

Messianic Series Volume Seven

לְכוּ־נָא וְנוֹכַחְהָ יְאֹמֵר יְהוָה Isa. 1:18

“Come now and let us reason together, saith Jehovah”

MESSIAH: HIS FINAL CALL TO ISRAEL

BY

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To

The memory of

FLORENCE LITA COOPER

Faithful and beloved wife of the author

And true friend of God's Chosen People Israel

is this volume dedicated.

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Preface

The present volume, *Messiah: His Final Call To Israel*, is the seventh and last book of my Messianic Series, which consists of the following volumes: *The God of Israel*, which sets forth the scriptural teaching of God's existence, His character, and His nature—especially the triune nature of the Godhead; *Messiah: His Nature and Person*, which presents the scriptural teaching that one of the persons of the Godhead would assume human form and come to earth to execute the plan of redemption; *Messiah: His Redemptive Career*, which foretells the two comings of the one Messiah and the interval separating these two events, during which the rejected Messiah, having been executed, is seated at the right hand of God the Father in glory; *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*, which sets forth the system of Biblical chronology and which points to the time of His first coming; *Messiah: His Historical Appearance*, which presents the scriptural evidence that all the predictions in the Old Testament regarding Messiah's first coming have been fulfilled to the letter by Jesus of Nazareth, and that all the predictions in the Old Testament regarding Messiah's Second Coming, as well as all the predictions in the New Testament regarding His Second Coming, await a literal fulfillment; *Messiah: His Glorious Appearance Imminent*, which discusses prophecies relating to the Second Coming of Messiah, and accompanying events: the Rapture of the Church, the Great Tribulation, and the Glorious Millennial Reign of Messiah; and *Messiah: His Final Call To Israel*, the present volume, which presents the scriptural teaching that Israel, upon learning the facts concerning the rejected Messiah, will repudiate the national sin and plead for Him to return—who will come to earth, lift the curse from all creation, and reign in righteousness, Israel becoming the channel of world blessing.

The last two volumes of the Series deal with prophecy, which falls into two divisions—fulfilled and unfulfilled. We are told that between one fourth and one third of the Scriptures deal with prophetic subjects. During World War II, some sincere brethren who knew little about prophecy began to study on prophetic subjects, without a proper understanding of the same. Thus some of them undertook to make out schedules of future events and to make out timetables for the Lord to follow—some even went so far as to set dates for the coming of the Lord. How can anyone set a date for the coming of the Lord since He Himself declares that no one knows the day nor the hour of His return? What is needed today is a sane, sound study of prophecy. The principle of which will insure a correct understanding of the Word is what is known as the Golden Rule of Interpretation: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise." Moreover, one must be guided by the principle thus stated: "A text apart from its context is a pretext." Every phrase must be analyzed and interpreted in the light of the facts of the context, the presumption being that every sentence element is to be taken literally unless there is clear evidence that it is to be understood figuratively.

At the present time the world situation is rapidly deteriorating. Most of the statesmen of the free world are very apprehensive of the present and the future. The political tension throughout the world is increasing by the hour. The situation, which is worse than what under normal conditions would be considered a trivial matter, could plunge all nations into a holocaust of bloodshed and destruction. A world conflagration at the present time might take place and cause great damage, but those who know the prophetic Word are certain that there is not to be a nuclear war that will end our civilization. Many people are telling us that at any moment our civilization may be blotted out, or practically so. But God is not going to allow such a

catastrophe now, for the Scriptures foretell a short period when the world will be lulled into a false feeling of safety and security. "But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child" (I Thess. 5:1-3). When men everywhere will be blinded by Satan's lies, then the Day of Wrath will burst upon the unsuspecting world in all its fury. Everyone should be well informed regarding the times in which we are living. Those who know God in Christ and the prophetic Word should be about their Father's business: "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). These are days of seriousness. Let us always bear in mind that God watches over His Word to perform it (Jer. 1:11,12).

In preparation of this volume, I have consulted standard works, encyclopedias, and scholarly commentaries in order to avoid all possible error, and yet what men do is more or less marred with imperfections.

To my departed wife I owe very much, because she was a source of spiritual understanding in practical matters, as well as in scriptural knowledge.

To Miss Aurora Fluker and Miss Esther Smith, secretaries, I owe much, because they both relieved me of many duties in different ways in the preparation of this book.

May the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob use the message of this volume to the blessing of many of the Lord's brethren according to the flesh.

"But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: 17 that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Tim. 3:14-17).

David L. Cooper.

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CHAPTER I

THE ROMANCE OF JEWISH HISTORY

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament showeth his handiwork (Ps. 19:1).

But "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. 14:1). All who by faith see the Eternal God standing behind the physical, material universe, as David in Psalm 19 did, recognize the truth expressed in the following quotation:

10 Wherefore David blessed Jehovah before all the assembly; and David said, Blessed be thou, O Jehovah, the God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. 11 Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Jehovah, and thou art exalted as head above all. 12 Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou rulest over all; and in thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all (I Chron. 29:10-12).

In keeping with the truth of this quotation is that which the Apostle Paul uttered at Mars Hill in Athens, Greece, when he stood before the philosophers and statesmen of the supreme court.

24 The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: 28 for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring (Acts 17:24-28).

According to this inspired utterance, God "made of one every nation of men ... having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation ..." Figuratively speaking, the Lord has a blueprint of all the nations of earth, on which is indicated the rise, the expansion, and the decline or the continuance of each racial and national group. During the centuries of time, the Lord is directing the course of human history, as indicated on the blueprint, because

19 God is not a man, that he should lie,
Neither the son of man, that he should repent:
Hath he said, and will he not do it?
Or hath he spoken, and will he not make it good? (Num. 23:19).

When the Lord created man, He had one object in view, namely, "that they should seek God ... for in him we live, and move and have our being ... for we are also his offspring." Since man is the offspring of God, naturally God loves every person individually and wants to do all in His power for the blessing and welfare of each. He would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth (I Tim. 2:4). God is longsuffering toward all, "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9). He showed His profound interest in every individual by sending "his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Man is a free moral agent, having the power of choice, which he may exercise for his own good or to his detriment. The Lord never forces or coerces anyone's will. In His great solicitude for His creatures, He uses all spiritual and moral forces possible to influence them, never crossing the threshold of man's personality.

Wise and impartial parents are equally interested in all their children and plan to bring the greatest blessing to each. Some children however, not appreciating their relation to the parents, assume attitudes and pursue courses which make it impossible for the parents to do for them what they would like to do. Most frequently it is thus with men in relation to God. This fact is brought out in Romans 1:18-32. Notwithstanding man's rebellion and sinfulness God is endeavoring to bring the greatest blessing to the largest number in the shortest length of time.

God in His wisdom and love has chosen to bless men in and through others. He declares that He will bless all nations through Abraham and his seed (Gen. 12:1-3). God's great concern and love for all mankind gave birth to the unique miraculous elements which are seen in Israel throughout the centuries, and on account of which one can speak of "the Romance of Jewish History." The Lord had this plan in mind when He dispersed the nations and separated the children of men.

8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,
 When he separated the children of men,
 He set the bounds of the peoples
 According to the number of the children of Israel (Deut. 32:8).

In giving to each group its inheritance, the Lord made allotments in accordance with the number of the children of Israel. As this Scripture indicates, each nation, in the plan of God, is related to Israel. God selected Abraham and his seed—his literal seed and Messiah the seed par excellence—to be the channel of world blessing. In view of all the facts presented thus far, it is clear that God loves all men equally; but He chose the Hebrew race to be the channel through which that love might flow out to all people. Moreover, the Lord's giving special advantages and opportunities to Israel is not to be interpreted as favoritism but as a necessary step in equipping them for their special mission in the world.

Not realizing that a man cannot receive anything except it be given him of God (John 3:27), and that the special gifts of the Jewish people were conferred upon them by the Almighty to equip them for their world mission, some people look with jealousy and envy at the Hebrew race—because of their great contribution to the civilization of the world. It is a well-known fact that the Jews stand foremost in the ranks of all the arts, the sciences, and the professions, and that their contribution to our civilization is out of all proportion to their number—in comparison with that of other nations. When all the facts are marshaled and understood, there is no logical reason for racial prejudice and jealousy. Let all—both Jew and Gentile—humbly accept the gifts and the calling of God, as they pertain to each one, and look upon each other with mutual respect and good will.

I. MOUNTAIN PEAKS OF JEWISH HISTORY

For all who have eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to comprehend, sense to perceive the beautiful and the sublime, and spiritual insight to recognize the living God as He stands in His majesty behind His handiwork, a journey through Switzerland, for instance, is an experience never to be forgotten. But for all who lack these perceptive powers, such a journey would be merely a commonplace thing of life. The country which God gave to Israel, the Holy Land, is, as is well known, a country of mountains and valleys, streams and deserts. Let us think of the history of Israel in terms of the

topography of the land. Certain periods of Jewish history were indeed rich with spiritual blessings and may be compared with well-watered green valleys—as, for instance, the period of the Exodus. Some of the mountaintop experiences of Israel's history were the wars of conquest under the generalship of Joshua, who led the hosts of Israel from victory to victory, and the glorious reigns of David and Solomon. In our analogy the period of the Judges would be symbolized by the dry desert sections of the country.

Let us now make a journey through the country of Israel's history, stopping only to glance at the mountain peaks. There are several such peaks which, figuratively speaking, penetrate the blue, and from which the glory of the Eternal God flashes forth in miraculous power and works.

A. *The Call of Abraham*

We are told that Diogenes went through the streets of ancient Athens with a lamp burning at noonday. When asked why he was acting thus, he explained that he was looking for an honest man. God told Jeremiah: "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that doeth justly, that seeketh truth; and I will pardon her" (Jer. 5:1). Jeremiah's search was in vain—a lamentable situation!

God is always looking for a man whom He can trust, and whom He can use. To King Asa He declares: "For the eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly; for from henceforth thou shalt have wars" (II Chron. 16:9). Note the statement particularly: God is looking for men whose hearts are perfect toward Him. The average person would look for a man with a fine physique, an excellent personality, a ready and polished speech, and the ability to win and influence people. It is not so with God. He looks upon the heart. When Eliab, the oldest son of Jesse, stood before Samuel the Prophet, he said, "Surely Jehovah's anointed is before him. 7 But Jehovah said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for *Jehovah seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16:6,7).

In the days of Abram God was looking for a man—a real man whose heart was perfect toward Him. As He searched throughout all nations, He found one man whose heart was right, and whom He could trust—Abram.

12 Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: 2 and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: 3 and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Gen.12:1-3).

The call of God to one is usually a call to separation and service. Sometimes His call is to a literal separation, as in the case of Abram: "Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee." Sometimes the call of God is to spiritual separation, the breaking of fellowship with evil companions and unregenerated and worldly-minded kindred. Regardless of the type of separation, such a call is designed for the individual's good, though it often means heart-rending experiences.

The statement, "and I will make of thee a great nation," involves a biological miracle of creation, as one will presently see, since Abram was past the age of parenthood.

The promise blended with the command, "and I will bless thee ... and be thou a blessing," is characteristic of God's dealings with His special servants. God blesses His people in order that they may pass on to others the blessings conferred upon them, both of a material and of a spiritual nature, whenever it will advance the divine purpose or aid and assist the needy.

God has always honored His promise "and I will bless them that bless thee"—as many can testify personally, who have favored, whenever possible, the Hebrew people.

The solemn warning, "and him that curseth thee will I curse," God has likewise carried out. A glance at the punishment—and oftentimes the doom—of the nations that persecuted Israel bears incontrovertible evidence that God will, at the right time, punish all anti-Semitism and persecution of the Jews. Look at ancient Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Rome, Spain—and, in modern times, Adolph Hitler's Third Reich. As a matter of fact, history bristles with examples of pogroms and persecutions launched against the Jews throughout the Christian centuries by certain rulers and by some modern nations. God declares that He watches over His Word to perform it—to fulfill every promise and to carry out every threat (Jer. 1:11,12).

