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A Perspective on the New Year

“And this, knowing the season, that already it is time for you to awake out of slumber: for now is [our] salvation nearer to us than when we first believed” (Romans 13:11, RVIC).

“May you live in interesting times” was first attributed as a Chinese curse in 1936, when Sir Austen Chamberlain addressed the annual meeting of the Birmingham Unionist Association. He spoke of the “grave injury” done to collective security through Germany’s violation of the Treaty of Locarno. He went on to say, “There is no doubt that the curse has fallen on us. We move from one crisis to another. We suffer one disturbance and shock after another.”

Chamberlain’s statement was directed at the approaching danger of Nazi Germany. We could repeat the phrase while describing our world today, which seems to move from one crisis to another. Consider some issues of 2018 which have wreaked havoc in the four elements of world society.

Political

- In Turkey, the lira (TRY) plunged in value — 40% compared to the benchmark U.S. dollar. This decline was accompanied by high inflation and an ongoing economic crisis driven by excessive government borrowing. Adding to this were stiff tariffs imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump on Turkish imports such as steel and aluminum
- Venezuela faced the biggest economic crisis in its modern history driven by a collapse in oil revenues. The country was racked by rebellion, internal protests, and isolation from neighbors.

In April, Brazil closed its border to the daily flow of 5,000 Venezuelan refugees. “There is no historical parallel for this,” a Brazilian spokesman said as military personnel cleaned up a stadium that had been taken over by Venezuelan refugees. “We’re coming up with solutions as we go.”

- Illegal immigrants from Bosnia and Croatia attempted to break into the EU, resulting in clashes with police. Hundreds of refugees camped at the border shouting “open border, open border,” while mobs of

young men charged at police, armed with knives and stones.

- In Australia, ten ministers resigned from Malcolm Turnbull’s government, albeit eight of those resignations were rejected. The past decade has been marked by a series of leadership coups, with three sitting prime ministers deposed by party rivals and no leader serving a full three-year term as changes in parliament disrupted each new government.

- In Britain, neither major political party can find a Brexit (exit from the European Union) position that reflects citizens’ desires. Prime Minister Theresa May was jeered in the House of Commons when she commented on the resignations of the foreign secretary and the Brexit minister. New estimates on the costs of Brexit caused business firms such as Nissan, Airbus, and Jaguar Land Rover to consider pulling out of the United Kingdom as Britain abandons half a billion middle-class consumers.

Social

- In the Democratic Republic of Congo, over 4.5 million people have been displaced and 700,000 have fled to neighboring countries. The country is overrun with violence fueled by ethnic rivalries, malnutrition and disease.

- The South Sudan civil war is now in its fifth year and half the 13 million population now relies on

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foreign aid to merely survive. One-third of the people have left their homes and fled to Uganda, Sudan, and Ethiopia. Famine is rampant.

- Nearby, the Central African Republic faces constant conflict between the Christian anti-Balaka militia and the Seleka, a Muslim coalition. Nearly 700,000 citizens have been displaced.

- Burundi lost over 400,000 residents over the past three years due to political unrest and humanitarian crises. Most of those citizens fled to Tanzania.

- More than a million Ethiopians fled their homes in 2017 and 2018 because of conflict and drought.

- Escalated conflict in the state of Rakhine, Myanmar has driven out more than a million people, most of whom have taken refuge in Bangladesh.

- Yemen battles a three-year war displacing more than three million people. Compounding the social conflict is the largest outbreak of cholera in human history and eight million people at risk of starvation.

- Nigeria remains a bloodbath, with the terrorist group Boko Haram accelerating attacks randomly. The country has seen the collapse of public services and the destruction of nearly half a million homes, schools, health posts and water facilities.

Financial

- Although the global financial crisis of 2008/2009 has faded into history, fast growing debt in rich countries has raised new concern amongst economists. In America, for example, borrowing by students has risen to \$1.5 trillion, more than doubling since the 2008 debt crisis. Many of those borrowing mistakenly believed President Obama would erase student debt.

- Low interest rates dictated by the U.S. Federal Reserve in order to spur economic growth resulted in many companies adding significant low-cost debt. Debt issued by non-financial companies is now near its highest levels as a share of Gross Domestic Product since World War II. In China, corporate debt has risen to one-and-a-half times Gross Domestic Product (Source: Bank for International Settlements).

- Global companies now rate Cyber-attacks as their greatest risk. Successful breaches per company each year has risen more than 27 percent, from an average of 102 to 130. Ransomware attacks alone have doubled in frequency, from 13 percent to 27 percent. Costs range from \$5 million annually to over \$21 million annually according to a study by Accenture, a consulting group.

Religion

- The Ukrainian element of the Orthodox Church is near breaking away from its Russian overseer — a move that would undermine Moscow's central role in eastern Christianity. For several centuries since the fall of the Byzantine Empire, Moscow has pretended to the role of a "Third Rome" — a political and religious capital that would unite the Orthodox world.

- The U.S. Department of Justice is launching a federal grand jury investigation into Roman Catholic dioceses in Pennsylvania just months after a state-level investigation unearthed decades of allegations of widespread child sexual abuse by hundreds of priests that impacted more than 1,000 children over several decades.

- Chinese President Xi Jinping made it clear there would be a crackdown on foreign religions. He said that religions could operate only if they were "Chinese in orientation" and that Beijing "must provide active guidance to religions so that they can adapt themselves to socialist society."

- The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom cited more than two dozen countries as main contributors to an "ongoing downward trend" in religious liberty worldwide.

The Changing Middle East

Students of the Bible have great interest in developments in the Middle East, driven by expectations that it will be the site of the last great battle of this age before the ushering in of the Kingdom of God (Joel 1-3; Ezekiel 37-40). Most expect Israel to be at the forefront of this battle, surrounded by enemies who are only crushed when Jehovah intervenes. 2018 witnessed significant changes in the structure of many of the countries surrounding Israel.

Seven years ago in 2011, the Arab world took to the streets in rebellion. Uprising began in Tunisia when a protesting priest set himself afire. Conflict spread across the Middle East all the way to Cairo, aimed at bringing democratic reforms to countries with entrenched demagogues. The old order of things seemed doomed.

But things quickly fell apart — states collapsed, civil war broke out, and in 2018, the Middle East was more of a muddle than when the rebellions began. Traditional great powers such as Egypt, Iraq and Syria are barely functional while repressive regimes such as Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia are wealthy and thriving.

- The Syrian civil war has become one of the greatest human catastrophes in history, with over 500,000 civilians dead and 10 million displaced.

- Although Iraq appears to have defeated ISIS, the cost was significant and corruption rampant. The country faces an annual deficit of 13 trillion dinars (1 dinar = .0012 Australian dollar)

- Egyptians are suffering the consequences of a 2013 military coup when President el-Sisi rose to power on promises of reform and democracy. Tourism has since dwindled and insurgency is rampant.

- Bruised from the Syrian civil war where thousands of fighters were killed or wounded, Hezbollah is rising again in Lebanon. The terrorist group represents more of a threat now to Israel, as four years of fighting has honed military capabilities. Ability to

maneuver forces into enemy territory and draft large forces at rapid speed poses significant problems for Israel. Hezbollah was recently described by a senior officer in Israel's Northern Command as "the strongest army in the Middle East after the IDF (Israeli Defense Force)."

Israel's Changing Posture

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has proclaimed that Israel remains an "isle of stability" but that "everything is shaking." From Israel's perspective, the changes in the surrounding Arab nations over the past seven years, accompanied by a rise in political Islam, increases the volatility of the region.

