

The Herald

Of Christ's Kingdom

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EDITOR'S JOURNAL

Focus on Prophecy

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. - 1 Thessalonians 5:4, 5

pollsters tell us that uncertainty about the future is one of the main concerns of mankind today. What will tomorrow hold? Politico-social events give a veritable yo-yo of indicators-one day up and the next day down. The gospel writer sums it up when he predicts that there would be "upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity" (Luke 21:25).

One commentator has phrased it well when he likens man's perspectives to "a bug in a rug." The insect crawling through the thick pile of an oriental carpet may well perceive the color he is in, but sees no relationship to the next tone that surrounds him. The Bible-believing Christian, on the other hand, is treated to a "bird's eye" view. Through prophecy he is given an overview. He sees the somber tones of today's uncertainties and troubles as only the precursor for the brighter hues of Christ's millennial kingdom. To him the future stretches "as the garden of Eden" before him (Joel 2:3).

The theme of this issue of THE HERALD is *Focus on Prophecy*. We recognize that the entire vision of the prophet, covering a major portion of the Bible, lies well beyond the scope of any single issue. Therefore we will be taking a mere overview of some of the insights of scripture into the events of our day as well as looking into the nature of biblical prophets and their works.

This issue opens with the query, "What is the function of the Old Testament prophets?" It is a reprint of a question that appeared in these columns nearly fifty years ago, but the answer is still current and relevant to the areas to be examined.

The mind of the prophetic student remains riveted on Israel. In no other land do we see such clear indications of the accuracy of long term biblical predictions.

Two articles examine this area. *Israel, What Next?* uses the prophetic telescope to give an overview of the subject, while this issue's verse-by-verse Bible study, *The Salvation of*

Israel utilizes the microscope to illuminate one particular prophecy of Israel's future, that of the fifth chapter of Micah.

The following two articles make use of prophecy as a wide-angle lens to broaden out from Israel to look at the prophecies concerning the other nations of the earth. *What Lies Ahead for the Nations?* discusses the political and military situation; the second article, *The Gathering of the Nations*, includes a discussion of the current economic situation as it relates to prophecy.

Of all the prophesied events none holds the interest of the Christian more than that of the second advent of Jesus Christ. While there are a large variety of viewpoints on the subject, certain aspects of the subject are generally agreed upon. Many Christians see that world events point to the eminence of the promises that relate to his second presence. Most Bible Students concur on the object of that event being the long-awaited and prayed for kingdom of Christ and the related "times of restitution of all things" (Acts 3:19-21). Another area of general concurrence of opinion is on the distinction between Christ's coming "for" and coming "with" his saints. All Christian scholars concur that the great prophetic sermon of Jesus on the Mount of Olives (Matt. 24, 25) is relevant to this discussion, though all do not agree on the particulars of its interpretation. The article *Three Prophetic Parables* deals specifically with the conclusion of this prophetic sermon—the three parables given in Matthew 25.

The *Echoes from the Past* feature was not originally written as a magazine article, but is excerpted from the book "Notes from the Bible of J. A. Meggison" and furnishes an outline for the study of one of the Bible's minor prophets, Hosea.

The final article is based on contributed notes from Australia and suggests a prophetic interpretation of the blessings Jacob gave his sons at the time of his death. This article particularly hones in on *The Blessing of Judah*.

Whenever the student approaches the subject of prophecy he must be on the alert to avoid the temptation to become a prophet himself. In perhaps no other area of biblical research is it more important to realize the import of the Apostle Paul's words, "now we see through a glass darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12). With this thought in mind this issue is published, not as dogmatic interpretations, but with suggestions which appear reasonable to the authors.

Our New Format

The last issue of THE HERALD featured a new four-color cover. This is part of a long range plan to update the appearance of this journal. In this issue a new interior format is used which we hope will be more readable as well as more pleasing to the eye. In the following issue we hope to replace the wrap-around mailing cover with a clear-plastic envelope and increase the contents of the magazine by four pages. By so doing we will not sacrifice space from spiritual articles to print the necessary general information and

announcement pages; and we will as compensate for the amount of print space that is lost with the new, lighter, more airy format.

The availability of THE HERALD on tape was announced in the last issue. Tapes are made available not only for the blind and others with vision problems, but also for those whose busy schedules give them more time to hear the spoken word than to read that which is written.

Plans are now being completed for the articles to be made available on electronic media. The computer has become so common today and Bible study software programs so popular that many prefer to study in front of their computer screen with the convenience of various commercial brands of search software. When the arrangements are complete the files can be downloaded from a Bible Student bulletin board at no cost other than the necessary phone call. We will notify you once the arrangements are fully completed.

The Question Box

What was the function of an Old Testament prophet?

Reprinted from THE HERALD of November, 1949

Richard G. Moulton in *The Modern Reader's Bible* has written very instructively on this subject. The following is little more than a condensation of his remarks.

"In approaching this subject one misconception needs special notice. It seems almost impossible to eliminate from the popular mind the idea that 'prophecy' means 'prediction.' Yet this is a purely modern modification of its meaning. It rests upon a false etymology: the pro in this word is not the pro which means *beforehand* (as in *prospectus*), but the other pro which means *in place of* (as in *pronoun*): a prophet is one who speaks in place of another. When Moses had been shrinking from the mission to Israel on the ground of his inefficiency as a speaker, and Aaron was granted him as an assistant in this respect, the words were: 'See, I have made thee [Moses] a god unto Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet' (Exod. 7:1)."

As Aaron is thus the mouthpiece of Moses, so regularly in scripture the prophet is the mouthpiece of God. Of course prophecy can contain, and in fact does contain, predictions: but such predictions are the accident, not the essence of prophecy. Yet in traditional interpretation the idea that prophecy must be prediction has distorted the study of the prophetic books; particular passages, often of minor importance, have been over-accentuated, while the spiritual richness of the books when read as literary wholes has usually been missed.

In this broad sense every one who stands forth as a representative of God has a claim to the name of prophet. Moses thus speaks of himself; Deborah is called a prophetess. But there is a more specific sense to the word. Israel began as a theocracy. The government of God was exercised through such as Moses and Joshua. Later, when the people insisted upon visible kings, prophets, who had hitherto appeared sporadically, became a settled order, ready at any time to appeal from the secular kings to the divine Ruler of Israel. They were prophets as representing the theocracy. They were not the equivalent of pastors—they were statesmen; and they were not statesmen merely, but opposition statesmen. They did not minister to sympathetic congregations, but flung themselves into active life as antagonists of the prevailing system.

To this must be added an important distinction between the earlier and latter prophets. The earlier prophets, such as Elijah, were men of action. There is no "book of the Prophet Elijah"; men like Elijah and Elisha entered into literature as heroes of stories others narrate. But the latter prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah without ceasing to be men of action are also men of letters. Thus for these latter prophets there is a double function. To

their own generation they, like their predecessors, are leaders of national action. But beyond this function, their literary gifts have fitted them for a wider and perpetual audience. The same spiritual message they have fitted to day by day passing emergencies, they now convey through these other literary channels to succeeding generations.

This double function of the latter prophets has a bearing upon the interpretation of prophecy. As an illustration, consider the first chapter of Isaiah. We call it a discourse. But in what sense is it a discourse? If it be read side by side with one of the orations of Deuteronomy, a great difference will be found. In every sentence of the latter we are conscious of the presence of a great audience, and the influence of an audience upon a speaker. The oration was actually spoken by Moses to an assembly of Israelites. In the chapter of Isaiah we have impassioned oratory, but without anything to suggest a visible audience or a particular occasion. The matter of this chapter will no doubt have been used by Isaiah on fifty or a hundred occasions, in whole or in part, in formal address or passing remonstrance, as he labored, in season and out of season, in his prophetic vocation. The content of the chapter is something different—the essence of the message, the concentration of these multiplied prophetic ministrations, stripped of what is accidental or occasional has adapted itself to a different literary type and become universalized in its appeal. And what is true of so simple a thing as discourse is yet more true in application to the more elaborated prophecies of the nature of rhapsodies and doom songs. This should be specially borne in mind when studying the "Rhapsody of Zion Redeemed"—a happily phrased caption Moulton gives to the last twenty seven chapters of Isaiah.

Much of what we have presented foregoing applies equally to the New Testament prophets. An instructive paragraph from Scripture Studies, Vol. VI, page 246, is in point here. We quote:

"The word 'prophet' is not generally used today in the broad sense in which it was used in olden times, but is rather understood to signify a seer, or foreteller. The word prophet, however, strictly signifies a public speaker—an orator. A seer of visions or a recipient of revelations might also be a prophet, in the sense of a declarer of same; but the two thoughts are distinctly separate. In the case of Moses and Aaron, Moses was the greater, being the divine representative, and the Lord said to him, 'See, I have made thee a god [mighty one or superior] unto Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet'-spokesman, mouthpiece' (Exod. 7:1). . . . Several of the Apostles were seers in the sense that they were granted a knowledge of things to come . . . they were nearly all prophets, too, that is public orators—especially Peter and Paul."

The meaning of the word does not change even when applied to our Lord. Moses had spoken of the prophet like unto himself which should arise (Dent. 18:15, 18; Acts 3:22); when our Lord came, the people said of him: "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world" (John 6:14). In the exercise of his office as prophet, our Lord represented—was truly in the stead of, the spokesman, the mouthpiece, or word of God. As Brother Russell points out in the Manna for September 25, even now our Lord "gives us, as our Prophet or Teacher, wisdom by his Gospel."

It is in this same sense of forthtelling, expounding, instructing (rather than foretelling) that the word applies to the great Prophet of the age to come. Of that Prophet our glorified Lord Jesus is to be the Head, the glorified church, the bodymembers. For ourselves, we may give thanks that the privilege is still ours of making our calling and election sure to membership in this company; for the world of mankind as a whole, we may rejoice at their prospect (all unbeknown to them, but nevertheless sure) of being granted an opportunity for deliverance from present sin and death conditions to everlasting life in the millennial Canaan to which this great Prophet shall lead them.

P. L. Read

ISRAEL - WHAT NEXT?