The blessings connected with Abram's call reach a climax in the statements, "and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3) and "in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18). What is meant by Abram's seed? The Apostle Paul gives us some information on this point: "Now to Abraham¹ were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). From this verse it is clear that the seed of Abraham is the Messiah of Israel, par excellence. The word *seed* in the original is in the singular number and signifies one. But this word is likewise used as a collective noun. In this sense it signifies many. After Abraham rescued Lot from his captors (Genesis, chapter 14), the Lord appeared to Abraham "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:5,6). In the light of this usage, it is also clear that Abraham's seed includes his literal progeny. Thus God plans to bless all families of the earth in and through the Hebrew Messiah and the faithful remnant of Abraham's literal seed

This cursory view of the call of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) scintillates with the presence and glory of the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Thus from this first mountain peak of Jewish history there flash forth rays of divine glory.

B. The Birth of Isaac

In Genesis, chapter 18, is found an account of Jehovah's appearing to Abraham. In explaining this unusual visit, the sacred writer states that Abraham lifted up his eyes "and lo, three men stood over against him ..." Abraham received these strangers in regular oriental style. Who were these men? By reading the entire account (Genesis, chapters 18 and 19), we learn that one of these visitors was one of the persons of the Holy Trinity, who in the text is called Jehovah. The other two are called angels. In view of these facts, it is certain that Jehovah and the angels assumed the form of men in order to communicate with Abraham.

¹Abraham—the name given to Abram when God renewed His promise to give him numerous posterity (Gen. 17:1-5).

9 And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. 10 And he said, I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him. 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, *and* well stricken in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 12 And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? 13 And Jehovah said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, who am old? 14 Is anything too hard for Jehovah? At the set time I will return unto thee, when the season cometh round, and Sarah shall have a son. 15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh (Gen.18:9-15).

Since Abraham and Sarah were stricken in years and both were past the age of parenthood, Sarah laughed at the thought—in unbelief. When, however, she was confronted with the seriousness of her doubts, she denied having laughed—to her discredit. Many good people today, when they, like Sarah, are faced with a grave situation, deal carelessly with the truth. Few people will stand up and be counted. In reply, Jehovah said, "Is anything too hard for Jehovah? At the set time I will return unto thee, when the season cometh round, and Sarah shall have a son."

God miraculously fulfilled His promise to Abraham and Sarah, as seen in the following quotation :

21 And Jehovah visited Sarah as he had said, and Jehovah did unto Sarah as he had spoken. 2 And Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. 3 And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. 4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5 And Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. 6 And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh; every one that heareth will laugh with me. 7 And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should give children suck? for I have borne him a son in his old age (Gen. 21:1-7).

According to the Genesis account, Isaac's birth was the result of a miracle. Isaiah the Prophet confirms this position. "But now thus saith Jehovah 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" (Isa. 43:1). According to this verse, God performed a biological miracle upon the bodies of Abraham and Sarah, which made possible the birth of Isaac. His birth was as much the result of a miracle as creation itself. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). In the beginning there was no material universe. Then God put forth the act which is spoken of as *creation*. The result of this act was the coming into existence of the physical, material universe. In Isaiah 43:1-7 the Prophet discusses the faithful remnant of Israel of the end time, and speaks of "everyone that is called by my name, and whom I have created for my glory, whom I have formed, yea, whom I have made." Each one of the remnant will be used in some special manner to glorify and honor God. Concerning these same ones, the Prophet in verse 21 speaks of them as "the people which I formed for myself, that they might set forth my praise."

In Romans, chapter 4, Paul discusses the case of Abraham and the birth of Isaac. When the bodies of Abraham and Sarah were as good as dead so far as procreation is concerned, Abraham believed God's promise that he should have a son. He, therefore, staggered not in unbelief, but was assured by his unswerving faith that what God had promised He was able to fulfill.

16 For this cause *it is* of faith, that *it may be* according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all 17 (as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were. 18 Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. 18 And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb; 20 yet, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, 21

and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; 24 but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification. (Rom. 4:16-25).

When God performed the biological miracle of creation upon the bodies of Abraham and Sarah, He, so to speak, injected new powers, capabilities, and special talents into the bloodstream of Abraham's descendants—a special blessing enjoyed by no other race. This fact accounts for the marvelous contribution which the Jewish people have made to civilization. Because of this general principle, God will punish the people of Israel double for all their sins (Isa. 40:1,2).

C. Israel's Deliverance from Egyptian Bondage

By the providence of God, Jacob and his family went down into Egypt during a severe famine in the land of Canaan. Before Jacob and his sons went, the Lord in a most mysterious and unthinkable manner sent Joseph ahead to be divinely used in working out the problem of national survival and increase. While Joseph was ruler of Egypt, the Hebrews enjoyed great favors from the crown. In the process of time there arose a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph—who did not recognize the blessings that Joseph had conferred upon the Egyptian people. In Pharaoh's ingratitude he became anti-Semitic. He changed the political status of the Hebrews into abject slavery and became more unreasonable as the days passed. The lot of the Hebrews became unbearable. Finally, they cried out to God for deliverance. The Lord used the inhuman treatment of the Hebrews by the Egyptians in weaning them from the fleshpots of Egypt, and in creating in them a desire to return to their own country, the land of Canaan. The all-wise and omnipotent God uses every situation—regardless of all factors—and makes it contribute to the furthering of His cause among men.

It has been well said that God has the man of His choice for every emergency. As has already been seen, the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth, searching for those whose hearts are perfect toward Him. In the present case the man whom God chose was none other than Moses, who became His spokesman and Israel's deliverer from serfdom. Spiritually speaking, he was of noble birth, inheriting those characteristics and talents that equipped him for his life's work.

By the overruling providence of God, as seen in Exodus, chapters 1 and 2, the baby Moses was taken out of the wretched, miserable existence of an Egyptian Hebrew hovel and, to the amazement of all, was brought into the glamorous cultural life of the imperial palace, having been adopted by Pharaoh's daughter as her son. By this one act, the wealth and riches of Egypt, figuratively speaking, were laid at the feet of this Hebrew infant. Not only so, but the treasures of knowledge, education, and culture were placed at his disposal: "And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and works" (Acts 7:22). He lived in the imperial palace until he was forty years of age. During this time, he was busily engaged in his studies, mastering the arts and the sciences of Egypt. Thus we may think of this time as a period of his undergraduate studies. From all the evidence, it is clear that he was an honor student, "mighty in words and works."

Suddenly Moses' schooling in the imperial palace came to an abrupt end. But such is life. He had to flee from Egypt. For the details concerning his hasty departure, see Exodus 2:11-15 and Acts, chapter 7. Moses fled from Egypt to Midian and there married the daughter of Jethro, the priest of Midian, and became a shepherd, caring for his father-in-law's flock. Forty long years Moses herded sheep. Probably his duties as a shepherd took him throughout the length and breadth of the Sinaitic Peninsula. In this way he became familiar with the country in which he accomplished his real lifework. There

is an infinitely vast difference between the schooling and the environment of the royal palace of Egypt and that of life in the desert, caring for sheep. In the former environment Moses took his undergraduate studies and prepared himself for his lifework. He needed the practical experience in dealing with animals and men and in acquiring a thorough knowledge of the country through which he was to lead the Chosen People out of Egyptian slavery into the liberty of their own homeland. Without this knowledge Moses could never have accomplished the work which God had for him to perform.

At the proper time the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush and called him to deliver His people from their serfdom in Egypt (Exodus, chapter 3) and invested him with supernatural power, thus enabling him to accomplish his divine mission. The account of the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt and their passage through the waters of the Red Sea is recorded in Exodus, chapters 1 through 15. As the Hebrews were departing from Egypt, the Egyptian armies were in hot pursuit. Upon the Hebrews arrival at the Red Sea, the waters were separated, thus forming a path through the Sea so that they could leave Egypt. The Egyptian army, attempting to pursue the Hebrews through the Sea, was completely destroyed. The Hebrews, standing safely on the opposite shore of the Sea, sang the song of deliverance:

- 1 Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto Jehovah, and spake, saying, I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously: The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.
- 2 Jehovah is my strength and song, And he is become my salvation: This is my God, and I will praise him; My father's God, and I will exalt him.
- 3 Jehovah is a man of war: Jehovah is his name.
- 4 Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea; And his chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea.
- 5 The deeps cover them: They went down into the depths like a stone.
- 6 Thy right hand, O Jehovah, is glorious in power, Thy right hand, O Jehovah, dasheth in pieces the enemy.
- 7 And in the greatness of thine excellency thou overthrowest them that rise up against thee: Thou sendest forth thy wrath, it consumeth them as stubble.
- 8 And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were piled up, The floods stood upright as a heap; The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea.
- 9 The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; My desire shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.
- 10 Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: They sank as lead in the mighty waters.
- 11 Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?
- 12 Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, The earth swallowed them.
- 13 Thou in thy lovingkindness hast led the people that thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation.
- 14 The peoples have heard, they tremble: Pangs have taken hold on the inhabitants of Philistia.
- 15 Then were the chiefs of Edom dismayed; The mighty men of Moab, trembling taketh hold upon them: All the inhabitants of Canaan are melted away.
- 16 Terror and dread falleth upon them; By the greatness of thine arm they are as still as a stone; Till thy people pass over, O Jehovah, Till the people pass over that thou hast purchased.
- 17 Thou wilt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, The place, O Jehovah, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, The sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.
- 18 Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever. (Ex. 15:1-18).

Although God had performed one miracle after another in connection with the Exodus, many of the Hebrews soon forgot God's mighty acts of deliverance. For an inspired commentary on this phase of the situation, study carefully Psalms 78 and 106.

D. The Giving of the Law

By the arduous, painstaking, scientific labors of faithful archaeologists, some of the literary remains of ancient nations have been recovered from their graves and have been placed at the disposal of students in their quest for exact knowledge of the civilizations of the past. Among these documents are some legal codes. One of the most famous of these is the code of Hammurabi. Scholars have compared Hammurabi's code with the Mosaic legislation and have called attention to some striking similarities between certain laws of the two codes. Abraham and Hammurabi were contemporaries, as is seen in Genesis, chapter 14, for conservative scholars are generally agreed that Amraphel of Genesis 14:1 is Hammurabi of the monuments. Moses, the great law-giver of Israel, lived approximately four hundred years after Abraham and Hammurabi. The exact verbal agreements between certain laws of these two codes have led some scholars to say that Moses borrowed from Hammurabi. They are positive that there was borrowing done. According to them, Hammurabi did not borrow from Moses because he lived four hundred years before Moses' day. They are, therefore, sure that Moses borrowed from Hammurabi.

Candor demands that one acknowledge the verbal agreement between these codes. Is there not another logical, more reasonable explanation than the one suggested above? The verbal agreements point positively to the position that there was some borrowing done; but by whom? and how? According to Genesis 26:5, God had revealed a legal code to someone, for Abraham lived under it: "because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Originally, Abraham lived in Babylonia. God called him out of that heathen environment and brought him into the kingdom of Melchizedek, whose capital was Salem, the ancient name of Jerusalem. Melchizedek was king and "priest of God Most High." Since he was sovereign of the Kingdom of God on earth, as it existed at that time, the laws and statutes enforced were probably the laws mentioned in Genesis 26:5.

It is reasonable to suppose that Hammurabi was acquainted with this primitive revelation and saw the value of certain laws. These he copied and incorporated into his code.

When God called Moses to give a code to Israel, the Spirit of God led him to copy certain laws of this primitive revelation and to incorporate them into his code. Thus by hypothesis one can see how Hammurabi and Moses could have copied from God's primitive revelation. Moses, in his quoting, was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; Hammurabi, in his quoting, was guided by human wisdom.

From the crossing of the Red Sea, Israel's trek through the wilderness brought the people to Mount Sinai, which trembled before the omnipotence of the Almighty, which glowed with the glory of the Holy One of Israel, and which resounded and echoed with the living words of the God of Israel—the God of love, the God of redemption, and the God of life.

2 And he said,
 Jehovah came from Sinai,
 And rose from Seir unto them;
 He shined forth from mount Paran,
 And he came from the ten thousands of holy ones:
 At his right hand was a fiery law for them (Deut. 33:2).

The children of Israel, having sanctified themselves according to the instruction which Moses had given them (Ex. 19:7-15), assembled in the plain at the foot of Mount Sinai to hear God speak to man.

