

*The Glories
of the
Age to Come*

A VISION OF THE FUTURE

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THE NEED FOR A VISION

In speaking of the Acts of the Lord's Apostles, the Spirit records how that Philip was engaged in "preaching the things *concerning the Kingdom of God*, and the name of Jesus Christ" - and that those who heard and believed his sayings "were baptised, both men and women" (*Acts 8:12*). This illustrates the vital importance of "the things concerning the Kingdom of God" - they are principles which formed half of what the Apostles taught as the Gospel! And in the case of Philip's preaching, they were "things" to be accepted and believed as a prerequisite to Baptism - by implication therefore, they are "things" to be the object of faith, in order that Forgiveness and Salvation might be received. But they are not simply doctrines to be believed; they are fundamental principles for daily life. Our Lord Jesus taught that the primary things to be sought after in this life, are those "things" pertaining to the Righteousness of God, and His Coming Kingdom: "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God*, and his righteousness . . ." (*Mat 6:33*). The Kingdom of God then, must feature predominantly in our daily prayers, thoughts and meditations. No matter what evils the day brings - and they may be many - they are but the transient affairs of this life of mortal travail and sorrow. But "the things" of the Kingdom are eternal, and whilst being hidden from the natural eye, they present themselves to those that believe in bold relief - a glorious picture of coming reality. Thus it is, that with the Apostle Paul, "we look not at the things which are seen, *but at the things which are not seen*: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (*2Cor 4:18*).

Maintaining such a vision of the things promised by the Father is a characteristic of all the faithful. Thus, we read of those outstanding characters enumerated in Hebrews 11: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but *having seen them* afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (*verse 13*). These brethren had not yet "received the promises", yet had "seen them", which means they visualised the fulfilment of them in their minds. And having been "persuaded" of them, they "embraced them", which means that they held on to them in love. But more than this, in actually seeing these promises in faith - in seeking their fulfilment "first" above all other things, these saints were taught that they belonged, not to this age of iniquity, but were citizens of a Kingdom yet to come - they confessed themselves to be but "strangers and pilgrims on the earth".

It was their faith in that future age of glory that taught them the need to "come out" from a world of sin, and journey towards "a better country": "truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now *they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly*: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city" (*Heb 11:15,16*). Like Abraham, they "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (*verse 10*), that is, New Jerusalem - the City of the Great King.

So it is, that although the promised inheritance is yet future, we must learn to live the standards and principles of that age *now* in the age of our sojourning, for we belong not to this benighted kingdom of sin, but to the brightness of the age to come, when all nations shall walk according to the standards and dictates of Almighty God: “the night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly **as in the day** ...” (*Rom 13:12,13, cp. 1Thes 5:5*). In forsaking a world of sin, iniquity and death, a world which is soon to pass away with all its’ lust (*1Jno 2:11*), we commence a journey through life to a new Kingdom, whose values and ordinances, we must walk in accordance with now, “as in the day”.

But those who like the faithful of old, are persuaded of and embrace the promises of the Lord who has “delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” in prospect through faith (*Col 1:13, Eph 1:11, cp. v 14,2:7*) will inevitably find that they will face trials, and difficulties because of their separation. As it is written: “whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons” (*Heb 12:8*). And so the Lord will bring trials upon us to purge us as gold is purified in the fire, (*1Pet 1:7, Job 23:10*) that we might learn how to do the will of God. As the Psalmist testified, “before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word” (*Psalms 119:67,71*) and as the apostles taught, “we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God” (*Acts 14:22 cp. Rev 7:14*). The form and intensity of those trials do vary greatly; but they will come, for they are necessary for our spiritual growth and development into beings suitable for the bestowal of Immortality and Glory.

We must “think it not strange” then (*1Pet 4:12*), concerning the trials that will come upon us, but we must rather learn to endure, being encouraged and strengthened by our sight of things yet future, to remain steadfast to the end “for we walk by faith, not by sight” (*2 Cor 5:7*). We must rather “rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (*1Pet 4:13*). And if we have a vision of that coming revelation of glory firmly fixed in our minds, like the faithful ones in Hebrews 11, we shall have the strength and determination to overcome. As we have seen, like Paul, we shall be able to compare our present difficulties with the blessings of the future, and say “though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our *light affliction*, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while *we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen*: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (*2Cor 4:16-18*). And for an example of One whose thoughts were always directed towards the world to come, we look to the Lord Jesus Christ, who, “though he were a Son”, we are informed “yet

learned he obedience *by the things which he suffered*” (Heb 5:8). The Lord Jesus certainly bore a weight; the weight of the cross upon which he was crucified. But his is the supreme example of endurance, for he looked beyond his present suffering to the greater eternal weight of glory laid up for him at his Father’s Right Hand. He, “for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of God” (Heb 12:2). It was this joyous vision of the future that was ever set before his mind that ensured his separation from the world, and enabled him to remain faithful even unto death. We then, must be “looking unto Jesus” as an example. Like him, we must have a vision of the future in order for us to maintain our separation, and endure trials faithfully.

In Proverbs 29:18, the importance of such a vision is expressed, “*where there is no vision, the people perish*: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he”. Here, those who have no vision, are contrasted with those who keep the Law of God - the clear implication being, as we have seen, that it is by maintaining a clear focus on the Kingdom that we might be able to remain obedient in times of adversity. But here, the Hebrew word rendered “perish”, literally, is “to be loosed”, and can have the sense of the removal of a garment. Hence, an alternative rendering is, “where there is no vision, the people *is made naked*” as in the AV margin. Being the brethren of Christ, we must seek to be clothed with righteousness, as with a garment. And rather than to allow ourselves to be drawn into the world around us, allowing our fine white linen garments to be “spotted by the flesh” (Jude 23) the exhortation is given “Blessed is *he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame*” (Rev 16:15). We must therefore remain fully clothed with the purity of righteousness; we must use that vision Scripture presents us with to remain faithful, and separate, to “keep” our garments, that we might not walk naked and shamed before the Son and his Angels at his appearing. Let us therefore, rather than being mindful of the world from which we have come out (Heb 11:15), be as the faithful of all ages, “forgetting those things which are behind, and *reaching forth unto those things which are before*” (Phil 3:13). The value of maintaining such a vision of those promises which are “before” us is self-evident - for without it, we cannot remain a holy people prepared for the coming of our Lord. We have Christ Himself to look to as the supreme example, and so let us share his joy that we also might learn to endure, that we might reign with him.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ISRAEL’S REPENTANCE

When the Lord Jesus comes to establish his universal reign, the Scriptures reveal that his seat of power is to be “the throne of David” (Luke 1:32), placed in Jerusalem, “the city of the great king” (Mat 5:35). But just as in the natural order of things, a king rules firstly over his own countrymen, (his “first dominion”), and then by victorious warfare, he subjugates other peoples under him, whose lands then become added to his dominion, so this will be the case

with the reign of the Lord's Christ. Although his reign is to be global, his "first dominion" is said to be Israel (*Mic 4:8*), as Gabriel testified: "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and *he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever*; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (*Luke 1:32,33*). And in that day Jerusalem, being the centre of global authority and the home of the King of the World, shall be held in honour and praise by all other nations - the Great King shall require it to be so, for it is written; "*the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted ... the sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of Yahweh, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel*" (*Is 60:12-14*).

