet intercedes in Israel's behalf, and says to the Lord, "Feed thy people with thy rod; ... the flock of thine heritage ... let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, *as in the days of old.*" To this prayer, Jehovah replies to the prophet as the nation's petitioner, in these words:

"According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him (the flock of mine heritage) marvellous things. The nations shall see and be confounded at all their (Israel's) might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth; they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of thee" (Mic 7:14-17).

The reader may learn how Israel fed in Bashan and Gilead "*in the days of old,*" by reading the historical parts of the Bible. The prophet teaches in his intercession that the same thing shall be again: and in the answer to the petition we are instructed that, as the Gentile governments are the great obstacle to such a consummation, Jehovah will make Israel mighty with the Lord their God as their commander (*Is 4:4*) and by their invincible and wonderful prowess overthrow the barrier, and plant them there "as in the days of old."

The re-establishment of Israel in Gilead and Bashan by “the Lord their God,” or Messiah, is regarded by the prophet as connected with the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham. Hence, he says, “God will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. *Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.*”

THE DISPLAY OF MARVELLOUS THINGS

Now, the “marvellous things” which Jehovah says he will show to Israel in the sight of the confounded and dismayed nations, he says also shall be displayed during a period equal to that occupied in the coming out of the nation from Egypt into Palestine. This was a period of forty years. The work therefore which Messiah, the Angel of the Abrahamic Covenant (Mal 3:1) and Jehovah’s servants (Is 49:5,6) have to perform for Israel in restoring the kingdom again to them, will consume at least forty years from and after his advent “in power and great glory.”

The most difficult part of this work is, not the making of the goat-nations to lick the dust like a serpent, but the regeneration of the understandings and affections of the Tribes of Israel. At present they are no more fit to inherit the Holy Land under Messiah the Prince, that were the bondmen of Egypt under Joshua. The rebellious must be purged out from among them (Ezek 20:35) as in the wilderness under Moses; that, being renewed in heart and mind, the nation, as a righteous nation, which at present they are not, may be engrafted into its Olive (Rom 11:24) by the delivering of the New, or Abrahamic Covenant, which is to be made with the houses of Israel and Judah (Jer 31:31-34).

The re-establishment of the *overturned* (Ezek 21:27) kingdom by Messiah, “*whose right it is,*” is a work then of the forty years succeeding the advent. It begins with the identification of him that comes as the person that was crucified, some eighteen centuries before (Zech 12:10; 13:6,8,9) as the “prophet like unto Moses,” by whose hand their ancestors did not understand that God would deliver the nation; it begins with that “third part’s” recognition which will then have been brought through the fire, that this is Jesus whom their fathers refused, saying, “We will not have this man to reign over us;” even the same whom God sends to be a ruler and deliverer, not by the hand of an angel as in the case of Moses, but by his own arm, as himself the antitypical angel of the bush, to bring salvation for “his own” (Jno 1:11).

Jesus, recognised as ruler and deliverer by the surviving “third part,” sends of this escaped portion of the nation, messengers to the nations to declare his glory among them (Is 66:19, Jer 16:16). These are *Christ’s apostles of “THE LATTER DAYS.”* Those we read of in the Acts were *Christ’s apostles of “THE LAST DAYS;”* and not to be confounded with the others. Their missions have not the same end in view.

The apostles of “the last days” of the *Mosaic Age*, proclaimed that God would at some future time, *unknown to them*, set up a kingdom, on the throne of which the crucified

and risen Jesus should sit as ruler in Israel; but the apostles of “the latter days” of *the times of the gentiles* will proclaim that the Lord Jesus is king, and actually enthroned in the Holy City; and that therefore, the kingdom having come, the “hour of judgement” was no longer in the future, but at length impending, as an electric cloud in the sultriness of harvest (Is 18:4), over the world.

The apostles of the last days preached the gospel as an invitation to the nations and their rulers to “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. To kiss the Son,” as a warning, “lest he be angry, and they perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.” (Ps 2:10-12).

This latter day invitation is of the nature of a demand sent from one to another, who possesses what does not belong to him, requiring the surrender of it to the rightful owner, under penalty of the consequences that may follow. It does not invite to eternal life; but to allegiance and submission to the King in Zion, and consequently to the renunciation of fealty to “the powers that be.” It demands liberty for the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, that they may return to their own land, and serve the Lord their God in the place where he hath installed his Name. Such is *the nature* of the proclamation to the nations and their rulers, which precedes the manifestation of the “marvellous things” to be shown to scattered Israel in the sight of the astonished nations.

THE FINAL RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

Wherever there are Israelites to be separated from the Gentiles, and to be gathered out, there the proclamation will be made, even to “the outmost part of heaven” (Deut 30:3-5). The class of Jews engaged in making it known; call them apostles, evangelists, angels, messengers, or ambassadors, it matters not, they are *persons sent, qualified, and equipped*, by their government for the work; these are collectively emblematised in the Apocalypse by “another angel flying in the midst of the heaven, having the Age-gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth ... saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to Him; for *the Hour of his Judgement IS COME.*” That is, the time has at length arrived when “Judgement is given to the saints of the Most High, and they do take possession of the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven; and take away the dominion of the Little Horn, to consume and destroy it unto the end (Dan 7:22,26,27). This is the judgement-work to be executed by Jesus and the saints, the commanders of the armies of Israel; who in the proclamation give the world fair warning of what they intend to do.

A NEW WORLD ORDER

God sets up the kingdom by his power substantialized in Christ, the saints, and the Twelve Tribes of Israel. They cast down the thrones of the Gentiles, seize upon their kingdoms, and organize the Jews as a kingdom in the Holy Land by reuniting the tribes into one nation under Messiah the prince (Ezek 37:22,24). When this is fully accomplished the forty years will be ended; and the gospel of the kingdom an accomplished fact (Gal 3:8). The kingdoms, empires, and republics, now existing in the hands of the world’s rulers, will then

be no more. The political system of the earth will have been entirely changed, A NEW ORDER of things being established, styled by Paul, "THE ECONOMY OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES" (Eph 1:10) which pertains to the Age to Come, subject, not to the angels as the present world, but to Jesus and the saints (Heb 2:5).

As to the *manner* of Christ's appearing, I would reply that he will come to the clouds of heaven, which are "the dust of his feet," with angels of his power in fire of flame, with a shout, with a voice of an archangel, and with a trumpet of God; but *not so that all nations can see him.*

He will come as a thief; not being expected; and being in the city of the great King unknown to any beyond the land until he shall cause his presence there to be proclaimed by the symbolical messenger flying in the midst of the heaven. "He shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into the heaven." "He went up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." He will therefore come to the clouds which will receive him out of the sight of the Russo-Assyrian-Clay forces on the mountains and plains below.

THE GATHERING OF BELIEVERS

While there, the transformed living believers of the gospel of the kingdom, and the resurrected saints, shall be caught up among clouds for a meeting of the Lord upon air, and so they shall all be with the Lord. It was thus on Mount Sinai. The angels, through whom Moses received Jehovah's law, were in the clouds, and thick darkness on the mountain top, which smoked like a furnace, and shook exceedingly. "The Lord descended upon it in fire ... and the blast of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, so that all the people in the camp trembled." Thus "they met with God" in thunders, lightnings, and thick clouds; but the angelic trumpeters, and him that spake to Moses, they did not see. So, I apprehend, it will be with the armies of the Assyrian Image in Megiddo, the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and Edom; they will, like Saul's companions on their way to Damascus, or Daniel's on the banks of Hiddekel, "see not the vision, but quake exceedingly, and flee to hide themselves."