16 And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; and all the people that were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. 18 And mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. 19 And when the voice of the trumpet waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. 20 And Jehovah came down upon mount Sinai, to the top of the mount: and Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. 21 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto Jehovah to gaze, and many of them perish. 22 And let the priests also, that come near to Jehovah, sanctify themselves, lest Jehovah break forth upon them. 23 And Moses said unto Jehovah, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou didst charge us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. 24 And Jehovah said unto him, Go, get thee down; and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto Jehovah, lest he break forth upon them. 25 So Moses went down unto the people, and told them.

20 And God spake all these words, saying,

2 I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them, for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, 6 and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

12 Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill.

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 Thou shalt not steal.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

18 And all the people perceived the thunders, and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off. 19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die. 20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before you, that ye sin not. 21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. (Ex. 19:16-20:21).

The Five Books of Moses—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—cover little more than 2,500 years of human history. The Book of Genesis recounts the creation of the universe, the catastrophe which wrecked the earth, and the work of reconstruction² which made the earth habitable for man whom God created for His glory (Genesis, chapters 1 and 2). Genesis has well been called "the book of beginnings": the beginnings of the material universe; the

² When God created the earth, it was perfect. We read in Genesis, chapter 1, verse 2, "And the earth was a desolation and a waste." If it was perfect when created, and if subsequently to its creation it was in a state of desolation and waste, as Genesis 1:2 asserts, evidently it was wrecked. In Isaiah 45:18 we read that God created the earth "not a waste." This passage, therefore, is positive proof that the world was wrecked.

beginnings of life on earth, the highest of which is man; the beginnings of Satan's nefarious activities; the beginnings of sin and sickness; the beginnings of the scheme of redemption; and the beginnings of Hebrew history and God's plan for the Jewish people.

The Book of Exodus takes up the story where Genesis leaves off. The word *exodus* means a going forth. In this connection it means the going forth of the Hebrew people from Egypt. Since God sent Moses to deliver the Hebrew people from Egyptian bondage, Exodus has been appropriately called "The Book of Redemption." The principal events of the Book of Exodus eddy around the giving of the law at Sinai and the erection of the tabernacle. The third Book of Moses, Leviticus, has been called "The Priestly Manual," because in it instructions are given regarding the sacrifices and the worship to be conducted at the tabernacle. A portion of it has been called "The Book of Holiness." In this section special emphasis is laid upon the clean lives of the worshipers.

Numbers, the fourth Book of Moses, recounts Israel's trek through the wilderness for forty years. Since this Book recounts many of Israel's failures, it has been called "The Book of Backslidings." In order to appreciate the Book of Numbers, one should very carefully study Psalms 78 and 106.

Deuteronomy, as the name signifies, the fifth Book of Moses, is a repetition of the law plus some new revelations. The law was given to the generation that came out of Egypt. During the forty years of wilderness wanderings, there arose a new generation. Especially for the benefit of this new generation was the law repeated by Moses just before his death.

Here and there throughout the Five Books of Moses one finds certain laws and legal requirements, given as the occasion demands. The same principle is true concerning the sacrificial system of offerings. From Genesis, chapter 3, there flows throughout the Five Books of Moses a stream of sacrificial blood. What is the significance of this blood in the light of Jeremiah 7:21-26?

21 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Add your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat ye flesh. 22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: 23 but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you. 24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. 25 Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: 26 yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff: they did worse than their fathers.

Jeremiah declares that God did not speak to Israel concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices when He brought their fathers out of Egypt. An examination of the law of Moses shows that He did. Is there a contradiction between Jeremiah's hyperbolic statement and the sober statements of Moses? There is not. For after stating that God had not spoken to them concerning burnt-offerings, Jeremiah declares that God had commanded them to hearken to His voice. These facts show that Jeremiah means that obedience is better than sacrifice: "And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah?" (I Sam. 15:22), "For I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings" (Hos. 6:6). The full significance of these statements relative to offerings is clearly seen in the following quotation:

5 Many, O Jehovah my God, are the wonderful works which thou hast done,
 And thy thoughts which are to us-ward:
 They cannot be set in order unto thee;
 If I would declare and speak of them,
 They are more than can be numbered.

- 6 Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in;
 Mine ears hast thou opened:
 Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.
- 7 Then said I, Lo, I am come;
 In the roll of the book it is written of me:
- 8 I delight to do thy will, O my God;
 Yea, thy law is within my heart (Ps. 40:5-8).

In the light of the facts just presented, it is clear that the system of animal sacrifices commanded by Moses could not cleanse from sin. They had a symbolic and typical meaning. Scriptural proof of this position is found in Isaiah 53:10: "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand." This verse read in the light of its context shows that this servant of Jehovah, the Messiah of Israel, pours out His blood to make atonement for sin. In harmony with this scriptural statement is the language of the poet:

"Not all the blood of beasts
 On Jewish altars slain,
 Could give the guilty conscience peace,
 Or wash away the stain.

"But Christ, the heav'nly Lamb,
 Takes all our sins away,
 A sacrifice of nobler name
 And richer blood than they.

"My faith would lay her hand
 On that dear head of thine,
 While like a penitent I stand,
 And there confess my sin."

At Sinai God spoke audibly to Israel, giving them the ten words, the Ten Commandments, which are found in Exodus, chapter 20, and in Deuteronomy, chapter 5. These commands are basic in the government of God and in the governments of men. They fall into two categories: man in relation to God and man in relation to his fellow-man. On one occasion a lawyer asked Jesus what was the great commandment. He replied saying,

37 And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 40 On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets (Matt. 22:37-40).

According to this statement, every utterance of Moses and the Prophets hangs upon these two laws. The one, therefore, who loves God, as here stated, and who loves his neighbor as himself has fulfilled everything that Moses and the Prophets commanded. In other words, there is not a single utterance of Moses or of any of the prophets that can be fulfilled except by genuine love. Every statement of Moses and the Prophets is seen, when analyzed, to be an expression in some way of genuine love.

Since the essence of the revelation of Moses is the love of the individual for God and for his fellow-man, the outward form of expressions or symbols may vanish or be abolished, but the reality remains. In the light of these basic principles, one can readily understand how the Lord allowed the elaborate ceremonial worship and temple services to disappear from Israel. Since it was by divine providence that the beautiful ritualistic services of Israel were abolished, one can understand the following statement by the Apostle Paul:

7 But if the ministration of death, written, *and* engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face; which *glory* was passing away: 8 how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be with glory? 9 For if the ministration of condemnation hath glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. 10 For verily that which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth. 11 For if that which passeth away was with glory, much more that which remaineth is in glory.

12 Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness of speech, 13 and *are* not as Moses, *who* put a veil upon his face, that the children of Israel should not look stedfastly on the end of that which was passing away: 14 but their minds were hardened: for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remaineth, it not being revealed *to them* that it is done away in Christ. 15 But unto this day whensoever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart. 16 But whensoever it shall turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit (II Cor. 3:7-18).

E. Israel's Settlement in Canaan

The next mountain peak of Israel's history to be inspected is the entrance of the people into Canaan. Jacob and his family went down into Egypt seventy strong and developed into a nation of approximately three million—according to the estimate of some Bible students. One could think of the day of Israel's departure from Egypt as the birthday of the nation. Israel's forty-year trek through the wilderness was largely a sad story of backsliding and of strokes of judgment. There were, however, some bright spots here and there which broke the monotony of the humdrum of their carnal living.

As has been seen, Moses was a very highly educated man, taught in all the arts and sciences of Egypt. His forty years of caring for sheep, and his practical experience gained thereby, prepared him for the strenuous duties of leading his people through the wilderness. From the record it is clear that Moses was a born and trained executive and an administrator, who under God could and did cope with and solve the many difficulties which were constantly arising.

As a good and faithful administrator who had the welfare of the people of God at heart, Moses, figuratively speaking, set his house in order. He did so—at the command of God—selecting and appointing Joshua, a military genius, as his successor (Deuteronomy, chapter 31). No good and faithful servant of God who has the welfare of the people at heart ever thinks of his own prestige and power, but is engrossed with the thought of being a blessing to others and of advancing the cause of God.

The people constantly murmured against Moses. On one occasion they wanted to appoint a captain to lead them back to the "fleshpots of Egypt" (Num. 14:4). Concerning the effects of their murmurings on Moses' spirit, the inspired psalmist declares:

32 They angered him also at the waters of Meribah,

So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes;

33 Because they were rebellious against his spirit,

And he spake unadvisedly with his lips (Ps. 106:32,33).

On this occasion God instructed Moses to speak to the rock that it should send forth water for the people. They angered Moses by their grumblings and actions until he struck the rock and shouted:

10 ... Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of this rock? 11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and smote the rock with his rod twice: and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their cattle. 12 And Jehovah said unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them. 13 These are the waters of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with Jehovah, and he was sanctified in them (Num. 20:10b-13).

On this occasion Moses, concerning whom God said, "See, I have made thee as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet," became angry and misrepresented God, speaking unadvisedly with his lips—the only recorded mistake of this peerless servant of God. But this sin deprived him of entering the land of promise. "Every transgression and disobedience receives a just recompense of reward ..." (Heb. 2:2).

Thus without fanfare and human glamour Moses, one of the greatest servants of God, quietly but gloriously passed into the presence of His Maker.

BURIAL OF MOSES

By Cecil Frances Alexander

By Nebo's lonely mountain,
 On this side Jordan's wave,
 In a vale of the land of Moab,
 There lies a lonely grave.
 But no man dug that sepulchre,
 And no man saw it e'er;
 For the angels of God upturned the sod,
 And laid the dead man there.

That was the grandest funeral
 That ever passed on earth;
 But no man heard the trampling,
 Or saw the train go forth.
 Noiselessly as the daylight
 Comes, when the night is done,
 Or the crimson streak on ocean's cheek
 Fades in the setting sun;

Noiselessly as the spring-time
 Her crest of verdure waves,
 And all the trees on all the hills
 Open their thousand leaves;
 So without sound of music,
 Or voice of them that wept,
 Silently down from the mountain's crown
 That grand procession swept.

Perchance some bald old eagle
 On gray Beth-peor's height,
 Out of his rocky eyrie,
 Looked on the wondrous sight;
 Perchance some lion, stalking,
 Still shuns the hallowed spot;
 For beast and bird have seen and heard
 That which man knoweth not.

But when the warrior dieth,
 His comrades in the war,
 With arms reversed and muffled drums
 Follow the funeral car;
 They show the banners taken,
 They tell his battles won,
 And after him lead his matchless steed,
 While peals the minute gun.

And the noblest of the land
 They lay the sage to rest,
 And give the bard an honored place,
 With costly marble drest,
 In the great minister's transept height,
 Where lights like glory fall,
 While the sweet choir sings, and the organ rings
 Along the emblazoned wall.

This was the bravest warrior
 That ever buckled sword;
 This the most gifted poet
 That ever breathed a word;
 And never earth's philosopher
 Traced with his golden pen,
 On the deathless page, words half so sage,
 As he wrote down for men.

And had he not high honor?
 The hill-side for his pall,
 To lie in state while angels wait,
 With stars for tapers tall;
 The dark rock-pines like tossing plumes
 Over his bier to wave,
 And God's own hand in that lonely land
 To lay him in the grave:

In that deep grave without a name,
 Whence his uncoffined clay
 Shall break again—most wondrous thought!
 Before the judgment day;
 And stand, with glory wrapt around,
 On the hills he never trod,
 And speak of the strife that won our life
 Through Christ the Incarnate God.

O lonely tomb in Moab's land!
 O dark Beth-peor's hill!
 Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
 And teach them to be still:
 God hath his mysteries of grace,
 Ways that we cannot tell,
 He hides them deep, like the secret sleep
 Of him he loved so well.

Upon the death of Moses, Joshua, the chosen of God and of Moses, stepped into his predecessor's position, taking command. A new day was dawning. Israel, having received the law through the ministration of Moses, no longer needed the special services of the lawgiver. The time had come to enter the land of promise because the seven nations of Canaan had filled their cup of iniquity to overflowing. "And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full" (Gen. 15:16). What the people of Israel needed was a military genius to lead their armies against inveterate and unscrupulous enemies who lived in moral filth and the abominable pollution of idolatry, and who were strongly entrenched in the land.