And the LORD has declared this day concerning you that you are a people for his own possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments, that he will set you high above all nations that he has made, in praise and in fame and in honor, and that you shall be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he has spoken.-Deuteronomy 26:18, 19 RSV

By Michael Brann

One of the most exciting things for the Christian today is to observe the course of the nation of Israel. Each day seems to mark an occasion of prophecies being fulfilled before our eyes. The last 120 years have witnessed dramatic changes in their affairs, changes quite different from their previous 1700 years of experience.

Anyone remotely familiar with the Bible knows the nation of Israel is one of its central themes. Looking more carefully into its history one begins to see how important Israel's past, present, and future are in the outworking of God's divine plan of the ages. The knowledge and wisdom of God's plan is necessary to have a correct understanding of the purpose of God's dealings with the nation of Israel in the past and its relationship to the many prophecies of the future.

Literally hundreds of prophecies relate to Israel. Many have been fulfilled. For instance, the LORD predicted their subjection to gentile powers for a period of 2520 years in Leviticus 26. He also foretold their captivity in Babylon and their subsequent release. The coming of Messiah was foretold; likewise their dispersion throughout the world. The regathering to their homeland was also spoken of and we see this happening since the year 1878, toward the close of the above mentioned 2520 year period.

What Lies Ahead for Israel?

Many prophecies yet remain to be fulfilled in the near future. We are thrilled that the fulfillment of these is near at hand; because it means that after over 6000 years of sin and evil, mankind will be restored and peace will exist between God and all the willing and obedient of mankind.

Some prophecies yet to be fulfilled are:

- (1) the completion of their return to the land of Israel;
- (2) their deliverance from the enemies of the north;
- (3) the resurrection of their leaders and prophets of old to guide them; and
- (4) their establishment to be instrumental in blessing all the families of the earth.

Each of these four areas deserves our attention as we realize that these are not isolated events, which just happen to Israel, but they stand related to each other as pieces of a larger puzzle, culminating in the kingdom of God being established on the earth. Let us look at each of these in more detail.

The Return to the Promised Land

Since the first recognized settlement in 1878, when only a small handful of Jews were permitted to return to the land of Israel, we have witnessed a rapid growth in Jewish population. Much of the land left barren and uncultivated for centuries has been reclaimed and is producing food for the world. Cities, schools, synagogues, communities, technology, business-everything a twentieth century country could want -are found thriving in Israel today. Who would have thought such an impossible thing could happen in this cast off and deserted land?

Deliverance from the Northern Enemy

Ezekiel 38 and 39 prophesied Israel's deliverance from the northern enemy. The consensus of opinion among Bible Students is that this enemy from the north is Russia or the Soviet Union. As unlikely as it may appear today, because of their own internal problems, it still seems apparent that they are to be the major player in this confrontation with Israel.

Many Jews still reside in Russia and are now returning to Israel. For years there have been quiet whispers of atrocities against the Jews there, with threats of more of the same in the future. Jews there as in other lands have often been the scapegoats for other troubles that plague a particular country. We can only conjecture what will motivate Russia to invade Israel, but perhaps the skill and brain power of the Jews who emigrate will be a contributing factor. Others suggest that the North coming down to take a spoil would be based on Israel's spoiling their immediate neighbors in a more localized war. The Green Interlinear Bible hints at this possibility, translating Ezekiel 38:12, "to spoil a spoil and to prey a prey."

Who this enemy is and why he comes to spoil Israel is insignificant compared with the fact that this is the time when the Lord will miraculously intervene on behalf of his people Israel in a way in which he has not done for nearly 2000 years!

God will display his power in a way that will not only get Israel's attention, but the attention of the whole world. His message will be to the effect that a great change is about to take place in world affairs. No longer will it be business as usual. He comes to establish his kingdom! What a grand and glorious day that will be once the rubble is cleared away!

The Resurrection of the Ancient Worthies

Several scriptures speak of the great miraculous event of the resurrection of the ancient worthies. They speak of the time when Israel, on the brink of ruin and disaster, will be saved from distress by the Lord restoring their fathers of old to them; these are the ancient ones who were faithful to the Lord and are awaiting the "appointed time" to be brought forth out of death to lead their nation and people. What an exciting time this will be as they call upon the Lord to deliver them-and their prayers shall be heard!

Zechariah 12:6 states: "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."

Isaiah 1:26 (NIV) adds: "I will restore your judges as in the days of old, your counselors as at the beginning. Afterwards you will be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city."

Another revealing text to associate with this time is Micah 5:5. It reads: "And this man [manner] shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men." The margin reads "princes of men." Ferrar Fenton renders it: "eight who shall organize men." We suggest that the "seven shepherds" is a reference to the Christ (Head and body) while the "princes of men" refers to the so-called "ancient worthies."

These governors, judges, counselors, and principal men all refer to this same ancient worthy class, those faithful men and women of old, some of whom are listed by the Apostle Paul in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. These scriptures help identify not only the time frame of their return but the scope of their talents and abilities. Imagine what wealth of genius such a grouping of people would possess!

If we were to examine in some detail each of the talents and abilities of these remarkable people, this near-future assembly of ancient worthies will be "just what the doctor ordered" to help not only Israel but eventually turn around the sad conditions existing throughout the whole world today. They shall exercise fearless leadership in a difficult time, having had experience in making quick and crucial decisions when necessary. These will have had experience in dealing with matters of justice, mercy, and wisdom. They will know what directions to take in guiding Israel and with all who seek the one true God. They will be skilled in knowing how to organize and mold mankind into the kind of people which the Lord intends to bless with eternal life. They will exhibit total trust, faith, and loyalty to the Lord and to his principles of righteousness. What a thrill it is to realize that this glorious time is drawing nearer each passing day!

Israel, An Instrument of Blessing

Soon after the time often described as "Jacob's trouble," Israel will turn its focus once again on being God's chosen people, to lead the remainder of the nations of the earth back into harmony with God.

Many scriptures speak of this wonderful privilege Israel will have in this matter. Zechariah 8:13 reads: "And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong."

The prophet makes a proportional comparison, telling us that to the extent Israel has been cursed, vilified, and mistreated amongst the nations where they have been scattered (see Jeremiah 24:9), so shall they be a blessing. To the degree in which they have been accursed (worldwide), so shall be the degree of their blessing (worldwide). This opportunity to bless all the nations is thus shown to have a very grand scope because the history of the Jews is alarmingly full of the details which verify their mistreatment by their host countries. Everywhere the Jew has gone he has suffered. So the Lord here says, through Zechariah, that the Jews, once they are enlightened, will themselves be a light of blessing to all nations.

Isaiah 49:6 supports this conclusion: "I will give thee for a Light to the gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Zephaniah 3:20 adds: "At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD."

God has permitted the Jews to suffer greatly for many years. Perhaps some measure of vindication can be seen when we understand the wonderful and glorious role the nation of Israel will have in the future.

We conclude with Romans 11:26, 33-34, 36: "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob . . . O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be the glory for ever. Amen."

The Salvation of Israel

Verse by verse study in Micah 5

And so all Israel shall be saved. as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.-Romans 11:26

The chastisement and ultimate redemption of the people of natural Israel is the theme for many Old Testament prophecies. Though cast off for a time because of their rejection of the Messiah, we are assured that this exile from divine favor was to be for a limited time only. "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid" (Rom. 11:1).

The chastenings of the Lord are always corrective, never punitive. Thus, even after their regathering in the end times of prophecy, a final disciplinary action is intended for their good and not for humiliation. After this final period of trouble shall have accomplished its purpose of removing the pride of a great number of his chosen people (Zeph. 3:11, 12), it will serve its goal of preparing them for a great future work (Isa. 62:11). This final transition is the background for the prophecy of the fifth chapter of the Book of Micah.

Additionally the chapter furnishes a connection between God's work with Israel at the first advent of Christ and his work at the second advent. In other words, the prophet sets before us the complete cause and effect relationship of Israel's troubles to her ultimate restoration.

The First Advent

Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting (vs. 1, 2).

The first two verses refer to the assembling of the armies of Titus against Jerusalem in A.D. 68-73. Jesus speaks of the details of this fulfillment in the gospel of Luke:

"For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (19:43, 44). "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled" (Luke 21:22).

The "judge of Israel" they will smite with a rod appears to refer collectively to the high priest, the other priests of that time, the Sanhedrin, and the leaders of the Pharisees and Sadducees. These all were treated with contempt by the Roman army and given no preference over the common captives.

Yet out of this turmoil would arise a new leader born in the small village to parents from the despised area of Nazareth in Galilee of the gentiles. Affirming pre-existence in the simple phrase, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," his destiny is predicted; it is he "that is to be ruler in Israel"-in the future, not then.

The Diaspora

Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel (v. 3).

In this verse Micah passes over nearly two thousand years of the Diaspora, the temporary "casting off" of which Paul speaks in Romans. Micah also identifies the terminus of this period of rejection with the time when the church, the seed of the "barren" (Isa. 54:1), would come forth. This accords well with Paul's statement, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25).

The bringing forth of the church, however, is in two stages, as outlined in First Thessalonians: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (4:16, 17).

The "dead in Christ" begin to rise with the return of the Lord at his second advent while those who "are alive and remain" follow after at their deaths.

The Savior of Israel

And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof. thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders (vs. 4-6).

The Hebrew verb translated "he shall stand" in verse 4 is the same as that used of the returned Lord in Daniel: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people . . ." (12:1). In both texts it describes a determined action on behalf of the covenant people. In the Daniel text it is deliverance from enemies; in Micah we find the work is that of feeding, or more properly, shepherding Israel as a flock of sheep. Here we are assured that they shall "abide" and not fall away again, not because of their own innate goodness but because "he [their Messiah and deliverer] is great unto the ends of the earth."

In verse five the word "man" is inserted and is not supported by a Hebrew word. A spiritual being, their returned Lord, will bring peace when they are under attack by an enemy, here designated "Assyria." Israel's two main enemies were Egypt from the south and Assyria from the north. These two foes did not share the same characteristics. While Egypt was a highly civilized society, the Assyrians were marauding terrorists. Many students of end time prophecy anticipate a sharp division in the world forces between the haves and the have-nots, between the poor and the aristocratic rich. Many students of the Bible identify Assyria as a picture of the revolutionary forces of the poor and oppressed. Others identify Assyria geographically with Iraq and, on a larger scale, the combined forces of Islam. Which is represented is not as important as noting that it will be opposed to and in attack of Israel (see Ezek. 38, 39; Zech. 14).