Jehovah promised Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that he would bless those nations that were favorable toward Israel, but would curse (the Hebrew word is stronger than a mere curse) those who turned against it. He also promised that Isaac, Abraham's son through Sarah, that would inherit the promises of the covenant that He had made with Abraham. Because of Abraham's faith, Isaac's descendants — the Jewish people — would receive the promise of blessing all the families of the earth (Genesis 17:19).

Moses records that Ishmael, Abraham's son through Hagar, settled in Paran, where his descendants became the Midianites, Edomites, and the Egyptians (Genesis 25). They were desert people — nomads. When Moses brought the people out of Egypt, he encountered these tribal descendants of Ishmael (see Numbers 20) and sent messengers to the King of Edom seeking permission to enter and pass through the land. He even reminded the king of their family ties. However, the King refused, and thereafter animosity grew between the children of Isaac and the descendants of Ishmael. It continues to this day and its resolution provides a clue as to the timing of the end of this age.

Psalm 83 is recognized by many Bible Students as a prophecy of this ongoing conflict. Verse 4 reads, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel be no more in remembrance." This verse was likely fulfilled when Israel returned as a nation in 1948.

British rule over Palestine ended formally at midnight on May 14, 1948, the Jewish Sabbath. David Ben-Gurion, head of the provisional government of Israel, read a Declaration of Independence aloud on a live radio broadcast two hours prior to the beginning of Sabbath. Shortly after, the new nation was surrounded by armies of the newly formed Arab League — Egypt, Iraq, (Trans) Jordan and Yemen.

In his book *1948*, author Benny Morris describes how Israel, possessing only three tanks and without air force fighters or bombers, held off 74 Arab fighters and bombers. Jewish soldiers halted Egyptian tanks



Tel Aviv

moving up from the South and pushed back the Syrian army attacking from the North. Over a short time, they carved out by hand a three-mile stretch of road through rock and steep hillsides, resulting in the "Burma Road." This provided an avenue for convoys to stock Jerusalem with food, water, and supplies.

Six thousand Israelis — one percent of the population — were killed in the Independence war. A 1966 film, *Cast a Giant Shadow*, dramatizes the career of Mickey Marcus, who had a major part in the construction of the Burma Road. A 2006 film, *O'Jerusalem*, includes scenes in which food and supplies were brought into Jerusalem on the Burma Road. In *The Six Day War*, authors Randolph and Winston Churchill wrote, "By a feat of arms unparalleled in modern times, the Israelis, surrounded by enemies superior in quantity and quality of equipment and overwhelming superiority in numbers, had fought a war on three fronts and not only survived, but had won a resounding victory" (page 191).

Although Israel is well established as a nation today, two simple truths still exist: First, if the Arab nations laid down their arms, there would be no more fighting; second, if Israel laid down its arms, there would be no more Israel. According to prophecy, this situation will continue until the time of "Jacob's Trouble," just prior to the final conflict of this age at Armageddon.

Consider these verses from Jeremiah 30: "(3) For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it ... (7) Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. (8) For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him."

Compare this from Joel 3:1-12: "For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat ... let the weak say, I am strong ... come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together ... and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about."

Israel has been brought again to "captivity" — restored in the land promised to Abraham — according to the picture given by Ezekiel in his vision of the dry bones (Ezekiel 37). At its 70th anniversary in May, 2018, Israel contained 6.6 million Jews, 43 percent of world Jewry, along with another 2.2 million non-Jews.

Zechariah predicted "Though I scatter them among the peoples, yet in distant lands they will remember me. They and their children will survive, and ... return.

I will bring them back from Egypt (100,000 Jews emigrated from there in 1948) and gather them from Assyria (Iran, 100,000 emigrated in 1979) I will bring them to Gilead (NW Jordan) and Lebanon, and there will not be room enough for them ... I will strengthen them in Jehovah and in his name they will live securely," declares Jehovah" (10:9-12). This prophecy indicates a broadening of the nation to include parts of Jordan and Lebanon. Will this land come as a result of "Jacob's Trouble?" Prophetically, it appears so.

At some point, Israel's hostile neighbors will once again attack. Might this be over the status of the city of Jerusalem? Rather than defeating their enemies through military means, this attack is resolved through the intervention of a higher power. "And this manner shall be the peace, When the Assyrian shall come into our land and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds [a picture of the completed church] and eight princes of men [a picture of the Ancient Worthies]" (Micah 5:5).

The resolution of this ancient conflict will result in a different looking Middle East. It is then that the final conflict of this world takes place — the attack of Gog and his hosts: "And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates (Ezekiel: 38:11). Note that at this point the children of Abraham are dwelling in "unwalled villages" and "are at rest." This must indicate an end to the hostilities that have plagued the country since its founding in 1948.

Hezekiah's battle against Sennacherib king of Assyria is recorded in 2 Kings 18. Although Hezekiah was faithful, he emptied the temple treasury in order to pay tribute to Sennacherib and deter him from attacking Jerusalem. Sennacherib took the tribute, but still attacked Jerusalem. The fear of losing what he had drove Hezekiah to forsake the protection of God. As long as he was making reforms, Jehovah permitted Hezekiah to be undisturbed. But the fear of loss led Hezekiah to make concessions whether than to rely on the promises of God.

This is a lesson that Israel today must learn. Concessions of land for peace are not part of God's plan (Exodus 23:31-33). God allowed Sennacherib to attack and plunder all the cities and lands. Then he intervened. Sennacherib did not even shoot an arrow. So it will be at the end of the age. God will intervene and the world will watch in disbelief. "For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. Then the angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold all of these were dead" (Isaiah 37:35-36). This miraculous deliverance foreshadowed Jehovah's deliverance of Israel from the hosts of Gog. "Then shall Jehovah go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle [against Sennacherib?]" (Zechariah 14:3).

Ezekiel follows the end-of-age attack on Israel and the subsequent victory by Jehovah over its enemies with the vision of what is known as The Third Temple, showing the establishment of the Kingdom of God and Christ (Ezekiel 40-48). Christ's kingdom will be the first real opportunity for Israel to bless all people of the world. The scattering of the past three thousand years has uniquely allowed Jews to know the culture and climate of almost every nation on earth. However, Israel must first pass through this final testing which will redeem their hearts and point them to Jesus as their Messiah and redeemer.

Lessons for Us at the End of the Age

Author of *1984* and *Animal Farm*, George Orwell, said, "The further a society drifts from the truth, the more it will hate those that speak it." This fits us who represent Jehovah at a time when few want to hear of Him and His coming Kingdom. We must remember that the battle for the Kingdom is the Lord's, not ours. We are volunteers in His service to whatever extent he chooses to use us. One person enlisted in the Lord's service can make a huge difference when set on the side of truth. David had no armor, no experience, no equipment, he was not battle tested, nor was he trained. But he had one thing over Goliath — his confidence was not in his own strength but in His God. When Jehovah fights for His people, the enemy is always outnumbered.

The task that the Lord sets in front of us is never bigger than the power behind us. "The Lord can break any trap that you find yourself in. He can set you free from whatever ensnares you. He did it for Judah, he does it for his church, and he will do it for his human family" ("Like a Caged Bird," *Herald of Christ's Kingdom*, 2001). As we enter 2019, let us go forth with confidence that the Lord is in control. No matter how much we see the world around us deteriorating, we know the outcome. The phrase "do not be afraid" appears 365 times in the Bible. It should be a daily reminder to us that every day should be lived without fear. The transformed life we aspire to is a continuous process; all the power it entails comes from Jehovah God. To God be the glory, forever and ever!