As a wise, prudent, military strategist, Joshua struck with sledge-hammer blows Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan. In this first military campaign Joshua conquered all the territory east of the Jordan River. By this conquest he made his rear secure from attacks.

At this time the hosts of Israel were encamped in the Plain of Moab opposite Jericho, the key city guarding the entrance to the land from the southeast.

At the proper time the command was issued to the nation to pass over Jordan into the land of promise. Herewith is the historical account of the inspired chronicler:

3 And Joshua rose up early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel; and they lodged there before they passed over 2 And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the midst of the camp; 3 and they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of Jehovah your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. 4 Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore. 5 And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow Jehovah will do wonders among you. 6 And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

7 And Jehovah said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. 8 And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, ye shall stand still in the Jordan. 9 And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of Jehovah your God. 10 And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanite,

and the Hittite, and the Hivite, and the Perizzite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite, and the Jebusite. 11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into the Jordan. 12 Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, for every tribe a man. 13 And it shall come to pass, when the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of Jehovah, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, even the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand in one heap.

14 And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over the Jordan, the priests that bare the ark of the covenant being before the people; 15 and when they that bare the ark were come unto the Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (for the Jordan overfloweth all its banks all the time of harvest,) 16 that the waters which came down from above stood, and rose up in one heap, a great way off, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those that went down toward the sea of the Arabah, even the Salt Sea, were wholly cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. 17 And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel passed over on dry ground, until all the nation were passed clean over the Jordan. (Joshua, chapter 3).

The inspired author (Ps. 114:1-8) speaks most beautifully, and yet accurately, of Israel's passing through the Red Sea and of crossing the Jordan River into Canaan:

114 When Israel went forth out of Egypt,
 The house of Jacob from a people of strange language;
 2 Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion.
 3 The sea saw it, and fled; The Jordan was driven back.
 4 The mountains skipped like rams, The little hills like lambs.
 5 What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleest?
 Thou Jordan, that thou turnest back?
 6 Ye mountains, that ye skip like rams; Ye little hills, like lambs?
 7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,
 At the presence of the God of Jacob,
 8 Who turned the rock into a pool of water,
 The flint into a fountain of waters.

When the Hebrews came out of Egypt, "Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion." After this statement the Psalmist states, "The sea saw it, and fled ..." Obviously, this statement refers to the parting of the waters of the Red Sea for Israel to pass through. Then the Psalmist says, "The Jordan was driven back"—a reference to the parting of the waters of the Jordan for Israel to pass into Canaan. The sea parts its waters to let the Hebrews out of Egypt; the Jordan opens its waters to let them into Canaan. When the Jordan parts its waters, the mountains skip like rams; the little hills, like lambs. What is the significance of this statement? Obviously, the land in the vicinity is trembling, which causes the mountains and hills to shake. Undoubtedly, there was an earthquake.

In verses 5 and 6 the Psalmist asks four questions—not to obtain information, but to interpret the supernatural phenomena to others which he is observing in the vision. He sees the Red Sea parting asunder, the Jordan River turning backward, and the mountains and hills in the vicinity of Jericho being rocked. He compares their movement to the skipping of rams and lambs. According to the scientists, there is an adequate cause for every effect. Recognizing the correctness of this principle, the Psalmist wishes to inform his readers who or what force is causing these unusual phenomena. This extraordinary shaking and trembling of the earth doubtless suggests to the writer prophecies which foretell that God will shake, not only the literal earth, but the heavens also. An example of such prophecies is Isaiah 24:18-20:

18 And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows on high are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble. 19 The earth is utterly broken, the earth is rent asunder, the earth is shaken violently. 20 The earth shall stagger like a drunken man, and shall sway to and fro like a hammock; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall, and not rise again.

Another example of this type of prophecy is Haggai 2:6,7:

6 For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; 7 and I will shake all nations; and the precious things of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith Jehovah of hosts.

The Psalmist's seeing the supernatural rocking of the earth creates in him a desire to see the final rocking of the earth and the establishment of the reign of righteousness among men. He, therefore, prays, "Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, At the presence of the God of Jacob" (Ps. 114:7). From this petition, it is clear that the Lord of the whole earth is the one who will shake both the heavens and the earth at the conclusion of the Tribulation. In the light of these facts, the Psalmist wishes us to know that it is the God of the earth who parted the Red Sea, turned back the waters of the Jordan River, and made the mountains and hills to skip like rams and lambs at the time of Israel's entrance into the promised land.

The God of the whole earth, who miraculously delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage, and who protected the people and provided for their needs throughout the wilderness wanderings, manifested His power in bringing Israel into Canaan.

After crossing the Jordan, the Israelites encamped in the plain of Jericho. Joshua, a real strategist, inspected the approaches to Jericho in order that he might know how to attack it. As he was reconnoitering about the city, suddenly there appeared before him "a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand ..." (Josh. 5:13). In a fearless manner Joshua approached the stranger, saying, "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" His reply was, "Nay; but *as* prince of the hosts of Jehovah am I now come." Joshua, falling on his face and worshiping, said to him, "What saith my lord unto his servant?" Then the stranger instructed Joshua, saying, "Put off thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy."

The hosts of Jehovah are the celestial beings consisting of cherubim, seraphim, and all ranks and orders of angels. The stranger who appeared to Joshua on this occasion is the prince, the generalissimo of God's celestial armies. Those constituting the hosts of the Lord are "ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation" (Heb. 1:14). For further information on this point, examine carefully II Kings, chapter 6.

In this connection the reader should note that there is an army of evil spirits which opposes the armies of the Lord. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth" (Isa. 24:21). At the end of the Tribulation, the Lord will incarcerate this host of wicked spirits, that are now "on high," in the pit of the abyss during the thousand-year reign of Christ, and after the Kingdom Age they will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

An illustration of the clash between the armies of Jehovah and the forces of evil is set forth in Revelation 12:7,8: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels *going forth* to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; 8 and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven." One has every reason to believe that, when Joshua attacked Jericho, there was a terrific conflict—invisible to mortal eyes—between the hosts of Jehovah and

the forces of Satan. One may also believe that the fate of Jericho, to a certain extent, depended upon the outcome of this conflict.

Light is shed on this subject by a glance at the battle of Ai. At Jericho Israel was triumphant in every way. At Ai Israel was defeated, being thrown back in utter confusion. Jericho was a veritable fortress for that day. Ai, though strong, could not compare with Jericho from the standpoint of power; nevertheless, at Ai the armies of Israel were utterly defeated. Why? Evidently, the armies of the Lord had forsaken Israel because sin had entered their camp. Under such conditions a holy God would not countenance sin in His people and allow them to be triumphant over their enemies.

Obviously, Joshua was expecting to attack Jericho according to orthodox military tactics of his day, but man's ways are not God's ways. The Lord, therefore, revealed to Joshua the method of attack:

6 Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in. 2 And Jehovah said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor. 3 And ye shall compass the city, all the men of war, going about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. 4 And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. 5 And it shall be, that, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall go up every man straight before him (Joshua 6:1-5).

Joshua faithfully carried out Jehovah's instructions to him in both the letter and the spirit of the command. God honored and accepted his obedience, for "to obey is better than sacrifice ..." (I Sam. 15:22b). The reader is urged to study Joshua, chapter 6, for the inspired account of the supernatural overthrow of Jericho.

Thus Israel's entrance into the land and the overthrow of Jericho shine forth in the light of divine intervention. These events constitute another mountain-peak experience in the romance of Jewish history.

F. The Reigns of David and Solomon

In the days of David and Solomon, the kingdom of Israel reached its greatest height of glory, power, and influence in the world. The eighty years of their combined reigns were the Golden Era of Jewish national history from every standpoint. The Lord can work marvelously when He has servants yielded to Him. Someone has well said that the world has yet to see what God can do through one whose heart is perfect toward Him. David was a man after God's own heart.

14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: Jehovah hath sought him a man after his own heart, and Jehovah hath appointed him to be prince over his people, because thou hast not kept that which Jehovah commanded thee (I Sam. 13:14).

22 And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king; to whom also he bare witness and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will (Acts 13:22).

4 Nevertheless for David's sake did Jehovah his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem; 5 because David did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. (I Ki. 15:4,5).

It is true that, figuratively speaking, Satan slipped up on the blind side of David and caused him to sin grossly. When, however, he was brought face to face with his sins, he humbled himself before God and implored divine mercy.

Solomon's heart was right toward God when the Lord chose him to rule His people.

4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. 5 In Gibeon Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream by night and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. 6 And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great lovingkindness, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great lovingkindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. 7 And now, O Jehovah my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in 8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 9 Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people? (I Ki. 3:4-9).

Though Solomon started out well, he made a wreck of his life. He was a man of peace, and it seems that he was willing to purchase peace at any price. He adopted the principle of maintaining peace by royal marriages. When the war clouds began to appear on the horizon, we may believe that Solomon arranged marriage between himself and some of the princesses of the countries involved. Thus war was averted. By adopting this policy as a principle upon which to build peace, Solomon destroyed the basis of a just and righteous government.

According to the historical account in I Kings, chapter 11, we see the leaven of immorality rapidly spreading throughout the kingdom and destroying the basic, fundamental principles of life.

Judged from the standpoint of literature, the reigns of David and Solomon surpassed all other periods of Jewish history. It is to be borne in mind that the literary activities³ of Israel were the result of the Holy Spirit's speaking in and through chosen vessels. The world has been enriched by the poets, philosophers, and historians; but none of the writings of the uninspired men can compare with the writings of the Sacred Scriptures.

In this Golden Era of David and Solomon, appeared the Book of Psalms, the greatest selection of devotional and prophetic poems ever compiled; the Book of Proverbs, unsurpassed in practical wisdom; Ecclesiastes, the one Book showing the vanity of all human strivings; the Song of Solomon, the greatest love song ever written; and probably the Book of Job, the greatest drama ever written.

The rays of divine glory continually flashed forth during the Golden Era of Israel's literary activity.

II. A SECOND GLIMPSE AT SINAI

When Israel came out of Egypt, the Lord led His people to Mount Sinai. Here He appeared in a unique manner and delivered His law to His people. The account of these miraculous occurrences are recorded in the Books of Exodus and Leviticus. In the Book of Numbers appears the record of Israel's trek through the wilderness for forty years. As has already been mentioned, there arose during this period a new generation that had not seen the miraculous manifestations of the giving of the law and the many infallible proofs of divine intervention at Sinai. At the close of the wilderness wanderings, for the benefit of all the people, especially the new generation, God again broke through the natural barriers of commonplace events and spoke those portions of the law that met the requirements of the time. This repetition of the law constitutes the Book of Deuteronomy.

³ After the Spirit of God ceased to make revelations through His servants the prophets, there was considerable literary activity apart from inspiration resulting in the Books of the Old Testament Apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, et cetera.

Deuteronomy, chapter 4, is replete with meaning. Among the things discussed are the giving of the law, the remnant of the Hebrew people seeking God in the end time, and the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

In Deuteronomy 4:9-14, Moses urges the people to be diligent in keeping before their minds what they saw and heard at Sinai. The very atmosphere was supercharged with the presence of the God of the universe; Mount Sinai vibrated with divine glory; and a hush of holiness and awe settled down upon the people. Then God, the sovereign of the universe, the covenant-keeping Jehovah, spoke the Ten Words, the Ten Commandments, which set forth the basic principles of God's relation to man and of man's relation to man.

9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes saw, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but make them known unto thy children and thy children's children; 9 the day that thou stoodest before Jehovah thy God in Horeb, when Jehovah said unto me, Assemble me the people, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children 11 And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the heart of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. 12 And Jehovah spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of words, but ye saw no form; only ye heard a voice. 13 And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. 14 And Jehovah commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and ordinances, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. (Deut. 4:9-14).

The speaking of the living God to mortal man was unknown to the peoples of the earth. "Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of fire, as thou hast heard, and live?" (Deut. 4:33). This rhetorical question demands the answer, No. "Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee; and upon earth he made thee to see his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire" (Deut. 4:36).

In verses 25-31 Moses gives a brief survey of the course of Jewish history from his day through the centuries to the end time. By the judgments of the Tribulation, the Israelites surviving that period will, comparatively speaking, be few in number.