But, says one, is it not written, that "every eye shall see him?" How can this be, if all dwellers upon the globe do not see him? It is so written; but "every eye" *of whom?* The next member of the sentence explains whom the "every eye" refers, namely, *even whosoever pierced him.* (Rev 1:7). It is every eye of these that shall see him; and not every eye of the invaders below, or of their compatriots at home. He said to some of those who afterwards pierced him, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves cast out." These will see him. The Tribes of the Land of Israel will also see him, and mourn on account of him, as their fathers did, and for a like cause, in the presence of Joseph at their second interview.

This is a national mourning, or lamentation, resulting from the discovery that they had crucified their king in piercing Jesus; and that, though punished severely, they were punished justly in their tribulation, for slaying the innocent, and imprecating upon themselves and their posterity the blood of the guiltless. "They shall look upon me

whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem ... and the land (the tribes of the land) shall mourn." Thus speaks Zechariah—a prophecy reproduced by the Spirit in the apocalypse of John.

STANDING UPON OLIVET

But, he is not only to be received into clouds whence will be displayed the local portents of the advent; but the purposes of his obscuration being answered, he will come down to the mount of Olives (Zech 14:4), whence he went up in the presence of his Galilean friends. When in the clouds, he and his companions are as "the Stone cut out of the mountain, not in hands" - the Power that smites the Assyrian Image upon its Feet. It may then be said with David, "His strength is in the clouds."

How appropriate is this position of the power to the execution of the judgment recorded against Gog! "I will, saith the Lord, rain upon him and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain and great hailstones, fire and brimstone." This, with mutual slaughter, pestilence, and Judah's sword, will destroy the military power of the Image-Clay; so that the constituents of the Czar's dominion, severed from his sovereignty by this worse than Moscow or Waterloo defeat, will fall into other political combinations, styled apocalyptically, "the Beast and the False Prophet, and the Kings of the Earth," to do battle against the power (Rev 17:14, 19:19) predestined to grind them into powder (Mat 21:44), light as the chaff of the summer threshing-floors (Dan 2:35).

The Assyrian power being broken by this terrible overthrow, the Lord comes down to Olivet, and thence descends in triumph to the Holy City. Its gates are opened to him as the King of glory and the Lord of armies, strong and mighty in battle (Ps 24) and he is received by the people with acclamations, saying, "Blessed be he that comes in the name of Jehovah!" (Mat 23:39).

It may then be said of Jerusalem, "THE LORD IS THERE," (Ezek 48:35) as "an ensign upon the mountains," about to "blow the great trumpet" that shall make the nations tremble (*Is 27:13, 18:3*). The trumpet to be blown is that of the symbolic angel flying in the midst of the heaven. While this proclamation is in progress, the land is being cleansed by the burial of the slain (Ezek 39)

THE GREAT REBELLION

When the rejection of it by the papal nations is announced at Jerusalem, war is declared against them; and the postadventual missions of the second and third angels are executed upon Rome, and all who adhere to the fortunes of her kings. She sinks like Sodom, or a millstone in the sea; and is found upon the earth no more (Rev 18:21). The thrones of the papal kings are then overthrown, and with them, the European Imperiality originally founded by Charlemagne upwards of a thousand years ago. The triumph of Jesus and the Saints is then complete. Not a vestige of the Image is left; and its territory occupied by the kingdom and empire of Israel's king. This is

the end of the matter; and may therefore now be fairly left with the reader for comparison with what else is written in the testimony of God. Examine the Scriptures quoted, and see if I have not herein correctly methodised the Truth.

(John Thomas, Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come, 1854)

The Importance of Israel's Repentance

When the Lord Jesus comes to establish his universal reign, the Scriptures reveal that his seat of power is to be “the throne of David” (Luke 1:32), placed in Jerusalem, “the city of the great king” (Mat 5:35). But just as in the natural order of things, a king rules firstly over his own countrymen, (his “first dominion”), and then by victorious warfare, he subjugates other peoples under him, whose lands then become added to his dominion, so this will be the case with the reign of the Lord's Christ. Although his reign is to be global, his “first dominion” is said to be Israel (Mic 4:8), as Gabriel testified: “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 1:32,33). And in that day Jerusalem, being the centre of global authority and the home of the King of the World, shall be held in honour and praise by all other nations - the Great King shall require it to be so, for it is written; “*the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted ... the sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of Yahweh, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel*” (Is 60:12-14).

The fellow countrymen of the Lord Jesus, the descendants of Abraham through Jacob, are God's people whom He “hath not cast away” (Rom 11:2), and it is through them that the Lord has chosen to effect his purpose. He called them out of Egypt, as “a nation from the midst of another nation” (Deut 4:34), in remembrance of His Covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex 2:24), that they might be a model people, “for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory” (Jer 13:11). To Israel were given The Law, a set of standards far higher than the crudities of any human legislation, founded upon the principle of Love - the Love for God, and the Love for man; “on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Mat 22:37-40). And it was in observance of these laws that Israel were an example to, and set above the hoards of barbarians around them, as Moses exhorted: “keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding *in the sight of the nations*, which shall hear all these statutes and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people” (Deut 4:6).

But Israel were not simply a paradigmatic race of men, for the Lord has predicated salvation for them, and all other nations, upon belief of certain promises made to “the fathers” concerning them. This was the teaching of Christ, saying “**salvation is of the Jews**” (Jno 4:22), and of his apostle: “if the casting away of them be the reconciling of

the world, what shall the receiving of them be, *but life from the dead?*” (Rom 11:15). Forgiveness of sins comes through the promised seed of Israel’s progenitor (Rom 4:1-8), upon the basis of the things covenanted to him (*Gal 3:18*) - indeed, the very blessing obtainable by the Gentiles through faith in Christ is styled apostolically, “the blessing of Abraham” (*Gal 3:14*). And the promises made to Abraham contained the Gospel: “the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before *the Gospel* unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (*Gal 3:8*).

THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

As recorded in Genesis, the promises conferred upon Abraham, and his multitudinous seed the right to an age-lasting possession of all the land “from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates” (*Gen 15:18*). But as Abraham never possessed this land (*Acts 7:5*, *Heb 11:13*), and as the preeminent seed referred to is Christ (*Gal 3:16*), who also never possessed any such land (*Cp. Luke 9:58*), it is evident that they relate to an age yet future, when the Lord shall return to raise Abraham from the dead, that they might both receive their inheritance together. The sojourn of Abraham’s natural seed in the land under the law, was a foretaste of the Kingdom, demonstrating to all who beheld the wisdom of their laws that the blessing of God rested upon those whom he had taken “out of another nation” for Himself. But by the very nature of things, as they possessed the land under Law, not Promise, their sojourn was only a shadow, or pattern of better things to come (*1Chron 29:15*, *Heb 10:1*).