Luke 21:28

**When these things begin
to come to pass,
then look up,
and lift up your heads,
because your redemption
draws near.**

Ulrich Zwingli

1 January 1484 — 11 October 1531

ULRICH ZWINGLI is not well known by many Christians/Bible Students today, however he played a very important role in the Protestant Reformation. He was born in the South East of Switzerland, in the village of Wildhaus on the first of January 1484, seven weeks after the birth of Luther (Born 10th November 1483). At a very early age he was taught the scriptures by his grandmother, a God-fearing woman. At bedtime she would relate to him stories from the bible. This as well as the grand aspects of nature around him in the mountains and valleys near where he lived, doubtless, contributed to the formation of this future Reformer.

His biographer “Oswald Myconius” thought so when he wrote about Zwingli, “I have often thought in my simplicity, that from these sublime heights, which stretch towards heaven, he has taken something heavenly and sublime. When the thunder rolls through the gorges of the mountains and leaps from crag to crag with crashing roar, then it is as if we hear anew the voice of the Lord God proclaiming, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect”.

At the age of nine he was sent to his Uncle, The Dean of Wesen, where he was schooled, until he outgrew his teachers. It was then decided to send him to the Rhine region, to a town called Basle, where he was placed in the care of Gregory Binzli the Master of St. Theodores school, a man of mild temper and a warm heart. Again, young Ulrich surpassed his school mates and teacher, so the question was asked “Where shall we find someone qualified to teach him?” The most distinguished school in Switzerland, at that time, was located in Bern where Henry Woelflin taught. During his time there he came to the attention of the Dominican Monks who tried to enrol him into their ranks at their Convent. Fortunately, his Father learned of the snare the Dominicans were laying for his son and sent word for him to return to his home in the Tockenburg Valley, thus Zwingli was spared!

He was next sent to Vienna for two years, where he studied the Roman Classics, once again he returned (1502) to his home in the Village of Wildhaus, this was now his 18th year. He again, wanting to increase his learning, returned to Basle where he studied philosophy. He found no peace of mind, the more he tried to study the more futile and wasteful it became. While at Basle he was introduced to Thomas Wittembach, a scholar, who was skilled in the sacred tongues (Languages) and had developed a strong desire for the Scriptures, it was at his feet that the young Zwingli also acquired a thirst for God’s word.

The message that Thomas Wittembach was spreading was “The death of Christ is the only ransom for our souls”. When these words were uttered to

Zwingli the seeds of the kingdom had been cast into his heart.

At the age of 22 he was invited by the people of Glarus (Switzerland) to become their pastor. Not long after this Pope Julius II was at war with France (King Louis XII) and the Swiss crossed the alps to fight for the Holy Roman Church, after being summoned by their warlike Pontiff, and their newly appointed priest (Zwingli) was compelled to join them. This experience began to open young Zwingli’s eyes to see that the miseries being inflicted on his countrymen were being caused by the corrupt Papal system of the Roman church.

On his return from the carnage of the battlefield he returned to his studies of the Divine Word. Not since the time of Wycliffe had someone so diligently strived to understand the scriptures. He accepted the bible as the sole and infallible Word of God! This was the starting Point of Ulrich Zwingli’s reformation, he said; ‘The scriptures come from God ... cannot fail; it is bright, it teaches, it discloses itself, it illuminates the soul with all salvation and grace.’ This light that he was seeing came from above, not from any man, at this time he had not even heard of Luther and Calvin was only a young boy just ready to start school. At this time there was no other light coming from any other man, all was in spiritual darkness.

In 1518 Zwingli was appointed to the College of Cannons (established by Charlemagne) in Zurich. His first appearance at the pulpit of the Cathedral at Zurich was on the 1st January 1519, he was 35 years old, his main subjects were ‘The Word of God, the one Infallible authority and the death of Christ the one complete satisfaction’.

After this Sermon, it was as if a fountain of new life had opened at the heart of Switzerland. Zwingli had become the spiritual regenerator of the nation. In August of that year the black death, the great plague, came to Switzerland and struck with savage fury. Zwingli was affected and lay at the point of death. It was during this sickness that he penned this little hymn, his faith so strong and firm.

I hear Death’s knock!
Shield me, O Lord,
My strength and rock
“The hand once nailed
Upon the tree,
Jesus, uplift —
And shelter me,
“Willest Thou, then,
Death conquer me
In my noon-day? ...
So let it be!

"Oh! May I die,
Since I am Thine
Thy home is made
For faith like mine

Thus, he examined at that awful moment the foundations of his faith, he returned from death's door to preach the word of God with more fervour than ever before. From the year 1523 he decided to REFORM the Church in Switzerland and root out all the false teachings of the Roman Church, a council was set up and the clergy, far and near, were summoned to attend. This decree was to take effect on the 29th January 1523. In preparation for this Zwingli prepared his famous "Sixty-Seven Articles of Doctrine" to defend the Word of God in Switzerland.

His first article struck right at the heart of the false Roman Church's claim that "Holy Scripture has no authority unless it is sanctioned by the church". He firmly held that the divine word was infallible, not the church, that Christ is our only teacher and mediator, only he is the head of his church; all who are united to him are members of his body, children of God, and from Christ and only Christ (not the pope or clergy) is our salvation, the claim of transubstantiation was false, food could be eaten on any day, not to be substituted on special days, and Monastic life, with all its rituals, clothing, tonsures (special shaving of the head) and the forbidding of marriage, were not in line with the Holy Scriptures.

Some of the other things he preached were that God alone can Pardon sin, the selling of indulgences could not purchase an exemption from punishment for some types of sins, Simony and the act of selling church officers and roles were wrong. That there is no place called Purgatory after death. Prayers to the saints were wrong and had no biblical backing. All brethren in the church are equal and should not be addressed by Father or any other title.

600 priests, scholars, strangers attended along with many of the citizens of Zurich. In the middle of the assembly Zwingli sat alone at a table with Bibles in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. All eyes were focused on him. He was there to defend the Gospel. After lunch the Conference re-assembled and the lords of Zurich proclaimed that the traditions of men should be laid



aside, only the word of God was (as proven from the Scriptures) to be preached from the pulpit. From this time on reform after reform enacted in Zurich, with Zwingli at the helm.

The Monasteries and their Orders were dissolved, idols were removed from the church and burnt. Thus, step by step, the movement advanced. That changes so great in a country where the Government was so Liberal and the expression of public opinion so unrestrained were accomplished, without popular protest or dissent, is truly marvellous. The next milestone was the mass being abolished. What a blow to the Papacy and the Pope! It laid to dust the towering fabric of the Roman Church and its hierarchy.

In 1529 a meeting was held at Marburg Castle, Germany between Martin Luther and Zwingli to try and solve the major difference between the two on the subject of the Eucharist (Transubstantiation). This meeting was arranged by Philip the 1st of Hessen, Germany, who wanted it to be a symbol of Protestant unity, but he was disappointed as both Luther and Zwingli could not agree over the sacrament of the Eucharist. Luther believed that the wine actually turned into the blood of Christ and that the bread turned into his flesh, Zwingli did not.

Luther Initially refused to acknowledge Zwingli and his followers as Christians. At the death of Zwingli on the battlefield near Kappel on the 11 October 1531 (he was 47), Luther said, "They said that Zwingli recently died thus, if his error had prevailed, we would have perished and our church with us. It was a judgment of God". Thus, the father of the reformation in Switzerland died, not fighting for Christ but for his own countrymen in Zurich!

