

## Patterns for the Last Days

In 1914 headlines in newspapers in England would be relating to the dramatic turn of events in Europe, events that were altering the course of history. These were stirring times for Bible students who had been led to anticipate these events for decades. In terms of time prophecy, this was zero hour.

Another item too was finding mention in the press, one of the greatest witnesses to Truth ever presented in this country. The Photodrama had reached England, and was being shown in towns to audiences of thousands throughout the land. Sufficient truth-tracts inviting attendance had been circulated for every adult in England. The result was a turnout of public so large that the halls were inadequate. Deacons were sent along the queues pulling out the brethren to leave more room for others. Two million in England alone saw the Photodrama during those months. What a witness! Elsewhere it was the same.

Long, long before this happening the Lord had engaged His own “actors”, and provided a strong supporting cast of angelic hosts to enact the original version of the Photodrama. This consisted of a great scenario of the entire plan of God, and it was enacted through the lifetimes of four generations. In Abraham’s life we glimpse the age of faith leading up to the coming of the seed of promise. First stage was from Eden to the flood, suggested by the death of Terah, when Abraham passed over the river from the old order and began his walk of faith as a stranger and pilgrim until the seed appeared. Then the scene of the offering on Moriah of that dear and special child of promise, and his receiving, as it were, from the dead. Then Isaac’s experiences and the depiction of the call of the church in the mission of Eliezer. Finally, Joseph, again a special and dear son of his father, after his release from the prison-house (of death) and exaltation and his finding of a bride, is seen with his blessings of life for mankind. What a scenario indeed of the whole plan of the ages! Yet something would be missing but for Jacob filling that gap. Jacob was to highlight for us in particular the restoration of Israel and her preparation to fulfil all the Lord has purposed in and through His people.

## According to the Pattern

Num 8:4. And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shewed Moses, so he made the candlestick.

As Moses was directed by the Lord to make the Tabernacle and its contents according to the pattern he was shown on the mount, so the Tabernacle itself became a pattern of a greater and more perfect one. Likewise was it written of David concerning the Temple that Solomon was to build.

1 Chr. 28:11-12 *“Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things:”* Again, this Temple would itself become a pattern of a greater Temple.

Thus do we see illustrated the deliberate choice of the Lord to make use of patterns as recorded in His Word to point towards greater realities yet to be manifested in the course of His great plan. There are numerous such examples of situations and events foreshadowing others yet to be.

It is our objective in this sequence of articles to particularly concentrate upon such portions of the Word of God that appear to illustrate the days in which we are so privileged to live, these days of the winding-up of the work of the Gospel age as it overlaps the age of kingdom development. The concept that some of these patterns even exist would have been a matter for speculation before 1914. It is because we can now look back over a period exceeding 120 years since 1874, the time of Our Dear Master's return, that these patterns are now discernible, no longer as speculations, but as the emerging succession of historic events showing interesting comparison with former times and periods in the plan of God.

From Jacob's wrestling at Jabbok with its bearing on the present situation in Israel, to the sense of great joy and rejoicing as the Ark of God enters its eternal resting place, the Christ complete, in consideration of each parallel there is a sanctifying message for our day. Joseph, Moses, even Balaam, each tell much to confirm our understanding of the times in which we live. Joshua, Cyrus, Esther and Nehemiah, each have something to add, and David not least.

What a privileged people we are with such a vantage point, and what responsibility too with such light upon the path, to take comfort from the reassurances and give heed to the exhortations—so much the more—now that we are living in the day so long prepared of the Lord!

1 Cor. 10:11 *"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."*



## Jacob at Jabbok

Israel in turmoil. The time to favour Zion is come. Israel returns exactly on time and according to the prophetic Word of God. WHY THEN THE STRUGGLE NOW TAKING PLACE?

Let us commence this story from the very moment of time in which we find ourselves today—this very special hour of Israel's history. Look at those headlines of not too long back. Thousands of Jews transported from Ethiopia... Collapse of an empire, the USSR... Who would have thought it? Centre of it all—Israel! Jacob is at the ford of Jabbok.

Gen. 32:22-24 *"And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had. And Jacob was left alone."*

Yes, even in the Hebrew, rather as it comes over in the English, the name Jabbok is a phonetic word-play on the name, Jacob. It denotes, we are told, "wrestling," an appropriate setting for the struggle that is here to take place.

The ford of the river Jabbok was the place where there was a conflict between two paths. It was at the confluence between two streams. It was also the only place where it is possible to brave and wade through the torrent that crosses the path of the road or trek that passes on further into the land of Israel. At certain times of year this was quite a struggle, and especially if there were goods to be carried over, and cattle and flocks to be got across, not to mention family and children—a lot of children at that! (Twelve with his daughter, Dinah.) The very youngest arrival was Joseph, the very precious first-born of Rachel, and it was his coming into the world that seemed to mark the fresh surge in the old urge to return to the land. Now, after so long a time, that return was taking tangible shape. It appears to have been shortly after Joseph arrived (prefiguring Jesus,) that the Lord tells Jacob to return to the land of promise.

Gen. 31:3 *"And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee."*

Now Israel, or rather Jacob, is on the march. He is already in the land. The very place he now walks on is within the boundaries. But there is a very important sense in which Jacob has yet to arrive, yet to know and receive the full blessing the Lord intends to bestow. What Mt. Moriah was to Abraham, Jabbok is to Jacob. It is here that the Lord's work on human trust and faith is to reach its peak. Jacob is to leave that place a changed man, ready, prepared for the full blessedness of his role in the divine purpose—an instrument of blessing and happiness for all.

But at this moment he sits there at sundown. The effort of getting his family and flocks thus far across those troublous waters has wearied him, and he is glad to now wait behind on the former bank alone with his thoughts, his conflicts, his fears of what awaits both him and his seed. Doubtless he recalls the experiences of past years, and the memories of former days, and looks for some pattern, some meaning in his life. Perhaps he remembers how he once laid himself down in loneliness and foreboding that very first night of exile when he fled from his family home for fear of his life. The cause of his plight—his estranged brother, Esau. It does not yet occur to Jacob even now that his twin brother represented part of himself, his own flesh and blood.

Esau seems to represent that within each human mind and character which tends always to resist the ways of the Lord his God. It is that which despised the birthright given him, and values the promises of God and His declared purpose far below the exigencies of the moment, the appetite that demands immediate though, oh so transitory, a satisfaction.

Gen. 25:22 *"The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, 'Why is this happening to me?' So she went to inquire of the LORD."* (NIV) Gal. 5:17 *"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."* (KJV)

Jacob was not himself defiant of the divine promises, nor did he undervalue them. He simply lacked the faith to believe that the Lord could fulfil them without Jacob's human scheming, craftiness, wiles, and cunning. So he had found himself ready to comply with the idea to deceive in order to obtain. How many Christian people have still this same lesson to learn who glory in appearance. Jacob put on a skin with the intent to deceive even his own father with that which was superficial and pretentious. Oh what a lot that skin tells us about the Jew, and what a lesson to us all! The promise was his. The blessing would be his. The Lord would see to that in His own way regardless of Isaac's intent. But Jacob trusted his own wiles and craftiness, his own judgment and ability to achieve this, rather than the Lord's. Thus, for lack of faith in his God to bring about that full blessing, Jacob had found himself running for his life, cast out of the land of promise.

#### **LADDER UP TO HEAVEN.**

Yet even this was overruled, and the very first night of his exile the Lord had granted Jacob that first vision of heavenly involvement in Jacob's life. In total, seven visions, according to the records, were granted to Jacob. This was the first. There in weariness he had fallen asleep, a pile of small stones for a pillow in that rugged stony place. Then, in his dream, he had seen stone laid against stone, ascending and ascending still upwards till the very topmost step of this great stairway reached, it seemed, into heaven itself. There, above all, stood the Lord. Jacob had found himself gazing up at the Lord. Then, as he watched with great awe this astounding spectacle, angels appeared, first he noticed their ascent up that stairway, then that others came down to replace them here on earth, right next to where he lay—and he heard the voice of God, and received that message from His own lips, a message specially for Jacob, personal and reassuring.

Gen. 28:13-15 *"And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."*

Next morning early Jacob rose knowing he would never forget that experience or that place where human thought is drawn up that steep ascent to the thoughts of God. How could he forget that continual ascending and descending of angels, overruling, intervening, a vision so transforming of the daily trial of human life. Have we seen that stairway? Can we forget once we have glimpsed that vision of the Lord's concern in our life?

Gen. 28:20-22 *"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I*

*come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."*

This may sound a rather mercenary attitude as it reads, a kind of "ten percent" agent's fee, but the word "If" at the outset should read rather "Since", and this statement seems to be prophetic of Israel's future appreciation of divine overruling, when they will pay to the Lord their dues of gratitude and trust and loving obedience. Mal. 3:10 *"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."*

Meditating on the bank of Jabbok, Jacob listened to those waters dashing through the rocks, rocks that seemed to stick out and intrude in the life, just to demonstrate that conquering overcoming power of that relentless flow of the river of God's pleasure. Nothing that great purpose can thwart. Over the sound of those many waters Jacob may have thought he could still hear that voice of God speaking above the troubles of his mind, the travail of his soul: *"The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed."* Certainly the Lord had fulfilled His word thus far, though the path for Jacob had been sorely trying to his faith.

As an exile from the land Jacob had spent the years in servitude. He had known no place of his own, not even a home life, for he had been a shepherd for Laban, a most menial task of a slave, and this had entailed much hardship. As shepherd, Jacob had been held responsible for the flock of that mean and grasping master, and that was the story behind the dark tanned face of Jacob. Through the burning of the noon-tide heat of the sun he had watched against the wild beasts culling the flock.

Gen. 31:39-40 *"That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes."*

Isa. 42:24-25 *"Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart."* (Cp Isa. 49:10 *"They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them."*)

That was an awful moment too, so recently behind him, for after the Lord had told him to depart from alien lands and return to the land of promise such animosity arose in Laban's heart that he threatened to completely wipe out the chosen race, Jacob's seed. Only the Lord's intervention achieved Jacob's escape. Anti-Semitism first reared its ugly head in Genesis 31:1&2, because even in those adverse conditions the Lord made Jacob to prosper. Gen. 31:1-2 *"And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before."* and Gen. 31:29 after Laban was prevented from his evil design to destroy the people of Jacob, *"It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying,*

*Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.*" We cannot miss the parallel here to the similar attempt of Hitler in this our day after the Lord had said it was time for the return of Jacob to the land of promise. Satan is at enmity with the seed to this day, both the natural and the spiritual.

Oh why was life so hard? Looking back Jacob would recall how it was, as it were, his own nature that had been played back upon him. He now found what it was like to be at the receiving end of deceit, and pretence, the victim of scheming and plots against him—what it was like to be taken advantage of, as when he had taken advantage himself of his brother's weakness to his own ends: *"Sell me the birthright..."* Isa. 42:24-25 *"Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart."*

Seven years he had known servitude (= 2520 [prophetic] days), and at its close the expected bliss had not come. The deceiver had been deceived. All his works were in vain. Israel did not obtain that which he sought after. Then seven years more, a further 2520 days of servitude, and even then the full fruition of his hopes were still not realised. Why was the Lord still keeping Jacob waiting for the blessing so long promised even after the years of servitude were fulfilled? Was it not the Lord Who had said to Jacob, It is time to "Return unto the land...and I will be with thee."? Gen. 31:3.

Before Jacob stood that old enemy—in the shape of Esau. Even at this point, already back in the land, an obstacle stood in the way between Jacob and the full realisation of the blessedness towards which the Lord was leading—Esau, his own twin, his own flesh and blood! One great crisis was past, a threat to wipe out the seed of Jacob, Laban and his host had retreated under the hand of God. [Compare the threat of annihilation of Jews from Europe under Hitler prior to Israel's entry of the land.] And as Jacob went on his way, we are told in Genesis 32:1, *"... the angels of God met him."*

Everything now seemed to be working for Jacob. Nothing surely could stand in the way of that divine purpose? Could anyone resist that heavenly army that defended his way? Yet in the eyes of him who waited in the land, Esau, Jacob was still the usurper, still pushing him out, still using his cunning and intelligence and devious ways to achieve his own ends, still arrogantly resting in his own ability, in human integrity and strength, to achieve the purpose of God.

Jacob had revealed his fears. He had prayed earnestly to the Lord. Gen. 32:9-12 *"And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."*

The company was now found to be composed of two bands—one in heaven, the host of accompanying angels, and one earthly, Jacob and his camp (Gen. 32:2 margin. Compare Mat. 24:31, which may apply to both gatherings now taking place, the earthly as well as the

heavenly seeds.), but as Jacob now desperately applied his mind to what strategy he should use to overcome this ultimate adversary that threatened to forever stand between him and the security and peace and prosperity in the land of promise that the Lord had said would be his, perhaps he found his mind also divided between two possible tactics—one aggressive, and one placative. [“Hawk” and “dove”.] He could not go on forever fighting his brother, his own flesh and blood. How was he going to work out a solution to this ultimate challenge? This was the very point of time marked out in the purpose of God. So near, yet apparently so far away, lay the prospect of lasting bliss for which he had longed in so many years of bondage. Was this to be it? Was it to be a future of continual strife, tit-for-tat skirmishes, bloodshed, and bitterness of soul, resentment, mistrust? Was he forever to live by his wits to ever remain one step ahead of his enemy, or retaliating, and eye for an eye.

Israel faces today a crisis even deeper than that realised in the Kneset. The flow of Jews from eastern Europe flood over into the boundaries of the little land. It was as if a great clock chimed, and the gates were opened, the last restrictions lifted. This is a time, surely, of great blessedness, for which so many so long have prayed. Yet bringing in its wake a crisis for Israel beyond any of the past. As we write the Great Powers, so called, lean hard on Israel to work out a solution towards Middle East peace. The Palestinians, many of them ancestral blood brothers of the Jew, live in increasing fear of the consequences of this insurgence into the land of so many thousand fellow Jews. Tension is at its height! Recent attacks by extreme groups of Moslem faith shatter prospects for peace. Jacob planned a gift. He was ready to share much of his own possessions with his brother Esau, but the Lord has a more enduring solution in mind. The struggle that now engulfs Israel will go on, and it will not end until the Lord’s purpose is achieved. Before he comes through this struggle Jacob will be a changed man. Israel will be at last made worthy of that God-given name. [Israel means “God prevails”. See RV margin “God striveth”.]

Jacob begins the struggle of mind inflicted upon him believing he is wrestling with a human foe who attacks him. He schemes with man’s thoughts in the endeavour to outdo his human opponent. But sooner or later in the struggle he recognises in himself the chief opponent, for he comes to realise that he is fighting with God. This moment of awing truth brings about a great loss of confidence in his own ability and strength, for, at the Lord’s touch, that in which he trusted becomes as weak as a little child. All that he can do now is to use his arms to hang on to his opponent, only by this time he is no longer resisting the Lord but using all the power he can muster to cling to the Lord. He is now wrestling in prayer, and will not let go until he has the blessing of God for which he longs. What a wonderful scene is this in the great Photo-drama of Creation, and WE ARE WATCHING IT NOW!

And so the Lord speaks to him and asks a remarkable question: *“What is your name?”* (Gen. 32:27) Oh what point in this enquiry! How well the Lord knew Jacob’s name, knew his character—usurper, schemer, but Jacob has to confess it and acknowledge what he is. “My name is Jacob, supplanter, deceiver, liar, hypocrite, thief. My life has been one long career of crafty cunning and greed and reliance on self.” *“And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”* Gen. 32:28. Israel means “God prevails”. A profound Hebrew scholar tells us that in names compounded with “el” it is the “el”, or God, that is the doer of the rest of the name if it should be a verb. (e.g. Daniel = God judges, Gabriel = God is my strength, etc.) Israel, therefore, means God rules, or prevails, or commands. It is the Lord’s turn now to

make a play on words, and with what wisdom. When it is acknowledged that God prevails, God rules, then does man prevail and rule with God. This is the victory of full surrender to the Lord. When He is our overcomer then do we overcome in Him. The kingdom is for the violent to take by force. Their victory—total defeat of self. The battle is first with all that opposes His dominion in the heart, and the conquest is for clinging even until the dawn of the new day, and not letting go until the blessing is received.

Gen. 32:29 *“And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?”* Here is the desire to more fully know the Lord, even as He knows us, but that fuller knowing comes with experience in walking with God. When Moses asked that similar question he too received a puzzling reply: *“I AM.”* All that He IS only time and closeness can reveal. And we read: *“And he blessed him there.”* Where, we may ask, was “there”? It was “there” in the state of heart and mind the Lord had achieved in an unworthy man. It was “there” in Jacob’s tears, for we read in Hosea 12:4, *“Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him.”*

On one other occasion it is recorded that Jacob wept before this. That was when he first set his eyes upon that sweet vision of his soul that was called “Rachel” (Hebrew for a female lamb). In Jacob’s eyes she would represent that time of coming blessing promised. She was a vision of a future of happiness, a vision he would slave to attain—the blessing of the Lord. As we read in Gen. 29:11, *“And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.”* Now, at last, the Lord had blessed him there, and, as Hosea said, Jacob wept. The Lord blessed him there, in that dark prolonged conflict. He blessed him there, in the attitude of deep contrition and acknowledgment of all he was. He blessed him there, in that desire to know his God.