The fellow countrymen of the Lord Jesus, the descendants of Abraham through Jacob, are God's people whom He "hath not cast away" (*Rom 11:2*), and it is through them that the Lord has chosen to effect his purpose. He called them out of Egypt, as "a nation from the midst of another nation" (*Deut 4:34*), in remembrance of His Covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (*Ex 3:24*), that they might be a model people, "for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory" (*Jer 13:11*). To Israel were given The Law, a set of standards far higher than the crudities of any human legislation, founded upon the principle of Love - the Love for God, and the Love for man; "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (*Mat 22:37-40*). And it was in observance of these laws that Israel were an example to, and set above the hoards of barbarians around them, as Moses exhorted: "keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding *in the sight of the nations*, which shall hear all these statutes and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people" (*Deut 4:6*).

But Israel were not simply a paradigmatic race of men, for the Lord has predicated salvation for them, and all other nations, upon belief of certain promises made to "the fathers" concerning them. This was the teaching of Christ, saying "*salvation is of the Jews*" (*Jno 4:20*), and of his apostle: "if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, **but life from the dead?**" (*Rom 11:15*). Forgiveness of sins comes through the promised seed of Israel's progenitor (*Rom 4:1-8*), upon the basis of the things covenanted to him (*Gal 3:18*) - indeed, the very blessing obtainable by the Gentiles through faith in Christ is styled apostolically, "the blessing of Abraham" (*Gal 3:14*). And the promises made to Abraham contained the Gospel: "the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before *the Gospel* unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (*Gal 3:8*).

THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

As recorded in Genesis, the promises conferred upon Abraham, and his multitudinous seed the right to an age-lasting possession of all the land "from the

river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates” (*Gen 15:18*). But as Abraham never possessed this land (*Acts 7:5, Heb 11:13*), and as the pre-eminent seed referred to is Christ (*Gal 3:16*), who also never possessed any such land (*Cp. Luke 9:58*), it is evident that they relate to an age yet future, when the Lord shall Return to raise Abraham from the dead, that they might both receive their inheritance together. The sojourn of Abraham’s natural seed in the land under the law, was a foretaste of the Kingdom, demonstrating to all who beheld the wisdom of their laws that the blessing of God rested upon those whom he had taken “out of another nation” for Himself. But by the very nature of things, as they possessed the land under the Law, their sojourn was only a shadow, or pattern of better things to come (*1Chron 29:15, Heb 10:1*).

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

ISRAEL - NOT CAST AWAY FROM GOD’S PURPOSE

There are those who would deny the Lord His rightful inheritance and dominion over the tribes of Jacob, by claiming that because of the Jewish rejection of the promised Messiah, God has cast off his people - that the Kingdom is not to be restored to Israel, and that there is to be no holy temple built at Jerusalem. They claim that the promises were contingent upon obedience, and that because of the Jew's rebellion they have been rejected, and Gentiles take their place, as the so-called "spiritual Israel". But these delusions are merely the regurgitated morsels of Church Tradition, eagerly grasped and consumed by those who desire to boast against the branches (*Rom 11:18*). Like those who delighted to vaunt themselves against the Holy People of the Most High God in the first century, they say “the branches were broken off, that I might be

grafted in”. But they do well to take heed to the Apostle's warning: “Well, *because of unbelief* they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. *Be not highminded, but fear*; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee” (*Rom 11:19-21*). Those who are in “unbelief” of the Lord's covenant to Abraham and his seed - which covenant necessitates the Israelitish restoration - therefore place themselves in severe danger of being “cut off”.

It is true to say that the natural branches have been “cut off”, but only with a view to chastisement, that having been purged of unbelief, they might be grafted in again. Israel will never be cast away, for this is the testimony of the prophet concerning them: “fear not, O Jacob my servant, saith Yahweh: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but *I will not make a full end of thee, but will correct thee in measure*; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished” (*Jer 46:28*).

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

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

THE FUTURE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

By it's very nature, the Kingdom over which Christ will rule, is an *Israelitish* kingdom; his “first dominion” being over his own countrymen, whom he came to save. It is only when Israel are received in again, that the Kingdom can be restored to them (*Acts 1:6*) - only then can the Lord Jesus take up his reign (*Luke 1:33*) and only then can we receive our inheritance, and reign with him

(Rev 3:21, 5:10). Without Israel's restoration therefore, there can be no restored kingdom, and no inheritance - truly the apostle wrote: "if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, **but life from the dead?**" (Rom 11:15). We cannot receive our inheritance, unless they receive theirs, for our inheritance *is* theirs, and it is only extended to us by our *becoming joined to Israel and their Hope*.

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

THE REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

We have seen that in order for the Kingdom to be restored to Israel, there must firstly be a humiliation and repentance of the Lord's people, that they might learn to bow before the King they rejected 2000 years ago. Even though, within the last 50 years or so, we have seen the Jews pouring back into their Land, these Jews are not yet ready to submit to their King - they still reject the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus, and do not accept the things testified concerning Him in the Oracles of God. And in addition to these faithless sons of Jacob, there are still many more of them resident in foreign lands, who also refuse to bow before their Lord. There is then, a need for a *dual conversion*; for all 12 tribes, both inside and also outside the land to have the veil currently cast over their understanding to be removed (2Cor

3:14-17), that they might turn to the Lord in recognition of His Saving Power. As regards to the Jews resident in the land at the epoch of our Lord's return, the Divinely selected means of causing them to turn back to Him, as in the days of old (*cp. Deut 28:49*), is to afflict them at the hands of a foreign invader. The prophetic testimony is that by the hand of his angelic ministers, the Lord will gather the armies of the world against Jerusalem, to afflict them for "all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land" (*Ezek 39:26*). Thus, Zechariah was "moved" by the Spirit to proclaim: "Behold, the day of Yahweh cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For *I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle*; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity ..." (*Zech 14:2*). This "day of Yahweh", is styled by Jeremiah, the "day of Jacob's trouble" which shall be "great, so that none is like it" (*Jer 30:7, cp. Dan 12:1*), and it is in that unique "day", that Isaiah testifies the Lord shall remove "the filth of the daughters of Zion ... by the spirit of judgement, and by the spirit of burning" (*Is 4:4*).