When this attack takes place Israel's returned prince will "stand" on their behalf, accompanied by "seven shepherds and eight principal men [or, princes of men-see the RSV]." It is suggested that these shepherds represent the under shepherds of the Lord, his church, and the princes picture the restored prophets of old (as in Psa. 45:16). The number seven suggests that it is the completed church while eight (as the number of a new beginning) may indicate the resurrected worthies of Old Testament times. By this divine intervention, Israel is turned from being the victim to becoming the victor.

The Remnant

And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off (vs. 7-9).

The miraculous deliverance by the Lord will be for only a remnant of Israel. This final battle will at first go against God's favored people, so much so that the "city shall be taken" (Zech. 14:2). However a remnant of faithful Israelis will turn to the Lord for deliverance. The others will be removed because of their pride in thinking they could obtain victory without the Lord's aid. Those who remain will "not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid" (Zeph. 3:13).

The two-fold work of this remnant is set forth by the prophet Micah. While to their enemies they shall be as a lion among sheep, tearing in pieces so that "none can deliver," they will be also "as a dew from the LORD and as showers upon the grass." Through them will the word of the Lord spread to all the nations of the earth informing them of the new king of earth and teaching them the laws of righteousness. This work is described as being that of "priests and Levites" in Isaiah 66:21.

Two-Fold Judgment

And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds: And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers: Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands. And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities. And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard (vs. 10-15).

The Lord's purging judgment will be manifest in this final deliverance. Like a two-edged sword it shall cut two ways. Israel will be purged of her militarism [her horses, chariots, (walled) cities, and strongholds.] Not only will all idolatry [her witchcrafts, soothsayers, graven and standing images] be removed, but most importantly she will learn to put her trust in the Lord and lean upon him for help.

In the final verse of our chapter he assures them that he will execute strong vengeance upon the heathen who were her attackers-even "such as they have not heard." Although these heathen nations were used to execute the Lord's work in judging Israel, they were not justified in the extent to which they attempted to annihilate Israel. As we read in Zechariah, "And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased [with Israel], and they helped forward the affliction" (1:15).

This judgment will be unprecedented. It will be a time of trouble "such as never was, no, nor ever shall be" (Dan. 12:1). When God's plagues are fully poured out they will contain the fullness of the wrath of God (Rev. 15:1).

Although it is not the subject of this fifth chapter of Micah, we can rejoice that this deliverance in troublous times is only transitional. The trouble will be cut off when it shall have accomplished its work and then will begin to come to pass the answer to men's prayers for God's kingdom on planet earth, the foretold "times of restitution of all things" (Acts 3:19-21).

What Lies Ahead for the Nations?

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.-2 Peter 3:10

By David Rice

The nations of earth have for centuries been in the grip of the great adversary, whose usurped control has given him the designation "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4). Now a mightier one has come, for whom he is no match. He will dispossess Satan of his empire. During the seventh trumpet "the kingdom of this world [becomes] the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ . . . and the nations were angry" (Rev. 11:15, 18).

The great despot is known by four titles: serpent, devil, Satan, and dragon. Each distinguishes his evil roles in a particular way. In each capacity he manifests a perversion of the godly attributes of wisdom, justice, love, and power respectively. As the serpent he is the deceiver, as the devil the accuser, as Satan the adversary, as the dragon the tyrant of nations.

These titles are carefully applied in Revelation, each exactly fitting the context, to specify a particular influence of the adversary. Therefore if we wish to examine his role as despot of nations, we need to focus on the use of dragon. We notice that in Revelation 20:1, Z our Lord lays hold of the dragon and proceeds to restrain him with a chain. This implement of restraint is mentioned sparingly in scripture, but does appear in Psalms 149:8 to bind kings and nobles. This is evidently not a coincidence. It strengthens our surmise that the dragon represents Satan's rule through political heads, "kings."

Satan still wields a practical control over the nations. Cited as scriptural evidence is the description of plague six, which depicts the beast (papacy), false prophet (protestant coalition), and dragon (civil power) still operating for mutual support and control. If Satan were not still controlling the civil powers of Christendom at that time, just prior to Armageddon, the term "dragon" would no longer be used to describe them.

However, his control is not as it has been in times past, not because the subject nations are more enlightened with the knowledge of the true and living God. In fact general godliness and faith has diminished rather than increased in modern times. But the nations are more enlightened in other areas. (1) Increasing technology has opened man's mind to what might be, in contrast to the misery of human experience in the past. (2) An increasing awareness of human rights has triggered the clamor for an equal standing in society. (3) A general disdain for conventional dogma (like hell fire) has dissipated the respect for religious leaders which in the past held many in check.

These enlightenments will work beneficially for people when the new reign of righteousness is installed worldwide. But under the present rule of selfishness, this

progress, not mixed with godliness and principle, works among people as fermenting wine to stress, stretch, and even burst the seams of the old order. This process is counter-productive to Satan's goals because it weakens the systems of his control, but it is in the interests of the new king. The dissolution of nations and powers is required for him to establish his own kingdom.

Therefore, these enlightenments are attributed to the new king, not to the old despot. "The Lord reigneth . . . His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord . . . A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies" (Psa. 97:1, 4, 5, 3). These illuminations of truth are elsewhere represented by a sword, "out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations" (Rev. 19:15), as hail which "shall sweep away the refuge of lies," and as waters which "shall overflow the hiding place" (Isa. 28:17). Is it not reasonable to suppose, therefore, that his same agent, truth, is represented by the chain which restrains the "kings and nobles" in Psalm 149? Is this not the same chain which circumscribes the powers of the dragon in Revelation 20:2?

How Far Are We in the Process?

A suggestion is that we are in the last of a three stage process. Recall the episode when Elijah had fled for his life to Mount Horeb and the Lord showed him three exhibitions of his power before Elijah heard the "still small voice" of peace. There was first the wind, which "rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks." Then the earthquake, followed by the fire (1 Kings 19:11, 12). These are usually applied to the winds of war (cf. Dan. 7:2), the earthquake of revolution, and the fire of anarchy, which finally introduces the peaceable call of the kingdom. We have seen the winds of war in two world wars. The mountain kingdoms of Christendom were sorely rent and broken by these. It was not one episode, but a lengthy process of war with two main events. But lapping upon this was another process, revolution. The Russian revolution of 1917 and continued with communist began in 1917 and continued with communist and other uprisings for decades.

Neither war nor revolution is entirely past, but much of their work is in the past. The most pressing problems today are not major wars between countries nor communist revolutions within the major powers. The pressing problem today is the melt-down of societal discipline. It is likely that this "fire" phase has lapped upon the other two for some years already, and like the other two, this third stage may endure and increase in spasms for decades.

In the climax, however, all three aspects will play a final and severe part. The four winds will be unleashed, the "great earthquake such as was not since men were upon the earth" will strike, and the kings of earth shall bewail "the smoke of [Babylon's burning]" (Rev. 7:1; 16:18; 18:9).

The Final Conflict of Nations

Ezekiel 38 and 39 are well known. They speak of a final conflict of nations occurring in Israel. Gog, the aggressor from the north, is probably Russia. Those unsympathetic to the invasion-Sheba, Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish (Ezek. 38:13)-are perhaps the moderate Arabs and their western allies from Christendom. Ezekiel is unclear whether these powers are engaged in the struggle militarily. However, their involvement seems to be included in Joel 3:9-13. Joel speaks of a gathering of nations to battle at the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Israel), where the Lord will hold judgment over them. Joel pictures their destruction as the treading of a great winepress. Revelation 14:20 and 19:15 use this same figure for the final judgment of Christendom.

Even Revelation gives us a clue that the treading of the winepress begins at Israel. Revelation 14:20 specifies that the winepress is trodden "without the city." The only city mentioned in Revelation 14 is Babylon (vs. 8). Yet the vine of the earth which is trodden in the winepress is Babylon, Christendom. It is the imitation of the true vine of John 15. How can Babylon be trodden outside of Babylon?

At first it seems contradictory. This can only be true if the powers of Christendom are gathered to some locality outside their native lands for the beginning of their final judgment. This would be the case if the gathering place is at Israel, as Joel 3 requires.

The deaths of Ahab and Jezebel remind us of the same thing. Jezebel represents papacy and Ahab represents the (nominally) Christian governments. The doom of the house of Ahab was prophesied to come in two parts: in the city, eaten of the dogs, and in the field (of battle), picked clean by birds of prey in the aftermath of battle (1 Kings 21:23, 24). The latter applied to Ahab, the former to Jezebel. First the nations of Christendom are broken in the battle at Israel, outside the city; afterwards the churches will be consumed back at home, in the city.

National structures will probably endure into the kingdom for some time. The care and sustenance of billions of persons will require structure and organized operations. For all governmental structure to perish suddenly, in a moment would be counterproductive to the Lord's plan. The scriptures are consistent with this. Zechariah 14:16-19 speaks of a time after the Kingdom has been established. It shows that both proffered blessings and threatened punishments will be used to induce the existing nations to participate. Also, Micah 4:3 affirms that the Lord will "rebuke strong nations afar off," which implies their continued existence. However, their power and strength of arms to oppose the new kingdom will be broken in the ravages of Armageddon.

As time passes and God's blessing is witnessed at and upon Israel, and the people begin to say "we will go with you for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8:23), surely the nations will subordinate their arrangements to the counsel of the ancient worthies, the leaders of Israel. As time progresses the "nations shall walk in the light of [new Jerusalem] . . . and the kings of the earth [will] bring their glory and honor into it" (Rev. 21:24).

Of one thing we can be sure. There will never afterward be national opposition to the kingdom authority. Satan will never again be a dragon, a tyrant usurping control of nations. In Revelation 20, following the millennium, he will appear as "Satan," the adversary (vs. 7); he will go forth to "deceive" as a serpent (vs. 8), and he is still then "the devil," the accuser (vs. 10). But he is nevermore referred to as a dragon. In that capacity he will rise no more after he is once and finally shorn of his power. Probably for this reason the Old Testament references picture the matter a little differently than Revelation. "In that day [introducing the kingdom], the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword . . . shall slay the dragon that is in the sea" (Isa. 27:1; see also Psa. 74:13, 14; Ezek. 29:1-4).