Our confidence in Christ does not make us lazy, negligent, or careless, but on the contrary it awakens us, urges us on, and makes us active in living righteous lives and doing good. There is no self-confidence to compare with this. — Ulrich Zwingli

A Teachable Spirit

*“Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days”
(Proverbs 19:20 NASB).*

Brethren need a “soft heart”, one that has a desire and ability to be “teachable”. Unfortunately, amongst Brethren there are some who take the Apostle John’s statement “You need NOT that any man teach you” and use it out of context. They use this verse to justify why they no longer need to attend meetings or to read any of the material written by Pastor Russell and others who have thrown light on the scriptures in these last days. The Psalmist speaks of Jehovah “And thou givest them their food in due season (Psalms 145:15 ASV). In the due season the Bible was translated into the many languages of the nations. Older manuscripts were discovered that showed the errors in the translation of some of the earlier Bibles. The claim of only needing the Bible and the Holy Spirit nullifies the rest of the scriptures that shows that “God has set **teachers**” in the church.

No one has yet come to an understanding of the word of God, or come to Christ, without first either reading it or hearing it from someone else. The Bible itself was written by men under the inspiration of God “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for **teaching**, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16 NASB).

The thought that there were people qualified to teach the word of God is not confined just to the New Testament. When the Law was given to Moses the work of the Levites was also set out, including the moral requirements they needed to display “so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them through Moses” (Leviticus 10:11 NASB). On the return from exile in Babylon the Levites once more were commissioned to teach the people. “And the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. And they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading” (Nehemiah 8:7-8 ASV).

After Jesus had commenced his earthly ministry, teaching the disciples about the word of God, he sent the twelve out to preach to the lost sheep of Israel “And he called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. And he sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God, And they departed, and went throughout the villages, **preaching** the gospel, and healing everywhere” (Luke 9:1-6 ASV).

Towards the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry, he sends 70 disciples out to teach the people. “Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. And He was saying to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers

are few; therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Luke 10:1-2 NASB). They are to go in advance into places where Jesus might follow. Their message was “The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.”

These disciples were not to focus on teaching in synagogues, (the place of the scribes and Pharisees; the religious teachers at that time). Jesus told them to go to people’s homes. They were to enter the house and if made welcome they were to stay in that house to “heal those in it who are sick,” and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’

After Christ’s Resurrection

After Christ’s resurrection and before his ascension he gave this commandment to the disciples “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **teaching** them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20 NASB). At His ascension he again spoke of this commission, “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the **remotest part** of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NASB).

The Apostle Peter had denied Christ three times before his crucifixion. After his resurrection Christ spoke to Peter, challenging him with the question “lovest thou me more than these?” Three times he instructed Peter “Feed my Lambs”, “Tend my sheep” and “Feed my sheep”. Peter was to feed, i.e. teach the younger, more tender of the flock, those that maybe were weak in faith and belief. Teach them the milk of the word. He was to tend the sheep, both the lost sheep of the house of Israel, plus those that would come in from the Gentiles. He was to teach them from the bread and water of life. The third command was to “Feed my sheep”. These were the more mature brethren who although possibly capable of looking after themselves still needed guidance as Satan was there waiting to snare any who may have wandered away from the main flock.

The Holy Spirit

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you (John 14:26 NASB).

The Apostles had humble beginnings, listening to the words of Christ, but often not understanding the deeper meanings of his words. Christ knew that once he had left the earth they would need the assistance

of the Holy Spirit to guide them. With the coming of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles the effect was striking. Peter's speech stirred the people as he set out the prophesies in the Old Testament and how Christ had fulfilled them. "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41 NASB).

Even after being brought before the council, jailed and flogged, they were not discouraged, after their release it is stated "And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on **teaching and preaching** Jesus as the Christ (Acts 5:42 NASB).

Teaching in the Churches

The Corinthian Church was an example of why continual teaching is important. They were introduced to the Gospel by the Apostle Paul, but they had started to go astray and needed to be taught again. The Apostle Paul had spent eighteen months in Corinth, staying with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:11), preaching to the Brethren. He wrote two letters reminding them of what he had preached and correcting the errors that had infiltrated the Church. Paul realizing that they needed more instruction tells them "For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Corinthians 4:17 NASB).

Paul in his letters to Timothy writes that those in the position of overseers must be "able to **teach**" (1 Timothy 3:2). Timothy is also told "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to **faithful** men who will be able to **teach** others also" (2 Timothy 2:2 NASB).

They were not only to be faithful to the true message but also "The Lord's bond-servant must not be **quarrelsome**, but be kind to all, able to **teach**, patient when wronged" (2 Timothy 2:24 NASB).

Paul stressed the importance of teaching the flock and in 1 Corinthians 12:28 states "And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, **third teachers**, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues" (NASB).

A Teachable Attitude

The account of the Ethiopian eunuch illustrates the attitude that Bible students need. He was highly qualified in a high position "a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship" (Acts 8:27 NASB). He was a devout man and was reading the book

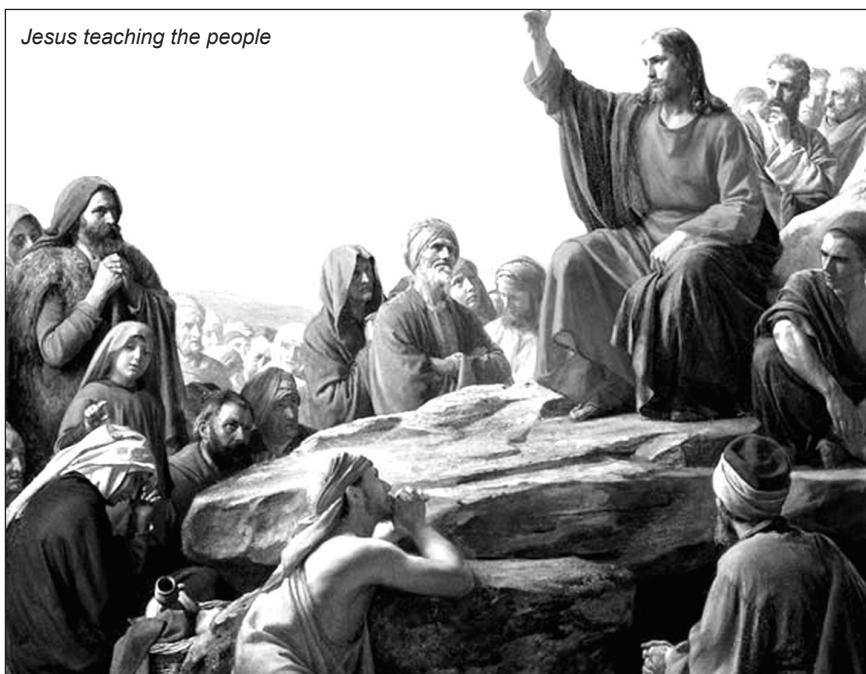
of Isaiah. When Philip joined him and asked the question "Do you understand what you are reading?" He answered "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" Then Philip opened his mouth and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him" (Acts 8:35 NASB).

Throughout the New Testament, Jehovah continually emphasizes the need to provide spiritual food to the church. Jesus says that His servants will be providing "**food** in due season" to His people (Matthew 24:45). "**Feed** My sheep" is one of the last things Jesus tells Peter (John 21:17). Paul writes to Timothy stating, "**Preach** the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and **teaching**" (2 Timothy 4:2).

The Apostle John was old, and lovingly referred to the Brethren as "My little (beloved) children" He reminds them that they have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ and of the love they should have for each other. They are not to love the things of this world as they will pass away. He then goes on to warn them of the coming of the antichrist and that there were many antichrists around them. The problem was that the philosophies of man where starting to mingle with the true teachings of Christ. Timothy was warned "Turn away from the irreverent babble and godless chatter, with the vain and empty and worldly phrases, and the subtleties and the contradictions in what is falsely called knowledge and spiritual illumination" (1 Timothy 6:20 AMP).