27 And Jehovah will scatter you among the peoples, and ye shall be left few in number among the nations, whither Jehovah shall lead you away. 28 And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. 29 But from thence ye shall seek Jehovah thy God, and thou shalt find him, when thou searchest after him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. 30 When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, in the latter days thou shalt return to Jehovah thy God, and hearken unto his voice: 31 for Jehovah thy God is a merciful God; he will not fail thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them (Deut. 4:27-31).

From these verses we see that the remnant of Israel will seek God with all their heart in the latter days—and will find Him.

In verses 32-40 appears a second glimpse of God's delivering His people from Egyptian bondage. It is such a sublime statement of a historical fact that the reader will appreciate the quotation in full:

32 For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? 33 Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? 34 Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that Jehovah your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35 Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that Jehovah he is God; there is none else besides him. 36 Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he made thee to see his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. 37 And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee

out with his presence, with his great power, out of Egypt; 38 to drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as at this day. 39 Know therefore this day, and lay it to thy heart, that Jehovah he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is none else. 40 And thou shalt keep his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days in the land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, for ever. (Deut. 4:32-40).

III. THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH

A most wonderful and sublime peak of Jewish history is yet in the future. Moses concludes Israel's National Anthem with a matchless prophecy of Messiah's second advent. He will appear as *El Gibbor* (Isa. 9:6), God the mighty warrior:

- 39 See now that I, even I, am he,
 And there is no god with me:
 I kill, and I make alive;
 I wound, and I heal;
 And there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
- 40 For I lift up my hand to heaven,
 And say, As I live for ever,
- 41 If I whet my glittering sword,
 And my hand take hold on judgment;
 I will render vengeance to mine adversaries,
 And will recompense them that hate me.
- 42 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,
 And my sword shall devour flesh;
 With the blood of the slain and the captives,
 From the head of the leaders of the enemy.
- 43 Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people:
 For he will avenge the blood of his servants,
 And will render vengeance to his adversaries,
 And will make expiation for his land, for his people (Deut. 32: 39-43).

King David spoke of Messiah's coming in Psalm 18:1-19. Also see Habakkuk 3:1-15 and Isaiah 63:1-6.

When Messiah does come, He will champion the cause of the faithful remnant of Israel, lift the curse from the earth, and establish His reign of righteousness from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

CHAPTER II

ISRAEL'S CONFESSION OF THE NATIONAL SIN

Someone has tersely spoken of the Book of Genesis as "the seed plot of the Bible." A careful examination of its contents confirms this position. Some Bible students call attention to the fact that many of the fundamental doctrines of the Scriptures are found, in their embryonic form, in the writings of Moses.

Among the very important doctrines of the Scriptures is the prediction that the nation of Israel will confess the national sin, repudiate it, and plead for mercy and forgiveness.

40 And they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, in their trespass which they trespassed against me, and also that, because they walked contrary unto me, 41 I also walked contrary unto them, and brought them into the land of their enemies: if then their uncircumcised heart be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; 42 then will I remember my covenant with Jacob; and also my covenant with Isaac and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land (Lev. 26:40-42).

I. ACCORDING TO MOSES

In Leviticus, chapter 26, appears one of the most important prophecies relating to Israel. This prediction was given by Moses at Mount Sinai and is a brief outline of the meandering course over which Israel travels during the centuries, from Moses' day to the time that the Chosen People are gathered from among the nations and are restored to their own land.

Moses begins the message by calling special attention to Israel's unique relation to Jehovah their God (v. 1,2).

In verses 3-13 he calls attention briefly to the special blessing which the Lord will bestow upon the people of Israel if they will be faithful to Him. God promises them rains in their seasons, abundance of crops, and protection from all enemies.

On the other hand, He warns them against disobedience, threatening punishment commensurate with their sins. If they continue in willful disobedience, the Lord threatens to punish them sevenfold. In the event that the punishment administered does not cause them to reform, He threatens to send punishment even sevenfold more severe. If, under these conditions they absolutely refuse to repent and to reform, the Lord again threatens them with punishment sevenfold more severe than they have already experienced. Finally, if they still stubbornly persist in rebellion against God and His will, He threatens to spue them out of the land and to scatter them among the nations.

While the people of Israel are so journeying in other countries, the Lord assures them that their land shall enjoy its sabbath rests while it is lying in a desolate condition. This warning is vitally important to the understanding of God's dealings with His Ancient People.

27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; 28 then I will walk contrary unto you in wrath; and I also will chastise you seven times for your sins. 29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. 30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your sun-images, and cast your dead bodies upon the bodies of your idols; and my soul shall abhor you. 31 And I will make your cities a waste, and will bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savor of your sweet odors. 32 And I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies that dwell therein shall be astonished at it. 33 And you will I scatter among the nations, and I will draw out

the sword after you: and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste. 34 Then shall the land enjoy its sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye are in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy its sabbaths. 35 As long as it lieth desolate it shall have rest, even the rest which it had not in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. 36 And as for them that are left of you, I will send a faintness into their heart in the lands of their enemies: and the sound of a driven leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as one fleeth from the sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth. 37 And they shall stumble one upon another, as it were before the sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. 38 And ye shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. 39 And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them (Lev. 26:27-39).

Verse 39 speaks of the last generation of Israel scattered among the nations that will "pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them." According to this verse, the generation of Israel that is left—the last generation scattered among the nations—will pine away from two causes: from their own iniquity and from the iniquities of their fathers. Something in the life of this generation is properly called "their iniquity." Since the word *iniquity* is in the singular number, it evidently refers to some wrong of which the people of Israel are guilty, and on account of which they are suffering. The second thing for which they will pine away is the iniquities of their fathers. Light upon this expression is gleaned from Exodus 34:6,7. In this passage God declares that He visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation. People reap what they sow. Sin always leaves its mark upon the sinner. According to this passage, the effects of the father's sins are transmitted to his children, to the third and fourth generation.

According to Proverbs 28:13, the sinner who "covereth his transgressions shall not prosper; But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy." In keeping with the fundamental principles of Leviticus 26:40, the people of the last generation of Israel left among the nations will have to confess both their own iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers.¹ In the King James Version of the Scriptures, verse 40 reads as follows: "If they shall confess their iniquity ..." The American Standard Version (1901 edition) renders the sentence, "And they shall confess their iniquity ..." This latter translation is correct. The King James Version is wrong in translating the first clause as if it were conditional. Confessing or not confessing the iniquity is not an optional matter for Israel to decide. God speaks of it as one of Israel's *musts*. "And they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers ..." The people of the last generation are guilty of an iniquitous act. Their fathers also are guilty of an iniquitous act. Are these two acts one and the same?

The act of iniquity of which the fathers are guilty is a trespass which the fathers trespass against Jehovah while they are in the land. In committing this trespass, the fathers walk contrary unto Jehovah, who punishes them by scattering them among the nations.

There seems to be but one iniquitous act which the fathers commit while they are in the land, and of which the last generation is held guilty. Will a righteous and just God hold a person responsible for the acts of another with which he had nothing to do? Every right-thinking person knows that God will not. The fathers commit an act of iniquity, for which God spues them out of the land and scatters them over the world. All Biblical students know that God allowed the Romans to overthrow the kingdom of Judah and to spue them out of the land. If one studies the events of A.D. 70 in the light of Leviticus 26:40-42 and in the light of the gospel records, he comes to the conclusion that the one act of iniquity committed

¹ The last generation of the people of Israel *pine away* because of the iniquities of their fathers, and they also confess "the *iniquity* of their fathers." This distinction must always be borne in mind.

by the fathers of Israel was the rejection and the execution of Jesus of Nazareth, the Hebrew Messiah, "a man approved of God unto you [the Jewish nation] by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; 23 him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:22-24).

If the leaders of the nation of Israel in the first century commit the act of iniquity, foretold by Moses, how can a just and righteous God hold their descendants of the twentieth century guilty for a crime committed by their ancestors nearly two thousand years before their day? Those who demanded His crucifixion held certain views and attitudes toward Him. They shouted, "Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify *him*! ... We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). "His blood *be* on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27:25). If the descendants of those who crucified the Messiah take the same attitude toward Him, they are just as guilty as those who perpetrated the crime. In the light of these facts one is forced to conclude that the fathers of Israel committed the iniquitous act mentioned by Moses and that the people of the last generation of Israel scattered among the nations, holding the same attitude toward the Messiah that their fathers held, can justly and righteously be said to be guilty of the same iniquitous act.

"... if then their uncircumcised heart be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; 42 then will I remember my covenant with Jacob ... and I will remember the land" (Lev. 26:41,42). When the remnant of Israel humble themselves and accept the punishment of their iniquity (acknowledge their offense against Jehovah in rejecting the Messiah), God will remember His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and will remember the land promise.

The day on which Israel sees the truth with reference to the Messiah and repudiates the national sin of rejecting and executing Him will be one of the highest mountain peaks of Israel's entire existence. Concerning that day Malachi says: "But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings; and ye shall go forth, and gambol as calves of the stall" (Mal. 4:2).

II. ACCORDING TO HOSEA

Hosea, one of the earliest writing prophets in Israel, also speaks of Israel's confession and repudiation of the national sin:

15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly.

6 Come, and let us return unto Jehovah; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2 After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him 3 And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain as the latter rain that watereth the earth (Hosea 5:15-6:3).

In order to see the force of this prophecy, one must look at the context. In thundering tones Hosea denounced the sins of the people of both kingdoms—Ephraim and Judah. Hosea addressed the priests, the house of Israel, and the royal house, stating that the judgment pertains to them. The Prophet, speaking for God uncovers the sinful lives of the people; for they had played the harlot and defiled themselves. They had gone so far from God in sin and defilement that they could not turn back to God:

4 Their doings will not suffer them to turn unto their God; for the spirit of whoredom is within them, and they know not Jehovah. 5 And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in their iniquity: Judah also shall stumble with them (Hosea 5:4,5).

According to these verses, both Israel and Judah traveled the road of disobedience and reached the point most obnoxious to God—pride. Of all sins pride is the most repulsive to God.

Because of this condition Hosea, the representative of God, threatens both Israel and Judah with devastating strokes of judgment.

Instead of turning from sin unto God, the major part of the nation turned to the king of Assyria in this crisis (Hosea 5-13). In the next verse God threatens to be as a lion to Ephraim and Judah: "For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will carry off, and there shall be none to deliver."

At this point of the prediction, the Prophet, following the law of double reference² blends what he had said about this special crisis with another crisis, far greater, in the future.

An examination of verses 14 and 15 shows that in them the Prophet stops talking about this crisis and speaks of another one in the remote future. Concerning this event, the Prophet, speaking for God, declares, "I will go and return to my place ..." In the first-mentioned crisis the Lord did not leave heaven and come to earth to deal with the situation. He simply overruled providentially in dealing with the case. It is not so with the crisis in verses 14b,15, for in this latter event He leaves heaven (His place) and comes to earth. Both Ephraim and Judah sin against Him. As punishment the Lord rends both Ephraim and Judah as a lion rends his prey. Then He goes away to His place and remains there until the offenders acknowledge their offense.

The language implies that the Lord leaves heaven, comes to earth, and is sinned against by the Chosen People. When these events take place, the Lord returns to heaven and declares that He will remain there until the guilty ones acknowledge their offense. These offenders will not only acknowledge their sin, but will seek the Lord's face—His favor and blessing. When will they do these things? The answer is, "In their affliction"—the Great Tribulation which is called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). At that time the people of Israel—the faithful remnant—will seek the Lord earnestly, with all their heart.

This prediction is followed by an unusual prophecy:

6 Come, and let us return unto Jehovah; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2 After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him. 3 And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth (Hosea 6:1-3).

An examination of these verses shows that they are a continuation of the prediction found in the two preceding verses, Hosea 5:14,15. Seeing the close connection, some Bible students insert the participle *saying*. Undoubtedly the insertion of this word shows the exact connection: "... In their affliction they will seek me earnestly, [saying], Come and let us return unto Jehovah ..." (Hosea 5:15-6:1).