And even as the Lord blessed him, the sun rose upon him, and his eyes adjusted to its warming rays and glory, he realised that he had looked upon the face of God and yet survived that burning bliss. Now he could see God’s face wherever he looked. He even saw the face of God in his brother Esau when he met him. Gen. 33:10 *“And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.”* For the battle was done, and as the words of Prov. 16:7 *“When a man’s ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.”*

This was not the end of the story. Jacob still had further stages of processing ahead. At Shechem he pays the price of disobedience. Then the Lord reminds him of his vow at Bethel. He has to get rid of his strange gods and idols, build an altar to the Lord at Bethel, weep over the “Saviour of the world” as his own son, the greater Joseph. [See the article on Joseph.] So our hearts go out to the chosen race today in the land of promise, so near, yet so far from realisation of the blessedness of the Lord’s purpose for them. This is an essential part of the process leading to that full realisation. Morning indeed cometh for Israel, but also night. [The statement of Isa. 21:12, *“The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night”* is directed to Edom, the old Adam, within which must be overcome before the blessings may flow. Cp Isaiah 34 preceding 35.] The struggle against the enemy without will surely turn to dark wrestling with the enemy within, but the Lord yet will touch Jacob’s prided human glory so that it fails him, and Jacob will come to recognise the true nature of the struggle, and learn to cling to his God.

Today Jacob sits at Jabbok’s ford contemplating those torrents that threaten to engulf



and sweep him away. Isa. 43:1-11 *"But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. 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, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth. Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour."*

And in Isa. 43:21, *"This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise."* But the Lord goes on to reflect on Jacob's resistance to His hand in the past. That is why He adds, verse 28, *"Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches."* (the ban from the land of promise. Isa. 44:1-5 *"Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the LORD's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel."* And that self-righteous spirit, like filthy rags in the eyes of the Lord, will be processed into something pure and white, a worthy medium for the hand of the Lord to write upon, and on it will be seen the watermark of the likeness of Jacob's God and King.

*"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned:"* Isaiah 40:1,2



# The Story of Joseph

The story first told over three millennia ago has not yet ended.  
The history of men's lives is now retold and leads up to our times and still beyond.

*"Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?"* Gen. 41:38

The words were those of Pharaoh, supreme ruler of Egypt, and they concerned a young man of 30 years, a Hebrew, called Joseph.

The first book of Holy Scripture is remarkable for its account not only of the origin of man and the universe, but also for the first language in picture form of the whole plan of redemption from the fall in Eden to the restoring of life under the ministry of Christ. Even the place of the cross was marked by the offering of a dearly loved son. The pictures are so vivid, and have long been perceived by students of the Word of God. What is also remarkable is the almost total silence of the New Testament writers on some of these pictures from the history of the patriarchs. When we find reference, say, to Isaac, it is a somewhat oblique reference drawn into a discussion of the covenants in Paul's letter to Galatians. There Isaac is compared with the church (Gal. 4:28), and we have to work our logic backwards, as it were, to realise that it was Jesus Who first Isaac was pointing to as a type.

Joseph is a similar case. That he was a type of Jesus has been recognised for many years, perhaps from the beginning of this age. Yet where in the N.T. do we find this beautiful allusion explained? Perhaps the nearest we get results is from a careful examination of the last sermon of Stephen to the unwilling ears of his accusers. What was the point and purpose of this defence if not to witness to Jesus as Messiah? So, after briefly tracing the movements of Abraham to Jacob and the origin of the tribes, Stephen dwells for a while on Joseph. He retells how his brethren mistreated him and he was placed at the mercy of Gentile powers in order to be rid of him. Stephen then proceeds to where Joseph was made known to his brethren, now in a position of greatest honour over the realm of Egypt. Why did he tell this story? Why did he go on to speak of Moses also rejected by his fellow men and the way in which, nevertheless, divine deliverance was put into his hands? The history of Israel was, he showed, one of rejection of the ones sent of God for their deliverance. Without doubt, Stephen was making a strong point of comparison between Joseph, Moses, and this Jesus to Whom Stephen stood as witness that he was sent of God. Peter had already identified Jesus with the "prophet like unto me" predicted by Moses. Now Stephen is adding the similar case of the rejection of Joseph.

The language of the picture of Joseph's life and experiences speaks for itself. He was the son so loved of his father, who, in the purpose of God as revealed in his dreams, was to become exalted high. But the way to that exaltation was a hard one which greatly developed and proved the character thus being prepared for great future responsibility. As with all picture language, it fits the truth it depicts wherever it touches. For example, the time features of Joseph's life are clearly not parallel to that of Jesus, though the general sequence of events suggests greater similarity. Yet there are remarkable points of comparison beyond the overall picture of the path to glory.

Joseph was the first son of Rachel, a seed long desired and waited for. She was to bear but once more before her demise. This woman was Jacob's first love, and the longing for her

child was reflected in the special place that Joseph held close to his father's heart. The name, Joseph, means "He shall add." In her strong faith Rachel now believed that in his birth she had the guarantee of further fruitfulness. Joseph was seen to be a first-fruit, a promise or earnest of more yet to follow. Later Jacob was to bless Joseph as a "*fruitful son (or shoot) set over a spring of water, climbing a wall and flowing over it.*" (Gen. 49:22.) Certainly, in the words of Isaiah 53:10, "*the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.*" We know something of the strength of that "wall", the mighty power of God, and we know too that "fount" of living water, the One Who was and is His life. We speak of Jesus when we speak of Joseph.

This was He (Jesus) who, like Joseph, when asked by His Father to leave the comfort of His Father's house to be sent unto His brethren, replied, "Here I am." If Jacob hoped to hear a good report of the children of Israel he was to be bitterly disappointed. The appearance of Joseph brought forth the worst response from his brethren who planned how to be rid of him. Gladly they turned him over to the hands of strangers, and the events that followed closely paralleled the life of servitude by that One Who came as bond slave to this earth. When Joseph exchanged his father's house for the bonds of a slave he did not spend his time lamenting his great misfortune. Instead, he excelled as a slave. What a beautiful lesson we have here! We who are "nothings" in this world's eyes, let us excel as being "nothings."

Ten long years Joseph endured that situation, yet in all he did he had the blessing of the Lord. His trustworthiness became known and earned him the honour of some, though that same faithfulness and loyalty was to prove too much for others, in the shape of Potiphar's wife. She would have him fit into her shameful ways of adultery. "*A wicked and adulterous generation...*" That was the Master's description of those who despised Him for His unwavering faithfulness to the ways of His God. Jesus, like Joseph, was to be condemned for the sins, not of Himself, but of others. Joseph was incarcerated in prison, Jesus in the prison-house of death. For Joseph it was to be early in the third year that he was to emerge from that prison-house, for Jesus, three days. These sufferings were spoken of in Psalm 105:18, where, speaking of Joseph, we read, "*Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron.*" Little could better express the bands of death, yet both the tasting of that prison and the afflictions that led to it combined to the great strengthening of this servant's character. An alternative and better rendering of the last part of that verse might read: "*And iron entered his soul.*" Thus was Joseph and Jesus prepared for the great exaltation that would follow. First the sufferings, then the glory to follow. Jesus said: "*Ought not Christ to have suffered these things...?*" and the word "ought" implied a dire and certain need. Can any less thorough preparation be possible for those who are to share the Saviour's throne?

Joseph then swiftly experienced a wondrous change in his circumstance to correspond with the great exaltation of Our Lord as He ascended up on high. And it was here that we commenced our thoughts, for we read here of the plight of mankind, their desperate need for a plan of salvation and a Captain of salvation. Without such a programme man would be swallowed up in death. In Rev. 5:4, the quest for such a man and the recognition of this desperate need causes John to burst into tears, until the comforting voice of an elder assures him that such a one has been found. "*Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the spirit of God?*" (Gen 41:38) The words of Pharaoh, echoed before the throne of God, find total answer and satisfaction in that one ordained of God, the little lamb as it had been slain. Worthy indeed was such a one to receive honour and glory and blessing, power, wisdom,

riches, and strength. The words of Pharaoh so aptly portray that worthiness of Jesus for this position so high and so critical for the execution of the plan of salvation for mankind. Gen. 41:39 *"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art."* Jesus is the epitome of heavenly Wisdom, described in words of great beauty in Proverbs 8. His Father was His delight, and He was the Father's delight, but His delight was also with the children of men. Gen. 41:40 *"Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou."* How wonderful that such a history should be written with so great a promise of that One Who would come! Gen. 41:42 *"And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand..."* That ring by which Pharaoh himself impressed his mark of authority upon every seal, was taken from his own hand and placed upon that of Joseph. How remarkable that one so great should be ready to pass over to a one-time Hebrew slave and prisoner such authority and power, indeed all the power of the throne! Only complete confidence and trust could allow an act as this. God has given all authority to His Son because He trusts Him so. He has total confidence in Jesus, having been obedient unto death, to fulfil all His good pleasure. Is it not an awing thought to us, dear brethren, that before our course is done the Lord will also have such confidence in US?

Vestures of fine linen, the robe of a royal prince and priest, were then arrayed upon Joseph, and a gold chain, or perhaps better, a gold deep band of many interlocking parts, was placed around his neck. In the case of Jesus, all the glories of the divine nature would now endow all the fullness of God. All power in heaven and in earth is His. No other name is higher, and to Him will every knee bow in reverent worship and praise that would ever redound to the glory of His father.

At this point, corresponding to the ascension in glory of God's Lamb, Joseph was given a new name. Gen. 41:45. In Rev. 3:12, Jesus speaks of His new name. It is a promise to the overcomers that they too will share this new name when themselves proved worthy. What is this new name of Jesus? The Rabbis thought they could identify part only of the name given to Joseph by Pharaoh. They assumed it was a Hebrew name part of which would then mean "hidden." The rest they had to guess! Hence the name added in the margin of Bibles, "Revealer of secrets." However, there seems little doubt that this name given by Pharaoh was Egyptian, and this is even more in keeping with the new title given to Jesus only after His death and resurrection and ascension on high. For as an Egyptian word it means either "abundant life", or "Saviour of the world" Jesus needed to release the price before He could fulfil this wondrous role. The promise to the overcomer of Rev. 3:12, to share His new name is thus a precious promise to His Bride one day to share that blessed privilege with Jesus of bringing to this sad only earth that life abundant when the Spirit and the Bride say "Come," and "saviours come up on Mount Zion." (Obad. 21)

A similar curious situation arises with the expression translated in Gen. 41:43, *"Bow the knee."* Here the margin has "Tender father." This is because again it was supposed the expression was a Hebrew word. It was, of course, Egyptian, not Hebrew, being the cry made by Egyptians and to Egyptians before the chariot of Joseph. While Joseph refers to his position later in Gen. 45:8, as "a father to Pharaoh", that is in the sense of a counsellor or advisor, and while it is also true that one of the titles of Jesus in Isa. 9:6, is *"everlasting father"*, or "father of everlasting Life," a concept repeated by Our Lord in John 17:2, *"Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him."*

nevertheless, the cry before the chariot was better rendered by the words in our translation: "Bow the knee." This was a call to all to prostrate themselves before their Lord. In fact the thought is that of kissing the ground, and this is the alternative rendering of Psalm 2:12. *"Kiss the ground that is, prostrate yourself before the king that the Lord has set upon Zion's hill."*

Next in sequence of events following Our Lord's exaltation in glory at His ascension was the process of taking a wife. This wife would be taken largely, as we know, from the Gentiles and this is beautifully depicted in the Moabitess Ruth, taken by Boaz, and other cases of Gentile wives being incorporated into the seed of promise include Rahab, and Bathsheba the Hittite. In the case of Moses it was the daughter of a priest or prince of Midian, Jethro. Here, in the Joseph account, it is Asenath, daughter of a priest or prince (the Hebrew word is the same for either) of the city of On, centre of learning in the Egyptian world of that day.

The name Asenath, if her original Egyptian name, would refer to her belonging to a different world to that of Joseph, and once worshipper of a different god, steeped in the wisdom of this world. From this the church has been called to forget her own people and her father's house. Ruth 2:10-13, fits so well. *"Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust. Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens."*

However, if the name Asenath be a Hebrew name given to his wife by Joseph, then we have reference to a deep spiritual truth therein, for then it means "a Storehouse." To explain the significance of this to the plan of God we need to take note now of the special sequence of history predicted in Pharaoh's dream and interpreted by Joseph. This was that there would be seven years of great famine, but that this would be preceded by seven years of abundance. The plan was that during these plentiful years provision should be made and stored for the needs of the people to come. The abundant years commenced shortly after the time of Joseph's exaltation, which we see to correspond with the exaltation of Jesus at the beginning of the Gospel age. How does this compare with the facts? How often it helps brethren, when we ask the right question! Let us ask: Has the Lord made any provision for the needs of mankind in the future age under the rule of the greater Joseph? Has this provision been stored up during preceding years of fullness? The answer then is clear. Indeed from Pentecost onwards the Lord has been engaged in such a programme of preparation for all man's future needs in the kingdom age. The abundance of this period has been for the saints in course of their development for that future work of ministry. These He has blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. These blessings have far exceeded those of each previous age, and as a result, the completed Christ is all but ready for the work ahead. These are His treasure houses in which are stored all the benefits of heavenly grace and that wisdom from above to make them able ministers. Sensitively aware of all human need, sympathetic with human failure, acquainted with the endless resources of divine providence, and with inside experience, just as their Head Himself, with the need and process of being saved.

In another picture, this age has been set aside for the engraving of the stones with the ways of God high in the mount in the hands of the Greater Moses. Then does He descend from heaven, the work of the age in His hands, His finished church, in whom the principles of divine righteousness, the standards on which the new covenant ministry will be based, are indelibly engraved, a witness forever to the power and grace of the Lord. In the Joseph picture language, the church is the storehouse of divine grace, and this makes the Hebrew meaning of his bride's name Asenath so meaningful, "Storehouse." All the saints can testify that the Lord spared no good thing. All that they needed His hand hath provided, He has in no wise stinted His work. Gen. 41:48, speaks of Joseph actively engaged in the filling of them with his fullness, abundantly beyond all they could think or ask, as verse 49 states, "*for it was without number.*"

Thus already did Joseph see fruit for all that he had suffered which to him, far outweighed the afflictions he had endured, and that is to us a precious thought, that even during this age, before the grand kingdom work for the world proceeds, the Saviour can look at the travail of His soul and be satisfied, that satisfaction being in His church, these blessed first-fruits to His Father's praise.

This appears in the choice of names for Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, "forgetfulness" and fruitfulness, "*For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.*" Gen. 41:52. This satisfaction came as result of his union with his wife, Asenath.

The years of fullness draw to an end, The storehouse is full pressed down and brimming over. Now come the years of dire distress for mankind. It might well be said that from man's fall such days have ever been. The fact remains that this world is to close with a time of trouble such as never before. This is a time of great trial for mankind, yet, in the words of Ecc. 3:10. "*I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.*" There is point and purpose in those ultimate of all trials which will bring home to man the nature of his deepest needs and draw them to the Source, the only Source, of satisfaction for those needs, the Source of Life, and that life, life with God, abundant life indeed.

Man needs such experience. He needs the breaking of the arrogant spirit of self-sufficiency regardless of his Maker. When man's river Nile of sinful pleasure and transient material toys, when that river of man's pleasure dries up, as it indeed will, then will man begin to thirst for the river of God's pleasure from which all will be invited to drink. Gen. 41:55 "*And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.*" Many years later Mary used these very words of instruction to those whose resources had run out—and a miracle resulted, as indeed the same has been proven over and over again throughout time. How we look forward to that message spreading throughout this earth—"Have all your resources failed you—? Go to Jesus; what He saith to you, do!"

So many lessons in the language of the history of Joseph, and each with meaning and significance, like those "handfuls of purpose" left in the path of Ruth for her to find when gleaning in the fields of Boaz. The money the people brought at first to Joseph in exchange for the bread of life represented their time and effort demanded to receive the first blessings of the age of salvation. They came to recognise that life was indeed more precious to them than their goods, and these too were relinquished. At last, as with the church before them, they come to realise that "love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all." And

the people yield themselves, as in the language of Psalm 110:3, as willing offerings, free-will offerings to the Lord. These Joseph accepts on behalf of his lord Pharaoh, and in turn comes to a most satisfactory arrangement in the which man is made steward of all God's creation, man, wiser for his sins and their results, humble now under the mighty hand of God, and instruments of that mighty hand.

But early in this time that the Saviour operates we find a special work progressing of bringing Israel, Joseph's own brethren, to the state of heart required for them to become fitted for the part Divine Wisdom and Grace has designed for them to play, first witnesses to the saving power and mercy of God. *"Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord."* (Isa. 43:10,12) Thus do we find in these next few chapters of Genesis 42 to 45, the enthralling account of just where we are this moment in the stream of time and in the progression of the plan. We are watching with deep interest a process of the work of Joseph, or Jesus, with His people Israel to bring them to Himself. Their attitude and spirit has to be reversed from that which brought about the Saviour's rejection and death to one prepared for the highest form of self-sacrifice in order now to please their father whose heart they were once so ready to break. Amos 6:6, Woe unto them that *"are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph."*

How wonderful that the Lord can undertake such a programme with those who so hated and despised Him, thus piercing the very hand that gave so precious a gift of a Father's great love. How wonderful to us too that He can undertake this process with the full confidence of His ability to complete what He begins. Perfect is His work always and this is true of His work with Israel that they might be to all mankind a blessed evidence and witness of divine skill and power, and the abundance of heavenly grace.