Gathering of the Nations

Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until that day that I rise up to the prey: for 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. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. -Zephaniah 3.8, 9

By Leonard Griehs

An epidemic terror of the end of the world has several times spread over the nations. In the year 999, pilgrims gathered in Jerusalem to await the coming of the Lord in that city. Most of them had sold their goods and had gone to live in the Holy Land. Buildings, edifices, churches, all were allowed to deteriorate and tumble as people from all walks of life traveled eastward with their eyes on the sky, expecting the Son of God to descend in glory at any moment. During the thousandth year, as they sat waiting, every disturbance of nature filled them with fear. A mid-March thunderstorm set them all on their knees to await God's voice announcing the day of judgment. Every meteor seen in the Jerusalem sky brought Christians into the streets, weeping and praying. Fanatic preachers appeared everywhere, preaching sermons about the coming judgment.

As we approach the second thousandth year, we have many books and preachers who have appeared proclaiming a similar venue. Likely we will see even more over the course of the next few years. Perhaps some will attempt to venture to Jerusalem, as those early Christians did, fully expecting the Son of God to descend. No doubt, if that year passes without the realization of their expectations, many will fall away from the faith and wonder why God has not revealed himself in flaming fire as they believe he promised to do. While we as Bible students must be on guard against preachers today who proclaim a message similar to those who warned the tenth century Christians (Acts 20:30), we know that at some point perhaps not too distant in the future God will bring an end to this age through an outward manifestation of his power, as described in Ezekiel 38. We cannot determine precisely when that day might be nor precisely how it might happen, and so we must be wary of selecting a year simply because it is the turn of an earthly millennium. We do better to focus on the scriptures which discuss events preceding this great time of deliverance.

Nations in Distress

In Luke 21:25, 26, 27, Jesus describes the transition of this present evil world into God's kingdom through a catalogue of events which, though highly figurative, give us some framework for determining the fulfillment of biblical prophecy in the events of our day: "And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and *fog- looking after those things which are conning on the earth*: for the

powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in his glory" (author's emphasis).

The italicized phrase is important to our discussion. The word looking (Strong's #4329), expresses the thought of expectation of infliction, thus apprehensiveness. The New International Version suggests this: "On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world . . ."

God's intervention in the world's affairs is not what makes men faint, but it is what they see happening in the world prior to that time that brings them distress! The tenth century Christians who gathered and awaited the terror of deliverance at the hands of the returning vengeful Christ did not have the benefit of the scriptures to help them understand how to view the "signs" of the heavens in the world around them. They saw God bringing destruction and death to those left on the earth, rather than rescuing it from the brink of annihilation.

Gathering of Nations

What is the nature and purpose of the gathering of nations mentioned in the theme text? It is unlikely that this refers to a physical location, as many nations barely have room for their own population! The word for *gathering* is Strong's #622, *acaph*, meaning to put all together. The Hebrew word is recognizable from remembering David's chief musician, *Asaph*, whose name was based on this word because he was a "collector" of songs. The "gathering" of nations then likely refers to a "collection" of the nations in a common cause or interest, displayed in a way which makes them so interdependent that they are willing to compromise former ideals. This interdependency makes it possible for a disaster in one nation to cause major disruption to all. In our modern world we have seen substantial collecting of the world through common economic interests. This has gained even more momentum since the emergence of nations following World War I and most recently with those nations emerging from the fall of the Soviet Bloc. Peoples suppressed by long centuries of despotism now want economic prosperity, and expect government to secure it rapidly. A common concern in the world's peacekeeping efforts during the past eighty years has been to protect economic and investment interests of nations. Empires which battled each other feverishly for years now sign agreements for common trade and guarantee of loans and investment dollars to become part of global economic security. Access to world capital through strong competitive positions far outweigh ideals once important enough to justify the slaughter of innocents and the death of men and women who rallied to defend that idealism. Our world population today wants leaders who provide them with a means for economic independence and personal prosperity, and they are willing to compromise both religious and social principle to achieve it. This goal "gathers" the nations in a far more efficient manner than any common cause of idealism. Mass media advances the cause by displaying the benefits to the people and creates in them an even greater desire to advance.

During the past fifty years, we have seen much progress toward a global gathering of nations in a common economic interest.

World Bank

The world bank was established in 1944 to assist European postwar recovery. In *1949*, after the Marshall Plan absorbed this role, the focus shifted to loans and technical assistance to promote the balanced growth of international trade and economic development, especially in underdeveloped areas. The World Bank gave rise to the International Monetary Fund and the International Finance Corporation (*1956*) and finally the International Development Association (*1960*). This has become the single most important lending agency in international development.

In *1990*, over *159* nations had increased borrowing from \$7 billion to \$15 billion. The increase in commitment to the bank from lending nations has risen from \$85 billion to \$171 billion. While this is hardly enough to concern lending nations whose gross national product is in the trillions, the bank played a significant role in providing solutions to Third World debt problems in the late eighties and early nineties. It will likely do even more for emerging nations such as China, which is only now emerging from millennia of suppression and poverty.

Investment in Foreign Economies Growing

Over \$100 billion in international equity investments were publicly reported by United States institutions in *1994*. This represents only a portion of the total U.S. investment, yet it is an indication of the increased commitment being made to foreign countries. It is estimated that about six percent of the investment dollars flow into over *38* countries around the world.

Almost \$150 million was committed in *1994* alone.

World Trade Organization

The World Trade Organization, which emerged in April, *1994* following the ratification of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), will be a powerful multilateral organization when fully enacted. It is empowered to monitor global trade agreements and to resolve disputes among member nations. The conference at Marrakesh, Morocco, resulted in 125 nations finalizing agreements which had been under negotiation since 1986. This is the most ambitious agreement tying together the common economic interests of the world since 1947. This agreement came into effect officially on January 1, *1995*. While this agreement focuses on trade of hard goods between nations, future areas of discussion will center on services, investments, government purchases, research subsidies, patents and telecommunications. Indeed a most powerful gathering!

United Nations

The United Nations (UN) was founded at the close of World War II to maintain international peace and security. Although it has not often proved capable of preventing military conflict, it has expanded its functions and membership to become an influential force in economic aspects of international relations. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), under the supervision of the General Assembly of the UN, functions on recommending ways of improving economic and social cooperation. It was originally made up of only 18 member nations, but today has expanded to over 50 member nations, with growing interest.

During the nineteen eighties the fortunes of the United Nations seemed in decline. The UN itself was in financial difficulty with even the United States refusing to pay its share of the organization's expenses. By 1990, however, the UN had been revitalized through the end of the cold war, which held out the promise of the sort of cooperation among the great powers of the world that had been the original basis for the organization's charter. The UN has played a much more prominent role in today's world since U.S. President George Bush proclaimed a "new world order." Since 1990, the UN's peacekeeping role in the world has expanded significantly. Whether it will keep this role, and grow into the kind of organization envisioned at its creation, could well depend on the support of emerging powers such as Germany and Japan. These two countries will be highly dependent on economic growth the next few years in order to sustain their ability to satisfy their people and share in the world's investment dollars.

Failed Efforts of Economic and Social Reform

History shows that no one man, company, country, or nation can change the present order of society. It reveals many well-intended but futile efforts. At the turn of the twentieth century, trade unions appeared as a solution for relieving the oppression of rich overseers of the poor working class. However, soon the unions grew corrupt through abuse of the power of men who created them. They usurped control for personal gain and brought destruction of the very jobs they were created to protect, as well as criminal behavior to those who resisted them.

Social programs aimed at redistributing wealth from the haves to the have-nots were developed. Those in control, however, did little to help the recipients advance and thus created a class of people uneducated and unfit for assuming a productive economic role in society.

These programs were confined and limited geographically. They produced nations which limited individual freedom and converted gain into a posh military domination and power. While many students of the Bible in the early twentieth century believed such programs were signs of the fulfillment of prophecy, their failure to bring the expected outcome was largely due to the limited scope of such programs. Prohibition, welfare, antitrust laws, and other similar programs were confined geographically to single countries. In order to fulfill prophecy, it is necessary that movements be global and

encompass a common interest of peoples in all nations. Such a requirement appears today, as nations pool efforts and form collective organizations to promote economic equality and attempt to eliminate the disparate levels of economic status in a new world order.

What does common economic gain mean for the nations? Bankruptcy of one nation no longer impacts that one nation. Investment dollars to finance that debt come from far across the world. Recent support for loan guarantees to Mexico from the United States illustrate this difficulty. Substantial failure would impact not just the financed country, but all loaning countries as well. Similarly, an investment in the capital of a country to promote economic growth links the progress of the recipient with the wealth of investor countries. Failure of the emerging country to fulfill its economic expectation can result in the loss of dollars to support social and economic programs in the benefactor country.

Tottering to Fall

Psalm 82:5 describes the situation emerging in our day in the words, "senseless and ignorant, they blindly move till the world shakes to its base" (Moffatt). The concept is explained by one commentator as the world "is tottering to fall." As the world collects its nations together in mutual economic interest, it becomes easier for a single economic disaster to bring havoc from which recovery may not be possible without complete disaster. It is precisely at that point when the Lord will intervene.

Only the Lord's power and in the Lord's way will the world's direction change to a perfect system, based not upon personal gain, but upon love and justice. To introduce this system, present conditions must be entirely overthrown. God cannot put a new patch on an old garment or pour new wine into an old wineskin. Man must accept God's terms for equality. With sympathy for all people who have been suppressed for so long and are now looking to the world's leaders to obtain equality and justice for them, we can pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," even though our text suggests that it can be done only through the "fire of God's jealousy," which he will pour out upon the nations when the gathering is complete.

Three Prophetic Parables

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?-Matthew 24:3

By Carl Hagensick

Jesus' answer to the three questions in Matthew 24:3 was in two parts and covers the whole of chapters 24 and 25. The first portion of his answer (chap. 24) is in the nature of a prophecy, while the latter section (chap. 25) takes the form of three parables—the wise and foolish virgins, the talents, and the sheep and the goats. These three parables summarize in parabolic fashion the more direct answer of his prophetic words in the twenty fourth chapter.

Two elements are common to all three parables. First, they all relate to a separation of good from bad, of profitable from unprofitable. Second, they each contain a reference to the subject of Jesus' sermon—the second coming of the Lord (see vs. 6, 10, 19, 31).