John reminds them to remain steadfast in the teaching of Christ and not to be swayed by worldly knowledge that throws doubt on the Gospel message.

"As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has **taught** you, you **abide** in Him" (1 John 2:27 NASB).



What Does the Future Hold?

"He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways."
(Psalms 91:11)

This past year has been tumultuous to say the least. Governments world-wide are losing the confidence of their citizens. Trust has gone and faith is on the wane. Even with the advent of modern medicine, mankind is still suffering the ills of disease and aging is still taking its toll on the human family!

Politics has become a game of who gets crushed first. And yes, the possibility of a nuclear threat is still very real. The average person walking the streets of any major metropolitan city is clueless as to what could correct these major problems.

Since time began mankind has been plagued with sadness, death and sorrow. In the beginning father Adam suffered the loss of a son due to him being murdered by another son. The Jewish nation, from its very beginning, has been embroiled in one war after another. Nation against nation has been the rule. Why? These are questions which beg for an answer.

Beginning with the garden of Eden, Genesis chapter one: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In subsequent verses we find the statements of the creation of the expanses of water, land and the various animals as well as man. In the last verse of this chapter we read and quote, "And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day."

We see in the beginning all was good! As man began to fill the earth, at God's command, the troubles began to multiply. Then Satan and his minions began to inject themselves into the society of man.

All forms of evil were witnessed from half-man half-angels to evil spells and all forms of witchcraft! We assume the people at that time would have felt all was lost, and destruction was on the horizon. Today our society feels very similar to the chaos that occurred at that time. The difference today is that modernisation and greater population dominate. Is the heart of man any different today than back then? We don't think so. Loose morals, jealousy, and greed still prevail! We read in the book of Jude how we should conduct ourselves in relation to those around us.

Jude 17:22, "But you beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts. These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded devoid of the spirit. But you beloved, building yourselves on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit: keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. And have mercy on some who are doubting."

Today there is more wealth in the world than there ever has been, yet mankind is no happier than he was 500 years ago, Why? We answer that the society of man has slowly removed any vestige of religion and spirituality from everyday life. As you travel through Europe today, the magnificent cathedrals are empty! They have become museums where tourists pay to appreciate the architecture.

Man has become secular for the most part. Yes, there are small groups of the faithful, however their numbers are so small as to not have any meaningful effect. The society in which we are living today closely resembles the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in many respects! We ask the question, "Is all lost?" We answer no. The future of mankind rests in the hands of our beloved Heavenly Father. Jehovah has allowed man to suffer the effects of evil all these thousands of years in order for him to come to a realisation of the sinfulness of sin.

This present evil world is still under the control of Satan, but that is all about to change. God has allowed sin to run its course in order for man to experience the terrible separation from His love and care. When you were a child you were protected by your parents. You were loved by them, you were nurtured by them, when you became an adult all of that changed. The love and care of your parents never changed, but you became separated from it as you made your way in the world. As in the case of father Adam, after he sinned, he became separated from his father. The protection and love he had previously experienced was withheld from him, such is mankind today.

Hope for the Future

When we go to God's word in the scriptures, we begin to realise the loving care our Father has in store for us in the future. The thoughts and expressions that David has recorded for us in his Psalms are words and revelations of great comfort! One Psalm in particular expresses our thoughts at this time, that is Psalm 91. It is quite lengthy; therefore, we will use selected verses to show the loving kindness of our Heavenly Father.

These verses reflect our present life as well as the life eternal that is to come. Psalm 91:1-5, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust! For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper, and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the

arrow that flies by day." Here we find in these words the love and protection our Father wants to give to His children! We continue. Verses 11, 12. "For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone."

Here we see the loving care our Father affords us. finally, we conclude this Psalm with verses 14-16. "Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him, and honor him. With a long life I will satisfy him, and let him behold my salvation."

In 1 Timothy 2:1-6 we read, "First of all, then I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity, This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth, For there is one God and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time."

So dear friends, not all is lost. We must have hope and faith in the promises our Father has given to those who love Him. Remember without faith it is impossible to please him, Hebrews 11:6. So how can we be reassured of the promises set forth in scripture that declares an end to all evil and death? Ref: Revelation 21:4. The scriptures declare that we are to be watchmen, that is watchmen concerning the events in the world as it relates to prophesy. There is an expression in scripture that states, "God turned His face away from Israel so to speak." Isaiah 59:1-2, we quote, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not short That it cannot save; Neither is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear." This expression reflects the thought that God's blessings and protection were withdrawn from Israel because of their great sinfulness and loss of faith in Him!

Jesus, God's Emissary

There you have the first great clue as to how the Father will began to interface with man, especially the Jew. When Jesus presented Himself to the Jew first, they were given the opportunity first to repent and believe on Him, God's emissary! But alas this did not happen, instead they crucified him upon the cross. But His mission was successful, as He fulfilled all that was required of Him by the Heavenly Father.

At this point the way was opened to the Gentiles, Cornelius being the first. In essence, Jesus purchased the entire human race, which is to be brought back in harmony with the Father in His due time. The subtle key we mentioned earlier as to how we would



The Prophet Amos

recognise this happening is found in the nation of Israel. God had spoken earlier in the Old Testament of Israel: of all the families of the earth I have known you, Amos 3:2. "Even tho His face was turned away from them, He has not forgotten them, but is waiting for the proper time to shed His grace once, again on them."

In the eleventh chapter of Romans, the Apostle Paul makes it quite clear that God has not forgotten Israel. Romans 11:8-15, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes to see not and ears to hear not, down to this very day. And David says let their table become a snare and a trap and a stumbling block and a retribution to them. Let their eye be darkened to see not, and bend their backs forever. I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. Now if their transgressions be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles, inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen, and save some of them. For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead!"

We have it quite clear from the apostle that at a prescribed time God will again act on their behalf, and once again turn His face of favour back to His people! We read in Zachariah 14 that when Israel is besieged by all the nations, God will go before them as in the days of old, Chapter 14:1-3, "Behold a day is coming for the Lord when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city

will be captured, their houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle." Again, we read in verse nine to summarise, "And the Lord will be King over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one."

There we have the outcome, but how do we get there from all of the world's confusion and evil today? Our barometer, brethren, is Israel. That tiny little nation of only 8,019 square miles. We are living in the days when the Lord's face (mercy) is slowly beginning to turn back to His people.

Let us examine this barometer and the events that should have wiped Israel off the face of the Earth! Today the nation of Israel is completely surrounded by hostile nations that are plotting for their demise, countries such as Egypt, Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Syria, just to name a few. These countries are highly militarised, some with nuclear capabilities! The following are just a few examples of unexplained events from a human viewpoint that occurred during many of the wars Israel has faced since 1948.

During the six-day war, a strange occurrence happened. Israeli soldiers came into the Straits of Trina prepared to do battle with the enemy, an Egyptian half-track was approaching them, filled with armed soldiers, with mounted machine guns on both sides. The Israelis only had small hand weapons with bullets that in no way could stop the approaching half-track. They waited for the first shot that never came! The half-track came to a halt and the Israelis approached cautiously. Inside of the half-track they found 18 armed soldiers sitting with guns in their hands having a petrified look on their faces! Ordering the men out of the vehicle they began to march the men. One of the Israeli officers asked the Egyptian sergeant why they didn't shoot at them?