In the light of all the facts, stated and implied, in this context, Hosea 6:1-3 is a call issued by certain ones to others to join them in returning to God; "for he [Jehovah] hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up." The "tearing" of this verse is obviously the tearing of Ephraim and Judah mentioned in 5:14. Those issuing the call

² The law of double reference is the principle of the blending of two distinct, though similar, events into a single picture.

and those to whom the call is proclaimed acknowledge that God has punished them by tearing them, and that, if they will return to Jehovah, He will heal them. One may believe that those who issue the call are the leaders of the Jewish people and that those to whom the proclamation is made are the masses of Israel.

The second verse of this call to repentance mentions three days: "After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him." What is the significance of the words "two days"? Some have very erroneously thought that they are symbolic and indicate two thousand years. As scriptural authority for this interpretation, these expositors refer to II Peter 3:8: "But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Upon the basis of this passage they claim that one day in prophecy fore-shadows a thousand years in history. Does the verse set forth this position? Note the language carefully: "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." With God, declares the Apostle, one day is not a thousand years, but as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. What then is the significance of this verse? From the context in which this verse appears, it is clear that the passage of time does not alter God's promises. He is as faithful in fulfilling a promise after a thousand years as He is the day on which He makes the promise.

What does Hosea mean by saying, "After two days will He revive us ..."? Since there are no indications in the context showing that the expression "two days" is not to be taken literally, one is logically forced to understand that the Prophet means two literal days. Israel will set a date for the repudiation of the national sin. When that day arrives, the nation, possibly with some exceptions, will in sincerity and earnestness begin this public confession and repudiation of the offense which was committed against Jehovah (Messiah) when He came the first time. After the penitent remnant have bowed in deep contrition and genuine repentance for two days, suddenly on the third day God will send the Holy Spirit, who will revive every sincere heart that humbles himself before God and in faith accepts the rejected Messiah—as Saviour and Lord. Thus on the third of those three days a revival will break out in all Israel. According to verse 2, on the third day Jehovah will go forth. His doing so will be as "sure as the morning." From what place will this going forth of Jehovah be? As has been seen, Jehovah Messiah, after His rejection, returns to heaven and remains there until the people of Israel acknowledge their offense. When they do so, He will go forth from heaven and return to this earth in order to set up His glorious reign of righteousness over all nations. The three days mentioned in this passage are the last three days of the Tribulation.

Enrapt by the vision of the solution of all Israel's problems, Hosea exhorts the Jewish people, saying: "And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth" (Hosea 6:3).

According to Hosea 5:1-6:3, the entire nation of Israel is going to "acknowledge their offense and seek" His face. This testimony of Hosea confirms that of Moses, the great lawgiver.

5 Hear this, O ye priests, and hearken, O house of Israel, and give ear, O house of the king; for unto you pertaineth the judgment; for ye have been a snare at Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor 2 And the revolters are gone deep in making slaughter; but I am a rebuker of them all. 3 I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me; for now, O Ephraim, thou hast played the harlot, Israel is defiled. 4 Their doings will not suffer them to turn unto their God; for the spirit of whoredom is within them, and they know not Jehovah. 5 And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in their iniquity; Judah also shall stumble with them. 6 They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek Jehovah; but they shall not find him: he hath withdrawn himself from them. 7 They have dealt treacherously against Jehovah; for they have borne strange children: now shall the new moon devour them with their fields.

8 Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah: sound an alarm at Beth-aven; behind thee, O Benjamin. 9 Ephraim shall become a desolation in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be. 10 The princes of Judah are like them that remove the landmark: I will pour out my wrath upon them like water. 11 Ephraim is oppressed, he is crushed in judgment; because he was content to walk after man's command. 12 Therefore am I unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness. 13 When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to Assyria, and sent to king Jareb: but he is not able to heal you, neither will he cure you of your wound. 14 For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will carry off, and there shall be none to deliver. 15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly.

6 Come, and let us return unto Jehovah; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2 After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him. 3 And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth. (Hosea 5:1-6:3)

III. ACCORDING TO ISAIAH

Isaiah, the great statesman, orator, and prophet, likewise foretells Israel's confession and repudiation of the national sin of rejecting Messiah at His first coming.

A. *Isaiah 52:13-53:12*³

Isaiah often uses the term *servant*. When the context of each occurrence of this word is examined, it is learned that the Prophet uses it with three different meanings. In Isaiah 42:18-22 the context shows that he refers to literal Israel, in the broadest sense of the term. In 41:8-16 the servant described is the faithful remnant of Israel of the end time. In 42:1-4 the servant is the Messiah, who comes into the world to establish justice among the nations. In 49:1-7; 50:1-11; and 52:13-53:12 the servant is undoubtedly an individual, the ideal Israelite, the Messiah.

Embedded in the famous passage of Isaiah, chapter 53, is one of the verbal confessions which penitent Israel will make regarding the mistake made by their leaders when they rejected the Messiah, who came nineteen hundred years ago. Herewith is the confession in full:

53 Who hath believed our message? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? 2 For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who *among them* considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke *was due*? 9 And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. (Isa. 53:1-9).

³ For exposition of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 see my volume, *The Eternal God Revealing Himself to Suffering Israel and Lost Humanity*, Chapter XVIII.

Upon reading Isaiah 52:13-53:12, the unbiased reader, who has no theory to support, sees clearly that the prophecy speaks of an individual who suffers vicariously for others. Notwithstanding this fact, there are those who still insist that Israel as a nation is the sufferer of this passage. Dr. Frederick A. Aston, in his pamphlet, *The Challenge of the Ages* (pp. 5 and 6), shows twelve reasons why Israel cannot be interpreted as the sufferer of this oracle.

- "1. He is portrayed in the detailed features of a human personality.
- "2. He is an innocent sufferer (vv. 9c,d; 12d).
- "3. He is a voluntary sufferer (v. 7a).
- "4. He is a meek and silent sufferer (v. 7).
- "5. His suffering springs from love for sinners, including his executioners, who acted in ignorance (vv. 4c,d; 7; 12f).
- "6. His suffering is ordained by God in love and fulfills a divine purpose (v. 10).
- "7. His suffering is vicarious, that is, substitutionary (vv. 4a,b; 5a,b; 6c; 8d; 10b; 11d; 12e).
- "8. His Suffering is redemptive and spiritual in nature (vv. 5c,d; 11d).
- "9. His suffering ends in death (vv. 8c; 10b; 12c).
- "10. His death gives way to resurrection (vv. 10c; 11).
- "11. His atoning work leads the straying people to confession and repentance (vv. 4-6).
- "12. His redemptive work, in which suffering, humiliation, and death are central, inaugurates a life of sublime exaltation (52:13; 15a,b; 53:12a,b)."

The twelve points just listed prove conclusively that the servant presented in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is a man who suffers vicariously for sinners, and who is able to make expiation for all accepting his atoning sacrifice in their behalf. This passage, studied in the light of related ones, identifies this sufferer as the Messiah.

As stated before, Isaiah 53:1-9 is one of the versions of Israel's oral confession of the national sin. Very frequently the prophets were borne along in vision by the Spirit of God to some time in the future and, figuratively speaking, were let down into the midst of the scenes concerning which they were to prophesy. That this statement is correct is evident in the light of II Peter 1:21, "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." It is certain that Isaiah the Prophet in 53:1-9 is transported in vision by the Spirit of God from his own day to the time that the whole nation of Israel will genuinely make this confession—at the end of the Tribulation. Every one who knows anything about Jewish history realizes that the people of Israel have never yet made such a confession. But they will do so, as has already been seen from Leviticus 26:40 and Hosea 5:15. When will they make this confession? The answer is that they will make it the year 1961 plus (x) plus 7. (The letter x is an algebraic symbol representing the unknown time between now and the Tribulation, and the number 7 represents the seven years of the Tribulation.) In the year 1961 plus (x) plus 7, when the people of Israel will have learned the facts concerning the rejected and condemned Messiah, they will look backward over the wasted centuries of suffering and confess that Messiah actually came on scheduled time, as foretold by the prophets, but that the people of Israel did not recognize Him. Not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God, many of the leaders of Israel rejected the Messiah, considering Him as an ignorant, unlettered, and deluded impostor. Hence, He was "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:1-3).

But in the year 1961 plus (x) plus 7 the entire nation of Israel will have been given the facts concerning the Messiah and His atoning sacrifice. As just seen, verses 1-3 give a glimpse of the Jewish people of the first century and their outlook when they were blindly led by their misguided leaders, whereas verses 4-9 picture the people of Israel of the twentieth century (plus 'x') as having learned the real facts regarding Messiah. According to these verses, they will see that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the true Messiah; that in His life, death, resurrection, and ascension He literally fulfilled the prophecies relating to Messiah's first coming; and that the people of Israel, after learning these facts, will make confession of their guilt of rejecting Him in the words of Isaiah 53:1-9. One may be certain that, when God pours out the Spirit of grace and supplication upon Israel (Zech. 12:10), He will open their blind eyes to see the marvelous truth of Isaiah 52:13-53:12.

B. *Isaiah 63:7-64:12*

A second version of the confessions and prayers which the people of Israel will make in the year 1961 plus (x) plus 7 is found in Isaiah 63:7-64:12:

7 I will make mention of the lovingkindnesses of Jehovah, *and* the praises of Jehovah, according to all that Jehovah hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses. 8 For he said, Surely, they are my people, children that will not deal falsely: so he was their Saviour. 9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

10 But they rebelled, and grieved his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. 11 Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, *saying*, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of them? 12 that caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses? that divided the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name? 13 that led them through the depths, as a horse in the wilderness, so that they stumbled not? 14 As the cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah caused them to rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

15 Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where are thy zeal and thy mighty acts? the yearning of thy heart and thy compassions are restrained toward me. 16 For thou art our Father, though Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us: thou, O Jehovah, art our Father; our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name. 17 O Jehovah, why dost thou make us to err from thy ways, and hardenest our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance. 18 Thy holy people possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary. 19 We are become as they over whom thou never barest rule, as they that were not called by thy name.

64 Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might quake at thy presence, 2 as when fire kindleth the brushwood, and the fire causeth the waters to boil; to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence! 3 When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains quaked at thy presence. 4 For from of old men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen a God besides thee, who worketh for him that waiteth for him. 5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou wast wroth, and we sinned: in them *have we been* of long time; and shall we be saved? 6 For we are all become as one that is unclean, and all our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment: and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. 7 And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us by means of our iniquities.

8 But now, O Jehovah, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. 9 Be not wroth very sore, O Jehovah, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, look, we beseech thee, we are all thy people. 10 Thy holy cities are become a wilderness, Zion is become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. 11 Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned with fire; and all our pleasant places are laid waste. 12 Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Jehovah? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

This version lays bare the heart of the faithful remnant of Israel of the end time, as few passages do.

Being carried forward in vision by the Spirit of God to the end time, Isaiah identifies himself with the penitent remnant and then prays, pouring out his soul in gratitude for God's having delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage, having "carried them all the days of old," and having brought them into the promised land (Isa. 63:7-14). According to verse 8, God the Father became their Saviour; according to verse 9, God the Son, "the angel of his presence," saved them; and according to verses 10-14, God the Holy Spirit, like a good shepherd, "caused them to rest" in the land of their fathers. This passage reveals the fact that the people of Israel will understand thoroughly the scriptural teaching of the triune nature of God and will recognize each of the divine personalities and the part each played in Israel's redemption from Egypt.

Turning from the past and looking toward the future, the Prophet identifying himself with the remnant prays to the Lord to look upon His people and have mercy upon them, "For thou art our Father, though Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us: thou, O Jehovah, art our Father; our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name. 17 O Jehovah, why dost thou make us to err from thy ways, and hardenest our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance" (Isa. 63:16,17). The petition, "Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance," is indeed revealing when studied in the light of this context. In 63:15 the Lord is asked to look down from heaven; in 63:17 He is urged to "return for thy servants' sake"; and in 64:1 these penitent ones pray saying, "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down ..." What does the word *return* imply? A person can return only to places where he has already been. The petition "Return," when addressed to Jehovah, implies that He has been here previously; that for some reason He has left; and that the penitent remnant are praying for Him to return. According to 64:1-3, they urge Him in prayer to come down from heaven to earth, as He did at Mount Sinai (Exodus, chapter 19). Obviously since Isaiah 63:15-64:3 is a single petition, the looking-down from heaven of verse 15, the returning "for thy servants' sake" of verse 17, and the coming down and making the mountains quake of verse 64:1 refer to one and the same event—the returning of the Lord at the end of the Tribulation, as seen in related passages.