The inheritance yet to be granted to Abraham was not to be bestowed by law, but was a gift for faith. This is the testimony of the Apostle: “the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was *not* to Abraham, or to his seed *through the law*, but through the righteousness of faith” (*Rom 4:13*). And again: “if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, *till the seed should come to whom the promise was made ...*” (*Gal 3:18-19*), and it is only reasonable that until the coming of the seed to whom the promise was made, that promise could not be properly fulfilled. The sojourning of Israel under the Law then, was a temporary institution until the promised seed would come, and they could take up possession of their inheritance with him. Yet even when the “seed” did come that the Almighty could, in the words of Zecharaias, “*perform the mercy promised to our fathers*, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath with he swore to our father Abraham (*Luke 1:72,73*), he was rejected by those he came to save. They crucified the prince of life, and persecuted his holy apostles; and having so judged themselves to be unworthy of everlasting life, the Apostles turned to the Gentiles (*Acts 13:46*), that in the intervening period between the cutting off of the Israelitish olive branches, and their grafting in again, at their Lord’s return, Gentiles might also have a share in the promises.

There are those who would deny the Lord His rightful inheritance and dominion over the tribes of Jacob, by claiming that because of the Jewish rejection of the promised Messiah, God has cast off his people - that the Kingdom is not to be restored to Israel,

and that there is to be no holy temple built at Jerusalem. They claim that the promises were contingent upon obedience, and that because of the Jew's rebellion they have been rejected, and Gentiles take their place, as the so-called "spiritual Israel". But these delusions are merely the regurgitated morsels of Church Tradition, eagerly grasped and consumed by those who desire to boast against the branches (Rom 11:19). Like those who delighted to vaunt themselves against the Holy People of the Most High God in the first century, they say "the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in". But they do well to take heed to the Apostle's warning: "Well, *because of unbelief* they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. *Be not highminded, but fear;* for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee" (Rom 11:19-21). Those who are in "unbelief" of the Lord's covenant to Abraham and his seed - which covenant necessitates the Israelitish restoration - therefore place themselves in severe danger of being "cut off".

It is true to say that the natural branches have been "cut off", but only with a view to chastisement, that having been purged of unbelief, they might be grafted in again. Israel will never be cast away, for this is the testimony of the prophet concerning them:

"fear not, O Jacob my servant, saith Yahweh: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: ***but I will not make a full end of thee, but will correct thee in measure;*** yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished" (Jer 46:28).

The natural branches were "cut off" because of "*unbelief*", not because of disobedience. Although faith must be made manifest in works (Jas 2:17-26), Faith, not obedience to Law is the prerequisite to inheriting the promises: "The promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was not* to Abraham, or to his seed, *through the law*, but through the righteousness of *faith*", that is, the faith which the Lord considers as righteousness (Rom 4:13). It was through lack of faith, not simply lack of obedience that a whole generation, bar 2, were excluded from the land, though their sins were many: "they could not enter in ***because of unbelief***" (Heb 3:19). And it was likewise "because of unbelief" that the Lord God directed the Roman forces against His Son's murderers in AD70, effecting the "cutting off" of the natural branches.

But in order for the Abrahamic covenant to be fulfilled, Israel must be brought back to the land, to take up their inheritance with their saviour and King - this is the "Hope of Israel", for which the Apostle was imprisoned (Acts 28:20). And in order for this to take place, they must also have the faith of their father Abraham. The apostle speaks of this, when discussing the bringing in of the Gentiles: "therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure *to all the seed*; not to that ***only*** which is under the law, but to that also which is ***of the faith*** of Abraham, who is the father of us all" (Rom 4:16). Israel which is under the Law are assured of their inheritance, when they turn to the Lord *in faith of His Promise*. Thus, "the promise" requires that Israel are restored, not just to the Land, but also to God.

THE FUTURE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

By its very nature, the Kingdom over which Christ will rule, is an *Israelitish* kingdom; his “first dominion” being over his own countrymen, whom he came to save. It is only when Israel are received in again, that the Kingdom can be restored to them (Acts 1:6) - only then can the Lord Jesus take up his reign (Luke 1:33) and only then can his brethren receive their inheritance, and reign with him (Rev 3:21, 5:10). Without Israel’s restoration therefore, there can be no restored kingdom, and no inheritance - truly the apostle wrote: “if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, **but life from the dead?**” (Rom 11:15). We cannot receive our inheritance, unless they receive theirs, for our inheritance ***is*** theirs, and it is only extended to us by our *becoming joined to Israel and their Hope*.

We have already shown that we cannot receive an inheritance independently of Israel - not by *replacing* the Jew, for the Jews are yet to be “received in” again. Rather it is by *becoming* a Jew through faith, and union with Christ, Abraham’s pre-eminent seed, and by embracing the Israelitish Hope in God, that He will restore them, as promised. As it is written, Abraham is not “the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but *who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham*, which he had being yet uncircumcised” (Rom 4:12). Those who are yet dead in their sins are “without Christ, *being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise*, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph 2:12). But through faith and baptism, we become one with Christ, and therefore Children of God, members of Israel’s commonwealth, and heirs of the promise. This is the Apostle’s inspired testimony: “*ye are all the children of God by faith* in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ ... *ye are all one in Christ Jesus*. And if ye be Christ’s, *then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise*” (Gal 3:29). So it is, that the Gentiles are brought in by a like principle by which Israel were led out from bondage; “a nation from the midst of another nation” (Deut 4:34), into the land of promise: “God ... did visit the Gentiles, *to take out from them a people* for his name” (Acts 15:14). They are taken out from the kingdoms of men, to become part of the “commonwealth of Israel”, that they also might be led by the antitypical Joshua, the captain of their salvation (Heb 2:10) into the same inheritance, at the coming of the seed “to whom the promise was made”.

Christopher Maddocks

“Indeed, *the testimony concerning the territory and throne of the kingdom are so intimately connected with the gospel, that a person cannot believe the gospel and be ignorant of it; for the territory and throne are principal subjects of the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the covenant made with David*. These are “the covenants of promise” which the ignorant, and consequently unbelieving, are “strangers from.” It is useless to talk about believing the gospel, and at the same time to be ignorant of these and of their true import; for they contain the gospel as we have shown abundantly in *Elpis Israel*”

John Thomas

The Repentance and Restoration of Israel

We have seen that in order for the Kingdom to be restored to Israel, there must firstly be a humiliation and repentance of the Lord's people, that they might learn to bow before the King they rejected 2000 years ago. Even though, within the last 50 years or so, we have seen the Jews pouring back into their Land, these Jews are not yet ready to submit to their King - they still reject the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus, and do not accept the things testified concerning Him in the Oracles of God. And in addition to these faithless sons of Jacob, there are still many more of them resident in foreign lands, who also refuse to bow before their Lord. There is then, a need for *a dual conversion*; for all 12 tribes, both inside and also outside the land to have the veil currently cast over their understanding removed (2Cor 3:14-17), that they might turn to the Lord in recognition of His Saving Power. As regards to the Jews resident in the land at the epoch of our Lord's return, the Divinely selected means of causing them to turn back to Him, as in the days of old (cp. Deut 28:49), is to afflict them at the hands of a foreign invader. The prophetic testimony is that by the hand of his angelic ministers, the Lord will gather the armies of the world against Jerusalem, to afflict them for "all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land" (Ezek 39:26). Thus, Zechariah was "moved" by the Spirit to proclaim: "Behold, the day of Yahweh cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For *I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle*; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity ..." (Zech 14:2). This "day of Yahweh", is styled by Jeremiah, the "day of Jacob's trouble" which shall be "great, so that none is like it" (Jer 30:7, cp. Dan 12:1), and it is in that unique "day", that Isaiah testifies the Lord shall remove "the filth of the daughters of Zion ... by the spirit of judgement, and by the spirit of burning" (Is 4:4).