If we ever think that Jesus is beyond all feeling corresponding to human emotion in this work, then let us remember His tears over Jerusalem, and remember again the tears of Joseph during the needful process of opening first his brethren's hearts, and then their eyes. Seven times is it recorded that Joseph wept in this process. These have to be most touching moments for Our dear Master. What is it that first causes the children of Israel to start that journey in the direction of their salvation? The Joseph account associates it with the same period of human extremity that will ultimately also bring the world to His feet. Israel are to be brought to recognise a need they themselves are powerless to fill. Nor will any money or support from Gentile powers avail. Gen. 42:7, says that when *"Joseph saw his brethren... he made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them..."* Now this part of the account may sound strange, yet how aptly does it describe the needful experiences to bring this people to the Lord. In Isaiah 40:2 we read, *"speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem..."* and we know that this means, in the Hebrew, "speak to the heart" of this people. How does He do that?

How does the Lord break through those barriers of hearts of stone, thus far impervious to the truth, unyielding to the spirit of their Messiah? How interesting, brethren, that in peering into the days just opening before us we find ourselves looking back to this first book of God's word for indications of both His purpose and His ways of bringing that purpose to fruition.

The overall picture is quite clear. The new ruler brings about situations and circumstances that prove a great trial to his brethren, yet with the most merciful intent, that needful change of heart. Terrible choices are laid before them, and all the while they know

him not who is their saviour. Strange mixture of events, some so perplexing, like that money—They have blessings they have not earned, are not worthy of in any way, yet interwoven with grievous trials that cause great searching of heart. The apparently unjust accusations, yet all the time that stirring within of conscience. Oh Israel, it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks of conscience! Judah is brought at last to the point of offering himself in the place of one whose loss would break his father's heart. And the work is then all but complete, the spirit of self-sacrificing love has triumphed, and the scales fall from their eyes. The Joseph/Jesus that they persecuted stands before them with arms outstretched to save. Gen. 45:4, *"And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near."* It was a time of deep emotion for Joseph, and he wept. What meaning in those tears! What wonder in the eyes now opened to behold their kinsman and their King! The words of that Jew so long resistant to the light of truth will doubtless speak for them all: *"Lord, what shall I do?"* (Acts 22:10.)

Yes, they are a chosen vessel to the Lord. They shall yet bring forth His praise, and it will be the wonder of the age, blessed herald to more wonders yet to be when all the world will bow the knee, prostrate themselves, in heart receive and welcome their King, and bring the tribute due to His great Name. As they add their tithes, all their living, all that they are and have, to fill the storehouse of their God, heaven's windows open and earth cannot contain the blessings then that freely flow from love's domain above to love's domain below.





# I Will Make it Again

(A Sermon in Clay)

Standing at the house of the potter at the direction of the Lord, Jeremiah witnesses the Divine Sermon in clay.

It was a time of great turmoil, and the prophet's heart ached with the burden of the Lord's judgments to be poured upon a faithless people. Israel lay in the midst of a battle of political giants, Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, and her position was vulnerable. She had forsaken the Lord, her true Rock and Fortress, and now had to decide with which of the world powers she should side, and the result was total disaster for Israel. It was at this time, with the end so near, and captivity in Babylon impending, that Jeremiah was directed by the Lord to go to the house of the potter. "There", said the Lord, "I will give you My message."



It was to be a most remarkable sermon, given at a very special point of time in the great history of God's plan of the ages. Wondering what this special message was to be, Jeremiah approached the house of the potter, and entering, stood there watching the potter at work.

The potter worked on a double wheel, which could be of wood or stone. The lower one was the larger, and this he spun treading it with his feet round its spindle which in turn operated the upper smaller wheel on which he threw the clay. Two wheels, one large, one small—together they both revolved in unison for the working of the clay, one for treading, one for moulding. The clay had first to be kneaded to remove bubbles of air, and as the wheels turned the potter deftly threw the mass at the very centre of the wheel. The whole purpose of both wheels centred in that clay now spinning and yielding to the varied pressures laid upon it by the potter's hand. At first little seemed to happen, and then gradually the vessel rose in response to the master's touch. It was fascinating to watch that formless mass take shape through countless revolutions, and rise upward in symmetry of ever changing stages of growth.

And THEN it HAPPENED! After working on the vessel some hidden flaw began to show in resistance to the potter's hand, and to the prophet's consternation, the vessel crumpled and fell about the wheel, some thrown to the lower treading wheel. The clay was scattered. One could almost hear the prophet groan in sympathy with the potter at the wasted time and effort. Surely he would now lose interest in that particular piece and take fresh clay to prepare something totally new. But, to the prophet's surprise, he saw the potter stoop and deftly scoop up that wasted clay scattered around the treading wheel, and, kneading it again to remove the flaw, he threw it again upon the wheel—"He made it again." This time he achieved his design, and a vessel was completed that would withstand trial by fire, a fire that would only serve to perpetuate that beauty which came from the potter's hand. It would show forth his praise.

A sermon in clay for at this point Jeremiah heard the word of the Lord, saying, (Jer. 18:6) "*O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?... Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.*" As the wonder of this statement filters into our hearts, we begin to perceive something of the scope of the lesson before us. We note the precise timeliness which gives it such great impact. Two wheels, one large for treading, one smaller for moulding, together they both revolve in unison for the working of the clay. In the O.T. the Hebrew word for Creator is the same as the word for Potter!

The Lord is working His purpose out. To the tiny mind of His creatures “born but for one brief day” the time cycles of the plan of God seem enormous, yet, from the moment of man’s fall into sin the great irreversible process of salvation vibrated into action. The greatest time cycle alluded to in the Word of God is the year of years multiplied by the Sabbath cycle of seven, the “seven times”, or 2520 years. The precise occasion that this sermon was given to Jeremiah by the Lord was immediately before the great seven times of the Gentiles commenced.

Around the time, Daniel, captive in Babylon, found himself called to consider a dream of Nebuchadnezzar, which the Spirit of the Lord enabled him to explain in terms of the forthcoming experiences of the great king. Like a tree he was to be cut down, brought low. His kingdom was to become depraved, and his appetite and ways and whole life was to become like that of the beasts. The condition is recognised by medical science as Zoanthropy, and there have been similar well authenticated cases.

What is not so well acknowledged is that the proud kingdoms of earth, the great Gentile powers, have all suffered this same malady, and while they have all been acting like beasts the Lord’s people have been trodden down. Such is the language used in the Word to describe the course of history leading up to this day in which we live. When the great cycle of “seven times” ran out in 1914, the time became due for the truth to slowly dawn upon the minds of men, as yet it will, that “*The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men...*” (Dan. 4:32.) A new era had been reached in the out-working of the divine purpose. The description of Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom in Daniel 4:11,12, and the downward fall, so aptly sums up the story of the world powers that were to develop. Like the writing of history before its time, it looks forward. It also looks back and describes a situation bearing remarkable resemblance to what had already been.

The first man, Adam, like Nebuchadnezzar, had been given a wonderful dominion. Genesis 1:26 & 28, depict for us the extent of that dominion, and the psalmist in Psalm 8 expresses the wonder of it all in language full of praise for that Creator Who condescended, having completed the myriads of orbs in space, to make a little tiny being called “man”, and to entrust him with the dominion of this earth. Ps 8:6 “*Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.*” It was to be a wonderful kingdom arrangement, with man, God’s prince on earth, ruling with God over the whole of earth’s domain. A wise ruler, a caring prince, watchful over the welfare of every living thing on this earth. But something happened to apparently thwart this great design. A flaw appeared, and the vessel collapsed! The mind made like unto that of its Creator became degraded to that of the common beast, reacting more to the lower instincts of self-preservation and self-interest rather than the nobler qualities of God-likeness. Man had fallen from the position God had graciously given. Would the great potter now turn away from His original purpose with disgust? Would He abandon His original clay and turn to another creation to fulfil His design?

Parallels frequently occur in the Word of God. Oh what a study they are! We know that in Jeremiah 18 the subject of the sermon in clay is Israel, yet so many things true of Israel we find to be symbolic of a wider truth involving the whole human race. Even the land of Israel at times seems to depict this whole earth, and the people of Israel represent mankind. In the Word we have many direct statements, but Our Heavenly Father, greatest Teacher of all, adds so many illustrations from His dealings with the lives of men, and we love looking at the picture!

When Adam fell he became a captive. Sin now reigned where man should have reigned, and man became a subject under sin's dominion. Long centuries he was to be a slave trodden under sin's ruthless taskmasters, with no prospect of deliverance save that word of promise given by his Creator at the fall. And SEVEN TIMES PASSED OVER MANKIND! Yes, from the fall of Adam, seven times passed over mankind, and sin reigned from Adam to Moses. It is at the very least a curious fact that if we count the years from Adam's fall, accepting with C. T. Russell that this probably occurred about two years after his creation, seven times, i.e. 2520 years, ran out at a most interesting time in the Divine Plan. God's special dealings by now had centred in one people, who became a picture, and illustration or sample of the whole world of mankind. The people of Israel came to the end of this long seven times from Adam's fall emerging from years of servitude as slaves in Egypt.

The seven times from man's fall into captivity ran out to find them on the march from Egypt to Canaan, their deliverer, Moses, already present at his second advent. To be absolutely precise, as you each may check for yourselves, the first seven times ran out exactly 31 years prior to passing from the wilderness state and entering the land of promise. We at first were puzzled about this 31 years, but we could not fault it, and will return to this later. At this point we would note, however, that this was precisely 49 years, a jubilee period, from the time at the "first advent" of Moses that he was condemned to death and left the scene, corresponding to the death and eventual ascension of Christ. In the intervening period between his two "advents" Moses seeks and takes a bride. Then a matter of further interest. This precise point of time at the end of seven times from Adam's fall was to mark the commencement of exactly one thousand years, a millennium in which would take place all the various stages of a developing kingdom arrangement.\*

The greater wheel or cycle of seven times continued its momentum in the upper or moulding wheel, 1,000 years, these great cycles working in harmony for the preparing and moulding of the clay, turning worthless things of dust to something that will bring eternal praise to the Great Potter. This thousand years of the typical kingdom development process will be considered later in this treatise, but overall we recognise at once that, while it foreshadowed the ultimate kingdom age, it could not be the very image. It could be only a vague shadowy outline, but not without important lessons and implications which are becoming more meaningful to us at this late point of time. So much about that 1,000 year age was typical. Sin had not immediately been removed.

The people were marching from Egypt, but sin marched with them. Deliverance was a process, and was even then figurative, not actual. So it is that at the end of that 1,000 years, at their season of testing, the whole nation of Israel failed every test. It was THERE, at the sad end of the shadowy Hebrew kingdom millennium, exactly as the end of that 1,000 years approached, that Jeremiah stood in the house of the potter watching that sermon in clay, watching the spinning of those wheels. What a long process had brought them to that point of time. Surely the clay had been well kneaded, trodden down to remove the proud spirit of man, in the long seven times of bondage until the Exodus. Surely the introduction of the Divine Law to one chosen sample family of mankind and the teaching of the holy ways of God, surely a thousand years of such an influence could not end like this! If the heart of the prophet was heavy at such a time, what of the heart of God!

Yet, as the vessel collapsed in a heap of worthless clay, and scattered upon the treading wheel below, the wonder of it all! The potter stoops to scoop up that clay and throwing it again in the centre of the upper wheel, he returns to his purpose—"he made it again."

*“Cannot I do with you as this potter?”* It was at the TURNING POINT of the whole plan of God, this very point of redemption history, that the Lord revealed through Jeremiah some of the reasons why the next time round the prospect of success was so much greater.

Then it was that the Lord spoke of a NEW covenant, a writing again of the Law of God, but this time, not on tables of stone, but the fleshly tables of the hearts of men. Man will be touched by the Spirit of God—the motivating power and influence that prompts in the Divine Mind every expression of holiness, righteousness, and love, that same power is to permeate the mind of man, to motivate him and express through him that same delight in the things that are lovely, and pure, and beautiful. The Spirit will be poured out from on high.

We believe that it was around and concerning this same turning point of redemptive history that Habakkuk was prompted of God to plead: (Hab 3:2) *“O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, [he repeats again,] **in the midst of the years** make known; in wrath remember mercy.”* And that is just what the Lord was about to demonstrate in so remarkable a way, the mercy and pity of a Father Who knows and understands the frailty of His child, knows we are but dust. God is not taken by surprise by human behaviour. He knew well those hidden flaws. The Lord expressly foretold through Moses the whole course of events that would mark that first millennium from Exodus. When all the people shouted, *“All these things we will do...”* the Great Potter knew that the enthusiasm of that moment was not to be depended upon. The clay was not yet ready for the firing.

The only hope for salvation lies in the total trust of the clay in the skill and power of the hands of the Potter. Salvation depends upon the Lord’s ability to fulfil His promise in the clay. It is also dependent upon the readiness of that clay to yield to that power, to sensitively respond to every touch of the Potter. What a lesson there for you and for me! The hidden flaw in human hearts is that resistance to the Potter’s hand, that rejection of the way of the Lord. The “I will,” of man stubbornly refuses the “I will,” of the Lord. *“How often would I... and ye would not...”* So we read in Leviticus 26:18, 19 as Israel stood on the threshold of her millennium: *“And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times MORE for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power.”* How well this fitted into the great lesson both Israel and all mankind must learn.

That FIRST seven times from Adam, then that subsequent thousand year work of shaping up a kingdom, the terrible failure at the end of man’s preferment of his own will to the will of his God. What a sobering result, what heart-searching it should bring! The clay, crumbling and scattered on the treading wheel must at last be gathered together and kneaded again. All the spirit of personal pride must be trodden out of it before the Potter begins to shape it to His purpose. Yet, even there in Leviticus 26, the promise is written of Divine intent. After this *“seven times more”* of chastening comes the process of restoration.

Lev 26:44-45

*“And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God.”*

To this wonderful statement He adds His signature, *“I am the LORD.”* The Lord also signs His great promise of this new arrangement in Jeremiah 31, with His oath.

*Jer 31:35-37 "Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD."*

The new arrangement of Jeremiah 31 is full of the "I WILL's" of the Lord.

The work of the wheels, both the greater and the smaller, is to bring the heart to realise what a wonderful will it is that wills so much blessing, so much joy for all His creatures, so much fulfilment in the abundances of their living. And the Lord knows both how to will and how to perform. What a wonderful time we live in! The times of that greater cycle, the wheel that He works with His feet, the treading wheel, has run out. Man has had his first seven times, Israel her seven times more. Both are past. The great momentum of that cycle continues now in that other wheel, the cycle of progressive kingdom shaping and development that each time follows the running out of the seven times.

It is the overall picture and resemblance that most impresses us, covering the whole of man's history on earth since the fall. That there should be this sequence, and then again the sequence repeated, seven times, then the seventh thousand year day, the point of transition being marked on each occasion by a period of change in the fortunes of the nation of Israel, the last sequence of events marking the time of her deliverance, and the taking of the land.

Think of that first millennium from Exodus. The clay, Israel, at centre stage, centre of the Potter's wheel. The process of kingdom development started from the wilderness march with little to show that resembled a kingdom. Then through the early conquests and possessing of the land of promise the process was to extend for many long years through the time of the Judges, until at last, under David and Solomon, the kingdom reached its height in terms of visible unity and kingdom blessings.

We see how THAT 1,000 years consisted of an evening-morning sequence. Half of the thousand years progressed before the full kingdom development was seen. What dramatic events marked that opening period! The fighting of the enemies both without and within was to take the first half of that millennium until the kingdom found the state of rest from all that opposed its inception. Then the second half of that millennium was to test, to thoroughly prove, the durability of that kingdom in the hearts of all its subjects. There, as we know, in the matter of faithfulness, the failure rate was shown to be total. That evening time was one of darkness, the evening of this new thousand years now before us will be light. It seems that here we have a most remarkable pointer to the present process of bringing in the kingdom.

The process of fragmentation has confirmed the striking of the image by the stone in 1914. We have the strongest possible evidence that we have passed the point of great transition. The seven times have run out, and what do we see? Israel at the centre stage position at the centre of the wheel once more. You will remember that we noted with surprise that the first seven times from the fall ran out precisely 31 years before Israel emerged from her wilderness experience.

Another notable point is that while still in that wilderness state a great tragedy overtook Israel on the very threshold of entering into the land. No less than 24,000 Israelites were to die. The account is written in Numbers 25, particularly verse 9. It is too sad to read. The time

was so near, yet so many were to die on the eve of pouring into the land of promise. Yet AGAIN the account has been written afresh in our own day. This time six million Jews to die, and to die so near to that hour, that time of Israel's emergence from her wilderness state.

The times of the Gentiles ran out in 1914. It is a matter of simple arithmetic confirmed by the indisputable evidences of our day. Thirty-three years after the seven times ran out in 1914, the year 1947/8, was to see the emergence of the Jews from their wilderness experiences, yes, those last days stained with the blood of so many of their number. 1945, 31 years after 1914, brought an end to their trying wilderness experience. For years the Jews had their hopes raised, their faces turned towards Zion. \*\* There was already a movement afoot that strengthened her desires to one day possess again the land of Israel, yet still a hindrance stood in the way. 40 years before, the first Jewish settlements appeared in Judea. They were there, as it were, to spy out the land, but the progress—how slow it seemed! It was as though that long dusty march of foot-weary travellers under Moses was to be repeated days so full of promise were to be days also of tears, and testing of the true earnestness of those desires.