Two Aspects of the Advent

Many students of the Bible concur that there are two basic aspects to the Lord's return—his coming for his church (John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17) and his coming with his church (Jude 14).

The first of these is quiet and unnoticed except by the watchers, while the second is more dramatic, revealing the fact of his return and signaling the onset of his long-promised kingdom.

Properly distinguishing these two aspects of the Lord's return removes much while they went to buy, the bridegroom of the confusion from the study of this came." important biblical topic.

Order of the Parables

Nowhere is this distinction more notable than in the sequence of the parables of Matthew 25. In the first parable, that of the wise and foolish virgins, obviously the coming for the bride is emphasized. He comes as a bridegroom and those discerning that return are cautioned to be awake and watching, implying that it would not be a coming openly manifest to all.

In contrast, the third parable, that of the sheep and the goats, speaks of his coming in glory accompanied by all his holy angels and dealing with the assembled nations gathered before him--an event noticeable to all.

This leaves the remaining parable, the one in the middle--that of the talents--to treat the events that come between these two aspects of the second advent.

With this preface we will proceed to look at an overview of each of the three parables, not attempting to discuss the minute details of each.

Wise and Foolish Virgins (Verses 1-13)

Two classes of individuals are featured in the first parable. Both are styled as being "virgins," pure ones. Both are honored as being chosen to lead the bridegroom to the house of the bride. Both are carrying lighted lamps. Their only distinguishing feature is that one group does not have the foresight to provide extra oil to keep its lamps burning, while the other does so.

The parable opens with all ten going forth to meet the coming bridegroom. Presumably, they would go to a nearby hill where they could more easily spot the lamps of the approaching party of the bridegroom.

In verse 6 there is a call: "Behold the bridegroom cometh." While the word "cometh" is not supported in the Greek, it is apparently the correct thought; for the approaching party does not actually appear on the scene until verse 10: "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came."

In the interim before the bridegroom's arrival, the foolish discover their lack of sufficient oil to keep their lamps burning and must go to the market to purchase more. Upon their return, they find that the party has already entered in for the wedding and they are left outside.

The basic lessons are simple: preparation and watchfulness. The parable is discussing a separation over the coming of the bridegroom and is closely associated time-wise with his arrival. It is summed up in verse 13: " Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

The Talents (Verses 14-30)

A similar parable, that of the pounds in Luke 19:12-27, was given on another occasion, but with much the same intent. There the purpose of the parable is given clearly in verse 11: "because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."

The separation in this parable is between those servants who wisely and unwisely used the talents over which they were made stewards.

The separation occurs when "the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them" (Matt. 25:19). While the Luke account says that he returned "having received the kingdom," obviously he was not yet in full control of that kingdom, for the final act in the Luke parable is the slaying of the rebellious enemies who would not have him rule over them.

The fact that the separation included those servants who had received their talents prior to his departure strongly implies that the members of this class, the church, would be resurrected at the time of the fulfillment of the parable.

This accords well with Paul's statement where we are informed that the "dead in Christ" rise at his return and are joined by those remaining alive at the time of his arrival (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

However the lesson seems to have special import for those of the church who are on the scene when he returns. It is a harvest lesson and applies especially in the Laodicean period of church history marked by a spirit of "lukewarmness" (Rev. 3:15, 16).

The primary lesson applies well to the interim between the Lord returning for his saints and his returning with them. Therefore it is aptly placed by the Lord between the other two parables of the chapter.

The Sheep and the Goats (Verses 31-46)

The "sheep and goats" are separated after Christ comes "with" all his "holy ones."

The time for the fulfillment of this parable is easy to determine: "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: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (vs. 31, 32).

The groups separated are equally easy to identify—he gathers all nations before him and separates them. This is not a division that takes place when he comes for his church but a later development in his advent. In fact this accounts for one of the main activities of Christ's kingdom.

A similar lesson is given by the prophet Malachi. He refers to the Lord gathering "his jewels," an obvious reference to his holy ones, his saints, the church. After they are gathered to be with their Lord in heaven, he states: "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (3:18).

The separation in this parable is not based on overt acts but rather on acts of omission: "Inasmuch as ye did it [acts of kindness] not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me" (vs. 45).

This will be that basis of kingdom judgment. It will not be so much in condemnation for past wrongs as it will be for a failure to live up to the kingdom rule of love for one's fellow man.

Some may question the applicability of this parable to the kingdom because there will be no prisons, nor hunger, nor nakedness there. These are however symbolic expressions and should be understood thus.

Those with the sheeplike disposition will visit their family, friends, and neighbors in the prison house of death. They can give them the food and drink of the knowledge of God's word, for "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). They can clothe one another with righteousness that comes from obedience to kingdom rules. They can welcome them into the same covenant relationship they themselves enjoy with God. They can visit, comfort, and encourage those who are discouraged with their own performance under the iron rule of that kingdom.

The Judgments

In each of the three parables there is an unfaithful class: foolish virgins, the one talent servant, and the goats. However, the fate of the three classes markedly differs.

In the parable of the virgins, the refusal of admission to the wedding is the only punishment. They have proven unworthy of the high honor bestowed upon them to be members of the procession to the bridal chambers. Loss of that privilege was considered punishment sufficient for their lack of foresight in providing more oil.

The one talent servant has two punishments. First, the talent with which he was entrusted is removed and given to the one possessing ten talents. Secondly, he is cast into outer darkness where there is "wailing and gnashing of teeth." Wailing merely denotes sorrow and refers to their rejection as a servant. Gnashing of teeth expresses a deeper emotion, that of frustration (See Acts 7:54).

Only in the parable of the sheep and the goats do we end the rejected class assigned to the "everlasting ire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Their punishment is equal in length to the reward of the sheep (see v. 46).

Identifying this fire with that prepared for "the devil and his angels" enables us to clearly identify it. In Revelation 20:10 that fire is called "the lake of fire" and is defined in verse 14 with the words "this is the second death."

The unfaithful, therefore, in the first two parables are not consigned to second death but merely lose their privileges of service and attending the wedding of the Lamb, while the unfaithful in the last of the parables suffer the everlasting oblivion of the second death.

Summary

In review then, we note that the three parables are a fitting climax to the great prophecy of the preceding chapter. They are given purposely in the order they are presented in our Bibles and show, sequentially, the tests to accompany his return for his church, the tests that immediately follow that return, and the ultimate tests for which that presence was designed, dividing mankind into those worthy of receiving life and those unworthy of that great gift.

Hosea - an Overview

Echoes from the Past

But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Loin their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.-Hosea 1:7

Based on Notes from the Bible of John A. Meggison

The name Hosea means "deliverance," "salvation." It is not uncommon among the Jews. Israel's last king was named Hoshea. It was the original name of Joshua, which Moses changed (Num. 13:8). The prophet's name thus stood in marked contrast to his mission, which was to announce ruin and destruction.

The period of his prophecy-Uzziah to Hezekiah and Jeroboam, son of Joash of Israel-covered a very long and active ministry. From the death of Uzziah to the first year of Hezekiah was 32 years. His ministry may have lasted 60 years (*Lang's Commentary*).

Hosea was contemporary with Isaiah, Micah, and Amos. These must have been closely connected in time, message, and service. Hosea takes up the thread of prophecy where Amos left off and keeps spinning it out until the destruction of the kingdom of Israel. There are parallel passages in Amos and Hosea (Hos. 8:14 and Amos 2:5; 1:4-7, 10; 12; 2:6; Hos. 9:13 and Amos 7:17; Hos. 12:8 and Amos 8:5; Hos. 12:10 and Amos 2:10). While Amos was probably aware of Assyria, by which God was to execute his judgment on the kingdom of Israel, he does not name or even allude to it. In Hosea it is named repeatedly and plainly, and he must denounce any association of Israel with this world power (*Lange's Commentary*).

The time of Hosea's prophecy covered two periods of the ten tribe history. First, the time of Jeroboam II, who raised the kingdom to an unprecedented position of eminence and power, although internal conditions of decay were abundantly present which the prophet was commissioned to reprove. The second was the period of decline and decay of the kingdom after the fall of the house of Jehu, and under succeeding kings. This was induced inwardly by a religious and moral ruin and not deferred, but only hastened, by a godless policy which sought support from foreign powers and delivered the nation into the hands of Assyria. (See 2 Kings 14:23-29; 15:8-31; 17:1-23) [*Lange's Commentary*].

The prophecy is mainly occupied with the ten-tribe kingdom, though Judah is not kept out of sight but alluded to in chapters five and six. It gives a severe testimony against the national apostasy from Jehovah and the deep and prevailing moral and civil corruption as the fruit of that apostasy; foretelling, as a result, divine judgments which increase in severity until the utter destruction of the kingdom. Side by side with the severe threatenings are words of promise richly unfolded, not merely as a hope of conversion

and thus of better days, but also as a definite announcement that the time was coming when the people, purified by chastisement and returning in grief to their God, would again find acceptance with him. Thereby their kingdom would be restored, not in its current abnormal and divided condition but as one united nation under a king of the line of David.

The prophet pronounces punishment because of Jehovah's love for his people. In this love of God (not merely in his righteousness) are rooted even his threatenings and the announcement of punishment. It was because Jehovah embraced his people from the beginning that he could not suffer any apostasy from them but must become angry at it, chastise it, even slay and destroy it utterly. All the threatening and chastisement is really the indignation and zeal of love, born of sorrow, and hence the more intense. Love is indeed angry and most justly and deeply so but it still remains nothing less than love. It is pained that it must be angry. In wrath it aims only to remove that which interrupts and prevents the display of love to the beloved. It seeks always to secure salvation, reconciliation, and restoration. Otherwise, it would stand in its own way of realizing its object—the happiness of all God's creatures—and would contribute most surely to its own failure.

Thus God's promise is as necessary as his threatening. In proportion to the severity of the punishment must be the richness of the promise; as flowing from the love of God and not simply from a compassion coexisting with his punitive righteousness or from his faithfulness to his covenant as though truthfulness alone were to be kept unimpeachable. Thus the prophetic exhibition of the love of God, wounded sorely and in many ways by Israel's guilt was therefore necessarily a chastening love, though ever remaining unchanged in its inner nature and so deeply grounded that it would not destroy, but heal and recall to itself (*Lange's Commentary*).