It is clear then, that there will be great suffering and sorrow, as the disobedient sons of Jacob are chastised for their iniquities, and brought to a situation of desperation and utter helplessness, that they might learn to trust in a Strength far greater than their own. And in the midst of such affliction, there will be heard the voice of bitter crying; Rachel weeping for her children (*Jer 31:51*), her tears running as a river day and night (*Lam 2:18*), as once again the enemy shall open the mouth against her: "they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed her up: certainly this is the day that we looked for; we have found, we have seen it" (*Lam 2:16*). Women shall be raped, houses pillaged (*Zech 14:2*), sons taken as slaves (*Joel 3:3,6*), the survivors of half the city shall go into captivity and "a great spoil" shall be taken, and divided in the midst of the land.

In that day, Jerusalem truly shall become a furnace of affliction (*Ezek 22:18-22*), in order that the people might be refined, as silver and gold in the heat of the fire, and finally look to their God for deliverance: "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith Yahweh, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: *they shall call upon my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, Yahweh is my God*" (*Zech 13:8,9*). In the depths of sorrow, and on the brink of annihilation, the survivors, "an afflicted and poor people" (*Zeph 3:12*) shall cry unto their God, in confession of their uncleanness: "*we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities" (*Is 64:6,7*).

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

JUDGEMENTS UPON THE HEATHEN

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

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

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

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

The oppressing army having thus been obliterated by the power of the Almighty, the voice of rejoicing shall be heard in the mountains of Israel, as the former misery shall become but a fading memory: "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.

Yahweh hath taken away thy judgements, *he hath cast out thine enemy*: the King of Israel, even Yahweh is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more” (*Zeph 3:15*). The tears of sorrow shall be replaced by the voice of gladness and joy, as the Lord’s repentant people will be joined to Him once more, that the abundance of His blessings might be poured out upon them (*Joel 3:21-29*) and the beginnings of their restored Kingdom might become the nucleus of a world-wide dominion with all nations bowing before the greatness of Israel’s God.

THE MINISTRY OF ELIJAH

This then, briefly describes the circumstances of the repentance of the Jews in the Land. But what of those outside, who will not experience such humiliation at the hands of the Gogian host? It is testified that the great prophet Elijah shall be instrumental in bringing Ephraim to repentance: “Behold, *I will send you Elijah the prophet* before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Yahweh: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (*Mal 4:6*). Speaking of his work, Bro Thomas wrote: “The person with whom they will have more immediately to do in their Second Exodus is Elijah. There would seem to be a fitness in this. In the days of their fathers, when they forsook the Lord and abolished the Law of Moses, Elijah was the person whose ministerial life was occupied in endeavouring to “restore all things”. Though he did much to vindicate the name and law of Jehovah, he was taken away in the midst of his labours. For what purpose? That he might at a future period resume his work and perfect it by restoring all things among the ten tribes according to the law of Moses, preparatory to their being planted in their land under a new covenant to be made with them there. But it may be objected that Elijah has come already, and that John the Baptist was he (*Luke 1:17*). True, in a certain sense, he has. John was Elijah to the House of Judah in the sense of his having come “in the spirit and power of Elijah”. But John was not the Elijah who talked with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration. The latter is Elijah to the house of Israel. The scribes taught that Elijah must precede Christ; which Jesus approved, saying, “Elijah truly shall first come and restore all things”. He said this after John was put to death ...” (*Elpis Israel, p 451, 452*).

There are those who feel that the Lord will not send Elijah “before the great and dreadful day of Yahweh”, as Malachi taught he will. They say that this prophecy had a total fulfilment in John Baptist, and needs not a further application. But what did John himself say? Was he Elijah? “They asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? *And he saith I am not*” (*Jno 1:21*). This is conclusive evidence, which ought to settle all dispute on the matter. Either John was Elias, without knowing it, or he spoke the truth, saying “*I am not*”. True it is, that John came “in the spirit and power of Elias” (*Luke 1:17*) as Bro. Thomas shows, for his preparatory work for the coming of the Lord Jesus, foreshadowed the future work of the ancient Israelitish prophet (*Mat 17:12*). But

he was “not” that prophet. This Elijah, it is testified, shall “turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers” (*Mal 4:6*), that is, to join together the hearts of the Sons of Israel to become at one with that of their Fathers, that they may rejoice together in the covenant made with them. And this work, as is evident from the present decadent state of the children’s hearts, is a work for the future, which must be accomplished in order for them to inherit the blessing promised to their Fathers.

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

THE REPENTANCE OF ISRAEL IN DISPERSION

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

is testified by Hosea, that they shall be gathered, and “shall sorrow a little for the burden of the King of princes (*Hos 8:10*)” (*Elpis Israel*, p 451).

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

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

AFFLICTION IN THE WILDERNESS

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

with you face to face ... And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am Yahweh” (Ezek 20:34-38).

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

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

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

DIVINE DELIVERANCE ASSURED

But be that as it may, it is clear that in this wilderness, having been “purged” of the “rebels”, the refined remnant shall find grace in the sight of their God: “Thus saith Yahweh, the people which were left of the sword *found grace in the wilderness*, even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest” (*Jer 31:2; see the whole chapter. It may be thought that these words relate to Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, but in that event, it was not just a remnant, those “left of the sword”, but the whole nation which was saved. See also Hos 1:14*). These people have a promise of Divine protection: “When thou passest through the waters, *I will be with thee*; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, though shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (*Is 43:2, see Ps 66:12*) and so it will be, that having entered into the New Covenant, just as the Lord shall deliver the Gogian confederacy into the hand of those in the land; so He will be with his people, in contending against their enemies outside. And just as Judah will have a part in executing judgements against their oppressors under the auspices of their Redeemer (*Is 59:20*), even so Israel will execute the Lord’s judgements upon those countries which seek their destruction. Thus we read of the proclamation of Yahweh: “Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for *with thee will I destroy kingdoms*; and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider ...” (*Jer 51:21*). And again, in speaking of Yahweh’s “weapons of war”: “when I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece ... And Yahweh shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord Yahweh shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south. Yahweh Tzavaoth shall defend them; and they shall devour ...” (*Zech 9:13-15*).

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

ASSYRIA AND EGYPT

The Scriptures speak of a miraculous gathering of the people from Assyria and also the Land of Egypt after the pattern of their deliverance under the hand of

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

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

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

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

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

because following their repentance, they are to provide a safe refuge for the returning exiles (*cp Gen 12:3*)?