It is clear then, that there will be great suffering and sorrow, as the disobedient sons of Jacob are chastised for their iniquities, and brought to a situation of desperation and utter helplessness, that they might learn to trust in a Strength far greater than their own. And in the midst of such affliction, there will be heard the voice of bitter crying; Rachel weeping for her children (Jer 31:15), her tears running as a river day and night (Lam 2:18), as once again the enemy shall open the mouth against her: "they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed her up: certainly this is the day that we looked for; we have found, we have seen it" (Lam 2:16). Women shall be raped, houses pillaged (Zech 14:2), sons taken as slaves (Joel 3:3,6), the survivors of half the city shall go into captivity and "a great spoil" shall be taken, and divided in the midst of the land.

In that day, Jerusalem truly shall become a furnace of affliction (Ezek 22:18-22), in order that the people might be refined, as silver and gold in the heat of the fire, and finally look to their God for deliverance: "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith Yahweh, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: *they shall call upon my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, Yahweh is my God*" (Zech 13:8,9). In the depths of sorrow, and on the brink of annihilation, the survivors, "an afflicted and poor

people” (Zeph 3:12) shall cry unto their God, in confession of their uncleanness: *“we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities”* (Is 64:6,7).

This will truly be a turning point in the history of the world - the final repentance of Israel, in order that the work of reconstructing their Kingdom might begin. From that day forward, Israel shall trust in Yahweh their God, Who shall turn and fight against their enemies. Following their confession of sins, and recognition of their utter dependence upon the mercies of the God of their Fathers, they shall cry for deliverance: *“Be not wroth very sore, O Yahweh, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation ... Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Yahweh? Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?”* (Is 64:9-12). And Yahweh shall indeed hear the cry of His People - He shall answer swiftly with the outpouring of His Grace (Zech 12:10), and contend with those nations which so bitterly oppressed His People: *“He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee”* (Is 30:19, cp. Ps 50:15), for *“then shall Yahweh go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle”* (Zech 14:3), *“and I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone. Thus will I sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am YAHWEH”* (Ezek 38:22:23).

JUDGEMENTS UPON THE HEATHEN

From these words of Ezekiel, we learn that the events of Armageddon are designed for more than one end. Not only will Israel be brought to trust in their God once more, as they see the power of the Almighty in effecting their salvation; the heathen also are to be witness to that Power being manifested in destruction to their armies, and shall themselves be thus taught of the God of Israel. These nations who assemble together against Jerusalem will do so unaware of the providential control over them, and unaware of the true reason for their gathering. They will be motivated entirely by their own carnal desire to *“take a spoil ... to take a prey”* (Ezek 38:13), and humiliate the Jews. They will say, *“let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of Yahweh, neither understand they his counsel”* (Mic 4:11,12), which is to cause His people to turn to Him, and then judge those who sought to oppress them. Never before will the armies of the entire world have been united together in one place on such a scale - it will be an unprecedented assembly of all peoples to Zion, the Holy Mount of the Lord. This is the site of the future capital of the world, the place that the Lord has chosen to Place His Name there from ancient times (1Kings 11:36). How appropriate therefore, that He should bring the nations to that very place that they may all appear before Him for judgement: *“ ... my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy”* (Zeph 3:8).

So it will be, that the preparatory work of establishing the Lord's reign, shall commence with the Glorious Power of the Lord being laid bare in the sight of all nations, in bringing Salvation to His People, yet destruction to "the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen" (*Hag 2:22*). Isaiah speaks of this, in describing the joy of Israel for their deliverance: "Yahweh hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. Yahweh hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of *all the nations*, and *all the ends of the earth* shall see the salvation of our God" (*Is 52:9-10*, cp. *40:5*). They will see the Salvation of Israel's God, at great cost to themselves, as Yahweh's anointed shall "rebuke many people" (*Is 2:4*, *Ps 9:5*), and so make himself "known in the eyes of many nations" (*Ez 38:23*), who will then be called upon to submit themselves to him (*Ps 2:12*).

The judgements which the Lord shall bring upon the heathen, are to be executed at the hands of the Lord Jesus, and His Saints, as it is written: "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand, *to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; ... to execute upon them the judgement written*: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye Yahweh" (*Ps 149:5-9*). But there will be no need for carnal warfare on the part of those who are energised with the Omnipotence of the Almighty, for as we have read, Ezekiel reveals a scene of destruction reminiscent of past judgements, in the use of natural elements: "... I will plead against him with *pestilence and blood*; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an *overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone*. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, *and they shall know that I AM YAHWEH*" (*Ezek 38:22,23*).

The repentant people of Israel themselves are also to have a hand in the final destruction, and removal of their oppressors. The strength of Gog's armies having been miraculously overthrown at the hands of the Lord's immortal hosts, the people will turn, and contend against those which remain, destroying their weapons and reclaiming their spoil: "And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears; and they shall burn them with fire seven years ... and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord Yahweh" (*Ezek 39:9,10*). And again, Zechariah speaks of this burning: "In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and *they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left*; and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem" (*Zech 12:6*, see also *Obad 17,18*).

The oppressing army having thus been obliterated by the power of the Almighty, the voice of rejoicing shall be heard in the mountains of Israel, as the former misery shall become but a fading memory: "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. Yahweh hath taken away thy judgements, *he hath cast out thine enemy*: the King of Israel, even Yahweh is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more" (*Zeph 3:15*). The tears of sorrow shall

be replaced by the voice of gladness and joy, as the Lord's repentant people will be joined to Him once more, that the abundance of His blessings might be poured out upon them (Joel 2:21,29) and the beginnings of their restored Kingdom might become the nucleus of a world-wide dominion with all nations bowing before the greatness of Israel's God.

THE MINISTRY OF ELIJAH

This then, briefly describes the circumstances of the repentance of the Jews in the Land. But what of those outside, who will not experience such humiliation at the hands of the Gogian host? It is testified that the great prophet Elijah shall be instrumental in bringing Ephraim to repentance: "Behold, *I will send you Elijah the prophet* before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Yahweh: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal 4:5-6). Speaking of his work, Bro Thomas wrote:

"The person with whom they will have more immediately to do with in their Second Exodus is Elijah. There would seem to be a fitness in this. In the days of their fathers, when they forsook the Lord and abolished the Law of Moses, Elijah was the person whose ministerial life was occupied in endeavouring to "restore all things". Though he did much to vindicate the name and law of Jehovah, he was taken away in the midst of his labours. For what purpose? That he might at a future period resume his work and perfect it by restoring all things among the ten tribes according to the law of Moses, preparatory to their being planted in their land under a new covenant to be made with them there. But it may be objected that Elijah has come already, and that John the Baptist was he (Luke 1:17). True, in a certain sense, he has. John was Elijah to the House of Judah in the sense of his having come "in the spirit and power of Elijah". But John was not the Elijah who talked with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration. The latter is Elijah to the house of Israel. The scribes taught that Elijah must precede Christ; which Jesus approved, saying, "Elijah truly shall first come and restore all things". He said this after John was put to death ..." (*Elpis Israel*, p 451, 452).