Then, in 1945, the concentration camps were opened and nothing now could turn back the tide. As in Joshua's day, the children of Israel had passed through their wilderness and their Jordan experiences and were infiltrating their land, only to find, of course, the mustering of opposition against them. The moment of change had come, however, and the weary wandering Jew became a fighting Jew, fighting for his land and his life. As in those days of Joshua, notwithstanding all the odds of those gathered against the Jew of our day, within a handful of years the land was theirs. Notice the parallels! How precisely the events and their timing match at the running out of each seven times period. Surely the Lord is saying something to us in this remarkable correspondence.

We have lived long enough to see that the battle did not end with the declaration of the sovereign State of Israel. That was only a stage, a very significant stage, indeed the FIRST VISIBLE AND TANGIBLE SIGN OF THE INCOMING KINGDOM OF GOD. A long process lies still ahead, but the clay is there centre stage, in the middle of the wheel. Finally, in Joshua 5:13, 14 we have a stirring glimpse of the invisible presence of the Lord, there describing Himself as the "*Captain of the Lord's hosts.*" The enquiry of Joshua at this dramatic penetration into spirit realm echoes in our ears today—"Are you for us or against?" Oh what poignancy lies in those words!

How many parallels speak of this time of mingled blessing and trial for Israel! Already we have mentioned Jacob at Jabbok fearing the approach of Esau, wrestling there with God. We also saw Joseph speaking roughly with his brethren to bring about that needful and wonderful change of heart. Moses, at his "second advent" to deliver his people furnishes a further example. There things got so bad even in the days of the presence of their deliverer that Moses himself cried out to God, Exod 5:22-23 "*And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.*" Things had got worse during the very advent of their deliverer! At the time of Esther too we shall see a further parallel in time and experience to the trials of the Jew in our day. There is no smooth passage for Israel, yet in these stirring correspondences we have many infallible proofs of the presence and activities of Israel's Messiah, our blessed Lord Jesus.



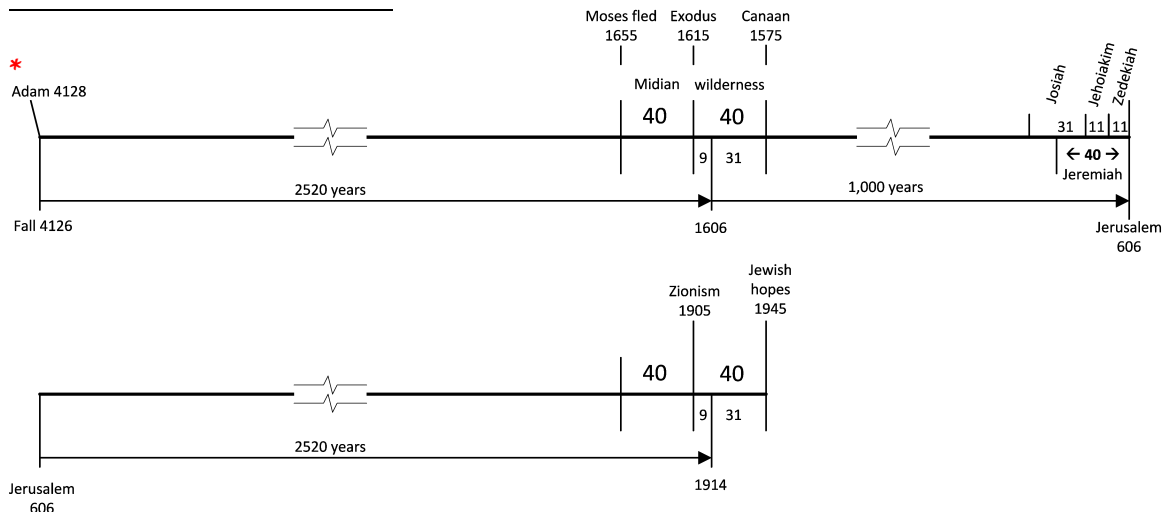
Joshua's eyes were blessed indeed to see what he saw. Blessed too are our eyes to see what we see. Israel have yet to share this blessed truth. Believing Jews in the nation are greatly perplexed at what is taking place today. They KNOW that THESE are the WORKS OF MESSIAH, but they cannot see their Messiah, hence their confusion. How long their eyes will be holden we cannot tell, but this we know, that when blindness is removed from Israel, when they look upon their Messiah with recognition and amazement, as the brothers of Joseph, there will be tears all round (Joseph wept too!), but by then, the "fullness of the Gentiles" will be "come in..." the Church complete beyond the veil.

#### SUMMARY:

We believe that these patterns in the history of the ages with their remarkable counterparts:

- 1) CONFIRM the 6,000 years chronology adopted by Brother Russell based upon the Hebrew Bible. The work of the seventh thousand year day is underway. [It seems not without significance to note that the Septuagint ends the 6,000 years at the time of the rise of the "man of sin", the Papacy! Does this not suggest who was behind that variation of text! What apparent support this would give to the early church in the concept that the kingdom had then come!]
- 2) CONFIRM our understanding that the "new covenant" arrangements apply to the age of kingdom development and NOT any previous age. This was true in the parallel in the typical Law covenant under Moses.
- 3) FORESHADOW the gradual nature of the progression of events leading (oh so slowly!) to the full kingdom development and time of blessing.
- 4) CONFIRM our understanding of the present out-working of God's plan for Israel in whom He is fulfilling His age-old promise of restoration. He has NOT cast them away! He said He would not, and He has not!
- 5) HELP UNDERSTANDING that now, as then, Israel gains her land "little by little", a long period of time elapsing before the whole land is theirs. This in itself is suggestive of the gradual spread also of the kingdom influence throughout the earth. The "stone" grows to fill the earth. Within "the days of these kings" the kingdom development progresses.
- 6) THE COUNTDOWN TO THE KINGDOM HAS BEGUN!
- 7) Brethren, the time for us is short! May we each TODAY be vessels of honour on which the Great Master Potter may be able to stamp His mark, sign His Name: "Holiness to the Lord."

~ Amen ~



**\*\*** Herzl wrote *Der Judenstaat* (The State of the Jews). This book was initially published February 14, 1896. A jubilee period of 50 years would see fulfilment of this dream begin. He has been called the "Father of Zionism," but died in 1904 too early to see his vision come true.

## The Shout of a King

The words come from a somewhat unlikely mouthpiece of the Lord, yet in them we have a remarkable confirmation of our faith in these days of the *parousia* of the Son of Man. The mouth is that of Balaam. He is speaking forth words he has no wish to utter.

Indeed, he has been offered substantial gain to bring a curse upon Israel, but finds himself powerless to perform that task, and instead, now finds himself doing the very opposite, pronouncing the Lord's blessing upon the race— Numbers 23:21. *"The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them."*

Israel is again centre of His wheel—visible evidence of the patient perseverance and ability of those skillful hands of the Lord. Israel is the first visible evidence of a new phase of the divine programme, the age of an emerging and gradually developing kingdom of God.

The various points of comparison with the previous thousand-year age of gradual development of the shadowy typical kingdom are of great interest. They help us to understand the apparently drawn-out nature of the sequence of events in our day. The interval between the ending of the Gentile Times (1914) and the infiltration of the land by the Jew (1945), and the appearance of the sovereign State of Israel. It is all there in that shadowy previous kingdom age, even to the tragic deaths of so many Jews at the very threshold of deliverance, under Hitler. Between 24,000 and 25,000 died there in the wilderness at that similar time just before entry of the Land of Promise. This was the result of a particular testing time for the Jew in both ages, and the nature of the test is also revealing. Marriage with the daughters of Moab, marriage with this world, leading to indifference towards the pursuit of the divine purpose. The same test applied in the last days of the first wilderness march and again in this our time prior to 1945. There is, of course, a lesson here too for the church. The breaking of covenant vows that separate us to the Lord, like the cutting of Samson's hair, lead to our spiritual loss and demise. But we are centring our focus on Israel, and it was in those days parallel to the attempts of Hitler and others to wipe out the Jew that Balak, king of Moab, sort to do exactly the same thing in his own day. The sight of that great army appearing out of the wilderness brought fear to his heart. He felt his time was up if he did not do everything within his power to eliminate this threat, to exterminate the people of the God of Israel. It requires little imagination to recognise the fear of the god of this world at the coming of Christ in 1874. Why so much hatred centred in the Jew? We know why! The time has come for the kingdoms of this world to be overthrown, for Israel to be restored, and for the Lord to achieve in her His wondrous purpose as the earthly representatives of His kingdom of righteousness and light.

Now we know that nothing will thwart that purpose, but Satan has an arrogant blind-spot on such matters. Drunk with power, he, like Pharaoh of old, and like the king of Moab, attempts the impossible. Why? Romans 9:17, *"Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that My Name might be declared throughout all the earth."* We have noted that 31 years after the seven times from Adam's fall ran out in Moses's day the Israelites ended their wandering and began to pour into the land of Canaan. Exactly parallel was the period of 31 years from the ending of the Gentile Times in 1914 which saw the ending of the wandering Jew in 1945 and the pouring of the Jews into their land. Within a similar brief period to that of Joshua a tangible kingdom of Israel was to be



seen in that land. Let us just glance back that at 40 years leading up to 1945 and note the remarkable points of comparison with those former times of Moses in modern Jewish history.

It is interesting to note first, however, that the precise point of time those seven times ran out in the days of Moses, completed a jubilee cycle of 49 years from the first advent of Moses when he left his exalted and high abode to visit and to become identified with his people, then slaves in Egypt. As Stephen later explained (Acts 7:25,) *“He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.”* (vse 27) but *“thrust him away, saying Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?”* Moses there came under the death sentence and went away, to return, in God’s due time for the people’s deliverance by his hand. We cannot help but see a graphic depiction of that wondrous link between the rejection and death of Our Lord Jesus when He came to His own and His own received Him not, and His return at God’s due time, not again to die a sacrifice for sin, but to deliver.

What we see taking place concerning Israel is part of the restoration process promised by all the prophets to which Peter referred in Acts 3:21. These are the days of Jubilee, the freeing of a captive people from a Gentile yoke of bondage, like Jacob from Laban, first stage in a process that will achieve salvation both for them and for all mankind from the real enemy of sin itself. The two events are wondrously linked—the rejection and the death of Christ, and the events now in these our days of His return to set up His kingdom. This link is shown too in that 49 years Jubilee cycle link between those two events in the days of Moses.

Now 40 years before 1945 would correspond to the time the people were led forth from Egypt accompanied by various incidents and situations. That would be 1905. Let us remember that the hope of deliverance was already high in many Hebrew minds in Egypt in those days of the second advent [second 40 years] of Moses. This was very true in the period before 1905. Up to then the concept of a Jewish state was dreamlike. In his book, *“The Jewish State”*, Theodore Herzl, a Jewish lawyer, who had become deeply affected by the *“death to the Jews”* cry he had heard from the crowds in Paris, left the Jews with a vision in his words: *“The Jews who wish it will have their own state. We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, die peacefully in our own homes. The world will be freed by our liberty, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness.”* It was a beautiful dream.

Herzl died in 1904. *“With his death, the first stage of the Jewish revolution ended and the second stage began.”* So writes the historian of that time. 1905 saw the beginning of a new stage in the process leading up to the State of Israel. The concept had been formulated, now the ideas began to germinate into motivation! The Jews who shared this hope were on the move. In the days of Moses the Jews moved in mass, their faces towards Zion. From 1905, what was known as the Zionist revolution took practical steps towards realisation of their vision. Ben Gurion, in 1906, arrived in Palestine as a farm-worker, like those spies of the land of Moses’ day. He was not there just to grow oranges. He came away with much practical knowledge of what lay before them. Chaim Weizmann was appointed lecturer of biological chemistry in England, later to become director of the British Admiralty Chemical laboratories. The first president of Israel and its first prime-minister were being prepared for their future role. And they were not alone. Others were now actively planning the practicalities of finance, and the fighting power for their future land.

45 years later Weizmann was to recall those days: *“Zionism (he said) was at the crossroads... I had to take a decisive step... A new start had to be made.”* He spoke of the

first chapter of Zionism closing at the point of Herzl's death, 1904, and 1905 a new chapter beginning. Certainly it was so in the days of Moses. The time for dreams of the promised land were now demanding action and commitment. The dream became a live movement. In both cases this was to mark the beginning of 40 arduous years before that dream would begin to be realised.

But the thousands of Jews following Moses out of Egypt were by no means ready for claiming the promises of God. It was at the people's instigation that the Lord agreed to them sending spies to spy the land. The result we know well. The Jews lacked faith. They were daunted by the giant obstacle in the way. Many were faint-hearted and ready to go back into Egypt. Then, when they were shamed for their lack of trust in God they decided to go up after all, and when the Lord said He would not now go with them, then they decided to go it alone—to achieve themselves by human strategy what they had felt beyond divine power to do for them. How like dear Jacob of old!

At the parallel time to this in the years from 1905 a somewhat similar situation was developing. The new-found energy and determination was in contrast to the attitudes of a small number of ultra-orthodox Jews to whom the notion of a Jewish state was little short of blasphemous. For them, the Jews could return home and establish a Jewish state only when Messiah comes. They failed, of course, to recognise their Messiah in their midst, fulfilling His great task of deliverance just as did the people of Moses' day. The authority and power, even the identity of the deliverer sent of God was frequently questioned, and this not only by individuals, such as Korah, and even Miriam, his own flesh, but also by all the people. They murmured against Moses, and in doing so, against the Lord Who had sent him.

Of our own times Dimont wrote of the godless Jew: "that dared to shift the mission of leading a return to Palestine from the shoulders of the Messiah to the shoulders of the Jews themselves." The Hasids and Talmudists at first opposed any such move. They opposed Zionism. Dimont continues: "they cursed it, vilified it, spat on it, but in the end joined it." However, those Jews we know of today, who are deeply puzzled by what is taking place, what is happening even now around them, the things they know to be the works of Messiah, though they recognise not the One Who stands amongst them, give interesting witness by their very perplexity to the presence of the Lord. The people murmured against their deliverer saying, (Numbers 14:2) "*Would God we had died in this wilderness.*" And verse 28, "*As truly as I live, said the Lord, as ye have spoken in Mine ears so will I do to you.*"

A whole generation would pass and fall before the land was taken. Verses 33,34: "*And your children shall wander in the wilderness 40 years... after the days in which ye searched the land, even 40 days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even 40 years.*" There follow most striking words which have caused no small concern amongst expositors: "*and ye shall know my breach of promise.*" Had God changed His purpose? Would He break a promise? Attention is drawn in such words to the conditional basis of the covenant God had entered with Israel, and which they now had broken. They were to taste the consequences of rejection of God's enabling power. As the NIV reads: "*you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have Me against you.*" The Syriac version of Lamsa reads: "*Then you shall know that it is because you have murmured against Me.*"

It is interesting to look back over the 40 years preceding 1945 and ask, what parallel situation we have found concerning the Jews in their quest for the independent State of

Israel? Was the 40 years of very mixed “wilderness” experience again related to their unreadiness of heart at the time of their visitation? Without recognising that they live in the days of Messiah’s presence, the Jews, nevertheless, decided to do it themselves, and to face the enemy without the help of divine presence and favour. Nevertheless, the Lord had mercy in the days of Moses and still achieved His purpose in terms of the typical kingdom of Israel. And we in our day see the same evidence of divine mercy, notwithstanding the unbelief in which they return, and their pride in self-achievement.

Are we beginning to glimpse some meaning in the very difficult circumstances and frequent failure of this wayward tribe in our own days leading up to and beyond the 1945 turning point in their history? Why the holocaust? Why so much Jewish blood to spill before the land was entered? Perhaps the visible parallel with the days of Moses helps us to glimpse something of the underlying significance of the event of so many Jewish deaths at the very threshold of their entry to claim the land. Certainly Joshua did not give them that promised rest, and we must confess that the people of Israel still are far from entering into rest. It will not be brought about by war-plane or fiendish modern weaponry. And if it depends upon Israel’s continual vigilance of her great spy net-work, then “rest” it is not!

Now this background, both in the days of Moses and the 40 years wilderness wandering, and in the parallel times up to 1945, serves to bring home the wonder of the words of Balaam’s unwilling blessing upon the Jewish race. The Balaam episode came at the end of those years, but prior to their entry into the land. The strength and intensity of anti-Semitism had reached a critical stage. The Jew was seen as a threat, and this provoked such hatred as wished their extermination as a race. The weapon to be used to this end was the curse of Balaam. He was the heathen prophet of such unquestioned prestige that it was believed that nothing could resist the effect of a curse laid by him. It would be a death sentence that could not be revoked.

The political aims of Hitler in the parallel period closing these 40 years were, like Balaam, to destroy the Jews, to wipe them out as a race, and at the same time to make gain for himself. The Jews were by no means the only victims, of course. As many million “Christians” were to die under Hitler as well as Jews. But “whereas the Germans exterminated Pole, Russian, Ukranian and other Slavs for their presumed intellectual inferiority, they killed the Jews for their intellectual superiority.” So writes the historian of our day.\* We see reflected there not only human fear, but that of the god of this world.