The Scriptures also reveal that there shall be many physical blessings also, provided for the benefit of the travellers. Thus, we read of the Lord's mercy in once again providing water in the wilderness: "when the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I Yahweh will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. *I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water*" (*Is 41:18 cp Ex 17:6*). The effects of the provision of water in the previously barren desert will be most remarkable, and will remain throughout the Kingdom Age, as a testimony of the grace of God extended to his weak and feeble sons, during their homeward journey: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad *for them*; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing ... strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees, say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you" (*Is 35:1-4*).

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

JESUS CHRIST - KING OF THE WORLD

The initial work of the Lord Jesus, "to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the desolations of Israel" (*Is 49:6*), will see the reestablishment of the Davidic seat of power, and the commencement of the Messiah's reign over his "first dominion". But the reign of our Lord is to be extended across all the earth, as to him will be given "dominion and glory, and a kingdom, *that all people, nations and languages should serve him*" (*Dan 7:14*), and so following the deliverance of Jerusalem, the work of subjugating the nations will begin. It is evident from the vision revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, that this work will be a *process*: "The stone that smote the image *became* a great mountain, and *filled* the earth" (*Dan 2:35*), which Daniel interpreted to mean: "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall *break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms*, and it shall stand

for ever” (*Dan 2:44*). There is then, a period of breaking and consuming of the kingdoms of men, as the Kingdom grows ultimately to fill the whole earth, their lands being incorporated under the dominion of “the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (*Rev 17:14*). And this work as we have seen, is to commence with the glorious power of Almighty God being made manifest in the destruction of their armies: “Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that *I AM YAHWEH*” (*Ezek 38:23*).

But the power of Israel’s God will not be shown solely in destruction; the subsequent transformation of the land, and glorification of the people, will also be a powerful incentive for nations to submit, that they also might be partakers of the beneficence of Israel’s King. Thus the prayer of the Psalmist was: “God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. *That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations*” (*Ps 67:1,2*), and that God’s Way and saving health will indeed be made known in this manner, is clear from the prophecies of Ezekiel: “... the heathen shall know that I am Yahweh, saith the Lord Yahweh, *when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes ... then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I Yahweh build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I Yahweh have spoken it, and I will do it*” (*Ezek 36:23,36*). And again; “the heathen shall know that I Yahweh do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore” (*Ezek 37:28*). And in that day, the call shall go out to nations to submit, and give praise to the Holy One of Israel: “O praise Yahweh, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of Yahweh endureth for ever. Praise ye Yahweh” (*Psalms 117*).

But the response of the nations to this call will be varied. It is clear that some will readily accept the Lord: “... thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me. *As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me ...*” (*Ps 18:44*). But others shall seek to rebel against the constraints placed upon them, “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Yahweh, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us” (*Ps 2:3*). Of this latter class, we shall consider more particularly later, but even amongst those who do submit to Yahweh’s Anointed, there are to be 2 classes.

THE DEPARTURE OF “STRANGERS” WITH ISRAEL

We have already shown how that alongside the events being transacted at Jerusalem, the dispersed tribes will be making ready to depart from their host countries, in response to the preaching of Elijah. But the prophetic Word also describes how that after the type of Israel’s departure from Egypt (*Mic 7:15*), there will be a “mixed multitude” (*Ex 12:38*), who depart with them: “For Yahweh will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set

them in their own land: and *the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob*. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of Yahweh for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors” (*Is 14:1,2*). And again, “strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of Yahweh, men shall call you the Ministers of our God ...” (*Is 61:5,6*).

From this testimony of Isaiah, it is apparent that as the returning tribes contend against their persecutors, they will take some of them captive, ruling over them. But other peoples shall “cleave to the house of Jacob”, having forsaken the world of man’s dominion, which like the walls of Jericho is to be utterly overthrown in preparation for the extended dominion of the Greater Joshua. These will have embraced the Hope of Israel - the hope of Divine deliverance, that they might dwell in a restored, glorified Jerusalem, under the beneficent reign of their Messiah. But, they will not be “heirs according to the promise” at this stage, they will need to learn humility in order to experience the Glory, and finally be accepted at the second judgement at the end of the Millennium (*Rev 20:12*). After the Type of the Gibeonites in the days of Joshua, they will enjoy the exalted blessings of Jerusalem as a subservient people (*Joshua 9*), as Isaiah inform us, as shepherds, plowmen and vinedressers.

We can but speculate as to who this people will be. It is most probable that upon the commencement of Elijah’s mission to the *diaspora*, those Gentiles living around them will also have opportunity to escape the day of destruction, and experience blessings with Israel, for their early submission - indeed, this principle of a final call to repentance to those close to the Lord’s people about to be delivered, would fit the Type of Lot (*2Pet 2:9*) in Sodom, (*Gen 19:14*). But in addition to this, we must not underestimate the effects of *our* current preaching activities (*cp Jericho, Jas 2:25*). Although in our day, the majority refuse to hear our words of warning, could it be that there will be those, (not sufficiently enlightened to appear before the Judgement Seat) who, having heard of the coming invasion and desolation of Jewry, as predicted by Christadelphians, will begin to lift up their heads when these things begin to come to pass? Could it be, that when they behold these things, and witness the destruction of the invader, when they learn of the tribes in dispersion making ready to depart for Zion, that they, being fearful for the things about to come upon the earth, which we will also have told them about, will then embrace Israel’s Hope, and seek after their Redeemer?

This would certainly seem to be the testimony of Joel, for in prophesying of “the great and terrible day of Yahweh”, he teaches: “it shall come to pass, that *whosoever* shall call upon the Name of Yahweh shall be delivered; *for in mount Zion and Jerusalem shall be deliverance ...*” (*Joel 2:32*), and the Apostle informs us that the “whosoever” includes both Jews and Gentiles (*Rom 10:12,13*). So it will be that in the appointed day when the Lord shall com-

mence to judge the world in righteousness, even in that day, His Mercy shall be Graciously extended to those few, who desire to forsake this present, transient world to join with His People, in seeking a city that hath foundations (*Heb 11:10*), that in calling upon His Name, they also might be partakers of His Blessing in the Land.

THE SUBMISSION OF NATIONS

The scriptures indicate that certain nations shall readily submit to the Lord's reign, as previously indicated. In Isaiah 42:11,12 we read of the early conversion of the Arab nations: "Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. *Let them give glory unto Yahweh*, and declare his praise in the islands". And again, "the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of Yahweh" (*Is 60:6*). And as we have seen from Isaiah 19, Egypt, being witness to the miraculous deliverance of Israel, shall also cry out to Israel's God for help. But there are others also, the nation of Tarshish, long identified by Bible Students as Britain, stands out predominantly:

"They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all nations shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him" (*Ps 72:11*).