There are those who feel that the Lord will not send Elijah "before the great and dreadful day of Yahweh", as Malachi taught he will. They say that this prophecy had a total fulfilment in John Baptist, and needs no further application. But what did John himself say? Was he Elijah? "They asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? *And he saith I am not*" (Jno 1:21). This is conclusive evidence, which ought to settle all dispute on the matter. Either John *was* Elias, without knowing it, or he spoke the truth, saying "*I am not*". True it is, that John came "in the spirit and power of Elias" (Luke 1:17) as Bro. Thomas shows, for his preparatory work for the coming of the Lord Jesus, foreshadowed the future work of the ancient Israelitish prophet (Mat 17:12). But he was "not" that prophet. This Elijah, it is testified, shall "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers" (Mal 4:6), that is, to join together

the hearts of the Sons of Israel to become as one with that of their Fathers, that they may rejoice together in the covenant made with them. And this work, as is evident from the present decadent state of the children's hearts, is a work for the future, which must be accomplished in order for them to inherit the blessing promised to their Fathers.

This will be the mission of Elijah - to "restore all things", that is to restore the remnant of Jacob to their God, and effect a second exodus, the final restoration to the land. How appropriate in this regard that on the Mount of Transfiguration (a foretaste of the Kingdom, (2 Pet 1:16-18)), there should appear Moses, the leader of the first Exodus out of Egypt, with Elijah, the leader of the final Exodus, through the wilderness of the peoples (Ezek 20:35) to communicate with the Lord concerning *his* "decease (*or "exodus", as the Greek has it*) which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31) - the means by which as the captain of salvation, he would lead many sons out of darkness into glory (Heb 2:10).

THE REPENTANCE OF ISRAEL IN DISPERSION

The re-gathering of the 10 tribes forms the object of many prophecies in Scripture, but it is evident that in order for this to occur, their repentance shall come *first*. Moses, after speaking of the blessings and curses to come upon the people prophesied of this: "And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind *among all the nations, whither Yahweh thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto Yahweh thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then Yahweh thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither Yahweh thy God hath scattered thee*" (Deut 30:1-3). Moses thus taught that whilst in the lands of dispersion, Israel shall return to their God, obeying His voice "according to all that I command thee, *this day*", that is, *the day in which he taught them the Law* prior to their entry to the Land. It would appear from this, that whilst in the lands of their dispersion, the people are to be brought under the Mosaic Law, prior to their resettlement in the Land, to discipline them, and to teach them the things concerning the Lord Jesus (Gal 3:19, 24). This conclusion is strengthened by Malachi, who immediately before speaking of the work of Elijah, spake thus: "***Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel, with the statutes and judgements.*** Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet ..." (Mal 4:4-5). Bro. Thomas commented on this:

"It would seem from the testimony of Malachi, who prophesied concerning the ten tribes, that while they are in the wilderness of the people, they will be disciplined by the law of Moses as their national code, while things concerning Jesus will be propounded to them as a matter of faith; for it is testified by Hosea, that they shall be gathered, and "shall sorrow a little for the burden of the King of princes (Hos 8:10)" (Elpis Israel, p 451).

But by what means are the people to be brought under the Mosaic Covenant once more? What signs and wonders (Joel 2:30, see Mic 7:15) will testify to the Truth of what the *diaspora* find themselves being taught? It would appear that the restorative work of Elijah will run concurrently with the humiliation and redemption of Jerusalem, for we read that Elijah shall be sent “*before* the coming of the great and dreadful day of Yahweh”, that is, *prior to* the invasion of Jewry by the Gogian host. Yet it will not be finally accomplished until *after* the salvation of Jerusalem, for “Yahweh also shall save the tents of *Judah first*” (Zech 12:7). So it will be that Elijah’s preaching shall receive a powerful witness in the desolation, deliverance, and miraculous blessing of the land. He will, doubtless warn the exiles of the impending judgements to come upon the earth, and will be able to look to Jerusalem as an example of this. And again, he will doubtless speak of the blessings which will fill all the earth - and will be able to point to the blessing of Jerusalem as an example of this. So it will be, that Elijah will lead the people out from the kingdoms of men, their dominion about to be crushed by the Stone-power of God (Dan 2:44) in the land of promise, its desolate wastes transformed into an Edenic paradise (Is 51:3) by the beneficent power of the Lord - upon the repentance and cry of his people. And beholding these things, what greater incentive could there be for the scattered tribes to seek after the One who has performed these “great things” (Joel 2:21)? So it will be, that as they sojourn among the countries of the heathen, they shall see these things, and rejoice: “Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, Yahweh hath done great things for them. Yahweh hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad” (Ps 126:2,3).

The response of the people to Elijah will be good: “thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power” (Ps 110:3), and in belief of their God, they shall depart from their adopted lands, to return home, to Zion.

AFFLICTION IN THE WILDERNESS

But the Scriptures indicate that many of the returning exiles shall be compelled to leave their host countries because of persecution. Just as the inhabitants of Jerusalem are to experience great affliction at the hands of the confederacy denominated in the 38th chapter of Ezekiel, so their brethren, resident in “their enemies’ lands” (Ezek 39:27), are to groan under great travail and distress:- “behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts” (Ezek 37:11), as they shall become a “curse among the heathen” (Zech 8:13). And even having left those countries, the people shall not find peace in the nations they will need to pass through to reach the Promised Land. Rather, they shall be subjected to a purging: “I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and *there will I plead with you face to face* ... And I will cause you to pass under the rod, *and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel:* and ye shall know that I am Yahweh” (Ezek 20:34-38).

From these words, it is evident that as they seek to return to their homeland, the Jews shall experience many terrible atrocities, as anti-Semitic feelings are aroused, probably by the leading countries of the campaign against Jerusalem. The scene of these events is to be “the wilderness of the peoples” - it is in this place that the rebels (those who desire to escape persecution in their own lands, and experience the blessings of Zion, yet refuse to accept Yahweh’s terms of deliverance) shall be removed. And it is here also, that the remnant shall be brought into “the bond of the covenant”; that is, the New Covenant (Jer 31:31), having been taught of it, through the Mosaic schoolmaster (Gal 3:24), and the ministrations of Elijah.

We have been unable to find in the Divine Testimony precise details of the route which the returning sons of Jacob shall follow in their journeyings, and so it is difficult for us to define with certainty the exact location of this “wilderness of the peoples”, if indeed it be referring to a specific place. But in the apocalyptic visions shown to John, he beheld a European “wilderness” (Rev 17:3), inhabited by the harlot mother of Christendom, the Catholic system, seated upon a multi-headed beast. This beast, we learn from verses 9-13, is a Roman political animal, comprised of 10 kings over which the Papacy exerts its influence - in short, Roman Catholic Europe, as it will exist at the Epoch of the Lord’s Return. And of these 10 Kings, we read, “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (*Verse 14*). We shall say more of this war with the Lord Jesus later, but these words serve to place the “wilderness” beheld by John in the time-period under our present consideration - at the epoch of the destruction of the Kingdoms of men, and their replacement by the reconstructed Kingdom of Israel.