It would seem that this again was the hour of Satan, and the power of darkness. And yet it was the shock of this very same nightmare experience and its effect upon the nations of earth that paved the way for the birth of the nation and their re-entry to the land of Palestine, to be established forevermore as the State of Israel. The very would-be curse turned to blessing. The spasm of greatest travail brought forth in one day what all human effort had failed to achieve before, i.e. the birth of a nation.

And so, with such a stirring background in mind, both of the encounter of Moses with Balaam, and with the more recent encounter of the Jews with Hitler and fascism, that ruthless power beyond the ability of its victims to defeat, let us look more carefully at the way the Lord causes human wrath to praise Him, makes the curse of the satanic spirit in man to turn to blessing, the triumph of divine purpose, notwithstanding the threat of every evil force. Let us look at the prophetic utterances of Balaam, and view them in the light of our times.

It is not without interest that the name “Moab” contains the word, “father”, as well as implying “progeny” or “race”, thus crudely portraying the self-proclaimed “father race” of our time. The name Balak, king of Moab, means “wasting, destroying,” and not only characterises the ruthless mind of Hitler, but behind him the Satanic spirit of enmity with the seed of divine promise, both the natural seed and the spiritual. But the purpose of these evil powers being raised up is to declare throughout the earth the power and Name of God, the Name of a faithful and everlasting love. This day is this word being once more fulfilled, and we, sheltering in the Rock of Ages, have the inestimable privilege of a blessed preview of what Israel and the world of mankind are yet to behold, the result of which will be that the knowledge of His glory will fill this earth as the waters cover the great deep.

To the meaning of the name Moab, “father race”, we may add that of Midian, also involved, meaning “strife, contention,” while the name Balaam means “treader down of the people.” Those jack-boots of the German armies so aptly represent this attitude of Satan to all who would oppose his evil ways. The word Balaam has an equivalent in the Greek, “*Nikolaos*”, and from this word we get the reference to the Nicolaitans in Revelation 2:6 & 15, the latter verse following an allusion to the sin of Balaam. Spiritual Israel has already felt the power of such an enemy that in these last days plays so fierce a role in Israel’s experience. All these names speak of the release of Satanic hatred against the people of God. Yet the Satanic purpose to devour and destroy that seed is thwarted by the power of God, though not without cost to that seed. This was true of Jesus. It was true of the church, and again of Israel, each in turn to know the fury of the powers of darkness. In this last phase concerning Israel, as with the others, whatever evil powers the Adversary uses, the end turns out far from Satan’s design, but in total alignment with the purpose of God.

Balaam utters four prophecies concerning Israel. In these he describes their separation, their justification, their sanctification, and their exaltation. The Spirit of God prompts Balaam’s words, and in Numbers 23:7, 18 & 24:3, 15, 20, 21, & 23, the word “parable” is used in our AV. The Hebrew word “*mashal*” (4912) has often the sense of an extended parable, something which becomes proverbial. It is the same word translated in Deut. 28:37 and Psalm 44:14, etc, as “byword”, and is spoken of Israel made a byword among the nations. In the Theological Wordbook of the O.T. we read on this word: “Much more is involved than simply scorn or derision. The point is that God has made Israel a public example, an object lesson for others to observe and learn from.” He did the same of Job (17:6): “*He hath made me also a byword of the people, and aforetime I was a tabret (a drum)*” to the sound and warning of which the people gave heed. In His work in Israel today God is calling the earth. Sooner or later men will hear, and recognise herein the voice and Name of a mighty God, able and willing to fulfil His Word, regardless of the utter unworthiness of the clay, and every power of Satan that has opposed.

Before Balaam’s pronouncement there was a great holocaust. Not one fire, but sevenfold the flames that consume the sacrifices on seven altars. This holocaust continues throughout the subsequent prophetic statements making a remarkable background to these words. Three different sites were chosen in order to survey more of the extent of the great Israelite throng below. These sites were high-places linked with pagan worship. In 1896, Geikie, in his series, “Hours with the Bible”, describes the work of Condor in visiting these sites and discovering there still seven ancient stone monuments at one site, and circles in each place with central cubical stone, all speaking of the idolatrous worship of ancient time. From each height a

different view was gained of the teeming thousands of Israel in the valleys below, camped and waiting for the moment of entry into the land. What follows is to demonstrate that all the material gods of earthly might and power worshipped by man can in no way influence the outworking of the Divine Purpose.

In the first parable, recorded in Numbers 23:7 to 10, we have the first great prophetic utterance since the promise to the fathers, and that promise is repeated now.

Num 23:7-10

*7 And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.*

*8 How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied?*

*9 For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.*

*10 Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!*

How shall I curse, and God hath not cursed? God had said to him: *"Thou shalt not curse this people, for they are blessed."* What was first told in private must now be made plainly public. *"If God be for... who can be against?" "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn."* Those who think that God, having broken off the branches, has cursed Israel forever, will have much to open their eyes in the days before us. *"I shall not cast them away."*

From his vantage point high up, Balaam now sees Israel as a nation outstanding from all nations. It is one on its own. This is because God has made it so. When Moses spoke in Exodus 33:16, *"so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth"*, he was speaking of a nation walking in the presence of God. Even when the visible tokens of His presence were removed and the glory rose up and departed from the Temple, the eyes of the Lord were still upon them. During its long period of adversity and treading-down, though scattered far among the nations, the Jew retained his identity, just as during the two centuries of Israel in Egypt. This is surely one of the miracles of time, and wondrous attestation to the certainty of the Word of God. Not only so, but Israel is uniquely chosen for the manifestation before all mankind of the manifold wisdom and grace of God.

Next to their separateness the prophet notes their increase: *"Who hath counted the dust of Jacob?"* What a sight it must have been, those two men standing beside their smoking altar, wishing Israel's doom. The smoke that rose from the incinerators of the gas chambers produced its sickening stench, but could not obscure the future of that race. The plotters look before them at the vast multitude, tent after tent, gathered there below. Yet these were only a part, a quarter of the whole. Gen 28:14 *"And thy seed (Jacob) shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."* The generations of that race today are yet to be joined by those future hosts of resurrected Israelites spoken of in Dan 12:2.

When Balaam prays that his death be as theirs, he is speaking not so much of his death, we feel, but of that glorious end or goal which lies before Israel—something to be greatly esteemed and prized. Balaam would have wished to meet the end of this present life with

such a resurrection prospect as that of the Jew. How such men as Hitler would have loved to be in the position decreed of God for His people!

All this took place from the heights of Baal worship. Baal, means Lord, and the whole world has lain under the lordship and dominion of Satan and sin, cruel taskmaster of the human race. From this time that marks the ultimate of human degradation, the outcome of sin's sad course, the vision is granted of a people resting under every divine blessing. How vexed would Hitler be to see the outcome of his wicked plan for the Jew—the pricking of the world's conscience that paved the way for the emergence of the nation of Israel, like the Phoenix from the flames, as something rising from the grave. What of Satan's response too? Num 23:11, *"And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether."* Was it that he had not sufficiently impressed the powers that be as to the potential danger to them of these developments of Israel's prosperity?

So the man that fearful king was trying to use to bring about the destruction of the Jew was hurried to another situation—verse 14, *"the top of Pisgah."* The holocaust continues with its seven-fold heat. The sacrifices, in these our days, were Jews. This was Satan's ironic offering to God of a people consumed in his hatred, as if to taunt the Lord.

Num 23:18 *And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor:*

19 *God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*

20 *Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.*

21 *He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.*

22 *God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.*

23 *Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!*

24 *Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.*

Balak was determined to use every situation to his evil ends. But the Word of God stands and cannot be changed, for God is not man. Every word He utters is a word of total TRUTH. His every command becomes incontrovertible law. The Lord does not change His mind or go back on His purpose.

Zechariah 3, speaks of this very same hour in Israel's end-of-age experiences, as pre-figured in the days subsequent to the coming of Cyrus. Her deliverer had come, yet still her state seemed so incongruous with her hopes, and Satan stood there ready to resist and accuse, to discourage and destroy—pointing to the filthy garments on Joshua the high priest, Israel's representative.

The word of the Lord cuts through that of the Adversary. With awful command He says, through then prophet, "Balak, stand up and listen!" All powers of earth, all kings and great ones, principalities and powers, will yet rise up and close their mouths at Him Who stands at Israel's side today. *"The gifts and calling of God are without repentance."* Sadly, many Christians are amongst those needing such salutary reminders of Paul's words.

To think that Israel have fallen so far, have been in need of such discipline under the mighty hand of God, have proved so unworthy of such great love, and yet He loves them still. Jer 31:3, *"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."* Hosea 2:19 *"And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. (20) I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD."*

What wonderful words now follow. How can they possibly be understood? Num 23:21 *"He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel:"* Do we see here the tender forgiving love of a father pitying his child, knowing that he is but dust, not dealing with him according to his iniquities, but putting them from him as far as the east is from the west?

Jer 31:37 *"Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD."* Zech 3:4 *"... Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment."*

The language of the Lord's love is so touching to our hearts, as so beautifully expressed in the last three verses of Micah 7:18 *"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in lovingkindness. (19) He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. (20) Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, (and) the lovingkindness to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."* (ASV) We are looking ahead with the eyes of God towards that New Covenant blessing: *"I will remember their sin no more."*

Then come the words we have chosen for our theme text: *"the LORD his God is with him, and THE SHOUT OF A KING is among them."*

Did Balaam's prophetic eye pierce that cloudy pillar resting in their midst? Could he see down the stream of time this day of all days of which the Spirit in him spoke, that angel of His presence which is Christ, standing in their midst today, though they know Him not?

HE is the great and wonderful CAUSE of all that is happening to Israel today—He, the great and mighty arm of the LORD. *"The shout of a king is in their midst."* As often happens, the Hebrew here is delightful for its variety of meaningful thought. The word for "shout" (Strong 8643, Harris 2135b) carries the meaning of sound or signal. It is used to mean the sound of trumpet, that is the silver trumpets or the curved horn shofar. In Leviticus 25:9, it is translated "jubilee." Elsewhere it is translated "alarm", and most frequently a jubilant and triumphant shout. Here the shout of the King in the midst of His people Israel is a beautiful reminder to us of the shout of triumph with which our Lord descended from heaven at His return. This is the trumpet signal the Lord's people now hear and recognise, and indeed, the same word is used in Psalm 89:15, *"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound..."* They recognise the triumphant shout of their King. It is the time of gathering of the church to Himself, gathering too of Israel, first to her land, then to her Lord—the Saviour out of Zion, Who will turn away iniquity from His people.

Here He stands up as Michael, God's representative or arm, standing up for the children of Daniel's people in the midst of the ensuing trouble that marks the winding up of Gentile Times. It is His shout of triumph in the face of certain victory that thrills the hearts of God's people today, as He rides forth prosperously in glory and in majesty on behalf of truth, meekness, and righteousness. (Psalm 45:3 & 4.)

At this very special moment of God's plan of the ages only the Lord's spiritual people are blessed with recognition of the meaning of the trumpet-like signal of their King's royal presence. We long for the moment of truth for Israel, when the shout of the king will become echoed by a jubilant shout of every heart FOR their King. Like the brethren of Joseph, they already receive blessings at His hand without realising who He is, though with those blessings, strange and trying experiences that will yet produce that essential change of heart to one of unselfish protective and sacrificial love, and deep respect for the things that please their Father. All of this is aptly illustrated in Joseph's work within his brethren while they still knew him not. What a wonderful demonstration of divine mercy and skill is taking place, centre of the Potter's wheel, before the eyes of angels and men! Are you watching world? You will behold and marvel—for in Israel is a great and wonderful example that will become the byword for every child of Adam.

The prophet continues to utter what the Spirit dictates. The God Who brought them thus far, Who brought them out of Egypt, the God Who has brought Israel today so far along the road towards Zion, is stronger than all. There is no power that can resist His Will. *"In this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!"* It is His mighty power invested in His Son and through Him in His people, that guarantees their victory be it spiritual or natural seed.

Remember that these are words of assurance and vision before Israel ever entered to take their land. They are uttered at a time when, in antitype, Israel's hopes would seem to have very little ground. At the approach of the last war British and Arab resistance hardened to bring down Jewish immigration to the merest trickle, and with a total end in view. The door was closed and barred. How wonderful that at such a time such hope was given in these words of God's Spirit through Balaam. But in the midst of Hitler's attempts to destroy it required faith to perceive such a wonderful outcome to their veil of tears. This faith they lacked. That was why they were there under Hitler's domain.

The worst thing that could happen to a Jew would be to become a Gentile. That means, to become married to the people of this world, in attitude, spirit, hopes, and goal—losing the vision: "next year in Jerusalem." The same applies to the spiritual seed. This was to be the most crucial test for Israel in the desert, and again for Israel in recent times. What Balaam could not achieve by direct opposition he would attempt by alluring them away from their hope. The daughters of Moab, the attractions of this world, and the worship of its gods, what a test this would prove in both parallel periods! In this way thousands would die without reaching the land.

Sadly, this seemed to be true of many Jews in Europe—Jews who had lost their way, regarding themselves as true citizens of whichever nation they adopted rather than a separated people unto God. The Gentilised Jew, known as "reform Jews", have a history dating back to the days of the Babylonian empire, followed by that of Persia. It is too large an issue to discuss here, but again at the end of the age, just as in Ezra's day, there were to



be those who clung to this world, and who needed such experiences as would cause them to stand up to be counted among the people of God.

The reform Jews strongly resisted and resented the Zionist movement. They were happy in Babylon, at home in Egypt, very comfortable thank you in the U.S.A. or wherever. There are 300,000 Jews in the United Kingdom today. The Jewish people were divided into three parts. One part were to pass through fire, to die in Europe. Another part would find its way to Zion, and the last part would remain scattered in the world. The British Government viewed the Balfour declaration as a means of winning over the American Jewish public opinion. They needed allies to influence the U.S.A. to enter the war on the side of Britain. But they badly misjudged the position. Many influential Jews in America, as in Europe, were opposed to Zionism. They feared that the concept of a Jewish homeland would threaten their position in the world.

It was against this background situation that we find Balaam now viewing the children of Israel from the top of Peor, which was again a site of Baal worship. Peor means “opening”. The Adversary is indeed expert at looking for any opening, any way to attempt to thwart the purpose of God. It was the matter of Baal Peor, an opening for the Adversary, that formed the last crucial test for Israel in her wilderness days, and many thousands were to fall—in that day 24,000, but in total 600,000 died in the whole wilderness journey without entering the land. The 6,000,000 who died in Europe under Hitler bear a remarkable resemblance to this figure. But here it was that, at the instigation of the frustrated Balak, Balaam once more fell under the power of God’s Spirit and failed again to effect the curse Balak so desperately sought to invoke upon the Jew.

Num 24:3-9

*3 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:*

*4 He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:*

*5 How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!*

*6 As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river’s side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters.*

*7 He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.*

*8 God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows.*

*9 He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.*

Rather than curse he now proclaims instead the total victory of this nation of destiny, and the supreme power of its glorious King. Perhaps in those opening lines Balaam had in mind the time when even his ass could see more than he could of the things of the Lord. Now his eyes were opened too, and the vision was glorious. As valleys verdant, fruitful and widely extending; luxuriant gardens on the banks of a river of living waters; and his people would be as aromatic trees diffusing fragrance as the plantation of God on the river banks. Goodly tents, beautiful tabernacles spread forth as valleys, waters of life abundant, every vessel or bucket overflowing with abundant life for all his seed. The Jews still chant these very words each feast day: “How goodly are thy tents O Jacob, thy tabernacles O Israel.”

In two lines Balaam then speaks of the King and His kingdom, a king higher than Agag. Agag could well have been the name or title of a whole succession of kings of Amalek, or this could be a reference, like that of Isaiah to Cyrus, of prophetic anticipation of that named king to one day be spared by Saul but slain by Samuel. Agag, king of the Amalekites. This tribe so epitomised the great invincible enemy of “doubt”, that which, as the name implies, robs the strength of those whose faith grows weak. Agag’s name means “to blaze as a fire”, and this is indeed the effect of doubt once it takes hold. We must not, like Saul, at the end of battle give place to doubt. It is a ruthless enemy of the soul and must be ruthlessly dealt with. Here is a King greater than all our fears and all our doubts, a King of Love, Faithful and True, Who will defeat this cruel enemy, and forever destroy this close-girding sin.

Under His domain the people, once hesitant, become willing, and are brought to the state of perfect trust and trustworthiness. It is with this very context that Isaiah 26:1-4 speaks:

*1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.*

*2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.*

*3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

*4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength: (a Rock of Ages.)*

Here is the rest Israel will at last enter.

Again Balaam refers (verse 8) to the mighty power of God that brought them out of Egypt. Jeremiah gives us the up-date on “Egypt” in Jer. 16:14-15

*14 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;*

*15 But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.*

The God Who can bring them out can also bring them in. Leaving Egypt was but a stage. The conquering of every obstacle, and the overcoming of every enemy of human happiness lies ahead, all within the power with which He endues His people. The “unicorn” of verse 8 is probably the “rhino”, and the strength of a rhino in its charge is here used to depict the unchallengeable and unstoppable course of this victorious King. He pierces His enemies through with His arrows—Truths that go right home to the heart of the King’s enemies—the realities of disarming love that will capture the heart, dismissing all enmity, and bringing every thought into the obedience of Christ. He is Lion of the tribe of Judah, glorious in majesty. He Who is willing to die for His people as a little lamb on the altar of sacrifice, was raised to triumph over every foe—as lion, undisputed King over the whole creation.