To Hosea the love of Jehovah is the deepest ground of his relation to Israel.

That love was always active in developing the faithful. It was injured and disturbed by Israel. It chastens now in deep pain, but can never deny itself nor be extinguished. It would still deliver and will at length save all the willing and obedient. All this is shown with the most glowing sympathy and in a great variety of ways. As the wife is united to her husband in indissoluble and sacred bonds and as the faithful husband feels justly angry and punishes her, even casting her off for a time, but can never cease to love her, so the love of Jehovah never departs from Israel, though he is angry and must punish them.

Divisions of the Book

I. First discourse (chapters 4 through 11)

A. Chapters 4 through 7

1. Against the people as a nation on account of their idolatry and deep depravity of morals promoted by the priests.
2. Chapters 5 through 7 against the rulers -- priests (chapters 5 and 6), especially on account of their evil alliance with the powers of the world.

B. Chapters 8 through 10, the judgment, extending even to the carrying away of the people into bondage under Assyria.

C. Chapter 11 - Mercy. God cannot destroy Israel whom he has always loved, but will again have complete compassion on them even though they have most vilely requited his love.

II. Second discourse (chapters 12 through 14)

A. Chapter 12. Complaint resumed

B. Chapter 13. Judgment most emphatically given.

C. Chapter 14. In hope of conversion, love finally flows forth in the promise of a rich blessing.

Chapters one through three are introductory. They give the beginning of the divine revelation to Hosea and describe the spiritual adultery of the ten-tribe kingdom and its apostasy from Jehovah into idolatry.

The second main division is chapters four through fourteen. Chapter four is separated as a general charge of apostasy by the people of Jehovah.

In chapter five the denunciation is directed against those of exalted position. In addition to the general unfaithfulness to Jehovah, the false policy of seeking alliances with Egypt and Assyria was an insult to Jehovah.

Disloyalty does not appear to be mentioned in chapter six, but is resumed again in chapter seven. There the denunciation is directed chiefly against the court itself while chapters five and six are more against the priests. In all these chapters the threat of punishment is

united with the accusations. The actual announcement of judgment, however, appears first in chapter eight and continues in the following two chapters.

A new section begins in chapter eleven and his promises enter. Jehovah's love for Israel seemed to be swallowed up by judgment, but here it emerges again. First is only his reminder of his action toward Israel in their childhood. Naturally, this is expressed in a sorrowful complaint against Israel who now, in manhood, requites that love with ill, showing by its apostasy the basest ingratitude. In 11:5, 6 we find the threat of punishment, but Jehovah again brings his love into remembrance. It is he that loves Israel. This love is his essential disposition and cannot now belie itself. It oversteps wrath and appears as mercy. His promises break forth on their shining way as sunlight after dark and long distressing clouds.

The storm is not yet passed. In chapters twelve and thirteen threats of punishment reappear. The present is contrasted with the past and weighty words are twice uttered: "I am Jehovah, thy God from the land of Egypt" (12:9; 13:4). That people who had from the beginning Jehovah as their God cannot be given up. It is on the ground of their expected ultimate conversion that love flows forth in fullest promise. It promises no longer a mere cessation of punishment (11:9), but positively holds out the promise of a glorious state of blessedness.

Keil divides each of the two tions (Chap. 1-3 and 4-14) into three smaller ones (1:2 to 2:1; 2:2-23 and chap. 3 for the first section and 4:1 to 6:3; 6:4 to 11:11 and 11:12 to 14:9 for the second section.) Each section is marked by a beginning of denunciation and an ending of promise.

The Second Section

The second section may alternatively be divided into two main parts as diagrammed in the box on the right:

The Sorrow and Indignation of Love

The prophecy describes the sorrow and indignation of Jehovah's love which was so wounded by Israel's faithlessness. The language is peculiarly emotional and impassioned, reflecting plainly the rush and swell of the feelings.

"This anguish of love at the faithlessness of Israel so completely fills the mind of the prophet that his rich and lively imagination seek perpetually by variety of imagery and fresh turns of thought to open the eyes of the sinful nation to the abyss of destruction ahead of it. His deep sympathy gives to his language the character of excitement, so that he merely hints briefly at the thoughts instead of studiously elaborating them, passes with abrupt change from one figure or simile to another and moves forward in short sentences and oracular utterances rather than in gently rounded discourse" (Keil).

"The style of the prophet is like a garland woven with various kinds of flowers, comparisons intertwined with comparisons. He breaks off one flower and throws it away, only to break off another immediately. He flies like a bee from one bed of flowers to another, bringing the honey of his varied sentences. His diction is marked by rare words and forms and unusual combinations and it may be conceived how difficult is the exposition of this book. The prophet [Hosea] is one of the most difficult of the prophets of the Old Covenant, and indeed of all the biblical writers" (Wunsche).

"His heart is full of the deepest anguish on account of the destruction and the inevitably approaching dissolution of the state, which makes him neglect all artistic and harmonious treatment of his theme" (Wunsche).

"In Hosea there is a rich and lively imagination, a pregnant fullness of language, and in spite of many strong figures, great tenderness of expression and warmth. His poetry is purely original, replete with vigor and thought and purity of presentation. Sudden changes occur."

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above notes are preparatory to the author's verse by verse treatment of the book of Hosea.

The Blessing of Judah

Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler.- Chronicles 5:2

Based on notes by Wilfred Price, Australia

In Genesis 49 Jacob blesses his twelve sons. He singles out Judah for the most prominent blessing. This study looks in depth at this special blessing upon Judah.

Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk (vs. 8-12).

Judah's main cause for prominence was that God had designed that from his tribe the chief ruler, Messiah, would come and "unto him shall the gathering [obedience] of the people [including gentiles] be." In due time Jesus was born from the tribe of Judah through the line of David, Judah's first king.

A Couching Lion

Giving this prophecy in Egypt, Jacob uses the family symbol of the Egyptian pharaohs - the lion, the king of the forest.

Other nations such as Great Britain have used both the lion and the unicorn. In Revelation 5:5 the Lord is depicted as "the lion of the tribe of Judah." Strong's concordance defines the word translated couching (Strong's #7257) as "having all four legs folded, like a recumbent animal." The description seems to be of one waiting the due time for its task, implying the delay from the giving of the prophecy to the assumption of the rulership role by "the lion of the tribe of Judah."

The word "Shiloh" (meaning "tranquil") in verse 10 is an epithet for the Messiah, laying stress, not on his conquering nature, but on the tranquil kingdom he will introduce as the "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

The Scepter

The word translated "scepter" (Strong's #7626) is open to two diverse thoughts. Literally it means "to branch off, a scion" and is suggestive of Jesus as the "branch" of the house of David (Isa. 11:1-3). As such it is frequently translated "tribe" in the Old Testament. It is also the word for the scepter of a king, literally "a stick for punishment." In this sense it conveys the thought of the right to rule, the title to all power (Matt. 28:18). This full power is delegated to him at his second advent, as we read of the diadem in Ezekiel 21:27 ". . . until he come whose right it is, and I will give it to him." (See also Dan. 7:13, 14.)

The Foal and the Colt

The King James translation of verse 11 reads, "Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine." The foal and the colt refer to the same animal. Leeser's translation makes it clearer: "Binding unto the vine his foal, and to the vine branch his ass's colt." This implies that the colt was tied twice-once to the vine, or vine trunk, and later to a branch.

This is referred to again in Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly . . . O daughter of Jerusalem . . . thy King cometh unto thee . . . having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass" (see Matt. 21:2-5). The literal fulfillment is given in Mark 11:7: "And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him [the colt], and he sat upon him." A preferred reading in Matthew phrases it thus: "And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon" (21:7). The word "clothes" here agrees with the same word in Genesis 49:11, though in a different language.

Jesus is associated with both the "ass" and the "colt," or "foal," a male. It is the "colt" which he ties twice, once to the vine and again to the branches. He identifies himself as the vine and the church as the branches in John 15: "I am the true vine" (v. 1), and a little later "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (v. 5).

What part then does the she ass fulfill? As the ass was the mother of the foal, so the Sarah covenant was the mother that produced our Lord as the seed of promise, the colt. The branches, then, in this prophetic picture, represent how the church is also under this Sarah covenant. The members of church are children of the free woman Sarah, just as was Christ their head (Gal. 4:28-31).

In John 15:1-5 our Lord Jesus is identified in the vine and the church is associated with him: "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing."

The vine in Jacob's blessing is no ordinary vine, but "the choice vine." The word "choice" (Strong's #8321) is in the sense of redness. It describes a vine stock yielding the richest variety of purple grapes. It is the only one which produces blood red wine, a

symbol of the blood associated with our Lord's sacrifice and the sacrament of the Last Supper (Matt. 26:27, 28). The only other place using this word "choice" is Isaiah 5:2, where we read of the "choicest vine"-the typical vineyard of the Lord.

Washing His Garments

"He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes." Note the two separate washings. "Garments" and "clothes" are from two different words. We are here introduced to the sin offering of the Day of Atonement of Leviticus 16 during the entire gospel age. We see our Lord, as the High Priest typified by Aaron, with the two sacrificial offerings of the blood of animals.

The word for "washing" (Strong's #3526) means cleansing "by stamping the feet." This is exactly how grapes are crushed if there are no mechanical means. In the Middle East this custom is still in practice today. This washing represents the atoning blood, for "the life is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11). Our Lord was lowly and "contrite," which literally means "to crush" (Strong's #1793). As such "he made his soul an offering for sin" (Isa. 53:10).

While the word for garments (Strong's #3850) means just that, it can be a euphemism for a wife. These are the garments the Lord was wearing and are referred to prophetically in Zechariah: "Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" (3:3, 4).

Joshua was the high priest of Israel soon after their return from the Babylonian captivity, about 500 B.C. He is shown here receiving a change of garments. The name "Joshua" in Hebrew is Jesus in Greek.

This is the picture we have in Leviticus 16:6. "And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering for himself . . . and his house." Aaron was imperfect and needed the blood for washing. His "house" would be the Priesthood and the Levites-the household of faith. However, when Christ

offered up himself he was not sinful. It was for his "house," his wife, the bride of Christ. The garments did not cover the head but all of the body members. These are now covered with the "robe of righteousness . . . as a bride adorneth herself" (Isa. 61:10). This is what Christ accomplishes during this gospel age.