He answered, "I don't know. My arms froze- they became paralysed. The Israeli soldier then commented, 'how can you say that God didn't help us?'" Another account regarding the Israeli air force; IDF Director of operations Maj. General Weizmann was asked by Mr. Levanon, the father of a fallen pilot, how he explains the fact that for 3 straight hours, Israeli



Ezer Weizmann, former president of Israel: "The Finger of God"

air force planes flew from one Egyptian airstrip to another destroying the enemy planes, yet the Egyptians did not radio ahead to inform their own forces of the oncoming Israeli attack?

Ezer Weizmann, who later served as President of the state of Israel, was silent. He then lifted his head and explained, "The finger of God."

The secular newspaper Haaretz summed up the 6-day war with the admission; "Even a non-religious person must admit this war was fought with help from heaven."

And finally, German journalists (who are by nature skeptical) summarised: "Nothing like this has happened in history. A force including 1000 tanks, hundreds of artillery cannons, many rockets and fighter jets, and a hundred thousand soldiers armed from head to toe was destroyed in two days in an area covering hundreds of kilometers filled with reinforced outposts and installations, and this victory was carried out by a force that lost many soldiers and much equipment, positions and vehicles. No military logic or natural cause can explain this monumental occurrence!"

The world, per say, cannot see or understand the workings of God. Only those guided by faith can see the old order winding down making ready for the kingdom, for which for so long we have prayed; "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

Why this "barometer"? Israel is so important to the world because when the last trumpet is blown at the last sounding, and God begins to take over the control of the earth, the first place for the restoration of mankind is to begin with the nation of Israel.

We read in Zechariah 8:23, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, "In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

So, all of the sin, crime, death and corruption will ultimately come to its final close. The evil that is presently in the world will be transformed into a condition of trust and faith for all of the human family. We will close our thoughts with the familiar quotation found in Revelation chapter 21. This will be the ultimate outcome for the human family.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

Abide always in His mercy and Love — Amen

The Bible Teachings

On the Covenants, Mediator, Ransom, Sin Offering and Atonement.

This book was published by the Berean Bible Institute during the 1970's and set out the teachings from the Bible on topics which so eluded many in the Christian world. The insert in this edition of the Peoples Paper covers the next part of this 274-page book. For Brethren who would like to read more of the content it is available through the Berean Bible Institute's official webpage.

www.australianbiblestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Bible-Teachings-on-the-Covenants2.pdf

Conventions

Berean Bible Students Convention

January 25-28, 2019 • Camp Wilkin
57 Noble Street, Anglesea, Victoria
Enquirybbi@gmail.com, Richard +614 6603 8225

Sydney Convention

March 8-10, 2019 • Wesley Vision Valley
7 Vision Valley Road, Arcadia, NSW
Enquirybbi@gmail.com, Richard +614 6603 8225

Convention Streaming Online

Anglesea, January 26-28, 2019 — www.australianbiblestudents.org/events/conventions/
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Publisher of the "Bible Study Monthly"
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Dawn Pilgrim Visit 2019

The Dawn Bible Students Association will send two elders for a pilgrim visit to Australia in 2019 — Br Byron and Sr Margie Keith, with Br Michael and Sr Vicky Balko. A draft itinerary follows. Enquirybbi@gmail.com • Ray +61429172606

- Jan 7 Arrive at Sydney
- Jan 8-10 Travel to Gympie to meet Brethren
- Jan 11-13 Brisbane meetings Saturday, Sunday
- Jan 14 Gold Coast
- Jan 15-17 Travel down East Coast
- Jan 18 Morisset NSW meeting
- Jan 19-20 Meetings, fellowship in Sydney
- Jan 21-23 Travel south to Pakenham
- Jan 24 Overnight Melbourne
- Jan 25-28 Australian Bible Students Convention
- Jan 28-31 Personal Time
- Feb 1-4 Meet with Polish Brethren, Melbourne
- Feb 5 Return Home

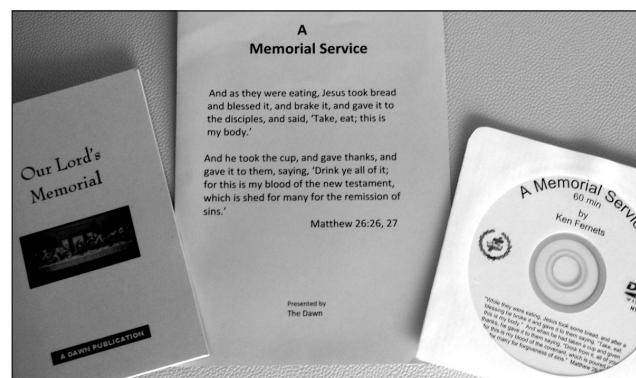
The Date of Memorial

Thursday, 18 April, 2019 (14 Nisan) after 6 pm

For details on locations where the memorial will be held in Australia, email enquirybbi@gmail.com

For Isolated Brethren

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The Three Great Covenants

What Is a Covenant?

A covenant is a ratified, unalterable agreement. God has made many covenants with men. (Genesis 6:18, Jeremiah 33:20, etc.) Three, however, stand out very prominently, as in them have been bound up all the best interests of mankind.

The Abrahamic Covenant

First: The Covenant of God to Abraham. This covenant seems to comprehend and include a blessing on the natural fleshly descendants, as well as upon the higher, spiritual Seed, “which Seed is Christ; and if ye be Christ’s (body), then are ye Abraham’s Seed and heirs according to (this) promise.” If this thought be borne in mind, it will assist us in grasping the full meaning of this Covenant.

Seed as Stars of Heaven

The spiritual seed is called the “blessing seed” and “stars of heaven.” It is prophesied that “They that turn many to righteousness shall, shine as the stars forever.” (Dan.12:3.) And Jesus calls Himself “the bright and morning star.” This thought seems to have had more weight and meaning with the ancients, who looked up to the stars with superstitious reverence, believing that they controlled the destines both of nations and of men. So probably this portion of the covenant represented by stars signified heavenly rulers — Christ and His Bride. The natural descendants are probably meant when mention is made of “a great nation” possessing “this land” — Canaan — said to be as the “sand of the sea.” This represents an earthly people as plainly as the stars do the heavenly. Let us read the covenant and see that it contains these two elements and recognises both natural and spiritual Israel. (Genesis 12:2,3, 13:14-16, 15:18, and 22:16-18.) Paul assures us that “the seed” referred to in this covenant is Christ. (Galatians 3:16).

Fleshly Israel lost this, the cream or choicest part of the covenant — the spiritual. As Paul says (Romans 11:7): “Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it.” But the loosing of this better part does not cut them off entirely from having a part in that covenant. “For brethren, that you may not be conceited with yourselves” (thinking that all of God’s favour and covenant are taken from them and given to you), “I wish you not to be ignorant of this secret; that hardness in some measure has happened to Israel till the fulness of the Gentiles may come in” (i.e., until the Bride selected from the Gentiles has been completed). “And then all Israel will be saved, as it has been written, The Deliverer shall come out of Zion, and

shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob,” and “This is the Covenant with them from me, when I shall take away their sins” (Romans 11:25, Diaglott).

Earthly Blessings Sure

Though for centuries they have been counted as enemies and blinded to the gospel, yet they are still beloved for the fathers’ sake; for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance (verse 29); i.e., these earthly blessings are just as sure to them as our spiritual ones are to us, because God has promised or covenanted, and never changes. — Thus, we see the breadth and grandeur of God’s plan and arrangement — how the natural seed was cast aside for the time that the spiritual might be developed, who, in their turn, are to be made the instruments for blessing the natural; when they shall obtain mercy through your mercy; when “The Deliverer shall come out of Zion (spiritual Israel — the Church) and turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (fleshly Israel).