“Blessed is he that blesseth thee...” the subjects of so great a King, “and cursed is he that curseth thee.” (Verse 9) Do we see Balak wincing at those dreadful words? If his face grows pale it is with very rage. The Adversary does not enjoy his frustration. He does not enjoy having to flee before the superior armoury of faith and light of the Lord’s people. Balak is now jumping up and down in fury and frustration. He had sought a mouthpiece for his wrath upon the seed, an instrument he could use to destroy them. Instead a blessing results beyond all dreams. He wants it all to stop right there. “Go away!” he screams. “Go home!” But Balaam has one more message to deliver. The Spirit of God respects no human dictator. It speaks the knowledge of the Most High Who sees the end from the beginning.

Num 24:15-24

15 *And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:*

16 *He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:*

17 *I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.*

18 *And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.*

19 *Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.*

20 *And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever.*

21 *And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock.*

22 *Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.*

23 *And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!*

24 *And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever.*

*"Star out of Jacob... a sceptre risen out of Israel..."* What glories of majesty will yet appear before the wondering eyes of all mankind. Star of Hope, and sceptre of righteousness, a perfect rule able to put everything right that is wrong in this earth. Human arrogance and pride, what enemies these have been to human happiness. The mighty men of Moab. We see their portraits hanging in the corridors of time. The Nimrods, Caesars, Napoleons, Hitlers of our day!

But something of this spirit of Satan lurks in every heart that is yet untouched by the Lord's Spirit, and from every heart it will be destroyed with all other enemies of the soul. Edom, that old Adam in man that ever resists the things and ways of God, this too will come under the accepted Lordship of the King of kings when all are gathered under the headship of Christ. It is difficult for us to imagine a world in which these elements of the human nature are removed, where no-one will say to his neighbour, *"Do you know the Lord?"* They will not need to for all will know Him from the least to the greatest. Everyone will be in the Truth! The going down and weakening of these enemies will concur with the growth and strengthening of His people—*"Israel shall do valiantly."* Israel shall grow in strength.

Is Amalek standing outside the gates of the City forbidding entrance, as doubt always does, to all the riches of that dwellingplace of God? As verse 20 shows, *"Amalek was first of the nations..."*

Skepticism concerning the things of the Lord has been a most notable feature of all peoples of earth. Like a thick veil it has lain over all nations lest the light of the knowledge of divine glory should shine in. *"But its latter end shall be that it perish forever."* What wonderful words!

The Kenites lived mainly in the rocky heights beyond the reach of others. The name means “a nest”. (verse 21) *“Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock.”* How impregnable seems the place of those inner thoughts of the mind. No one knows, no one can reach to explore those innermost recesses. How true it is that while we may not be able to prevent birds flying over our heads we can stop them building a nest in our hair. How wonderful when the King of Righteousness and Prince of Peace brings into subjection every thought, and sees the satisfaction of His desire—*“Truth in the inward parts.”* No evil thought will make its nest in the mind.

No unkind attitude, no bitter resentment, no unworthy feeling will attempt to cohabit when the Lord’s throne is found in every heart. For He must reign until all enemies are subdued. Verse 23 *“And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!”* He speaks of the Kenites, the enemies, all enemies, of the human mind, whose days are now numbered, as the progress of this little Sovereign State in the midst of the nations today now declares.

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\* Hitler’s obsession with Jews was publicly expressed in a speech at the Sportpalast. “I do not want to even speak of Jews,” he said, “They are simply our old enemies. We realise that this war can only end either in the wiping out of the Germanic nations, or by the disappearance of the Jews from Europe.” He reminded his audience of his 1939 prophecy that the Jews would be destroyed. Only later did Goebbels himself learn the exact meaning of Final Solution. Then Hitler told him flatly that Europe must be cleansed of Jews, if necessary by applying the most brutal methods.” The Fuhrer was so explicit that Goebbels could now write in his diary; “A judgment is being visited upon the Jews that, while barbaric, is fully deserved... One must not be sentimental in these matters. If we did not fight the Jew they would destroy us. It’s a life-and-death struggle between the Aryan race and the Jewish bacillus. No other government and no other regime would have the strength for such a global solution of this question.”



## Cyrus and Christ

*Jer. 50:5-8 "They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten. My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace. All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers. Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks."*

The Spirit of the Lord was transporting the mind of His prophet Jeremiah to a period of time beyond his day. Jeremiah was witnessing the rise of Babylon, that great power with roots way back in history, yet in his day to rise to a new pinnacle, a new position in which it was to dominate the nations around it. The ways of Babylon were foreign to the people of the covenant, or rather, they should have been if they had remained alert and faithful to that covenant. Sadly, in every other sense than name, they had forsaken the God Who had brought them forth. Now, having abandoned their Rock, they had in effect asked Him to release them from their covenant, and the Lord was about to allow them to learn the full implications of the course they had chosen.

Their long captivity was about to begin. It was a time of deep grief to the prophet of the Lord. The pathos of the scene was not lost to Jeremiah, and it saddened him to witness such resistance to those outstretched arms of the Lord's abiding faithfulness and love. It was an act of national suicide and self-destruction. Yet it would take more than the foolishness of human hearts to thwart the purpose of God, and the Lord granted Jeremiah a vision that was to lift his mind beyond the immediate darkness of that sad hour of Israel's history. At the time the prophet received the divine message Babylon was rising and Israel going down. He was given a glimpse of the time when this process would be reversed, when Israel would be rising as Babylon was going down.

Israel and Babylon are the two principle actors of the two chapters Jeremiah 50 & 51. A century before a similar message had been received by Isaiah, a message then even more remarkable in that Babylon was at Isaiah's time quite a different entity and no obvious threat to Israel. In Isaiah chapters 13 & 14, the Spirit prompts some of the most beautiful and elegant language to describe the same events. In speaking of the downfall of literal Babylon of old we know that the Lord was depicting something more far-reaching in time and consequence. In this way does the Lord sow light for the righteous one day to discover, like the handfuls of corn left in the fields of Boaz for Ruth to find. The clues are there in the text, for as the prophet speaks of the defeat of Babylon he finds himself describing the shaking of the whole earth. Isa. 13:11 & 13 *"And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible... Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger."* Verse 14 tells us that Babylon was to become like a hunted gazelle completely powerless before its enemy, like a sheep with no shepherd to defend it. "Behold", the Lord says in verse 17, *"I will stir up the Medes against them."* What a remarkable prophecy, for at the time of these words the Medes were themselves a subject people under the Assyrians.

Thus, with such detailed precision did the Lord depict the events that were to bring an end to the seventy years captivity of Israel in Babylon. Isaiah was even used to name the man, a man not then born, who was yet to rise as the king of the Medes, the man who would be used to fulfil the Lord's pleasure. It was to be the coming of Cyrus that was to result in the downfall of Babylon and the rising up of Israel. Again in Isaiah 45, the prophet is prompted to speak of Cyrus as the Lord's "Anointed", His "Messiah", or in the Greek version of the Scriptures, His "Christ." Isa. 45:1-4 *"Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me."* To loosen the girdle means to make feeble, the girdle being drawn tight represents preparedness for action and is a symbol thus of strength and readiness. When this prophecy was shown to Cyrus in due time we may well wonder what his response would be. Here was the God of the Jews calling him His shepherd, and promising him victory over Babylon and deliverance of Israel, but the Lord was, of course, using Cyrus to demonstrate His Own great wisdom, foresight and power over the kings of the earth. The Lord was also using Cyrus as part of a sequence of events that would foreshadow in the language of type events of even greater import that would take place at a later stage of the divine programme.

The ending of the captivity and the coming forth from Babylon and return to their own land was a remarkable period in the history of Israel, yet not half so remarkable as the greater deliverance it prefigured, a deliverance in process now in this our day. Only the rubbled walls of Babylon remained in the days of the apostle John on Patmos, yet in vision he saw Babylon rise again, and as he watched, a further captivity took place with an ultimate wonderful reversal of both these events under the direction of another "Anointed" of Jehovah, the "Christ", of Whom Cyrus was but a figure. As Jeremiah saw the new rise of that ancient power of Babylon in more formidable array, so the John class of this age, the Church, have seen the rise of this same old system of religious and temporal power only in a new, more formidable form. Hyslop, in his "The Two Babylons" demonstrated just how apt the title of "Babylon" has been to describe the great church-state system of this age. Portending to be the kingdom of Christ, the great Papal system has made war against the saints and overcome them, just as did Nebuchadnezzar against the Jews of old.

When we use the term "papal", we all know at once to what we refer. The church system itself owns the name. It is intriguing to discover in a modern book, a dictionary of Archeology of the Bible, the remarkable link between this word and the Babylon of old. There it is pointed out that the most ancient traceable name for what the Jews later called Babel was that used by the ancient Euphratean people themselves. This was the name "Papel", or "Papal", which the Jews, it is claimed, misheard and mistook the name for "Babel." So the name "Papal" has been around for quite a long time, shared by and linking the ancient and the more modern power. Now neither the Babylon of Jeremiah's day nor the Babylon of this age rose overnight. They each rose in stages. Papacy's rise took place over centuries, from the first Christianised Pagan emperor, Constantine, to the later paganised Christian fathers or popes. There were outstanding dates, just as there were in the captivity

of Judah under Babylon of old, but the process occupied a period of time. This was also to be an important factor when the great reversal took place. The fall of Babylon of Ezra and Nehemiah's day and the return and restoration of Israel were both to occupy a period of time, Babylon's destruction and Israel's recovery, each process spread over many years. BOTH PROCESSES WERE SET IN MOTION BY THE COMING OF CYRUS!

Take Babylon first. The four years leading up to 536 BC and the proclamation of Cyrus then for the captives freedom to begin to return to their land, these years were critical in the fatal events leading to Babylon's inevitable slide towards destruction. First the subduing of the provinces of the empire of Babylon began. The outlying districts became influenced by the fame of Cyrus. At the same time they had become dissatisfied with their king Nabonidus because of his bringing of various foreign gods into Babylon. This led to open uprisings against Nabonidus and in favour of Cyrus for whom they had more respect. Then, in 538 BC Cyrus marched in, and Babylon was taken. In Daniel 5, we have record of the great feast of Belshazzar, eldest son of Nabonidus who shared his father's throne. Following his defeat at Accad, Belshazzar, who was commander in chief of the army, had retreated to Babylon, and fancied himself safe within its mighty walls, notwithstanding the recent disasters. Any lingering fear he now sought to drown in the wild revelry of a sacrificial feast to his gods. A thousand nobles sat down to the banquet headed by the king and a dazzling array of princes. The feast described by Daniel brings before us a scene of luxury and splendour only to be found in the greatest of Oriental courts. An extravagant display was made of pomp and grandeur, the table laid with gold and silver vessels plundered from half a world, the vessels of the Temple of Jehovah among them. Then, in the midst of all the revelry, many being in a drunken state of stupor from which they were never to rise in accordance with the word of the Lord to Jeremiah (51:39), then it was that strange and awing apparition suddenly hushed the revelry as there came forth fingers of a man's hand over against one of the many branched candlesticks or lamps which filled the hall with light, and the hand wrote on the smooth stucco surface of the wall. The message spelt Babylon's downfall. All present could see it was a bad omen, but only Daniel, the Lord's servant, was able to interpret and recognise the full significance of those solemn words. It was to mark the beginning of the end for Babylon, but understood at first only by "the wise." *"In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain."* (Daniel 5:30).

Cyrus had entered the scene, taken that great city, and placed a prince of the Medes, Darius, as its king. Two years later, as the 70 years of the predicted captivity of Israel ran out, Cyrus himself took over as sole king, and gave forth the declaration that was to commence the long process of Israel's restoration. Babylon had been stripped of its temporal power. No longer could it appoint kings and princes throughout its once vast domain. Yet, notwithstanding this conquest, Babylon of old continued as a large and important part of the world of that day, a great city, a religious centre, and a seat of trade. It remained the capital city of the plain watered by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. For many years in Babylon life went on. Its temples were repaired, and it became evident that the final state of utter desolation predicted in such passages as Jeremiah 50:39, was yet to be realised. This destruction was fulfilled not immediately, but by degrees. Cyrus first took away Babylon's supremacy and temporal power at his coming. Twenty years later Babylon was revolting, and Darius Hystaspes squashed the rebellion and deprived it of fortifications, removing its great gates of brass and iron. Many years later Seleucus Nicator removed its citizens and wealth to Seleucia which he founded in the neighbourhood. In the course of time the Parthians

removed all that was left to Ctesiphon. Eventually only its walls remained, and they in turn crumbled into decay until it required the excavations of archeologists to discover the site. Babylon, the great city, had become the domain of the wild creatures of the desert as predicted in God's Word, but what a long period of time was involved to completely fulfil that Word.

As with the type, so with the antitype. As Mystic Babylon came up in stages, a long drawn-out process of development, so she submits to the judgment that sits to take away her riches, her temporal power, eventually her religious influence already undermined by the civil powers that once supported her, and by defecting bishops and disputing priests, something once unheard of, until she is no more. Babylon of old had for years heard of Cyrus and his great power, but had failed to recognise the threat to her security. She remembered her great walls and huge gates capable of withstanding any invader. She had her history, a history of conquests and glories, a line of despotic kings. Babylon felt insolently secure in her heart.

So it was with the Babylon of John's vision. As God's representative on earth there was no thought in the mind of popes of coming destruction. She had her two great walls, ignorance, and superstition, and her illustrious past and heritage and the security of her many earthly treasures. Papacy had not been without her problems any more than Babylon of old in that period leading up to the advent of Cyrus. From about 556 BC Nabonidus had reigned. He entrusted the care of the army to his son Belshazzar. Meanwhile, after some skirmishes with various enemies, Nabonidus desperately tried to carry out some of the needed work of restoration in Babylon. His main task was to restore the Babylonian temples, temples of the moon, of the sun, and the temple of Anunitum, the "lady who walks before the gods." Eventually it seems some progress was achieved and sacrifices were again being offered to Babylon's old gods. Nabonidus arranged that all the images of the gods were taken in grand procession around Babylon, and there is in existence a kind of newspaper clipping in the form of a clay tablet depicting the event. After describing this parade the tablet states, "In the month Tammuz (June,) Cyrus made battle... the men of Akkad made revolt... The soldiers took Sippara on the 14th day (June 14th) without fighting, and Nabonidus fled away. On the 16th day... the army of Cyrus came to Babylon without any opposition..." The army of Babylon of old would not go out to fight the army of Cyrus, just as the Lord foretold through Jeremiah. Jer. 51:30 *"The mighty men of Babylon have forborn to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed; they became as women: they have burned her dwellingplaces; her bars are broken."*

The correspondences with the Babylon of this age are of interest here. From the time of reformation one half of Christendom has been in revolt with the other half. Satan's house has been divided. Efforts were made to restore some of the esteem for the gods of Papacy, and for those things once counted sacred, such as Papal infallibility and divine authority of popes, together with that old system of worship of the woman god, "the lady who walks before the gods..." the virgin Mary, mother of God, these things were once more acclaimed. But the soldiers of Babylon, the civil powers so long made to jump at her command, were losing heart, their allegiance costing too much.

There is not space here to recount all the events leading up to the Papal fall. It is in the light of these happenings that we perceive the enormity of what has taken place in this earth concerning this doomed system. Let us just remind ourselves of the ultimate most striking scene when Pope Pius 9th, who had become Pope in 1846, turned from his first attempts at



liberal reform with which he might have regained some support of the masses, and pursued instead the tyrannical course of his predecessors. He re-opened the dungeons of the inquisition, and deliberately set himself to reorganise Europe on the model of the darkest days of the dark ages. On his own sole authority, without the concurrence even of a council, a thing that no pope had done before, he added a new dogma, "the immaculate conception", which all men were required on pain of death to receive. He reorganised a Roman Catholic hierarchy for Protestant England, canonised saints, and gathered around him in Rome imposing bodies of dignitaries and bishops from every part of the world. He enforced in Rome a law prohibiting Protestant worship, except at the embassies. He persecuted those who dared to read the scriptures in their homes. He gathered his great Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, and so managed it that the assembled archbishops, princes, cardinals, patriarchs, bishops, abbots, generals of orders, etc, had no liberty even to discuss the great question brought before them but were fraudulently forced to pronounce in favour of the dogma of papal infallibility. This new canon was decreed July 1870. All the old gods of Babylon were thus taken and paraded before the people. Yet on that same day, 18th July 1870, "on which the pope read ... the decree which marked the climax of papal pretension, the announcement of his own infallibility," a great storm shook the place, and Napoleon III dispatched his challenge to Germany. The writing was on the wall!