The God for whose return the remnant are praying is a God "who worketh for him that waiteth for him" (64:4). When penitent Israel genuinely assume the attitude of this prayer, God the Messiah, who works in behalf of those who wait for Him, will not disappoint them, but will return and champion their cause; for, of the Messiah, the inspired Prophet declares, "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways ..." (v. 5a).

In 64:5b the Prophet declares, "Behold, thou wast wroth, and we sinned: in them *have we been* of long time; and shall we be saved?" A glance at the history of Israel and at the writings of the Prophets shows that the people continued to disobey the Lord. The Prophet Isaiah in his statement "Thou wast wroth" evidently refers to God's wrath because of Israel's continuing in sin. Instead of repenting and reforming, the people as a group went on sinning—"Thou wast wroth, and we sinned."

To what does the Prophet refer when he states, "Thou wast wroth, and we sinned"? Evidently it was some outstanding sin—a single act—in the life of the people of Israel. Otherwise construed, the words lose their force. In view of these facts one is not far afield if he sees in this statement a reference to the national sin of Israel, mentioned by Moses, by Hosea, and by Isaiah in 53:1-9.

Concerning Israel's sinful condition, Isaiah declares, "In them [sins] *have we been* of long time ..." (v. 5). Since in this confession and prayer the Prophet sees the remnant of Israel of the end time, the long time in which Israel has been in their sins covers their entire history—from the beginning of the nation to the end of the present age.

The Prophet asks, "and shall we be saved?" It is the will of God that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance (I Tim. 2:4). "The Lord is ... not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9). Christ tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9). Whosoever will may come to the Lord and be saved.

Being under deep conviction, the remnant express amazement at the possibility of their being saved, "For we are all become as one that is unclean, and all our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment: and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away" (Isa. 64:6). "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. 14:3b). In the sight of God all the good works of unregenerated men are as a polluted garment. Man, in his sinful condition, cannot engage in any works that will be acceptable to God.

When this wave of genuine repentance begins to move in upon the remnant, "there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us by means of our iniquities" (Isa. 64:7). As the Spirit of God moves upon the hearts of the penitent people of Israel, they are brought to the point where they suddenly burst forth saying, "But now, O Jehovah, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. 9 Be not wroth very sore, O Jehovah, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, look, we beseech thee, we are all thy people" (Isa. 64:8,9). When a person is under conviction of sin before God and truly can say, "O Jehovah, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand," God will graciously and lovingly receive him and regenerate⁴ his heart.

Like the Father of the prodigal son, God is anxiously waiting for the return of his prodigal Israel.

IV. ACCORDING TO THE MESSIAH, JESUS OF NAZARETH

Jesus concludes His public ministry by denouncing the scribes and Pharisees who were hypocritical. This passage is found in Matthew, chapter 23. He concludes it with the following lamentation:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. 39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:37-39). In order to understand this passage properly, one must analyze the statement: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her!" In these words Jesus addresses official Jerusalem, that "killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her"—Jerusalem with her children, the Jewish people. That He is addressing official Jerusalem is clear from the fact that those addressed are the ones who were given authority by Moses to execute those guilty of certain crimes, and who exercised these powers. Jerusalem to which the prophets were sent is a literal city, and the people of Israel, who thought of Jerusalem as their

⁴ The theological term *regeneration* means, according to its etymology to generate again. The work of regeneration is accomplished by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the one who accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

"Wherefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (II Cor. 5:17) "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

mother city, are also literal. This interpretation is confirmed by the facts that the prophets were sent to all the people of Israel, and yet they are said, in this passage, to have been sent to Jerusalem. From these facts it is clear, therefore, that Jesus uses the term *Jerusalem* in a two-fold manner.

The statement of Jesus regarding Jerusalem's stoning the prophets is revealing. According to tradition, Isaiah was sawed asunder. There probably is echoed in this statement a knowledge on the part of Jesus that official Jerusalem would execute Him.

Jesus exclaims that He often would have gathered scattered Israel as a hen does her chickens, but they willed not. Our translation of the Greek says "and ye would not," but in the original the verb indicates the exercise of the will. If the leaders of Israel had accepted Him, He would have, during His personal ministry, gathered them to the homeland, but they willed not that He should do so.

Since they willed not to accept Him, He declares, "Your house is left unto you desolate." What is meant by the word *house*? Some expositors think that it refers to the temple. This surmise is possible. Others, however, think that by the house, Jesus refers to what was known as "the Beth Din," the house in which the Sanhedrin met, or the Sanhedrin itself, which was the supreme court of Israel. This second interpretation is also possible, for the literal building of the Sanhedrin was destroyed, and the Sanhedrin itself soon ceased as an institution.

John the Apostle, foreseeing the future, declares, "Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen" (Rev. 1:7).

What is the significance of "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord"? (Matt. 23:39). Jesus came in the name of the Lord, and the leaders of Israel rejected Him—without proper investigation concerning His claims. He will come again in the name of the Lord, according to Psalm 118. God will send this same Jesus whom Israel crucified: "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; 20 and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, *even* Jesus" (Acts 3:19,20). Since Jesus came in the name of the Lord, and since He will not return until Israel says, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," it is clear that the people of Israel will see and recognize that Jesus was and is their true Messiah.

The people of Israel will learn the facts about Jesus and will accept Him as their longed-for Messiah. Then He will return and deliver Israel and establish a reign of righteousness.

V. ACCORDING TO PSALM 106

106

- 1 Praise ye Jehovah.
Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good;
For his lovingkindness *endureth* forever.
- 2 Who can utter the mighty acts of Jehovah,
Or show forth all his praise?
- 3 Blessed are they that keep justice,
And he that doeth righteousness at all times.
- 4 Remember me, O Jehovah, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people;
Oh visit me with thy salvation,
- 5 That I may see the prosperity of thy chosen,
That I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation,
That I may glory with thine inheritance.
- 6 We have sinned with our fathers,
We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.
- 7 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt;
They remembered not the multitude of thy lovingkindnesses,
But were rebellious at the sea, even at the Red Sea.
- 8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake,
That he might make his mighty power to be known.
- 9 He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up:
So he led them through the depths, as through a wilderness.
- 10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them,
And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
- 11 And the waters covered their adversaries;
There was not one of them left.
- 12 Then believed they his words;
They sang his praise.
- 13 They soon forgot his works;
They waited not for his counsel,
- 14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,
And tempted God in the desert.
- 15 And he gave them their request,
But sent leanness into their soul.
- 16 They envied Moses also in the camp.
And Aaron the saint of Jehovah.
- 17 The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan,
And covered the company of Abiram.
- 18 And a fire was kindled in their company;
The flame burned up the wicked.
- 19 They made a calf in Horeb,
And worshipped a molten image.
- 20 Thus they changed their glory
For the likeness of an ox that eateth grass.

- 21 They forgat God their Saviour,
Who had done great things in Egypt,
22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham,
And terrible things by the Red Sea.
23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them.
Had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach,
To turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy *them*.
24 Yea, they despised the pleasant land,
They believed not his word,
25 But murmured in their tents,
And hearkened not unto the voice of Jehovah.
26 Therefore he sware unto them,
That he would overthrow them in the wilderness,
27 And that he would overthrow their seed among the nations,
And scatter them in the lands.
28 They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor,
And ate the sacrifices of the dead.
29 Thus they provoked him to anger with their doings;
And the plague brake in upon them.
30 Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment;
And so the plague was stayed.
31 And that was reckoned unto him for righteousness,
Unto all generations for evermore.
32 They angered him also at the waters of Meribah,
So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes;
33 Because they were rebellious against his spirit,
And he spake unadvisedly with his lips.
34 They did not destroy the peoples,
As Jehovah commanded them,
35 But mingled themselves with the nations,
And learned their works,
36 And served their idols,
Which became a snare unto them.
37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto demons,
38 And shed innocent blood,
Even the blood of their sons and of their daughters,
Whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan;
And the land was polluted with blood.
39 Thus were they defiled with their works,
And played the harlot in their doings.
40 Therefore was the wrath of Jehovah kindled against his people,
And he abhorred his inheritance.
41 And he gave them into the hand of the nations;
And they that hated them ruled over them.
42 Their enemies also oppressed them,
And they were brought into subjection under their hand.
43 Many times did he deliver them;

But they were rebellious in their counsel,
 And were brought low in their iniquity.
 44 Nevertheless he regarded their distress,
 When he heard their cry:
 45 And he remembered for them his covenant,
 And repented according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.
 46 He made them also to be pitied
 Of all those that carried them captive.
 47 Save us, O Jehovah our God,
 And gather us from among the nations,
 To give thanks unto thy holy name,
 And to triumph in thy praise.
 48 Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel,
 From everlasting even to everlasting.
 And let all the people say, Amen.
 49 Praise ye Jehovah.

In order to understand and appreciate this Psalm, one must note several facts that lie embedded in the text. In verse 4 the psalmist prays to be remembered with the favor which God extends toward His people. According to verse 5, he prays that he might see the era of the prosperity of God's Chosen People. In other words, he wants to be permitted to enter the glorious Kingdom Age, the Millennium. In verse 6 the pronouns *we* and *our* occur. In verse 47 he prays that God might gather His people from among the nations.

In verses 4 and 5 the personal pronouns *me* and *I* are to be understood literally, as referring to the author of the Psalm, but suddenly these pronouns are dropped, and the pronouns *we* and *our* take their places. As noted above, the plural pronoun *us* occurs in verse 47. This fact shows that the same point of view is maintained throughout the Psalm from verse 6 through 48. Obviously the psalmist, as an individual, prays that he might enter the Millennium (v. 5). The ones referred to in verse 6 by the pronoun *we* and in verse 47 by the pronoun *us* want to be saved and to be gathered from among the nations to the land of their fathers. In view of all the facts, one concludes that the psalmist was carried forward by the Spirit of God in vision from his day to the end of the age and, identifying himself with the penitent remnant of Israel of the end time, with them confesses their sins and prays for salvation and restoration to God's favor.

Confessing and praying thus, the people of Israel, according to verse 6 declare that with their fathers they have sinned against God: "We have sinned with our fathers, We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly." The fathers to whom they refer are the generation of Hebrews whom God delivered from Egyptian bondage, led and provided for during the wilderness wanderings, and whom He established in the promised land. Notwithstanding God's goodness to them and provision for all their needs and protection, they rebelled against Him. Their loyalty and devotion to their God were very superficial and uncertain—as is abundantly evident from the Psalm. When, however, they turn from their sinfulness to God, He pardons them and continues His blessing upon them.

Just as the Hebrews who went forth from Egypt were fickle in their devotion to God and sinned against Him, thus, according to this Psalm, one concludes that the last generation of Israel scattered among the nations will be guilty of fickleness and sinfulness. They will confess their sins and call upon God for deliverance: "Save us, O Jehovah our God, And gather us from among the nations, To give thanks unto thy holy name, And to triumph in thy praise" (v. 47).

As has already been shown, the outstanding sin of Israel is the rejection of the Messiah when He came nineteen hundred years ago, and the continued rejection of Him. Israel will confess and repudiate that national sin and implore forgiveness. The author of Psalm 106 leads the nation of Israel in this Psalm of confession, contrition, and unswerving confidence in God and Messiah.

CHAPTER III

GOD'S COMMAND TO HIS CHURCH

In the present chapter, *God's Command to His Church*—the believers in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah and Saviour of the world—to proclaim the gospel to Israel is presented. Whenever anyone attempts to proclaim the gospel in any way to the Jews, they immediately resent the thought, often saying that they do not wish to be "missionized." Being missionized, to the Jews, therefore, is synonymous with preaching the gospel to them.

The principal reason which the Jews present in support of their contention is that they are not heathen. Moreover, they say that, when the Gentiles were bowing down to stocks and stones in worship, their ancestors had the revelation of God and were custodians of the true worship and service of the Almighty. They therefore, tell the missionaries that they had better convert their own people and teach them to practice the morals and ethics of Jesus, and let the Jews alone.