"the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour" (*Ps 45:12*).

Although Psalm 72 describes how ultimately, "all nations shall fall down before him", it nevertheless depicts Tarshish and others travelling to Zion in order to present their Gifts - and this describes a willing submission, not a forced servitude. But the role of Tarshish really is significant, as this nation is to be instrumental in conveying the returning exiles back to their homeland. Upon the overthrow of Gog, a declaration will go out to the nations: "Hear ye the word of Yahweh, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For Yahweh hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he" (*Jer 31:10,11*). And it would appear that certain nations, including Tarshish will respond to this proclamation, and as a token of their willing subservience to the "King of kings", shall lend themselves to this service. In Isaiah 49:22, we read of the role of Gentile nations in this regard: "Thus saith the Lord Yahweh, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders". And Tarshish is one of those named as being predominantly involved with this work: "Surely the isles shall wait for me, and *the ships of Tarshish first*, to

bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of Yahweh thy God, because he hath glorified thee” (*Is 60:9*).

Tarshish herself, shall have experienced the judgements of God upon her, despite her position in Ezek 38:13 with Sheba and Dedan in apparently supporting the Jews, against the invading army. Thus, the Psalmist wrote: “thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind” (*Ps 48:7*), in the context of describing the elevated position of Zion in that coming Age. A possible reason for this, is that whilst in Ezekiel 38, Tarshish, with her “young lions” (*the “kings” in Ps 72:10?*) presents herself as the deliverer of Israel, she will herself need to be taught that the deliverance is to be wrought by Israel’s God, and as a token of that fact, some of her ships are broken, rendering her in a military weak position herself, and therefore herself needing redemption from the Gogian host. But be that as it may, it is certain that her remaining ships, (her merchant ships?) are to be used to transport the exiles to the land of promise, as the work of establishing the Kingdom progresses.

THE GREAT REBELLION

But not all nations will welcome the imposition of Divine Authority upon the Earth. We already cited the description of rebellion of Psalm 2, “the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Yahweh, and against his Christ, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us” (*Ps 2:2,3*). Similarly, it was revealed to John that there shall yet be a uniting of nations against Christ, led by those styled, “the kings of the earth” (*Cp. Rev 16:14*), those kings, or governments who willingly give their strength and power to the European Sea Beast, ridden by the Catholic Harlot into battle, as depicted in Revelation 17. Brethren E Williams, and F Bilton wrote concerning this:

“This second conflict is not a war of spoilation under a great military headship, as was the Gogian, but primarily a religious crusade of the Ten Kings under a great spiritual head: “These have *one* mind and give their strength and power unto the Beast”. Their object is the overthrow of the new rival power that challenges the Beast for spiritual supremacy (*Rev 17:13,14*), not to make war against defenceless Jews, Britain and Egypt, but to make war against the LAMB.

*Christ is now in possession of the Holy Land, having previously delivered Jerusalem from the yoke of Gog, and is by the Anglo-Saxon peoples recognised as the “King of the Jews” in fulfilment of the Angel Gabriel’s prophecy ... no longer does the ensign of Gog fly over Olivet, but the standard of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, who has demanded unconditional surrender under the stupendous claim, as God’s son, of being the “Prince of the Kings of the Earth”. The attacking power now is not Christ, but the Ten Kings. “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords” (*Rev 17:14*).*

Whereas in the Gogian overthrow they had no idea of the claims or identity of their Victor, these Ten Kings have been notified of the tremendous claims of Zion's King, but all in vain ... The preaching of the "everlasting gospel" has fallen on deaf ears, and the injunction to "fear God and give Him glory for the Hour of His judgement is come" is regarded as the blasphemous claims of a usurper. These kings and rulers will not be "instructed", nor will they "Kiss the son". They are so drunk with the wine of Rome's fornication that they rush headlong into perdition.

The result of this conflict will not be the release of Jerusalem from the pagan autocrat nor the emancipation of the Jews, as previously. This later conquest will have consolidated the throne of Christ as King of the World, and opened the eyes of mankind from the nightmare of spiritual darkness by the utter destruction of this mighty religious and political confederacy. The destruction of it's headquarters is the subject of Revelation 18. It goes into perdition by being engulfed in the abyss" (*Eureka at a Glance, EHV Williams & F Bilton, 1949*).

Thus it will be, that all rebellion shall be quashed, for "the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (*Rev 17:14*) and together, they shall exercise their reign over a subdued earth, all princes and powers being subjugated under the power of the Almighty God of Israel.

THE STRUCTURE OF ADMINISTRATION

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

"Yahweh's House" will be "an house of prayer for all people" (*Is 56:7*), a temple to which all nations shall attend to worship, offer sacrifice, and be instructed in the ways, laws and statutes which their King will require them to follow. And in contrast to the Israelitish Kingdom of past ages, where the Priesthood and Kingship were kept separate, "Yahweh's house", will be dual

purpose, being the abode of the High priest according to the Order of Melchisedec, the site of the reconstructed Throne of David.

The Lord Jesus, in his dual capacity as both King and Priest (*Heb 7*), shall be enthroned in the temple. He shall “bear the glory, and shall sit and *rule* upon his *throne*; and he shall be a *priest* upon his *throne*” (*Zech 6:13*). No longer shall the system of rule be separate and distinct from the system of worship - worship will be *part of* the law, for in keeping the laws of Christ, the nations will demonstrate submission to him, and therefore subjection and obedience to the Lord God. Isaiah and Ezekiel both saw the exalted priestly throne of the Lord in vision, “In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a *throne*, high and lifted up, and his train filled *the temple*” (*Is 6:1*), “And he said unto me, Son of man, *the place of my throne*, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever ...” (*Ezek 43:7*).

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

But although the *centre* of administration is established in Jerusalem arrangements will be made for this “justice and judgement” to be dispensed locally, within the various subject-nations. And to this end, the King shall not reign alone; his brethren shall exercise dominion with him, as he promised: “To him that overcometh will I grant to *sit with me in my throne*, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne” (*Rev 3:21*). The Saints then, that great innumerable multitude of Redeemed (*Rev 7:9*) are to reign with their Lord as kingly priests, singing his praises: “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; And hast made us unto our God *kings and priests: and we shall reign upon the earth*” (*Rev 5:10*). Comprising “the meek”, during the days of their mortal weakness, this multitude shall “inherit the earth” (*Mat 5:5, Rom 4:13*) with their Lord, and exercise dominion thereupon with him, as it is written; “a king shall reign in righteousness, and *princes shall rule* in judgement” (*Is 32:1 - see also 1:25*).