This Apocalyptic wilderness then, is the arena inhabited by the papal-driven European political creature (See Eureka for further evidence of this). It speaks of the European land which, although in many ways is a fruitful place - physically speaking - due to its lack of spiritual nourishment, is little more than an inhospitable, barren desert, in the Divine Estimation. And it is quite possible, therefore that it is this area of the globe that Ezekiel styles the “wilderness of the people”, the places in Europe through which the returning exiles will pass through on their journey homeward - the place which has been the scene of some of the most bitter campaigns of hate against God’s people in past ages.

DIVINE DELIVERANCE ASSURED

But be that as it may, it is clear that in this wilderness, having been “purged” of the “rebels”, the refined remnant shall find grace in the sight of their God: “Thus saith Yahweh, the people which were left of the sword *found grace in the wilderness*, even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest” (Jer 31:2; see the whole chapter. It may be thought that these words relate to Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, but in that event, it was not just a remnant, those “left of the sword”, but the whole nation which was saved. See also Hos 2:14). These people have a promise of Divine protection: “When thou passest through the waters, *I will be with thee*; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, though shalt not be burned; neither

shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Is 43:2, see Ps 66:12) and so it will be, that having entered into the New Covenant, just as the Lord shall deliver the Gogian confederacy into the hand of those in the land; so He will be with his people, in contending against their enemies outside. And just as Judah will have a part in executing judgements against their oppressors under the auspices of their Redeemer (Is 59:20), even so Israel will execute the Lord’s judgements upon those countries which seek their destruction. Thus we read of the proclamation of Yahweh: “Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for *with thee will I destroy kingdoms*; and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider ...” (Jer 51:20-21). And again, in speaking of Yahweh’s “weapons of war”: “when I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece ... And Yahweh shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord Yahweh shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south. Yahweh Tzavaoth shall defend them; and they shall devour ...” (Zech 9:13-15).

In that day the sons of Jacob shall fight victoriously against their enemies, in the preliminary work of subduing the nations, under the reign of their King. As it is written, “the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off” (Mic 5:8,9). Thus it will be, that Israel shall prosper, being victorious over their oppressors, in preparation for that time, prophesied so many years earlier, when “*the sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee*; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The City of Yahweh, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel ... I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations” (Is 60:15).

ASSYRIA AND EGYPT

The Scriptures speak of a miraculous gathering of the people from Assyria and also the Land of Egypt after the pattern of their deliverance under the hand of Moses: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again *the second time* to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt ... *And Yahweh shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea*; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river (*i.e. the Euphrates*), and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt” (Is 11:11-16). Thus it will be, as Yahweh spoke to His Prophet Micah, “According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things” (Mic 7:15).

This drying up of both the Red Sea, and the River Euphrates, to provide access for the people, suggests that both Egypt, and the site of ancient Assyria, are to be rallying points for Israel to head towards, before their final journey home. Indeed, this is also suggested by other passages:

“I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon ... and he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away” (Zech 10:10,11)

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that Yahweh shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel ... and they shall come which were ready to perish *in the land of Assyria*, and the outcasts *in the land of Egypt*, and shall worship Yahweh, in the holy mount at Jerusalem” (Is 27:12,13).

This association between the ancient sites of Egypt and Assyria, both scenes of Israelitish captivity in bygone ages is most interesting, especially in consideration of the reference by Isaiah to the “highway” which is to be constructed (Is 11:16, cp 35:8, 43:19). Apparently, this speaks of a single highway, extending from Egypt, through Israel into Assyria, thus allowing access for the returning captives from both sides into their land - but also allowing free intercourse between those nations. This arrangement of things will permit ready access from east and west to the Holy Land, for the peoples who will go up to Jerusalem to worship there, and is described further in Isaiah 19: “In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be a third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom Yahweh Tzavaoth shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria, the work of mine hands, and Israel, mine inheritance” (Is 19:23-25). Both Egypt, and Assyria are here linked with Israel, by a common highway, and also become what the Lord styles “my people”, and “the work of my hands”, therefore being granted an exalted status in the Kingdom Age. Could this be because following their repentance, they are to provide a safe refuge for the returning exiles (cp Gen 12:3)?

The Scriptures also reveal that there shall be many physical blessings also, provided for the benefit of the travellers. Thus, we read of the Lord’s mercy in once again providing water in the wilderness: “when the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I Yahweh will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. *I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water”* (Is 41:17-18 cp. Ex 17:6). The effects of the provision of water in the previously barren desert will be most remarkable, and will remain throughout the Kingdom Age, as a testimony of the grace of God extended to his weak and feeble sons, during their homeward journey: “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad *for them*; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing ... strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees, say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your

God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you” (Is 35:1-4).

The provision of these mercies in the deserts, will primarily be “for them”, that is, for the benefit of the returning exiles. But once provided, we may not unreasonably suppose that as the people of the earth shall attend the Temple for worship (Zech 14:16-18), these things will remain for their benefit also, providing them with both water, and also magnificent scenes of beauty, as they come nearer to the Holy Land, witnessing to the exalted position that country shall have in the age to come. And it will form part of a most splendid approach to the Holy Temple, adding to the wonderful scene of glory the travellers will behold, and testifying to the greatness of the Power and Grace of Israel’s God.

Christopher Maddocks

The Structure of Administration

As we have shown, the period of “the latter days” (that is, the final days of man’s dominion, prior to the establishment of the Millennium proper), will be a time of great activity, as all peoples are brought under the authority of the Lord’s Christ. But contemporary with this work, a period of reconstruction will be underway in Jerusalem (Is 60:10), transforming the city to become both the capital of the kingdom, and a suitable habitation for “the great king”. It is at this time that the Temple shall be constructed (Zech 6:13,15), to which the subdued nations shall be required to attend periodically: “it shall come to pass *in the last days*, that the mountain of Yahweh’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and *all nations shall flow unto it*. And many people shall go, and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob; *and he will teach us of his ways*, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem” (Is 2:2,3).

“Yahweh’s House” will be “an house of prayer for all people” (Is 56:7), a temple to which all nations shall attend to worship, offer sacrifice, and be instructed in the ways, laws and statutes which their King will require them to follow. And in contrast to the Israelitish Kingdom of past ages, where the Priesthood and Kingship were kept separate, “Yahweh’s house”, will be dual purpose, being the abode of the High Priest according to the Order of Melchisedec, the site of the reconstructed Throne of David.

The Lord Jesus, in his dual capacity as both King and Priest (Heb 7), shall be enthroned in the temple. He shall “bear the glory, and shall sit and *rule upon his throne*; and he shall be a *priest upon his throne*” (Zech 6:13). No longer shall the system of rule be separate and distinct from the system of worship - worship will be *part of* the law, for in keeping the laws of Christ, the nations will demonstrate submission to him, and therefore subjection and obedience to the Lord God. Isaiah and Ezekiel both saw the exalted priestly throne of the Lord in vision, “In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw

also the Lord sitting upon a *throne*, high and lifted up, and his train filled *the temple*" (Is 6:1), "And he said unto me, Son of man, *the place of my throne*, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever ..." (Ezek 43:7).

Being enthroned in "Yahweh's house", the Lord Jesus Christ shall reign on God's behalf, as Isaiah spake: "behold, the Lord Yahweh will come with strong hand, and *his arm shall rule for him* ..." (Is 40:10), and of this "arm", or extension of power vested in the Christ, he further wrote: "he shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgement in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law" (Is 42:4). "Justice and judgement" shall be the "habitation" of his throne (Ps 89:14), which will therefore become the centre from which judgement shall be set in the earth, ensuring that Divine Justice will be executed throughout the globe.