The domino effect of Napoleon's act was within weeks to result in the fall of Rome and the final irreversible loss of the Papacy's temporal power. We had a "newspaper clipping" in the shape of a tablet of clay recording the similar events in the days of Nabonidus. Today we have a witness, a Roman Catholic at that, in Cardinal Manning. He records, "There is one point in which the present crisis of the Holy See and of the Christian Church differs from all that has gone before it. Always in ages past, when one or more of the European powers were in conflict with the Holy See, one or more of the other powers were friendly and gave it protection. Now not one stands in its defence; they have all with one accord hid their faces from the Vicar of Our Lord; they are all consenting to the deed. The princes and rulers of Christendom have forsaken their Master, and their silence in the hour of danger is flight. Never until now have all the nations of Europe consented in the deed of the nations who have usurped Rome. Never till now has the public law of Europe been changed to sanction the usurpation. For the first time the Head of Christendom is excluded from the senate of Christian sovereigns, though the temporal sovereignty of the supreme pontiff is of divine institution!" The mighty men of Babylon, the civil powers that once supported her, have forborne to fight. They have remained in their holds. (Jer. 51:30.)

In Jer. 51:31, we read, "*One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end.*" So immense was the great city of Babylon that it took days to walk right through. When Cyrus diverted the waters to march in under the great gates at one end of the city there were parts of the city that did not get to hear for up to three days. They knew the city was besieged, but had such confidence in the enormous walls they would laugh off the thought of genuine threat. Those two walls are reported to have been nearly as high as St Paul's cathedral, and not eight but eighty-seven feet thick, and surrounded by a great ditch filled with water. One might understand their complacency! It was in this false sense of confidence that Belshazzar's feast took place. The city had been taken, they knew not the hour of their visitation, but cavorted in drunken stupor until they fell exhausted in sleep which was to become the sleep of death. Jer. 51:57, "*And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her*

*mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts.*" After that great event Papacy would never regain temporal power. Let us turn to the other great event of our day depicted by Jeremiah and Isaiah as SUBSEQUENT TO THE COMING OF CYRUS type of Christ—the long process of Israel's restoration.

When Cyrus gave the signal one might have expected a rush of captives to get back to their land and to freedom. Such was not the case. Why was that? What had happened? At the outset of their captivity it is reported that the iron of slavery had entered deeply into the souls of the Israelites. Contempt and hatred seem to have been lavished upon the race, culminating not infrequently in the dungeon, even in death. They are spoken of, as previously warned in the Word of God, as a people robbed and spoiled, snared in pits, hidden away in prisons. Pitiless cruelty, unrestrained by law, crushed their spirits, till despair settled widely on the various communities. *Psa. 137:1 "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion."* Gradually, however, matters improved. After a while many were allowed to even live in the capital itself where a happier lot was afforded. Bitterness gradually subsided, and the Israelites began to fall into their place as a recognised portion of the general community. The language of Babylon, moreover, was so closely related to Hebrew, its use being so easy, that it ultimately supplanted Hebrew. Once again the long unused dialect of Abraham, once of Ur of the Chaldees, became adopted by his seed, but not, alas, his faith!

Oh yes! some clung to the faith of Israel. Some realised the cause of their captivity, and sought a life of closer conformity to the requirements of their God, but by no means all. It was these more zealous ones with vision in their hearts that were first to gather together and muster that first company that were to ask the way to Zion. *Jer. 50:5 "They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten."* Out of the whole nation little more than forty thousand formed that band, one tenth of these being priests. Yet out of 24 courses of priests only four courses were here represented, and the defection of twenty courses from the faith of their fathers is here testified. The Levites response was even worse. By far outnumbering priests as a people, yet now only 74 Levites cared to leave Babylon.

Even so in our day the return and restoration of Israel began in a similar small way. More were to leave to join them in dribs and drabs from time to time as things got a little easier in the desolate land across the desert, but it was in troublous times and with many setbacks that the temple, and later, the city of Jerusalem was rebuilt. Some of those who remained in Babylon, including the richer Jews, though contented with their position, and faint-hearted when it came to the thought of forsaking their gains to face the desert and what lay beyond, nevertheless felt rather proud of the braver spirits who, having little to lose, more readily joined that movement. These liberally contributed whatever might be useful on the way or in the land. We do not need to detail further that typical return to illustrate how forceful and various are the points of comparison with what is taking place before our eyes in this our day. The work then took many years just as the return and restoration of Israel today. It was not to be the work of a moment. Lives were to be spent, many tears shed, before even the first-fruits of their endeavours were to be realised, and this applies to both events. There were moments in Israel's first return when it seemed their position was almost untenable, their hope for progress doomed. So again has it been in this our day. A long trail of events has led to the present stage of Israel's restoration. From the first revival of Jewish hope, the

work of Zionists, the first little bands that set out to settle in the cherished land, through events of two world wars, the shaking of nations and international tension that was to mark the end of the Gentile Times, there have been conflicts without and conflicts within. Yet again Israel returns, and again in troublous times.

We live in the time depicted by the Lord through His prophets of old and portrayed in the history of His people, the time when Babylon is ON THE WAY DOWN, and Israel, the people scattered and peeled, is ON THE WAY UP. So it is written, and so inevitably will it be, and we are witnesses of these things. As in the type, Babylon still exists, a great religious power, but stripped of her old temporal sovereignty. Her decline and doom is sealed. Her daughter systems too show the signs of a grievous sore of spiritual lifelessness. Jer. 51:55-56 *"Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice; when her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered: Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompenses shall surely requite."* These two long processes, the downfall of Babylon and the uprising of Israel both trace back to one event that precipitated and caused and began each process. This was the coming of Cyrus, the Lord's "Anointed." We cannot help but see the counterpart today in the coming of the Christ of God. What more can He say than to us He hath said!

There is, of course, a spiritual aspect that runs alongside both of these events. Spiritual Israel too are much involved. To them the cry has gone forth, *"Come out of her My people that ye partake not of her plagues."* (Rev. 18:4) We are in fellowship today because over a century ago scores of telegraph boys were deployed outside the churches of Christendom with the message "Food for thinking Christians." Some believe today that the message was untimely and inappropriate. We believe it was exactly on time and truly pertinent to the hour, and this the great signs both in Babylon and in Israel confirm.

During this harvest period two gatherings are in process. One a visible gathering of the natural seed back to their land. The other is an invisible gathering to the Lord of His saints which cannot be seen. The fact of the one which can be seen is indication of the other beyond our natural senses. The restoration and gathering of Israel is taking place before our eyes and requires no stretch of imagination to perceive. Likewise the going down of Babylon. Anyone who has knowledge of the power of that great system prior to 1870 cannot but realise the dramatic changes already evident in her undoubted decline. The two take place alongside. According to the Word of God both are precipitated by the same event, the coming of Cyrus. They confirm to us that a greater than Cyrus is here, the One Cyrus was used to prefigure... The Shepherd and Christ of God.

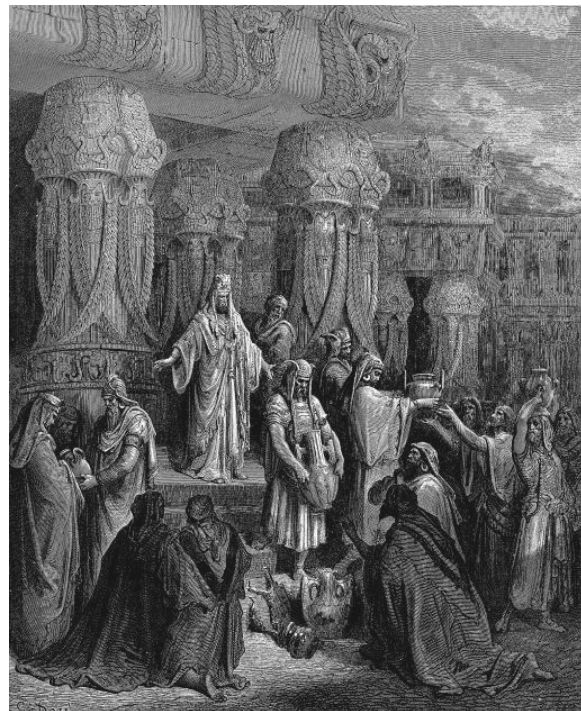
The drawn-out time periods involved in the out-working of the divine programme have proved a test of faith to many of the Lord's people. Nevertheless, that such long periods would be involved is testified in type just as it is today confirmed by undeniable history. Prior to 1914 Bible students were still expecting a fairly rapid winding-up of the pilgrimage of the last of the church on earth. From the time of Peter brethren have been "hasting the day." With the test of time some views of the Truth movement became reviewed, and gradually views of others outside the Truth movement became adopted with regard to the matter of the Lord's return. Today we have learned to share a charitable view and attitude towards those, our brethren in Christ, who no longer share our own views of truth. It seems that, in the Lord's wisdom, such a situation was needful for the final proving and rounding off of the Christian character as the last of the little flock finish their course.

That first step out of Babylon was by no means the end of the matter, the quest goes on. We too, like Israel, are asking our way to Zion, our faces turned thitherward. Israel still have much to learn about leaving the ways and attitudes of the Gentile way of life behind. The Lord will see to it that they receive those needful experiences, painful though some may be, that will clear their vision, and help them to define their highest and most satisfying goal. They must be the first to realise, after the church have gone, the divine blessing of truth. They must be seen to be the people the Lord has blessed. Israel will then be used in turn to bless all the families of earth under the higher direction of spiritual Zion, the saints in glory with the Lord. Both natural and spiritual Zion are sharing parallel experiences in this respect. For each the way is turning out to be not quite what was once expected, a long and somewhat difficult way, not without tests. Yet with each pitfall there is a lesson to be learned.

The same Lord is behind the work with each of these chosen peoples of God. The last days of the preparation both of the natural and the spiritual seed is to reveal something of the depths of divine wisdom and love. None of us are worthy for such things. Israel proved her unworthiness long ago. We never knew any sense of worthiness even from the start. Certainly the state of the Truth movement today does nothing to fill our hearts with pride or satisfaction. We think of the sadness of heart of Nehemiah many years after the coming of Cyrus, the Lord's Christ. How much real building work of the walls of Zion is taking place today? Sadly our history of the Truth movement these years, like that of Israel then, has been at times a history of factions and divisions, undermining of faith rather than building up. In spite of this He continues His work in us, and He perseveres with Israel too, a people also known for her factions and lack of unity. When at the end His work is finished in both peoples, when He presents to the Father and to the world this new government in heaven and in earth, His workmanship, then the work of grace in each will shine out. Out of Zion, Zion in heaven, Zion on earth, Zion the perfection of beauty, God will shine, and Zion will become the joy of the Father and the joy of the Lord Jesus, and the joy of the whole earth.



*Ezra 1:7,11 "Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD... All the vessels of gold and of silver... were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem."*



## Esther and our times

We have noted interesting aspects of comparison between the sequence of events following the coming of Cyrus and those following the coming of Christ around 1874. These include the fact that his coming brought about the process of downfall for Babylon and of restoration for Israel. Both, we have seen, were to prove long procedures in fact occupying well over a hundred years. Neither process could commence before the coming of Cyrus. We have thus seen underlined in pattern the fact that any indication of these two processes in progress today constitute infallible proofs that the Greater Cyrus, Jesus, has returned.

Yet there is more! The pattern of events in those days subsequent to the coming of Cyrus bear a remarkable correspondence with the sequence of events these last days since the *parousia* of Christ commenced. In fact, if we lay the two periods alongside it becomes apparent that there are correspondences in terms of time to some marked events where both periods concur. However, our present subject centres on the Lord's dealings with Israel and world Jewry in these last days.

The coming of Cyrus marked the turning point in Israel's sad history as a captive people banished from their land. Now many prophets had spoken by inspiration of Israel's restoration. In the early days of the captivity some of these visions and assurances must have seemed almost as idle dreams. Those first oppressive years in Babylon were accompanied by the expectation that the Lord would very quickly intervene, and the Lord sent a special message by Jeremiah to tell them that this would not be so. A long period of desolation would intervene. It was as though the Lord intended to air thoroughly both the land and its people to give time for the noxious vapours of sin and false worship to be eradicated. Yet through their sorrows and privations, scattered and peeled, strangers in Gentile lands, the Lord's eye was upon them. Hosea 13:9-10 "*O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?*" Again in Hosea 14:4 "*I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.*" Hosea 14:1 "*O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God;*"

But what a long drawn-out process is involved of bringing Israel to that state of heart of full return to their Lord! We watch the process today. We strain our eyes to see what is happening to the heart of this people. The outward signs we see. Israel is to us an unmistakable evidence of the presence of the Lord Whose coming was the signal for their long captivity in Gentile lands to end. When the Jews were turned out of Spain some centuries ago we might have expected them to turn their eyes towards the promised land, but they did not entertain such hope, because they knew that their Messiah had not yet come. Today, against their belief that such times of restoration must await the Messiah, we find them back in their land. This is still a mystery to many religious Jews aware of their Scriptures (e.g. Isaiah 49:6.). How can the works of Messiah be taking place apparently without Him? Only AFTER the coming of Cyrus could the cry go forth, Isaiah 52:11, "*Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.*" Then would they ask their way to Zion, their faces turned thitherward. It could not happen before the event. All Jews who had any faith in their Scriptures knew that. Peter knew it, as did the other disciples. The restoration of Israel was the work of Messiah. As the Master prepared to leave them the question was

uppermost in their minds: Acts 1:6 *"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"*

So what is happening to Israel now? Just as in the days after the coming of Cyrus with that proclamation so stirring to the heart of faithful Jews, a long process is involved with developing stages, hurdles to be overcome, apparent set-backs, and various trials of faith. Isaiah 52:6-12, and many other passages of the Word would be in the mind of the Jews as they began to return to their land. The Lord had turned again their captivity and they were like them that dreamed. The opening verses of Isaiah 52 called for a great awakening in Zion, and a loosening of the captive bands from around her neck. Isaiah 52:1-2 *"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion."* Then in verse 7, the joy of the occasion is expressed in memorable words. *"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"* Verse 8 continues, *"Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye"* ("they will see it with their own eyes." NIV), *when the LORD shall bring again Zion."* In the mind of the returning Jews of that day they were living in the time of fulfilment of those promises of restoration of Israel, and they would be full of expectation.

Yet not all Jews were ready to return to the land. Some had become settled and comfortable on foreign soil and wished only to stay put and not to be disturbed. The parallels to our days are obvious. Those returning to the land were in for a hard time. Much of the enthusiasm of the first band of pilgrims must have somewhat dampened at the first glimpse of the desolate land before them. They were soon to learn that there were also enemies, both without and within. The attitude of the people all around that land were hostile, and things seemed not to go according to the rosy concept of restoration they may once have entertained. There were to be periods when the work seemed to go backwards rather than forwards, and the Lord sent them three prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, with messages relevant to their needs during that long-drawn period of restoration process. The lessons of flagging zeal, of wrong direction of their activities, of apathy over what was happening, the feeling that this was not the time after all. These are well known object lessons to us all in the Truth movement today which somewhat parallels some of these experiences of the natural seed both then and now.

What of those Jews who wished not to return to their land? The story of Esther comes to mind set here in a different sequence of typical background yet teaching afresh similar lessons and warnings of a covenant people losing their identity in the world.

The period covered by the account of Esther was, we are told, from BC 478 to 464. If we take the time of the proclamation of Cyrus in his first sole-king year, 536 BC, to correspond with 1874, time of the Lord's return, then the period of Esther would parallel the period from 1932/3 to 1946/7 AD. This period, as we know, covered a most distressing time for the Jews in Europe, from the rise of Adolph Hitler. After years of struggle for power, in 1932 Hitler's Nazi party gained the largest party vote in Germany. By 1933 he was Chancellor. His first act was to demand an election. The Nazi party gained 42% of the votes. However, their allies, the Nationalists polled 8%. Added together this gave them the half share they needed to rule

Germany. This new Reichstag decided to abolish parliamentary government. From that moment until 1945 Germany was ruled by the Enabling Law which gave Hitler law-making powers independent of the Reichstag. Before long other parties were banned and opposition became unknown. Arrest, imprisonment, torture and death without trial became commonplace.

Jews were particularly ill-treated. From 1935 the Nuremberg laws deprived them of all rights as citizens. They could not marry non-Jews, could not leave their jobs, in some cases could not even buy food. Soon thousands were leaving Germany, some for the U.S.A., some for Israel. Meanwhile in Italy Mussolini was becoming increasingly impressed by the Nazi party. After a visit to Germany in 1937 he came away so intoxicated with the regime that he introduced goose-stepping to his troops and started a campaign against the Jews. In Russia also persecutions were underway, and likewise in Hungary and other European countries. The stage was set for the attempt to wipe out the Jews of Europe. (Compare the attempt of Laban in "Jacob at Jabbok")

In the days of Esther a similar situation was developing. We find Esther first mentioned in chapter 2 verse 7, where we find her name is given as Hadassah, which means "myrtle." There is often an aptness in Old Testament names, and the name Myrtle reminds us at once of the opening vision granted to Zechariah some years before. There he saw a vision of the invisibly present Lord riding upon a red horse, Zech. 1:8 *"I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; (the shady valley);"* a place of lowness and disesteem. This well represented the position of the Jews at that time. They were a chastised people, slow to recover from their self-brought captive state, and lowly regarded in the eyes of the world. Yet there, invisible to natural sight, in their midst stands the Lord, "the messenger or angel of Jehovah," of verse 11 being undoubtedly the Lord Jesus Himself. This vision of an invisible Lord in the midst applies in parallel to this day in which we live. He sits upon a red horse, symbol of blood, of vengeance, of judgment, and of war. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro continuously assessing the situation throughout the earth, and they note with displeasure the nations at ease, or indifferent to the plight of His people. The vision is given to encourage, and they certainly needed encouragement at that time.