THE 12 THRONES OVER ISRAEL

As an innumerable number of “kings and priests” requires a similarly innumerable number of nations over which they might rule, if one “king” reigns

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

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

JUSTICE DISPENSED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

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

A possible indication of how these judges might be appointed; both in the nations and Israel, under the exalted 12, is in the Lord's parable of the pounds. When considering the responses of those to whom he had given varying amounts, he speaks of the blessing conferred on the fruitful: "Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very

little, *have thou authority over ten cities*. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, be thou also *over five cities*" (Luke 19:16-19). Immortal saints then, will be appointed to dispense justice over varying numbers of cities, comparable to their degree of fruitfulness in the days of their probation, quite probably with the saints over 5 cities, being subject to those over 10 cities, and so on. Indeed, after the pattern of previous ages, there does appear to be grounds for the suggestion that above these city judges, there will be other saints appointed over each nation, to oversee national affairs, (see for example Ex 18:13-26, Num 11:16,17 and compare Deut 32:8, Gen 10).

The quality of judgement thus dispensed shall be of the highest standard - infallible, for the Great King "shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But *with righteousness* shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Is 11:3,4), and those who reign with him, "shall be like him" (1Jno 3:2). In contrast to previous times, when the poor and needy, the widows and fatherless (those who lacked both the resources, and the guidance of father or husband to instruct them), were dealt with hardly, suffering oppression and injustice at the hands of wicked rulers who favoured the wealthy, their cause shall be determined righteously. Indeed, their King is himself One who "became poor" (2 Cor 8:9), that through his poverty, and unjust execution at the hands of the wicked, we might be made rich. "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight" (Ps 72:12-14). And again, the Psalmist speaks of those future days, when Yahweh will be king in the earth; "Yahweh is king for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land. Yahweh, thou has heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: *To judge the fatherless and the oppressed*, that the man of the earth may no more oppress" (Ps 10:16-18).

WILL THERE BE PERSONAL TUTORS?

But in order to keep the statutes and ways of the Israel's God, peoples will need to be *taught* those ways, and that task could either be another role of the divine judges, or there may be others appointed to do this. Most probably, it will be the work of others, or even both, as this appears to be suggested by Isaiah. In speaking of the teachers of Israel, the Lord promised: "And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind (*Heb. "after"*) thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Is 30:20,21). And although this passage primarily speaks of Israel, we might reasonably suppose that these arrangements will be repli-

cated throughout the Kingdom, that all nations might be so taught. The picture presented here, is suggestive that each mortal will have an immortal tutor to watch over his/her affairs, in a way not totally dissimilar to the role of the Angels in the life of a believer today. But of course, the difference is this, the mortals in the Age to Come shall see their tutors, and hear their words of instruction. And if, despite having been instructed of the right Way, due to the inherent propensity of human nature to seek out other ways, (*cp. Ecc 7:29*) they begin to turn aside, their teachers shall be watching over their affairs, and will be at hand to give further guidance along the way. Possibly not by a voice suddenly booming at them out of nowhere, at the moment in which a mortal is about to commit a sin, as some suppose - this would surely bring about a life of terror for them, being afraid to do anything, lest they hear "the voice" of rebuke! Rather, when a mortal's walk in life is beginning to take a new direction, beginning to move away from the Divine Will, and back to their old ways, their tutors will call "after" them, to come back, and receive further counsel and instruction, that they might be corrected, and that their walk might be guided back onto the right path once more. The Psalmist spoke of such guidance: "Good and upright is Yahweh: therefore will he teach sinners *in the way*. The meek will he *guide in judgement*: and the meek will he *teach his way*" (*Ps 25:8,9*).

A CENTRE OF WORLD EDUCATION

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

BLESSINGS OF THE KINGDOM

The benefits of walking according to the commands of Christ will be readily manifest. Having being instructed His way, and the natural rebelliousness of man being under firm suppression, there will be no scope for man to lift him-

self up in conflict with another. So Isaiah prophesied that as a consequence of the subjection of nations under the Great King, by his rebuke and instruction: “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (*Is 2:4*). This is the ultimate United Nations - all peoples being united in their worship of Israel’s God, being instructed out of His Law, and taking up the more peaceful occupation of constructing agricultural implements out of the remains of war machinery. Rather than Jerusalem being a constant stumbling block, and arena of world conflict, it shall be come the centre of blessing, and longevity of life: “Thus saith Yahweh of Hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof” (*Zech 8:5 cp. Is 65:20*). What a glorious picture of tranquillity this is - a picture which so many long for, where children can safely play in the streets, without fear of abduction or abuse. Where the elderly can live without fear of assault, or ridicule for their infirmities. This is the vision many people desire in these days of degeneracy, violence and wickedness - yet it is a picture which can only become reality when all peoples are subject to the Laws of God, and walk in His Ways of Righteousness. This is the age that we yearn for, and earnestly seek “first”, above all other things (*Mat 6:33*).

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

WORSHIP AND SACRIFICE

In the prophecy through Malachi, we read that there will be local provision for worship made throughout the nations, with regard to the offering of incense, and the meal offering: “For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and *in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering*: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith Yahweh of hosts” (*Mal 1:11*). And again, we have another indication of this in Isaiah’s depiction of an altar in Egypt, we might suppose, for this very purpose: “In that day shall there be an altar to Yahweh in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to Yahweh ... and the Egyptians shall know Yahweh in that day, and do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto Yahweh, and perform it” (*Is 19:19,21*). But notwithstanding these local provisions, as we have already demonstrated, all nations will be required to appear at Jerusalem at regular intervals, to receive instruction, and pay homage to the Great King: “*all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto Yahweh: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee*. For the kingdom is Yahweh’s, and he is the governor among the nations” (*Ps 22:27,28; cp. 65:2*). The exhortation will go out to all nations: “Give unto Yahweh, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto Yahweh glory and strength. Give unto Yahweh the glory due unto his name: *bring an offering*, and come into his courts ...” (*Ps 96:7,8*). Thus it will be, that the bringing of offerings to the “house of prayer” to which all nations shall attend (*Is 56:7*) shall be a prominent feature of worship, as required by Almighty God.