When we see this, we see the fulness of this covenant to Abraham. It shows us what God meant when He promised that Abraham’s seed should be mighty, possessing the gates of their enemies (the place of power and control), and be so far above others as to be able to “bless all the families of the earth.” “O, the depth of the riches, of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments and untraceable His ways; for who hath known the mind of the Lord?”

The Covenant of the Law

Is the second covenant we wish to consider. It was unlike the Abrahamic, in that it was conditional and two-sided, i.e., it was made between God and Israel and by its arrangements God was bound to do certain things, if Israel did certain things. The one with Abraham was unconditional. God said: “I will,” etc.; and although that was the Abrahamic covenant, Abraham was in no way obligated. (Circumcision was instituted after the covenant. — Romans 4:10).

It was not Abraham’s covenant, but God’s entirely; and for this reason, it had no mediator. (A mediator is one who stands between the parties to an agreement or contract, whose duty it is to see that both parties fulfil their parts of the covenant.) Instead, God sware by Himself that He would keep His covenant. (See form of oath Genesis 15:8-18 and Jeremiah 34:18-20.) “The Law,” is called a covenant. (Compare Galatians 3:17 and 4:24.) It was ordained in the hands of a mediator (Moses, Deuteronomy 5:5), which proves that it contained conditions for its fulfilment: for “a mediator

is not of one" (Galatians 3:20), or, not necessary where there was only one party contracting, as in the case of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Law Covenant Made with Israel Only

This (the Law) was not part of the first covenant, nor was it made with the people of the world, but only with fleshly Israel — "And Moses called all Israel and said unto them: Hear O Israel ... The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us who are all of us here this day" (Deuteronomy 5:1-5).

The Ten Commandments

That the Ten Commandments, particularly, and the ceremonial law, incidentally, constituted this covenant, is clear from the reading of the remainder of this chapter. A difference between moral and ceremonial law is now recognised, but it is of men. God called them one "The Law." This Law Covenant was seemingly designed as a blessing to Israel, yet really by coming under it they condemned themselves; for it is written "cursed (condemned) is everyone that continueth not in all the words of the Law to do them." God never intended, therefore, that they should be benefited by this covenant since, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight." What then was the object of this covenant? It had two objects: first, it demonstrated that the natural man as a fallen creature, could not live in harmony with God, could not do right or be righteous. And finally, it was proved and illustrated that a perfect man could keep God's perfect law, when Jesus did keep it and thereby became heir legally as well as by grace to all the provisions of both covenants.

Secondly: The Law "was appointed on account of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise related." (Galatians 3:19.) God knew the best time, and "in due time sent forth His Son." The law was introduced because the proper time had not come for the development of "the seed" referred to in the covenant to Abraham, and was intended to prevent Israel's becoming degraded like other nations, and to act as a restraint on their fleshly nature, and an educator of self-control, etc. It thus was a "schoolmaster, which, by showing them their own weakness, prepared them to receive Jesus Christ as their justifier from the things which the law condemned. (Galatians 3:24.) And it did this very work. By the time the seed was due, it had prepared some to receive Jesus.

Thirdly: It was used as a type, not of the Abrahamic, but of the new covenant, to illustrate the operations and conditions of that covenant, as we shall soon see.

New Covenant Not Made with the Church

Is repeatedly mentioned in Scripture. It should not be misconstrued as being God's covenant with us — "the seed"; no, that was part of the Abrahamic covenant, and, although in harmony with each other, they are not the same, nor is the "new covenant" made with the Church at all. It does not come into operation until the spiritual seed as well as the fleshly children, have come into possession of what was promised them under the Abrahamic Covenant.

New Covenant Conditional Requiring a Mediator

It, like the law which was its shadow or type, is between God and fleshly men — the world. If, therefore, this covenant is between two parties (God and the world), there must be conditions binding upon both; hence there must be a mediator (as in the type) to stand responsible for the fulfilment of the conditions of both. Who, then, is to act as mediator of the new covenant? Let Paul answer: "Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant." (Hebrews 12:24.) Yes, Jesus our Head, is the one, and the only one, who can stand uncondemned before God's righteous law. In Him God recognises His holy Son, separate from sinners, and in Him humanity may, and soon will, recognise their Lord, now highly exalted, but once "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, who, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man"; and "who is a faithful. High Priest," able to sympathise).

Only through Him can the world ever be made at-one with God — His great work is at-one-ment, He will associate with Him in this work His tried and faithful Bride. Now, what are the conditions of this new covenant? They are, as in its type, the law, do and live. God can never be a party to any covenant recognising sin. Perfect righteousness ("Be ye perfect") has always been the condition on which God recognises or communes with any of His children. Christians in the present age, although not individually perfect, are reckoned so, being hid in Christ, and as members of His Body are covered by His robes of righteousness. But in the coming time, the imputed righteousness of another will not avail, but "every man shall die for his own sin" (not for sin of Adam), or vice versa, live by his own righteousness (perfect obedience).

New Age Vs. Jewish Age

It may be asked, then: In what way will the new age under the new covenant differ from the Jewish age under the law covenant? If the conditions of life are obedience to God's perfect law, will it not result, as the law covenant did, in condemning all under it to death? We answer no, the difficulty then was, not with the law, but with man. Man, in his fallen, imperfect condition, could not keep "the law ordained to life." But the conditions of this new covenant on God's part are, that man shall be brought to a condition in which he can obey the perfect law, and always keep it in his heart, as it is written,

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. ... This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my law in their inward part, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." "In those days they shall no more say, the fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge, but everyone shall die for his own iniquity" (Jeremiah 31:31).

Proof of New Covenant Being Future

"And in that day, I will make a covenant for them with the boasts of the field and with the fowl of heaven

and with the creeping things of the ground and I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle, out of the earth." (Hosea 2:18. See also Jeremiah 32:37-41, Ezekiel 37:26.) We see clearly that the new covenant is yet future and also that a great change will be effected in the condition of Israel, who, under the Law previously, were unable to keep it. The trouble then was, "the fathers (Adam and his successors) had eaten the sour grape of sin, and the children's teeth were set on edge" so that they could not keep the Law of God; so the Day of Atonement is brought in (the Gospel Age) and during it, they, and all men are redeemed from sin and the curse, through Jesus Christ, who, by the grace of God tasted death for every man. The man Christ Jesus, holy, harmless, separate from sinners was made a curse for us, made sin (i.e., dealt with as the sinner) for us, (He) who knew no sin. And it is consequently after the Gospel Age when they are pardoned freely for Christ's sake, and restored to the condition of sinless manhood that the New covenant comes into force. And to this thought agrees the words of Paul (Romans 11:27) "This is my (new) covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins."

All Nations to Be Blessed

The nations are to be blessed also under this new covenant, by becoming "daughters" to Israel. "I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy (old) covenant" (Ezekiel 16:61).

A Covenant with Obligations Requires a Mediator

We have seen that to every covenant to which there are obligations of two parties, there is a mediator, or one who stands between guaranteeing the fulfilment of its conditions.

As under the covenant of the law, Moses was the mediator, so is "Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant" And to Him God looks for the fulfilment of the Law, and to Him Israel and the world look for ability to comply with its conditions. Remember that we, the gospel church, do not come to Christ under the new covenant, neither under the "old" or Law covenant, but under a covenant older than either of these (Galatians 3:17), the Abrahamic covenant; as part of "The Seed." "If ye be Christ's (body), then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to (that) promise" (Galatians 3:29).

Covenants Sealed with Blood

As the typical or Law covenant (or "testament" same Greek word) was ratified by Moses its Mediator — sealed, with the blood of a bull and a goat annually — so the "new Covenant" is sealed with the blood of "better sacrifices" (plural) which these represented, viz.: Christ — Head and Body.