His Clothes

"He washed his clothes in the blood of grapes." This is the second washing. What clothes are here washed? Remember Jesus in the triumphal entry: "And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them [the animals] their clothes, and set him thereon" (Matt. 21:7). It was the admirers who cast their clothes on the animals for Jesus to ride in comfort. These are the clothes washed in the blood of grapes.

The grapes are produced by the branches which abide in the vine for their life. "Ye are the branches . . . the same bringeth forth much fruit" (John. 15:5). This blood is the offering of the church.

"If any man shall be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24);

"For if we be dead with him we shall also live with him" (2 Tim. 2:11);

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord" (2 Cor. 4:10);

". . . appointed unto death . . ." (1 Cor. 4:9);

". . . a witness [martyr] of the sufferings of Christ" (1 Peter 5:1);

". . . ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings" (1 Peter 4:13);

"And fill up [Strong's #466, `supplement' or `complete'] that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake" (Col. 1:24); ". . . planted together in the likeness of his death" (Rom. 6:5); "We are all members of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12; 6:15); "Else . . . why are they then baptized for the dead?" (1 Cor. 15:29).

As the branches have no life except they be in the vine, so all merit comes from our Lord Jesus Christ. The church has no intrinsic merit at all. It is Christ's merit that passes through the church giving her justification.

"It is one cup, though it be the juice of many grapes The grapes cannot maintain themselves as grapes if they would give the life-giving spirit" (Daily Heavenly Manna, April 12).

Eyes Red as Wine

The word "red" in verse 12 (Strong's #2447) means "dark, flashing; in a good sense; brilliant, as stimulated with wine." Weymouth renders it: "his eyes darker than wine."

This figure of flashing eyes is used frequently of the Lord.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire" (Rev. 1:14);

"In righteousness he doth judge and make war. I-Ifs eyes were as a flame of fire" (Rev. 19:11, 12);

"His throne was like the fiery flame . . . a fiery stream issued and came from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him" (Dan. 7:9, 10).

Our Lord is pictured with penetrating eyes, able to discern right from wrong, properly judging matters. "And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, . . . with righteousness shall he judge the poor" (Isa. 11:2-5). He will also be a consuming fire destroying the works of Satan. In this way his eyes flash "in a good sense." This fiery time will inaugurate the kingdom. As a surgeon, he only wounds to heal (Rev. 19:13; Psa. 45:3-6; Isa. 63:1-4).

White Teeth

Leeser and other translations phrase this: "I-Ifs teeth shall be white from milk." This is apparently the correct thought. We read in Joel 3:18: "In that day . . . the mountains will drop new wine [the joys of the kingdom], and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters."

When mankind returns from the grave most will be totally void of any knowledge of God. They will have to initially be fed with milk, as babes. As Paul says of the early church: "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat . . . ye were not able to bear it, neither are ye now" (1 Cor. 3:2). Again, speaking prophetically, we read: "Ho!

Come . . . buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1).

Why the teeth? Neither the United Nations nor the Roman beast have teeth for peace and righteousness. "It had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue" (Dan. 7:7). In contrast, the Lord's white teeth will deliver milk and the waters of life (Ezek. 47:1-5).

"Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing" (Song of Solomon 6:6). As in Genesis 49:11 the word "garment" was used as a euphemism for a wife, so in the Song of Solomon the "flock of sheep" refers to the church, the wife, the bride of Christ. In John 10:4 we read: "the sheep . . . know his voice"; and in Romans 8:36: "we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

As the teeth are in the head so these "teeth," the church, are controlled by our Lord, the head of the church. The milk and waters of life pass through them. Milk is always supplied by the mother: "Queens [shall be] thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee" (Isa. 49:23). The church will be the "nursing mothers" for mankind. "The Spirit and the bride shall say, Come . . . whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

Another prophecy, in Zechariah 8:23 reads: "Ten men . . . shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, 'We will go with you!'" As it was with Jesus' admirers who placed their coats on the colt for Jesus to sit on, so in the Millennium the only ones who will receive the full benefits from the ransom and sin offering will be those who admire the Lord and walk in his ways. This will be the time "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe . . . in that day" (2 Thess. 1:10).

Summary

In summary, then, these prophetic words of Jacob relate to the Abrahamic covenant and the producing of the promised seed who later becomes the lion of the tribe of Judah. Then it proceeds with the ass that bore the colt, representing the Sarah covenant being the spiritual mother of our Lord. The two separate washings with wine and the blood of grapes show the flowing of the blood of Christ through the church to the world. In verse 12 our Lord's second presence is introduced with heavy judgment against the apostasy and the world in order to establish his kingdom, with its laws enforced by the "iron rod." After this will come the finality of blessing- "the tents of Judah first," and then the gentiles (Zech. 12:7).

This is pictured by the merit of the ransom passing through the church as shown by the Lord's teeth and mouth. The Lord's sheep eventually become his milky teeth through which the waters of life and the milk for babes will flow for the blessing of all the families of the earth (Song of Solomon 4:2; 6:6).

NEWS AND VIEWS

Announcement of Annual Meeting

If you are a member of the Pastoral Bible Institute, you are entitled to attend the annual meeting of the Institute, which is held each June. At this meeting, the general business of the Institute is conducted, financial reports are given, and the new Board of Directors is elected. Editors of THE HERALD are appointed by the new Board. Terms of service to the board and as editors are one year. The 1995 Annual Meeting will be held at 10 a.m., CDT, on Saturday, June 3, in Wausau, Wisconsin, at the Mission Evangelical Church. On the following morning, those who wish to stay are invited to attend the meeting with members of the class in Wausau. If you plan to attend, it is essential that you contact us regarding your visit. Please call Delores Anderson, 924 Meadow Rd., Wausau, WI 54401, telephone (715) 675-7560. If you need pickup from the airport or bus station, please contact Loyal Petran, 607 Ross Ave., Wausau, WI 54403-6972, telephone (715) 848-6073. As an institute member, your vote is important. If you have not yet cast your ballot, please do so immediately. If you have questions or did not receive a ballot, please call James Candle, Secretary, at (206) 671-8661.

Herald Magazine Now on Tape!

As mentioned in our last issue, THE HERALD is now available on cassette tape. Each issue is complete on two tapes. The cost is \$4.00 per issue. Tapes can be ordered from Carl Hagensick, Managing Editor, 2929 Hillside Lane, Darien, IL 60561,

Renewals

Please remember to check your renewal date on the mailing label. You may renew your subscription at any time, but make sure that you do not let it run out unless you wish to stop receiving THE HERALD. We do not include notices of subscription expirations, so please note this closely.

Do you have a friend who might enjoy reading the Herald, or could you use another copy to give to a friend? You may order a second copy or you may subscribe for a friend. Mail your request to the address given on the inside cover.

Readers Speak Out

Re January/February issue

I enjoy News & Views but the real reason for writing is to express appreciation for the article "Praying for Government." That is my thinking and it is encouraging to see it publicly expressed. I think it is good to say thank you when we can to anyone who ministers the truth helpfully to us. "Portraits of Jesus Praying" is also an excellent article but not having that address I cannot write to (that author). Also "The Prayer of Jabez" interested me greatly because a year or two ago I wrote a paper on Jabez myself and sent it to Bro. Hudson of the Bible Student Monthly in England and he printed it (Bible Student Monthly, September/October, 1993). Jabez must have been a remarkable man and naturally we would like to know more about him, but anyway we know enough, if it is brief, to inspire our own desires to live near the Lord.

I read THE HERALD from cover to cover. I attend a small class and most of us are getting old, but (there is) a sprinkling of younger ones. I am approaching 87 myself and age limits me from doing some things I used to do, but God is good and how thankful we are to have the approach to Him through the work of His beloved Son, our Savior and Redeemer.

-W.A. Smith, Australia

Around The World

Israel

In 1996, Israelis will elect their Prime Minister directly for the first time. Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu is leading the opinion polls. Yitzhak Rabin's main problem in the polls is a scandal over the illegal siphoning of millions of dollars from Histadrut, Israel's giant trade union federation, to finance the political campaigns of senior Labor figures.

Netanyahu has already put the party on notice that if he wins the election he will not feel obligated to honor peace arrangements that Mr. Rabin has reached with Yasir Arafat, the Palestinian leader.

(New York Times, 3/12/95)

Within ten years, Jerusalem could have an ultra-Orthodox mayor. Thousands of new ultra-Orthodox Jews have taken up residence in the city since the election of Mayor Ehud Olmert in 1994. There has been a further push to expand existing ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods. Deputy Mayor Lupolianski says "I believe that in another 10 years, Torah Jews will be the majority in Jerusalem. The governing council of the city has been annexing as much land as possible to construct new housing for the new Orthodox settlers. Palestinians fear that by the time the discussion over the fate of Jerusalem comes up in 1996, a truly Jewish entity will have arisen already.

(Christadelphian Watchman, 3/95)

A growing threat in the heart of Israel comes from the Islamic movement within the country itself. In the most recent municipal elections, members of the Islamic movement won seats on more than a dozen local councils and captured the mayoralty in seven places. Islamic leaders claim to be setting up a political party to run for Israeli Parliament seats in the 1996 national elections. "We are no longer ready to sacrifice our own interests for the sake of the peace process," says Shik Ibrahim Sar'sur, an Islamic movement leader. Leaders of the Gaza-based Islamic Jihad say some Israeli Arabs have volunteered to lead suicide attacks against Israeli targets. Kafr Bara, once a small backwater area, is now a cluster of Arab towns located 30 miles from Tel Aviv. It is the center for what could be the first step to a secessionist movement according to Elie Rekhess of Tel Aviv University. Sheik Kamel Riyan, the mayor of the area, declared, "Jerusalem is an Islamic city, and all of Palestine is Islamic land. If Israel remains- the Jewish state, and not the state of all its citizens, then there will never be true equality here."

(Wall Street Journal, 3/2/95)

Avraham Burg, a member of the Labor party in the Israeli Parliament has been named the new acting chairman of the Jewish Agency, the organization that oversees immigration to Israel. In February Mr. Burg told the Jewish Agency Board of Governors, which appointed him, that he wanted to form a new relationship between Israel and Jews in other countries.