That there will be animal sacrifices offered in the Age to come, can be demonstrated beyond all dispute by a humble acceptance of the revealed Word of God. The testimony of Isaiah, speaking of “the sons of the stranger that join themselves to Yahweh”, is: “even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: *their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar*; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people” (*Is 56:6,7*). And again, “all the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nabaioth shall minister unto thee: *they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar*, and I will glorify the house of my glory” (*Is 60:7*). And this point cannot be made more explicitly than Ezekiel’s vision of the “house of prayer” yet to be constructed, and the worship associated with it. In Chapter 43, he was given a description of the altar, which will receive those offerings: “Son of man, thus saith the Lord Yahweh; these are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, *to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon*. And thou shalt give to the priests ... *a young bullock for a sin offering*. And thou shalt take of the blood thereof, and put it on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the border round about: thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it” (*Ezek 43:18-20*). Moreover, Ezekiel was also told the ordinances concerning the offering of specific sacrifices in the Age to come:

Burnt offerings (43:18, 45:15, 17, 46:2) the Daily Burnt offering (46:13), Sin offerings, (43:19, 45:22), Peace offerings (43:27, 45:15, 17, 46:2,13), Trespass offerings (46:20), and Meal offerings (46:15,20). In the light of such detailed testimony, there can surely be no doubt - there *will* be sacrifice in the Age to come.

Although it is perfectly true that all of the shadowy ordinances of the Law came to a focus in the Lord Jesus, who “was *once* offered to bear the sins of many” (Heb 9:28), and although it is perfectly true that forgiveness of sins can only be obtained by obedient belief in that Great Sacrifice, thus doing away with the need for any further offerings for that purpose, *this will not be the purpose of Sacrifices in the Age to Come.*

“The reason for the sacrifices in that age, will be to serve as a dramatic *memorial* of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ thousands of years before - even as we today make a symbolic sacrifice each first day of the week for a *memorial* of the Lamb’s sacrifice in which we share (1Cor 11:24-26; 10:16). Our baptism is likewise a symbolic sacrifice (Rom 6:3,4). Is it any problem to see the necessity for a similar reminder to be placed upon all the nations in the Kingdom age who, like Israel, must learn under a “school master” law to bring them eventually to grace? (cp. Gal 3:24)” (*A Handbook on the Temple of Ezekiel’s Prophecy*, p32).

It is clear then, that in that age, certain principles formerly incorporated into the Mosaic institution, shall be once again introduced in the future, (albeit into a new age, in different circumstances - but with similar objects) to be a schoolmaster, teaching the principles of Atonement in Christ - but pointing backwards instead of forwards. And of the various aspects of worship described in the prophetic writings, there are 2 feasts, which stand out pre-eminently, namely the re-institution of the Passover for the Nation of Israel, and the Feast of Tabernacles for the other nations.

THE MILLENNIAL PASSOVER

We read of the Passover, in Ezekiel 45:21-25, “In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the Passover, a feast of seven days, unleavened bread shall be eaten. And upon that day shall the prince prepare *for himself and for all the people of the land* a bullock for a sin offering ...”. Notice this point - the Passover is not kept by all nations, but by “the prince”, the Lord Jesus Christ, and “all the people of the land” - and there are differences from the Passover under the law, for instance the inclusion of a sin offering, absent from the Mosaic institution, rather echoing the principles of the Day of Atonement described in Leviticus 16 (see *Handbook on the Temple of Ezekiel’s prophecy*, p30). The Passover, being a feast originally designed to memorialise the redemption of the Israelites from the hand of the Egyptian oppressor (*Exodus 12*), will be a most fitting manner of celebration, to memorialise Israel’s Redemption from the Gogian confederacy, and their

return out of captivity at that time. Thus it will be a time of great national rejoicing, that the memory of such a great deliverance will be kept by both the delivered, and the One who effected that deliverance. Truly, in that day "it shall no more be said, Yahweh liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but Yahweh liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them" (*Jer 16:14,15*).

"But", we might ask, "why does "the prince" offer for himself? And that, a Sin offering too! Surely Christ is our Passover (*1Cor 5:7*), and Sin offering (*Jno 1:29*), he was himself sinless, so why does he offer for himself?" The answer is seen immediately, when we recognise the involvement of the Lord in his own sacrifice. It is true, that he needed no sacrifice for transgressions, but he was born with a physical nature which was under condemnation (*Rom 6:18*), because of the impulses of sin which resided in it (*Rom 7:17, Rom 8:3*). And it was through His perfect Sacrifice that he redeemed himself (*Heb 9:12 note: "for us" is not in the Greek here*), and cleansed himself (*Heb 9:23*) from the defilement of that nature, that he might rise from the dead. This is the point - the Lord had to redeem himself from the curse of his own nature, in order that he could redeem us from ours. Only when the root cause of transgression was condemned in him, could the way be made open for our forgiveness. And so God having "condemned sin in the flesh" (*Rom 8:3*) - the "law of sin" which physically dwelt in him (*cp. Rom 7:23*) - he was given immortality, thus providing the foundation for the forgiveness and redemption of others. How wonderfully appropriate it will be therefore, that in the Age to come, "the Prince", will not simply offer sacrifices for others in a detached manner of indifference, with no personal participation, but *with involvement with them*. Having been "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (*Heb 4:15*), He will offer for himself, as *a memorial* of his own redemption from those infirmities, and his victory over the *diabolos*, or "sin in the flesh" (*Heb 2:14, Rom 8:3*), the victory by which both he, and those he came to save might be granted Eternal Life. Thus, the keeping of the Passover will memorialise the principles of redemption in Christ Jesus, both from the oppressor of Israel, and also from the greater enemy - Sin.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Although it would appear that the nations of the world, (with the exception of those who join themselves to Israel at the time of their "receiving in", as described earlier), will be exempt from the Passover celebrations, it will be a requirement that they attend Jerusalem annually, to keep the Feast of Tabernacles: "it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (*Zech 14:16*), the verses which follow describing the punishment inflicted upon those who refuse to comply: "They shall have no rain", or in the case of Egypt, "there shall be the plague". This threatened withholding of rain gives an indication to the

purpose of this feast, which is essentially to demonstrate utter dependence upon the God of Israel for all things.

The institution of the Mosaic Feast of Tabernacles as recorded in Leviticus 23, involved the offering of Sacrifices, but also the dwelling in booths, temporary structures constructed from “the boughs of the goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook”. “Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: *That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am Yahweh your God*” (Lev 23:42,43). So it is, that whatever other lessons can be drawn from this feast - and there are many - it’s central object was to serve as a yearly reminder of how the Israelites were strangers and sojourners, dwelling in booths, under the Divine supervision and protection as they left Egypt to go to the land of promise. How fitting it will be, therefore, that all peoples in the Millennial Age, having left their respective countries to travel to that same land, shall also be taught that same principle - of reliance upon Israel’s God for all things - and that those who refuse to comply, will learn the lesson the hard way, in the withholding of the Lord’s blessing of rain, until they relent.