But although the *centre* of administration is established in Jerusalem, arrangements will be made for this "justice and judgement" to be dispensed locally, within the various subject-nations. And to this end, the King shall not reign alone; his brethren shall exercise dominion with him, as he promised: "To him that overcometh will I grant to *sit with me in my throne*, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev 3:21). The Saints then, that great innumerable multitude of Redeemed (Rev 7:9) are to reign with their Lord as kingly priests, singing his praises: "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* upon the earth" (Rev 5:9-10). Comprising "the meek", during the days of their mortal weakness, this multitude shall "inherit the earth" (Mat 5:5, Rom 4:13) with their Lord, and exercise dominion thereupon with him, as it is written; "a king shall reign in righteousness, and *princes shall rule* in judgement" (Is 32:1 - see also 1:25-26).

THE 12 THRONES OVER ISRAEL

As an innumerable number of "kings and priests" requires a similarly innumerable number of nations over which they might rule, if one "king" reigns over one nation, it is evident that this will not be the Divine order. Rather, there will be a hierarchical organisation of their dominion. The 12 apostles (with the exception of Judas, being replaced by Matthias, (Acts 1:26)), it is revealed, shall have a most exalted position, each reigning over a tribe of Israel's sons: "Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, *ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*" (Mat 19:28). These twelve then, shall execute the office of Divine Judges over each tribal canton, acting immediately under the authority of the Lord Jesus. The Psalmist likewise spoke of their thrones, "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: *whither the tribes go up, the tribes of Yahweh*, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of Yahweh. For there are set *thrones of judgement*, the thrones of the house of David" (Ps 122:3-5). Thus it will be, that arrangements will be

made within Jerusalem itself for Israelites to appear before their respective judge, according to the tribe of their origin, and receive justice at the hands of one of the Lord's apostles.

But under these 12, there will also be other judges, entrusted with the role of instructing the people the ways of God. Speaking of the priests in Jerusalem, the Lord informed Ezekiel: "they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in controversy they shall stand in judgement; and they shall judge it according to my judgements ..." (Ezek 44:23,24). That these priestly judges are the immortal saints seems to be indicated in the words of Paul to the Corinthian ecclesia, in his rebuke for their failings to judge righteously in their mortal days: "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that *the saints shall judge the world*? And if the world be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (1 Cor 6:1,2). Thus, the saints generally shall also be involved with the dispensing of justice in the Millennial Age, something which we must prepare for now, in our relations to each other.

JUSTICE DISPENSED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

But notice, the apostle declared that the saints will be involved with the dispensing of justice for "*the world*", not just in Israel. Thus, we may suppose that just as in Israel there will be thrones placed for judgement and teaching, this same pattern will be replicated in centres throughout the earth, with immortal saints (subject to the Lord and his apostles), judging other nations.

A possible indication of how these judges might be appointed; both in the nations and Israel, under the exalted 12, is in the Lord's parable of the pounds. When considering the responses of those to whom he had given varying amounts, he speaks of the blessing conferred on the fruitful: "Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, *have thou authority over ten cities*. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, be thou also *over five cities*" (Luke 19:16-19). Immortal saints then, will be appointed to dispense justice over varying numbers of cities, comparable to their degree of fruitfulness in the days of their probation, quite probably with the saints over 5 cities, being subject to those over 10 cities, and so on. Indeed, after the pattern of previous ages, there does appear to be grounds for the suggestion that above these city judges, there will be other saints appointed over each nation, to oversee national affairs, (see for example Ex 18:13-26, Num 11:16,17 and compare Deut. 32:8, Gen 11).

The quality of judgement thus dispensed shall be of the highest standard - infallible, for the Great King "shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But *with righteousness* shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Is 11:3,4), and those who reign

with him, “shall be like him” (1Jno 3:2). In contrast to previous times, when the poor and needy, the widows and fatherless (those who lacked both the resources, and the guidance of father or husband to instruct them), were dealt with hardly, suffering oppression and injustice at the hands of wicked rulers who favoured the wealthy, their cause shall be determined righteously. Indeed, their King is himself One who “became poor” (2 Cor 8:9), that through his poverty, and execution at the hands of the wicked, we might be made rich. “He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight” (Ps 72:12-14). And again, the Psalmist speaks of those future days, when Yahweh will be king in the earth; “Yahweh is king for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land. Yahweh, thou has heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their hearts, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: *To judge the fatherless and the oppressed*, that the man of the earth may no more oppress” (Ps 10:16-18).

WILL THERE BE PERSONAL TUTORS?

But in order to keep the statutes and ways of the Israel’s God, peoples will need to be *taught* those ways, and that task could either be another role of the divine judges, or there may be others appointed to do this. Most probably, it will be the work of others, or even both, as this appears to be suggested by Isaiah. In speaking of the teachers of Israel, the Lord promised: “And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind (Heb. “after”) thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Is 30:20,21). And although this passage specifically speaks of Israel, we might reasonably suppose that these arrangements will be replicated throughout the Empire, that all nations might be so taught. The picture presented here, is suggestive that each mortal will have an immortal tutor to watch over his/her affairs, in a way not totally dissimilar to the role of the Angels in the life of a believer today. But of course, the difference is this, the mortals in the Age to Come shall see their tutors, and hear their words of instruction. And if, despite having been instructed of the right Way, due to the inherent propensity of human nature to seek out other ways, (cp. Ecc 7:29) they begin to turn aside, their teachers shall be watching over their affairs, and will be at hand to give further guidance along the way. Possibly not by a voice suddenly booming at them out of nowhere, at the moment in which a mortal is about to commit a sin, as some suppose - this would surely bring about a life of terror for them, being afraid to do anything, lest they hear “the voice” of rebuke! Rather, when a mortal’s walk in life is beginning to take a new direction, beginning to move away from the Divine Will, and back to their old ways, their tutors will call “after” them, to come back, and receive further counsel and instruction, that they might be corrected, and that their walk might be guided back onto the right path once more. The Psalmist spoke of such guidance: “Good and upright is Yahweh: therefore will he teach sinners *in the way*. The meek will he *guide in judgement*: and the meek will he *teach his way*” (Ps 25:8,9).

A CENTRE OF WORLD EDUCATION

The Scriptures reveal that each year there will be a national vacation, so to speak, when peoples will be required to make their way to the Capital city, to offer their sacrifices, and to receive further instruction, away from the humdrum of everyday life. As we have already seen from Isaiah, speaking of the Lord's house, "all nations shall flow unto it, and many peoples shall go, and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob, *and he will teach us of his ways*" (Is 2:2-3). In this place, there will be a feast of spiritual delights, for the benefit of the partakers, and for the Glory of God: "in this mountain shall Yahweh of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined", the end result being, as the prophet continues: "and he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations" (Is 25:6,7). Thus it will be, that by Divine instruction to the people throughout the year, and by an annual period of instruction at Jerusalem, away from the distractions of daily living, all nations shall be taught of the Greatness of Israel's God, learning of His Ways, and being guided that they might walk in them.