Moses took a bunch of hyssop and scarlet wool and therewith sprinkled of the ratifying blood mixed with water, both the book (type of the Law) and all the people. (See Hebrews 9:19.) So with the New Covenant it must also be ratified with blood; and the mediator of the "new," gives His own blood (life,) both head and body, during this gospel day of sacrifice. And soon when the better sacrifices are complete, the people will be sprinkled with this cleansing blood and with the

pure water of truth. It will sprinkle both book (law) and people, bringing the people into harmony with God and therefore into harmony with His Law. Their teeth will no longer be set on edge; no longer will they, when they would do good find evil present with them; for "All shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest," and "The knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth."

Sprinkling After the Better Sacrifices

Who will do the sprinkling after the sacrifices are complete? It was Moses in the type; it will be the Great Prophet and Mediator in the antitype — "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:22.) This prophecy belongs to the "Times of restitution of all things," and is quoted by Peter as applicable there.

Antitypical Prophet Now being Raised Up

That prophet or teacher — "The Christ" — Head and body in new being "raised up" (to power) and soon the work of sprinkling and cleansing humanity begins; and the soul (person) who will not then obey and be cleansed shall be destroyed. In that age, the sinner a hundred years old will be cut off, though at that age he would be but "a child" (Isaiah 65:20).

Sarah — Hagar

Let us briefly review these covenants as they are illustrated in a type or allegory. (Galatians 4:22-31.) Paul explained that Abraham's wife, Sarah, was a type of the covenant made with Abraham, referring to "The Seed." As years rolled by, and no child came, they began to look for a fulfilment in some other way, and Hagar takes the place of a wife and bears a son, who apparently is to be the heir. So the original promise of God meant Christ, but He was not born until "due time," and in the meantime "The Law" was given from Sinai, apparently taking the place of the covenant, and under the law covenant a fleshly seed was developed — fleshly Israel. But the Abrahamic covenant had not failed, and after the Hagar covenant had borne fleshly Israel (typified by Ishmael), the true seed of Abraham and heir is born, under the first (or Sarah) covenant; i.e., Christ Jesus and the members of His body — spiritual Israel.

Paul Spoke of Only Two Seeds

This is as far as Paul carries the type, because speaking only of the two seeds, natural and spiritual, and the two covenants under which they come into existence. But as we find that God is to make "a new Covenant," "after those days," we naturally inquire: Why was not this new covenant typified by a wife as well as the other two? And upon examination we find it was so illustrated. Turning to Genesis 24:67, we read how Isaac receives Rebecca into Sarah's tent, and she becomes his married wife, etc., illustrating how our heavenly bridegroom will receive His Bride at the end of her journey, and bring her into, and associate her with Himself in the enjoyment of all things promised in the first (or Sarah) covenant. Then we read: "Then, again,

Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah," illustrating, as plainly as a type can, the new covenant.

Children Born of Abraham's Wives

Each of the first two covenants bore one offspring: The first, the "heir of all things" (Isaac, spiritual Israel), and the second, fleshly Israel, beloved for the fathers' sake. But the New Covenant (Keturah) bears six sons, which, taken with the one of Hagar would be seven, a complete number, representing that all the fleshly children would be developed under the Hagar and Keturah or "Law" and "New" Covenants. The name Sarah means Princess, Hagar means flight or cast out, Keturah means incense or sweet; all of which are significant.

Oh, how our covenant — the Royal — looms up above all the others! Let us not forget that we must die with Jesus, if we would live and share in the glorious work of sprinkling and cleansing the world in the next age. "That by means of death they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15). (Z1909-108).

THE THREE GREAT COVENANTS

Christendom in general recognises only two Covenants, the Old or law Covenant, with Moses as its mediator, and the New Covenant, with Christ as its Mediator. Christendom may be said to know nothing whatever about the Abrahamic Covenant. When rarely they recognise the Abrahamic Covenant at all, or enter it into their calculations, they identify it with the New Covenant. We all inherited this general line of thought through Sunday-School sermons, commentaries, etc. It is not strange, therefore, that we all had this confused conception of this subject. Gradually, as a part of the light due to the Church in the end of this age, we got to see that there are three Covenants, instead of two, as we first supposed. We got to see that the Abrahamic or Sarah Covenant, the original one, is the grandest and best of the three, and that from it the other two proceeded. This light upon the Divine purposes is elaborated in the "Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices." In this is set forth that these Covenants are represented in the garments of the High Priest, in the ephod of two parts, with its shoulder-clasps and jewelled breast plate. However, we did not discern so sharply as we now do the clear-cut distinctions between those three Covenants. And is not this in full accord with the Lord's general dealing with us and with all people throughout the age? Is it not His proposition that the "Path of the just shall shine more and more unto the perfect day"? We believe that it is.

Growth in Grace and Knowledge of the Covenants

What we now see still more distinctly it is our duty and privilege to lay before the Household of Faith. We remind you, however, that as it took some of us quite a while to get a proper focus upon the Abrahamic Covenant, it may now take some of us a considerable time to still further differentiate between the Abrahamic Covenant and the New Covenant. Remember also that a clear understanding of every detail of God's Plan, while desirable, is not necessarily essential to our blessing thereunder. For instance, we believed in the

precious blood of Christ and were justified thereby freely from all things, when we did not at all understand the philosophy of the Atonement — even as the majority of Christian people do not understand it now. The increasing knowledge did not bring increasing justification, but it did bring increased appreciation and love and devotion and opportunity for greater harmony with the Divine purposes better understood.

The Sarah Covenant One-sided, Unconditional, no Mediator

St. Paul tells us that the law Covenant was "added" to the Abrahamic Covenant in God's dealing with the nation of Israel. It is called a Law Covenant because of the benefits that Covenant offered were only to those who could keep the Law in all its requirements — inviolate. He calls it the Hagar Covenant, because it was a bondage and because its offspring, the Jewish nation could not inherit the promised blessings and privileges. He tells us that it made nothing perfect, brought nothing to perfection. Although faith had a place and the grace of God had some manifestation towards Israel, yet neither faith nor grace affected their Covenant, which was hard and fast and demanded obedience to the works of the Law — "He that doeth these things shall live by them." Since none could do perfectly, that Covenant of works brought only condemnation of their imperfect works. It had a mediator, Moses, but he was unable to accomplish anything for the people, because of their imperfection through heredity. We properly call this the Law Covenant.

Children of the Covenant

The Apostle states that as Hagar's child was born before Isaac who represented The Christ, Head and Body, "The New Creation," so the nation of Israel, Moses and all the people baptised into him in the sea and in the cloud, "The house of servants," would be developed before Spiritual Israel, the New Creation — Christ and all the members of the house of sons of spirit-begetting.

Sarah Covenant Before and After Law Covenant

As the Covenant of Grace (Sarah) existed before the Law Covenant was added to it, so it continued to exist after the Law Covenant was set aside as a Covenant, its prize of life eternal having been won by "the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a Ransom for all." So, then, the Covenant of Grace (Sarah), which preceded the Law Covenant (Hagar) four hundred and thirty years, continued alive during the whole period of the Law Covenant, but without children, and then brought forth the Head of the Seed, Jesus. The Law Covenant was then cast aside — "Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman" — The Christ, the Heir of the original promise, now being developed. From the Scriptural standpoint the Resurrection is the birth; as, for instance, our Lord is the "First-Born from the dead, the First-Born amongst many brethren," and "His brethren," "His members," "His Bride" (three different names for the "elect" Church), must all be brought forth from the dead, all be "changed" to spirit condition before the Seed of Abraham will be complete.

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