But there is another significant point; the feast of Tabernacles coincided with the final ingathering of the harvest: “Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, *when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto Yahweh seven days ...*” (Lev 23:39). And as such, it typifies the final ingathering of peoples at the end of the Millennium, the final resurrection and judgement, when the harvest of the world will be complete, and the situation prepared for the final stage, when Yahweh will be “all in all” (cp. 1Cor 15:20-25). How appropriate then, that in earnest of this, all nations shall be gathered into Jerusalem at the time of this annual event, to present themselves before the Great King, keep this feast, and so be taught in word and practice, of time of their ultimate ingathering, and acceptance before God at the close of the thousand years.

Although all nations will be required to attend the feast of Tabernacles, the Testimony of Isaiah suggests that it will be a continual stream of peoples, rather than all at once. “All nations shall *flow*” to this house (Is 2:2). And again: “And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and *from one sabbath to another*, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Yahweh” (Is 66:23). Thus it will be, according to the varying seasons upon the different parts of the earth, at the appropriate time, from one new moon, and one sabbath to another, there will be a continual cycle of all nations (excepting the time of Passover, we might suppose, to allow for the private celebrations of “the people of the land”), to observe the Feast of Tabernacles, to prostrate themselves before their King, learn His Laws, offer their sacrifices, and rejoice in his merciful provisions. And all this in anticipation of that great day at the close of the Millennium, when by God’s grace, they might be redeemed, and given immortality that they might enjoy Divine Life in the ages beyond.

BEYOND THE MILLENNIUM - WHAT?

The end of the Millennial age will be marked by a final rebellion of the Flesh against the ways of the Spirit: “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them” (*Rev 20:7,9*). Thus it will be, that after 1,000 years of restraint, the bonds of Divine Rule (*Ps 2:3*) shall be relaxed, and “satan”, the *diabolos*, or “sin in the flesh”, will be permitted to assert itself once more, in rebellion against the imposed dominion of Christ.

There are those who question how it could be, that after 1,000 years of experiencing the blessings of the Millennial age, that mortals would *want* to rebel - but such do not take into account the perversity of the human condition. There is, as part of man’s physical make up, a law of his being, styled apostolically, “sin”, or “sin that dwelleth in me” (*Rom 7:17*), which when unrestrained, leads all it’s possessors into transgression. And as this principle, or “law”, resident in human flesh (*Rom 8:3*) can only be removed by death (*Rom 6:7, 1Pet 4:1*), or transformation to Immortality (*Phil 3:21, 1Jno 3:2*) it will remain within the mortal populace, albeit under the suppression of Divine Law, and it’s rigorous enforcement. But once the pressure is released, at the termination of the 1,000 year period of restraint, it will be permitted to exert itself once more, leading it’s possessors into rebellion against the immortal rulers.

As Bro Thomas wrote: “If the apostle felt the workings of “the law of sin” within him, though obedient to “the law of the spirit of life”; need we wonder that the same “law of nature” should gather force in the hearts of nations subdued by fire and sword to the sovereignty of Israel’s King? Man, unrenewed man is essentially ungrateful and rebellious. The whole history of his race attests it. A thousand years of peace and blessedness will fail to bind him, by the bonds of love and a willing fealty, to the glorious and benevolent, yet just and powerful emancipator and enlightener of the world” (*Elpis Israel, p455*). Thus it will be, that the King will permit the Adversary (*the diabolos, or Sin*) to muster an innumerable company for his army, and march them against “the camp of the saints, and the beloved city” of Jerusalem, in a vain effort to depose the Son of the Most High God, and his brethren, and re-establish a kingdom based upon sinful principles of wickedness. “But fallacious will be the hopes of the rebel multitude, and dreadful the vengeance to burst upon them. The trembling earth and the blackening heavens warn them of a coming tempest. The dark vapours and thick clouds of the sky, curling in dense and lowering masses, suddenly hiss forth the forked lightning, and the heaven is rent by the deafening roar of the voice of God. Hail, and fire mingle with hail, pour down upon them, and they are destroyed from the face of

the land. Thus God will deliver his King; for “fire shall come down from God out of heaven, and shall devour them” (*Elpis Israel*, p456).

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

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

All nations shall be made a full end of, save one: “I will make a *full end* of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but **I will not make a full end of thee ...**” (*Jer 46:28*). This remaining nation, Bro Roberts describes as: “the nation of Israel with Jesus at its head - *a nation purified by a process of spiritual selection and having absorbed in itself the acceptable elements of all other nations by the same process*” (*The Visible Hand of God*, p 59). This is the seed of Abraham, and those of like faith who went before him - both his natural descendants, but also those Gentiles, drawn out by the Father (*Jno 6:44*) from the mire (*2Pet 2:22*) of humanity, and moulded by the potter’s hand (*Is 64:8, Rom 9:21*) to be vessels well suited for His use (*2Tim 2:21*) in containing His Glory (*2Cor 4:6,7*). Having been brought through the fire of affliction (*1Pet 4:12, 1:7*), and subsequently a change of nature, these “earthen vessels” become vessels of “gold and silver”, “sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (*2Tim 2:20,21*).

Having embraced the Jewish national Hope, these comprise the “Israel of God” (*Gal 6:16*), and shall populate the earth, for the duration of the Kingdom - “without end”:- “Israel shall be saved in Yahweh with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded *world without end*. **For** thus saith Yahweh that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, *he formed it to be inhabited*: I am Yahweh, and there is none else” (*Is 45:18*). The earth itself then, was formed in order “to be inhabited” by this Israelitish nation, having received “an everlasting salvation”, through the blood of the sacrificial Lamb as the national sin-offering. It will be a “world without end”, an

eternal “*olahm*” beyond the Millennium.

The Kingdom Age is to be essentially an intermediary period. It is the age standing between two epochs, one whereby man is permitted to rule himself by his own dictates, and one whereby all the earth is filled with an immortal family who have submitted themselves to the will of their Father. The Kingdom Age stands between the two as a transitional period between flesh and Spirit. It is an Age when the dominion of the flesh is taken away, and when all flesh shall be taught the ways of God, to submit to Him, and worship Him in spirit and in Truth. But the outworking of events to their final culmination beyond the millennium is to be a process of two stages. Firstly, as we have seen, all nations shall be taught a *knowledge* of God’s Glory: “the earth shall be filled with *the knowledge* of the glory of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea” (*Hab 2:14, Is 11:9*). But after “the end”, the earth shall be “filled”, with that glory. Truly in that day, the Father shall be manifested as the “all in all” (*1Cor 15:28*), for “all” of his Glorious Attributes shall be found “in all” of man. In the present order of things, with the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of the Ecclesial Body, it can be said that God “gave him to be the head of all things to the Ecclesia, which is his body, *the fullness of him that filleth all in all*” (*Eph 1:22*). For the faithful, the spirit of Christ pervades all their thinking; all that they do, however imperfectly, is to the Glory of the Father through him, as they seek to emulate his ways, and live out his principles.

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

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