BLESSINGS OF THE KINGDOM

The benefits of walking according to the commands of Christ will be readily manifest. Having been instructed His way, and the natural rebelliousness of man being under firm suppression, there will be no scope for man to lift himself up in conflict with another. So Isaiah prophesied that as a consequence of the subjection of nations under the Great King, by his rebuke and instruction: "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Is 2:4). This is the ultimate United Nations - all peoples being united in their worship of Israel's God, being instructed out of His Law, and taking up the more peaceful occupation of constructing agricultural implements out of the remains of war machinery. Rather than Jerusalem being a constant stumbling block, and arena of world conflict, it shall become the centre of blessing, and longevity of life: "Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof" (Zech 8:4-5 cp. Is 65:20). What a glorious picture of tranquillity this is - a picture which so many long for, where children can safely play in the streets, without fear of abduction or abuse. Where the elderly can live without fear of assault, or ridicule for their infirmities. This is the vision many people desire in these days of degeneracy, violence and wickedness - yet it is a picture which can only become reality when all peoples are subject to the Laws of God, and walk in His Ways of Righteousness. This is the age that we yearn for, and earnestly seek "first", above all other things (Mat 6:33).

Righteousness and harmony having been established among men, the conflicts amongst even creation itself shall cease. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their

young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea*" (Is 11:6-9). Notice this point - all the glorious blessings promised are things to come *after*, and *because of* righteousness being established in the earth. Firstly, "the knowledge of Yahweh" fills the earth, through judgements, and teaching, secondly the blessings are given. This is the pattern taught by the Lord - righteousness first, then blessing: "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mat 6:33). Let us then, resolve to apply these principles to our lives today, that having learned of, and enacted God's righteousness "first", as we seek entry into His Kingdom, we might be granted, not simply the temporal necessities of this life, but also the Glories of the Age to Come.

Christopher Maddocks

Beyond the Millennium – What?

The end of the Millennial age will be marked by a final rebellion of the Flesh against the ways of the Spirit:

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them” (Rev 20:7-9).

So, after 1,000 years of restraint, the bonds of Divine Rule (Ps 2:3) shall be relaxed, and “satan”, the *diabolos*, or “sin in the flesh”, will be permitted to assert itself once more, in rebellion against the imposed dominion of Christ.

There are those who question how it could be, that after 1,000 years of experiencing the blessings of the Millennial age, that mortals would *want* to rebel - but such do not take into account the perversity of the human condition. There is, as part of man's physical make up, a law of his being, styled apostolically, “sin in the flesh”, or “sin that dwelleth in me” (Rom 7:17), which when unrestrained, leads all it's possessors into transgression. And as this principle, or “law”, resident in human flesh (Rom 8:3) can only be removed with a transformation to Immortality (Phil 3:21, 1Jno 3:2) it will remain within the mortal populace, albeit under the suppression of Divine Law, and it's rigorous enforcement. But once the pressure is released, at the termination of the 1,000 year period of restraint, it will be permitted to exert itself once more, leading it's possessors into rebellion against the immortal rulers.

As Bro Thomas wrote:

“If the apostle felt the workings of “the law of sin” within him, though obedient to “the law of the spirit of life”; need we wonder that the same “law of nature” should gather force in the hearts of nations subdued by fire and sword to the sovereignty of Israel’s King? Man, unrenewed man is essentially ungrateful and rebellious. The whole history of his race attests it. A thousand years of peace and blessedness will fail to bind him, by the bonds of love and a willing fealty, to the glorious and benevolent, yet just and powerful emancipator and enlightener of the world” (*Elpis Israel*, p 455).

So it will be, that the King will permit the Adversary (*the diabolos, or Sin*) to muster an army, and march them against “the camp of the saints, and the beloved city” of Jerusalem.

“But fallacious will be the hopes of the rebel multitude, and dreadful the vengeance to burst upon them. The trembling earth and the blackening heavens warn them of a coming tempest. The dark vapours and thick clouds of the sky, curling in dense and lowering masses, suddenly hiss forth the forked lightning, and the heaven is rent by the deafening roar of the voice of God. Hail, and fire mingle with hail, pour down upon them, and they are destroyed from the face of the land. Thus God will deliver his King; for “fire shall come down from God out of heaven, and shall devour them” (*Elpis Israel*, p456).

After the final insurrection of Sin’s Flesh against the Spirit, the Spirit shall prevail, and the final enemy, even death itself shall be ultimately destroyed. The mortals who lived during the Age of Righteousness, whose names are found written in the book of life (Rev 20:12-15), shall be rewarded with glory and immortality. And “then cometh *the end*, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death ... then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, **that God may be all in all**” (1Cor 15:24-26,28).

This will be the climax of 7,000 years of human history; the ultimate purpose of it all, that: “God may be *all in all*”. But by “the end”, we are not to suppose that the Kingdom itself will end, for the Angel testified of the Lord; “he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom *there shall be no end*” (Luke 1:33). Rather, the *Millennial period* will end, and the *form* of that Kingdom shall change. There shall be no more mortal populace, as death itself shall finally be extirpated from the earth, all the remaining inhabitants comprising a single immortal family.

All nations shall be made a full end of, save one - Israel: “I will make a *full end* of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but **I will not make a full end of thee ...**” (Jer 46:28). This remaining nation, Bro Roberts describes as: “the nation of Israel with Jesus at its head - *a nation purified by a process of spiritual selection and having absorbed in itself the acceptable elements of all other nations by the same process*” (*The Visible Hand of God*, p 59).

Having embraced the Jewish national Hope, these comprise the “Israel of God” (*Gal 6:16*), and shall populate the earth, for the duration of the Kingdom - “without end”: -

“Israel shall be saved in Yahweh with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded *world without end*. For thus saith Yahweh that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, *he formed it to be inhabited*: I am Yahweh, and there is none else” (Is 45:17-18).

The earth itself then, was formed in order “to be inhabited” by this Israelitish nation, having received “an everlasting salvation”, through the blood of the sacrificial Lamb as the national sin-offering. It will be a “world without end”, an eternal “*olahm*” beyond the Millennium.

The Kingdom Age is to be essentially an intermediary period. It is the age standing between two epochs, one whereby man is permitted to rule himself by his own dictates, and one whereby all the earth is filled with an immortal family who have submitted themselves to the will of their Father. The Kingdom Age stands between the two as a transitional period between flesh and Spirit. It is an Age when the dominion of the flesh is taken away, and when all flesh shall be taught the ways of God, to submit to Him, and worship Him in spirit and in Truth. But the outworking of events to their final culmination beyond the millennium is to be a process of two stages. Firstly, as we have seen, all nations shall be taught a *knowledge* of God’s Glory: “the earth shall be filled with *the knowledge* of the glory of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab 2:14, Is 11:9). But after “the end”, the earth shall be “filled”, with that glory itself. In that day, the Father shall be manifested as the “all in all” (1Cor 15:28), for “all” of his Glorious Attributes shall be found “in all” of man.

Paul prayed concerning the Ephesian ecclesia “that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, *that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God*” (Eph 3:17-19). But how much more will this be the case, when all the earth shall be filled solely with the constituent parts of Christ’s Body, a united family: “that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us” (Jno 17:21). The Father, His Son, and His Brethren shall be bound up together, “one in” each other, as a conglomerate entity of Immortal Beings, in whom the fullness of the Father resides. As John bare witness of this post-millennial unending age, “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the former heaven and the former earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, ***Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*** And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed way. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” (Rev 21:1-5).

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