(New York Times, 2/26/95)

Many American Liberal Jews are alarmed by the rise of anti-Semitism against them. Secular Jews, who traditionally support liberal causes, are feeling a new vulnerability and wondering whether the political and religious tide is turning against them. More than 2,000 anti-Semitic incidents were reported in 1994, according to the Anti-Defamation League. The current climate has pushed mainstream Jews further away from Orthodox Jews, who support the demands of the so-called Christian Right. "Moving to the right is a blessing for the country," says Rabbi Joseph Gopin a member of the popular Chabad movement, a branch of Hasidic Judaism.

(Wall Street Journal, 3/8/95)

Dr. Mahmoud Zahhar, a Hamas leader in Gaza, says, "Our strategy is to establish a pan-Islamic state-everywhere, not just in Palestine." Egypt, Jordan, and Syria have seen surges of support for the Moslem Brotherhood. The Brotherhood is the nearest to an "international" Islamic movement that exists. Fundamentalist Islam is becoming "dynamic and flexible" according to Mr. Abu Amr. For example, Hamas appears to be aiming at some form of power-sharing agreement in junior partnership with the PLO even while it steps up its attacks on the Israelis.

(Financial Times, 3/10/95).

British industry has begun to take an interest in doing business in Israel. "A lot of businessmen see Israel as the fulcrum of economic development in the region," said Lord Sterling, chairman of P&O Shipping.

(Financial Times, 3/16/95)

International

The world's population will grow by at least 2 billion people in the next two decades, perhaps outstripping the supply of basic foods. According to the United Nations and the World Bank, 700 million of the world's 5.6 billion people now face endemic hunger not caused by natural disasters. The per-capita output of food has declined in some crucial areas of Africa and Asia, where population growth is the fastest. Poor countries are having to import more food. Nearly three-quarters of the world's fresh water now flows into irrigation. The Worldwatch Institute, based in Washington, shares the concern over the food supply. It's 1995 State of the World report said, "In the mid-nineties evidence that the world is on an economic path that is environmentally unsustainable can be seen in shrinking fish catches, falling water tables, declining bird populations, record heat waves and dwindling grain stocks, to name just a few." According to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, the production of rice has stagnated in Asia, dropped sharply in Latin America and increased only slowly in Africa.

(New York Times, 2/3/95)

Though the international borders separating the former Soviet states have not been redrawn, those of at least six nations are being gradually rubbed out. The result is a reviving sphere of influence for the Kremlin, especially in its military reach, which resembles the former Soviet Union. Rising friction recently between Russia and NATO hints that a Russia reintegrated with its Soviet-era dominions could more easily become leader of a political bloc aloof from and ultimately hostile again to the West. Since the

Soviet Union fragmented into 15 independent states in 1991, Russia has been re-extending its reach across its smaller and less powerful neighbors. The head of the committee which coordinates the protection of the states is Konstantin Zatulin, a member of the Russian parliament, who says, "The internal borders now marking off the newly independent states were never intended to be real borders."

(Wall Street Journal, 2/27/95)

Editor's note: Some Bible Students interpret the "enemy from the north" in Ezekiel 38 to be Russia. Though the former Soviet Union disintegrated, some believe it will rise again to fulfill the prophecy.

Christendom

The new Catholic Catechism eliminated the demeaning and prejudiced descriptions of Jews and Judaism used by generations of Catholics. The new catechism rejects the charge of deicide against the Jews and reaffirms God's covenant with Israel, as well as the validity of the Hebrew Bible and Jesus' life as a Jew. Rather than blaming the Jews for Christ's death, the catechism now gives to Christians "the gravest responsibility for Jesus' suffering."

(New York Times, 2/25/95)

Carl Henry, founding editor of *Christianity Today*, recently observed the rise in the commercialism associated with evangelical Christians. Despite *his* misgivings, Henry is convinced that religious entrepreneurs have "enhanced the Christian proclamation." He recently noted that the exhibition hall at the annual convention of the Christian Booksellers Association was filled with gaudy displays of trinkets, Jesus T-shirts, and pop-religion literature. Henry stated that if the ancient prophets could see some of the crass commercialism conducted in the name of God today, "they would probably weep." R. Laurence Moore, history professor at Cornell, said that religious commercialism grew because of the competitive environment for church membership and because the Constitution prohibited a state-sanctioned religion. Preachers in the 19th century "pandered to mass audiences and invented enticements, Christian forms of fun." The result is an evangelical subculture complete with its own music, magazines, movies and other forms of entertainment, including theme parks and cruises. Henry states that such diversions amount to little more than "a pale imitation of the cultural mainstream" that "allows the pious to keep one foot in the world."

(U. S. News & World Report, 3/13/95)

Financial astrology is now part of the multibillion dollar New Age movement. David Thorne, a former real estate developer who heads New Age Publishing, says, "We're

talking many, many billions, a growing chunk of the new economy. One in three Americans now pursues alternative forms of health care. Natural foods and products annually top \$6 billion. New-age music, another \$1 billion. Selfhelp and new-spirituality publishing? Billions there too. It's not just crystals any more." Marketing the philosophies has become progressively easier as people have become more nonrational. All manner of seers are popping up: chaos-theory visionaries, sunspot trackers, astrologers who work up natal horoscopes based on the hour of a company's incorporation, feng shui consultants who free unlucky conference rooms from evil spirits. "North Americans have no idea how seriously Europeans take mystical investing, " says one Credit Suisse banker.

(New York Times, 3/12/95)

BOOK REVIEW

Jacob's Dozen, by William Varner. *The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc.*, Belli New Jersey 08099; 1987, 108 pages.

It is generally difficult to find modern expositions of Old Testament prophecies. Today's Christian writers seem caught up in eschatology (the study of end time prophecy) and self-improvement philosophy based on proposed biblical principles. Rarely can one find a good exposition of the Old Testament published by mainstream Christian groups. Many groups lack the depth of study required to produce a meaningful exposition of the Old Testament. Even more, rare is finding a published work which places the nation of Israel in the role of God's favored nation for the future. One such work is *Jacob's Dozen*. The Friends of Israel is one of the few groups we have encountered which supports the concept of an Israel-centered millennial kingdom:

Will Varner serves as the Dean of the Institute of Biblical Studies of Deptford, New Jersey. This educational arm of the Friends of Israel Ministry has a unique program of intensive biblical, historical, and Jewish studies. Varner has published several books and is a regular lecturer for the ministry. In the book Varner examines biblical history and prophecy associated with each of the tribes of Israel. It is based on Jacob's deathbed prophecies (Gen. 49:1-28) concerning each of his twelve sons. Recall that Jacob's name was changed to Israel following his wrestling match with the angel and that his sons (by four different mothers) became the fathers of the twelve tribes. Varner examines how each prophecy played out in Israel's history and provides some good insight into Israel's dispersment in the land.

A few related subjects are covered in Varner's exposition, including some thoughts about the so-called "lost tribes" of Israel: an examination of the arrangement of the stones on the breastplate of the high priest: and the placement of the twelve tribes around the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. His final chapter titled "The Tribes of Israel in the End Times," is not particularly well done but Bible Students should not let its speculations detract from the rest of the book, which contains some excellent and worthwhile material.

ISRAEL, 100 Years Ago

The following items are extracted from the Zion's Watch Tower of June 1, 1895 (R1819). Compared with today's events they show the changes that have taken place in the land of Israel over the last century.

There are now 100,000 Jews in the Holy Land, one-half would be illustrated and contrasted. In order to more of whom have arrived in the past seven years.

Jerusalem is advocated as the initial meridian instead of Greenwich by no less a renowned society than the Academy of Sciences at Bologna.

Rabbi Leonard Levy lectured last Sunday morning before the Congregation Keneseth Israel upon "Jesus, the Light of Christendom." He said:- "His moral doctrines are the purest. They are mainly from the Old Testament. His ethical principles are the highest. They are for the most part from the oldest Jewish writings. He is a faithful copy of the lovable Hillel, that sweet, meek, gentle, character. Our God is his God. Our people were his people; for our God is the Universal Father and our people the human family. I do not accept the dogma that was built around his name, yet I would be mentally blind if I withheld from him the highest tribute of admiration and respect.

"The greatest tribute that can be paid to him is to be worshiped by 350,000,000 of grateful people. What a wonderful influence he has had upon the world! To the tempted he has been a fortress; to the struggling, a support. Again and again he has told them, 'I, too, was tempted; I, too, suffered, but I bore my cross; go do ye likewise.'

"Where he is remembered in his spirit, men are nobler and women are purer. Where he has entered the human heart, charity abounds and hope is strong. Where he is imitated in his spirit, woman is revered and childhood is sacred, and there grows the sweetest flower that ever bloomed, the violet of meekness spreading its perfume in the human heart."

Jewish Exponent

* * *

A young Israelite, a cultured man, thoroughly acquainted with the Jewish faith, became acquainted with several Christian families, and conceived the idea of writing a novel in which Christian and Jewish family life fully grasp the Christian idea he purchased and read a copy of the New Testament. His study convinced him that Jesus was indeed the Messiah looked for by his people.

* * *

In Berlin a Hebrew artist sought new subjects for pictures, and, searching for them, turned to the New Testament. As he read, the moral beauty of the Savior and the simple purity of his teachings deeply impressed his heart. The more he read, the more he became convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Son of God, the Messiah.

Gradually, as the full number of the elect Gospel church- "the bride, the Lamb's wife"-is nearly completed, the "blindness" which for over eighteen centuries has rested upon "Israel after the flesh," according to divine prediction, begins to pass away in a manner that must be marvelous even to that people.-See Romans 11:25-31.

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Considerable uneasiness is felt in Austria by the recent triumph at the elections of the Anti-Jewish Party, whose motto is "Hang or expel the Jews, and confiscate their property." This party has triumphed in Vienna and has charge of the city government, and is feared will similarly triumph in the national Congress or Reichsrath.

As we have already pointed out, Jewish persecution in Austria must be expected; for large numbers of them reside there, and the Lord will no doubt use persecution to awaken them, and turn their hearts and minds toward him, that those who yet trust his promises may begin to think of him whom they have pierced and return to the land of promise.-Jer. 32:37-40; 46:27, 28; Rom. 11:25-31.