Daniel had been afforded a glimpse (recorded in Daniel 10:13,) of wicked spirits in high places endeavouring to turn the heart of the Persian rulers against the Jews. This began early in the restoration period, as evidenced in Daniel 6, where we find much envy and rivalry becoming evident among the presidents and princes of Persia against Daniel. As a result of their conniving Daniel found himself in the midst of a den of lions, and how significant that was of the antagonism of Satanic source against the Jews. But the mouths of the lions were stopped by an invisible hand. Michael their Prince was watching over His people. This same watch-care we discern today as Israel passes through a similar time of trial, and Jews throughout the world share the brunt of the anti-Semitic spirit now evident. It was not inappropriate that this Jewess was called Myrtle, representative of a lowly disesteemed race.

A remarkable sequence of events brought about the situation of the days from 1932, the rise of Hitler. Quite a strange chain of history also led to the situation under Haman. The story opens with a sumptuous banquet given by the Persian king Xerxes in the palace at Shushan. This grand building, or what remains, has been excavated, and its marble pillar and pavements restored to view. We are not in Israel in this account but among Jews outside the

land, still dwelling amongst the Gentiles. Background history is enlightening as to the probable cause of the banquet. The king is planning to extend his domain by an expedition into Greece. He now has in view the idea of taking Europe! However a similar attempt by his predecessor one generation before had resulted in total defeat and disaster. That had been called the battle of marathion, and its magnitude in terms of arms and men make it one of the outstanding wars of all time, like the Great War in our times which preceded Hitler's later designs on Europe.

Hitler was caught up in the backwash of just such a similar great war, that of 1914, which resulted in the disastrous Versailles peace treaty which paved the way for so much unrest in Germany. Xerxes gathered together all his generals and military advisors in what turned out to be a six months convocation, and to boost morale a most sumptuous feast was laid on to conclude the preparations. Here it was, however, that something happened which was to alter history for the Jews of that time. At first it appeared to be just a domestic upset. Everyone was enjoying the feast and the king's heart was merry with wine. In this drunken condition he rashly sent his chamberlain to bring Vashti, the queen, his wife, with instructions to wear her royal apparel, crown and tiara, and to unveil her beauty before this half-drunken all-male party. Sensing the situation, Vashti's dignity was offended and she declined the invitation. This put the king on the spot, for he was a despotic ruler and no one could disobey any whim of his without the gravest consequences. Furthermore, this was a very public occasion and the slight was quickly seen by some present as an open invitation to other wives to assert their preferences over their husbands, thus leading to a very unhappy state of affairs throughout the empire. Counsel was therefore given to the king that he should dismiss his wife and forbid her ever again entering the king's presence. This the king did, and the decree was made.

Of course, when the hang-over had passed after this event the king began to think twice about what he had done and began missing his queen, but there was nothing he could do about getting her back for the decree was made and remained inviolate according to Persian law. It was therefore decided that a beauty contest should be organised with a view to finding a suitable replacement for the very beautiful queen Vashti. The winner would take her place at the side of the king with the royal estate of his queen. The rest of the story we know, how one of the men who had a post about the palace decided to put his cousin in for the contest. This man was Mordecai, and the young woman was his charge, for he had looked after her since the death of her parents. The beauty of Esther was such that she won the heart of the king and was made queen in place of Vashti. A great Persian king to marry a Jewess? Well, somehow Esther failed to mention that she was a Jewess! Thus the stage was set for a situation that, while it had not yet arisen, was clearly known beforehand by the Lord. What a lesson of providence!

We might well ask, could not the Lord equally simply have overruled what was to follow and avoided the whole ugly situation developing? Equally we may ask today, could He not have prevented Hitler ever rising to power, or Saddam Hussein, or any other evil man? Certainly if the Lord so wished He could have prevented Haman ever gaining the king's confidence in the way that he did, rising to a position where he could cause a decree to go forth to exterminate the whole Jewish race. Yet the story continues and this unthinkable eventuality was the very thing that did in fact take place, yes, even so long after the coming of their promised "Messiah", marking the time of deliverance. Why does God permit evil? Never because He cannot help it! Always because He has a wise and loving purpose in mind.



Not long after Esther became queen Haman became appointed as prime minister. Now it is important to note that Haman was not an ordinary man. He was, in fact, an Amalekite, and descended from a former king of that nation, Agag. King Saul had an encounter with Agag. In 1 Samuel 15 Saul was commanded to slay utterly all the Amalekites. Why? Because Amalek was a ruthless tribe which came up against the Israelites in the wilderness. 1 Samuel 15:2-3 *"Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."* In Exodus 17:1-7, we are told of a particular trial which came upon the Israelites. They were in the desert, and they could find no water. Israel today is also desperately in need of water, both the natural substance of life and the spiritual counterpart! The situation at that time seemed quite hopeless, faith collapsed, and they were found murmuring against Moses saying, *"Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?"* (Exodus 17:3) And they began to pick up stones to stone Moses. The Lord provided the water. He was going to anyway, but He does it now not as a response to faith but in spite of unbelief and lack of trust. Yet in His mercy He saved them. The people had failed in the fight with the enemy within, the enemy of doubt. Now they find themselves confronted with the enemy without, for there Amalek lies in wait. Thus is established a link between anti-Semitism and lack of faith by the natural people of God. The great object lesson was then taught, for in the battle with Amalek that ensued it was clearly demonstrated that the Israelites prevailed not by force of arms, but by the maintenance of the outstretched arms of Moses reaching towards heaven. When Moses held up his hand Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand Amalek prevailed. With the help of Aaron and Hur victory was thus achieved for Israel (as indeed it will be shortly with the help of the church and ancient worthies.) *"And Moses built there an altar, and called it Jehovah-nissi, (the Lord my Banner) For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."* (Exodus 17:15,16) So did the antagonism between Israel and Amalek become as a running sore.

In 1 Samuel 15, Israel's first king, Saul, a Benjamite, son of Kish, is directed by the Lord to go and smite Amalek, for, said the Lord, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. For Amalek read "doubt"! This was the beginning of a new stage of Israel's history, the kingdom with a visible king! How important to get things straight so far as Amalek was concerned, for Amalek represents one of the greatest enemies of the Lord's people, the close-girding sin of Israel. He must be wiped out from the start. Not one scrap of this enemy nor anything pertaining to him must be allowed to cohabit. All to do with Amalek must be destroyed in the most deliberate and final manner! Victory over doubt must be conclusive.

We all know what happened, and Saul's hesitancy in obeying this command was to cost him the kingdom. Saul failed to slay Agag, king of the Amalekites, and he failed also to dispose of all the things of Agag, the sheep, cattle, and all he considered worth keeping. In dismay and disgust Samuel turned away from Saul and refused to accompany him any further. Saul had forfeited the help and ministry of the Lord's priest and prophet, and this was their last meeting until Samuel's death. Doubt and disobedience, how ruthlessly must the Lord's anointed deal with these enemies of the soul to maintain a walk with the Lord. As Samuel turned to leave, Saul, in great consternation, seized his robe to stop him, and the robe tore in his hands. "So" said Samuel *"the LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this*

*day, and has given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.”* (1 Sam. 15:28) That neighbour turned out to be David.

Was David any better than Saul? Has the David class of this age learned well the things written in men’s lives for their admonition? The end of the book of Samuel describes how David went after Amalek who had made great spoil of the city of Ziklag and carried away the wives and children captive before burning down the houses. We read in 1 Samuel 30:17-19 *“And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all.”* Oh brethren, the victory of faith, for David went in the Name of the God of Israel.

This gives us a glimpse of the implication in the book of Esther when it states that Haman was an Amalekite of the line of a king Agag, and that Mordecai was a Benjamite of the line of Kish, the name reminding us of the lineage of Saul, although this “Kish” was probably a more recent ancestor. There is much that is suggestive in the recording of these details in the account. *“Light is sown for the righteous.”* (Psa. 97:11)

The beauty of Esther was to be proved to be more than skin deep. It would lie in her readiness, when put to test, to lay down her own life in the interests of her people. [The eventual Judah to Benjamin attitude of the ‘Story of Joseph’ chapter comes here to mind.] It was not an easy task that lay before her. When the plot was laid to wipe out the entire race of Jews throughout the Persian world Esther was urged by Mordecai that she use her influence upon the king. This involved three great elements of genuine risk. First she had to gain the king’s attention by entering his presence without his prior invitation, something unheard of and which might rouse his great anger at such affront to his dignity. This alone could cost Esther’s life. On top of this affront she would have to reveal that she, the queen, was a Jewess, a matter thus far concealed from her husband. What would be his shocked reaction at this news? Finally, her requirement would seem to flout the unalterable nature of Persian Law. How could the king be asked to go back on his word? Oh what great faith was required of Esther!

Because of the hatred he had developed for Mordecai, Haman, by his mischievous influence on the king, had caused the slaughter of Jews throughout the realm to be set for a certain day. The Lord, Who overruled the whole matter, was now to demonstrate His *“way of escape.”* [This expression in 1 Cor. 10:13, is literally “a way through.”] But why was the whole situation allowed to arise? The old enemy, Amalek, had reared his head again in Israel. With the coming of Cyrus the decree went forth and the signal was given to the people of God to leave Babylon, leave the world, and set their faces towards Zion, go back to the land of promise. They were to depart from all that Babylon meant, and in cleanness of heart were to bear the vessels of the Lord, the instruments of divine service and worship, back to their rightful place. The failure of so many Jews to return revealed that same old pull of flesh for tangible comforts, the demand for visible blessing, something immediate being preferred to the hope, a mess of pottage meeting desire more than birthright.

Their faith was lacking. It was not up to the challenge of a desolate land surrounded by enemies, nor ready to make the effort and sacrifice involved in its recovery. Much to be preferred were their present comforts, and they stayed where they were, as do many Jews in

this day. Their very life as a covenant people of God was here at stake. Would they now merge into their surroundings adopting more and more of the ways of those around them? Already they were talking like the people of Babylon. So did the grim spectre arise of the old enemy, Amalek. The days of Moses were also typical of these days of Christ, and the parallel of this test is clearly before us in this day of antitype. The visible and physical threat now brought home the deeper spiritual crisis. Amalek had to be defeated, all that this enemy represented, lack of faith, mistrust of the Lord and His ability to achieve His purpose in His people. His miraculous power lies latent for those who fully believe. The “measure” is “according to your faith...” (Matt. 9:29)

Esther, by throwing herself completely on the Lord in full submission, total resignation to whatever the consequences might be, demonstrated the attitude of faith essential to salvation. Natural reasoning would say to her, “Why should I? I am comfortable. I am alright. Why risk so much?” It should be noted that getting the message through to her was no easy task for Mordecai. It is your life that is at stake! The lesson remains for this day. It applies to all covenant people of God. This is the victory that overcometh the world.

When the signal was given at this end of the age for the Jews to return to the land of promise there was very little stirring throughout the world. Only the most zealous were ready to be uprooted from their homes and businesses and life in Gentile lands. The majority were comfortable where they were and felt no compulsion to leave all those comforts for an arduous existence in a desolate land. May we not be first to cast a scornful stone! The Lord sent hunters to hunt them out. The real enemy was depicted by Amalek, that lack of reverential fear of the Lord, and indifference towards that covenant relationship with Him. We read in Deut. 25:17-19 *“Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.”* Amalek feared not God, had no belief, no respect, for His great might. Such an attitude we find in world Jewry today.

There are noble exceptions, but in large the conscience is satisfied by donation, or general good-will towards those that have returned, rather than personal involvement, personal return to the land marked out for them by the Lord. As in the days of Esther, so it is now. There is meaning behind the ugly threat of anti-Semitism throughout so many lands today. It is not just an accident, but, as with the rise of Amalek in the past, it is a reminder to a covenant people of God of the blessed privileges of this hour in Israel’s history, privileges designed to demand a true and living faith in the Lord. The enemy within must be fought of which that enemy without is but a symbol. [Compare “Jacob at Jabbok”]

The Lord rewarded Esther’s faith. He overruled the matter so that the king responded favourably to her request. The attack on the Jews could not be cancelled, but the Jews would be allowed to fight back against their enemies. And so it was. And so it is today! The rise of anti-Semitism headed by the Amalekite Haman of this end of the age, Adolph Hitler, is but an outward tangible witness to the enemy within, the Amalek spirit of lack of reverential fear of the Lord, lack of trust in the God of Jacob, Who said, Gen. 28:15, *“And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land;*

*for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*" This enemy of doubt each Jew must fight. That is the battle. It is a most personal battle for each one, and on its conquest will depend the fulfilment of the great promises and privileges belonging to the natural people of God. The Lord brings about the circumstances that will achieve this result.

Some have wondered about the lack of reference in the account of Esther to the Name of the Lord. It has been noted in the Companion Bible, however, that the Name is secretly hidden in the book in no less than five places, each of which contains the Name in acrostic form, that is spelled out by the first letter of sequences of words in the Hebrew text. There is, indeed, a special pattern in the sequence, indicating that this is by no means accidental. The Lord is there, but secretly present, working with unseen hand in the affairs of His natural people.

Upon receiving the new decree of the king that the Jews might defend themselves against their enemy it was arranged for riders to go forth throughout the whole realm proclaiming that the Jews everywhere *"stand for their life"* (Esther 8:11) and make complete destruction of every vestige of enemy power and goods, that is, of all influenced by this spirit of Haman, or of the Amalekite against them. The thoroughness of the victory is a message both of stimulation and cheer to the Jews of our day. Seventy five thousand of the enemy fell that day. To make sure of full extermination a further day was granted at Esther's request. This may seem to have been rather vindictive on her part, but the fact that three hundred thousand more of the enemy were then slain shows her fears were well-grounded that the Amalek spirit may have survived the first battle. The conquest is most significant. Here lay the root of the downfall of Saul's reign and the whole kingdom of Israel, as predicted by Jesus in Matthew 24. The root of unbelief has to be eradicated from the hearts of all His people.

We have not mentioned yet what happened to Haman, and the story is not unfamiliar to Bible students, the end being that the very gallows he had prepared for the hated Mordecai were used for his own execution. Psalm 9:16 *"The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands."* Furthermore, his ten sons were also slain, thus eradicating further threat. This is an important aspect, indicating the finality of the battle. In the process Mordecai was made prime minister in Haman's place. By a wonderful turn around of events, before his death Haman was made to take the king's apparel that he thought he was going to wear and put it upon Mordecai, setting the royal crown upon his head, and bringing him in triumphal procession on the king's horse through the city, proclaiming before him: *"Thus shall be done to the man the king delighteth to honour."* (Esther 6:11) How beautifully significant! This is a theme worthy of your private meditation. So far as the Jew is concerned, there will be a complete reversal of his position in the world when he fulfils the Lord's requirements of him. No longer will he be the tail but the head. It all hangs upon this battle with the enemy within. This grand reversal will be when the battle with Amalek is decisive and he is shamed forever beneath the feet of the people of God.

In Esther 9:16, we read *"But the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand, but they laid not their hands on the prey. (i.e., the spoil they did not touch.)"* Nothing was to be preserved of Amalek in their lives, not even one little keepsake. All to do with that ancient enemy was to be forever detested and forbidden. Only deep true faith in God will make the present-day Jew victorious and clean vessels for the

Lord's use in the kingdom age before us. The enemy is not without but within, nevertheless the outer enemy, anti-Semitism, is permitted to bring home the true nature of the problem and to define the battle. What witness this will be to all mankind! The book of Esther is most relevant to this very day in which we have a part. Like the first Purim, this day will be memorialised forever in the new heart of His chosen people. Through the ages to come will men talk of this our day and the Lord's victory in a weak-willed and irresolute people.

In Esther 4:16, we read her proclamation before her ordeal, *"Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."* A period of denial of self and its interests and earnest prayer to the Lord, how important this was to the whole issue—the upwards-reaching of both arms towards the Lord. It was there, in communion with the Lord, that the battle was won. The result could not be more wonderful for the Jew. Esther 8:15-17 *"And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them."*

This, we note, was even before the battle was fought, for indeed, in fasting and prayer was the battle already won. In a collection of tablets from this period and subsequent days more than a hundred Jewish names occur in connection with important positions in the realm, including the position of governors of administrative districts. The ancient people of God, once endowed with the faith of the people of God thus become part of the divine arrangement of world government in association with those worthy ones of old whose faith was so attested. The material is there for the princes of this earth. Thus we find here depicted the further stages of more tangible kingdom blessings of all families of earth, through the Jew.

We are watching with deepest interest all that is happening to the Jew at this remarkable hour of their history of which the past speaks today in such graphic terms. If this is wonderful to us, and it is, what shall we now say should we go back to the beginning of this same lesson and recognise the corresponding message to the spiritual seed too. As the people of God we need, like the Jew, to stand and be counted. Nor would we cling thus trembling to the things of time in face of realisation of such hope sublime. The test upon the Jew is paralleled by similar tests of the Lord's spiritual people that will result in demonstrating their complete separation in heart from the things of this earth. Are we a people that the Lord delights to honour? Then do we with fervency of zeal and love endeavour to honour Him with our whole being.

In closing, how the sad story of Isaiah 5, the vineyard disaster, finds a wonderful counterpart and outcome in Isaiah 27:2-6 when the same song is sung, but this time the Husbandman rewarded for His great patience. *"In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me. He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."*

At the time of the end the wise shall understand