No right-thinking and unbiased person who knows the facts in the case would ever think or state that the Jews are an ignorant, heathen people. The Jewish race as an ethnic group stands, figuratively speaking, head and shoulders above all other peoples. This position is proved by the fact that the Jews have made a contribution to the civilization of the world far in excess of their numbers. All well-informed people know that the Jews stand foremost in the ranks of the sciences, professions, educational world, philanthropy, and general culture.

Why then go to the expense and trouble of presenting the gospel to a people, highly educated and cultured, when they do not want it—and even thrust it from them? Is it kind to disturb a people by telling them what they do not want to hear—especially so since they have been taught that Jesus was not their Messiah and that the New Testament is a collection of forged documents written, as is often asserted, to bolster up the false claims of Christianity?

Three courses of reasoning answer this question. In the first place, all the Scriptures—both the Old and the New Testaments—testify that man is in a lost spiritual condition. For a classic passage dealing with this subject, see Romans 1:1-3:20. Romans, chapter 1, shows that all the Gentiles are lost; Romans, chapter 2, shows the lost condition of the Jews. Romans 3:1-20 summarizes the evidence which proves that both Jews and Gentiles are lost and alienated from God. The conscience of every man confirms the scriptural testimony that all are lost. In the second place, the gospel message is the revelation of God's scheme of redemption which meets man's spiritual condition and prepares him spiritually for time and for eternity. In the third place, God commands His people who know Him through the Lord Jesus Christ to give the message of redemption to all men—especially to His ancient people Israel. (Isa. 40:1,2; 52:7-10; 57:14; 62:1-12; Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 1:16, 17).

I. ACCORDING TO ISAIAH

A. *Isaiah 40:1,2*

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins." In verse 1 of this quotation the Prophet, speaking to a certain group, declares that their God commands them to comfort His people. In this passage two groups are presented concerning both of which God states that they are His people: those who have a message of comfort, and those who need this message. Those standing in need of comfort are undoubtedly

the Jewish people, for in the next sentence the Prophet urges, "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem ..." By the term *Jerusalem* Isaiah means both the literal inhabitants of the city and the Jewish people who think of Jerusalem as their mother city. As proof of this interpretation examine carefully Isaiah 49:14-21:

14 But Zion said, Jehovah hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me. 15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, these may forget, yet will not I forget thee. 16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. 17 Thy children make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth from thee. 18 Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith Jehovah, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all as with an ornament, and gird thyself with them, like a bride. 19 For, as for thy waste and thy desolate places, and thy land that hath been destroyed, surely now shalt thou be too strait for the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. 20 The children of thy bereavement shall yet say in thine ears, The place is too strait for me; give place to me that I may dwell. 21 Then shalt thou say in thy heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have been bereaved of my children, and am solitary, an exile, and wandering to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where were they?

In verse 14 of this quotation the Prophet mentions Zion and her thinking that God had forsaken her. Then he proceeds to speak of Zion's future restoration and of there not being enough room in the land for all her children, spiritually speaking. In Isaiah 49:14ff, therefore, the word *Zion*, a poetical name for Jerusalem, embraces all the Jewish people. This same fundamental idea is found in Isaiah 40:2.

An examination of Isaiah, chapter 40, confirms this position. After urging the people of God who have the message of comfort to speak comfortably to Jerusalem, Isaiah foresees and announces the glorious coming of Messiah, heralded by a forerunner, Elijah the Prophet (vv 3-5).

All of God's people are not fully surrendered to do the will of God. When He, therefore, issues the proclamation to His people to comfort the people of Jerusalem, some of them in substance reply "What is the use?" implying that it is futile to do so, for they will not listen. "6 The voice of one saying, Cry. And one said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. 7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the breath of Jehovah bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. 8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever" (Isa. 40:6-8).

The Prophet urges those who are willing to carry out the divine injunction saying, "Lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your God!" (v. 9b). From this verse, therefore, it is clear that the cities of Judah are included under the term *Jerusalem*. In the light of all the facts it is certain that God commands one group of His people to proclaim a message of good tidings to another group of His people.

Who constitutes the group commanded to comfort Israel? Obviously, those who have a message of real comfort. Those constituting this group are the ones who know God in Christ, who have been born again (regenerated people), and who have an intimate knowledge of God's scheme of redemption and the prophetic Word. Those qualifying on these points constitute what is known in the New Testament as the body of Christ, the Church of Christ.

The gist of the message of comfort which the people of God are to give to the Jewish people is found in Isaiah 40:2: "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins." They are urged to speak comfortably to Jerusalem, or to speak to the heart of Jerusalem. One must be kind and considerate of those to whom he speaks.

The messengers are to cry to Jerusalem "that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins." Jerusalem's warfare which has extended over many centuries—throughout the Christian Dispensation—will come to a close when Messiah at the end of the Tribulation suddenly returns, wins the war of the great day of God the Almighty, and establishes a reign of righteousness throughout the earth. So long as warfare continues, Israel will need the message of comfort; when it ceases, there will be no need for such a message. The Prophet, therefore, envisages the time when Israel will be enduring the sufferings and persecutions brought on by their enemies. In what sense then can the messengers declare that the warfare is over while war is still being waged? The true explanation is to be found in the fact that there are two uses of language—the relative and the absolute. A scriptural illustration of the relative use is found in Matthew 3:5,6. "Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about the Jordan; 6 and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." That all the people did not accept John's baptism is proved by Luke 7:29,30: "And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. 30 But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him." The harmony between these two seemingly contradictory passages is that the bulk of the people accepted John's baptism, whereas the minority did not—to their detriment. A person can have \$4.93, for instance, and yet say that he has \$5—the relative use of language—meaning that he has approximately \$5. But if he says he has \$4.93, he means that he has exactly that amount.

Since the messengers are to bring comfort by saying that Israel's warfare is accomplished, there is but one way to interpret this language: namely, that the time yet to endure the ravages of war is very short compared to the sufferings of the past centuries.

In order to take this message to Israel, one must have a thorough knowledge of prophecy—both of the Old and the New Testaments. The thinking Hebrew will demand logical proof of the message before he will receive it. In doing so, he is correct.

The second item of the message to be proclaimed to Jerusalem is that her iniquity is pardoned. Note the word iniquity—in the singular number. This statement undoubtedly refers to the iniquitous act of the nation of Israel discussed on pages 31-34 (Web Ed. Note: pages 27-29 of this document), in Chapter II of this volume. As has already been seen, Israel as a nation will be forgiven at the Second Coming of Messiah, at the end of the Tribulation.

The third and last item mentioned in this prophecy is that Jerusalem receives double for all her sins. Increased light and advantages bring added responsibilities. No nation has enjoyed the advantages and opportunities that the people of Israel have received at Jehovah's hand. Since they have sinned against greater light, the punishment to be meted out to them is correspondingly increased. They, therefore, receive double for their sins at the hand of Jehovah.

B. Isaiah 52:7-10

7 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! 8 The voice of thy watchmen! they lift up the voice, together do they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when Jehovah returneth to Zion. 9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for Jehovah hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. 10 Jehovah hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

It is most highly probable that Isaiah the Prophet borrowed the imagery set forth in this passage from the local situation. Speaking in modern terms, one would call him the court preacher at Jerusalem. His ministry fell in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah—kings of Judah. Jerusalem is located in the mountains of the State of Israel. It, of course, was a walled fortified city. On its walls and in its towers were watchmen who sounded an alarm at the approach of an enemy. These watchmen were part of the king's intelligence service. They, therefore, passed on any information which they considered of vital importance to the welfare of the kingdom.

In this vision the Prophet sees a messenger approaching the city and exclaims, "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!" One has tersely said, "The beauty seen is partly in him who sees it." Being especially interested in everything that pertains to Jerusalem and the Jewish people and seeing the messenger who proclaims deliverance and salvation for the Chosen People, Isaiah, in his thinking, clothes the approaching herald of good news with the garments of beauty.

Isaiah pictures himself as being on the scene and hearing the good tidings delivered by the messenger. In a state of ecstasy he calls upon the waste places of Jerusalem to burst forth into singing and praise. Having seen the over-all picture of this prophecy, one should examine the message more minutely.

In verse 7 the Prophet sees and hears the herald of good tidings proclaiming his message to Jerusalem. This herald announces a message of salvation and assures Zion that "Thy God reigneth!" The term *salvation* means deliverance. The thing from which or the person from whom the deliverance is made must be determined by the context, or from the knowledge of the general situation as gleaned from parallel and related passages. Israel was delivered from Egyptian bondage. Many a person has been delivered from physical dangers in which he has become involved. This messenger publishes salvation in that he says to Zion, "Thy God reigneth!" Since the Prophet is talking about the time when Jehovah returns to Zion, it is clear that he is speaking of the end of the present age.

The walled city which the Prophet sees in this vision is Jerusalem. The watchmen on the walls are the leaders of the nation. The herald bringing glad tidings represents the people of God who bring the gospel message of redemption to the Jewish people.

The watchmen on the walls—the leaders of the Jewish people—believe and receive the message; then they burst forth in song, "for they shall see eye to eye, when Jehovah returneth to Zion." What is the significance of the expression, "returneth?" As mentioned in a previous chapter, a person can return to the places only where he has been before. Since Jehovah is going to return to Zion, the inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the facts is that he has already been to Zion, and that he has gone away from it. But, according to this prophecy, He will yet return to Zion. This interpretation is in perfect alignment with other passages pertaining to this subject. Jehovah the Son came to Zion in the person of Jesus of Nazareth over nineteen hundred years ago. Being rejected, He departed and went back to glory. When the message of redemption through His shed blood is given to the people of Israel and is received by them, He will return—in fulfillment of this prophecy.

Having learned about His returning to Zion, they rejoice in the fact that they "shall see eye to eye" when Jehovah Jesus returns. Moreover, they will be convinced by the heralds of the gospel that Jehovah's return will occur in their day,

"for they shall see eye to eye when Jehovah returneth to Zion." "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, ... Even so, Amen" (Rev. 1:7).

Who sends this herald of good tidings to proclaim the message of redemption to Israel? There can be but one answer: Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel.

C. *Isaiah 57:14*

"And he will say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people." As may be seen by examining Isaiah, chapters 56 and 57, the Prophet is discussing events of the end time. In this connection, speaking for God, he issues a command, "Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people." To whom is this command given? When this passage is studied in the light of Isaiah 40:1,2, it immediately becomes evident that the Prophet is addressing the same group of God's people in both chapters—believers in Jesus the Messiah. This interpretation is also confirmed by the facts presented in Isaiah, chapter 62, which will be presently examined. The command, "Cast ye up ... prepare the way ... take up the stumbling-block," is an echo of an old custom. In ancient times when one monarch announced that he would visit another ruler, the host monarch would construct a highway through his territory, from the border to his capital, in order that his royal visitor might come with all the pomp and pageantry of state.

In Isaiah 57:14 the way to be constructed is not for some royal personage, as in Isaiah 40:3-5 and 62:10-12, but for the people of Israel in their returning to God—"take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my [Jehovah's] people."

The command to remove the stumbling-block assumes that there is something in the way of Israel's return to God over which the nation stumbles—not a literal stumbling-block, of course, but some doctrinal teaching which they do not understand, and which, therefore, they do not accept. This stumbling-block may be a single doctrine, or it may refer to the system of teaching which is thought of as a whole.

How can the stumbling-block of error and misunderstandings be removed? There is but one way—by presenting the truth and exposing the error. The command to remove the stumbling-block, therefore, is a figurative way of commanding those who have the truth to proclaim it to God's Ancient People.

D. *Isaiah 62:1-12*

The sixty-second chapter of Isaiah is of paramount importance in presenting the truth of God's Word to the nation of Israel.

62 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth. 2 And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name. 3 Thou shalt also be a crown of beauty in the hand of Jehovah, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. 4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah; for Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. 5 For as a young man marieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are Jehovah's remembrancers, take ye no rest, 7 and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. 8 Jehovah hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy grain to be food for thine enemies; and foreigners shall not drink thy new wine, for which thou hast labored: 9 but they that have garnered it shall eat it, and praise Jehovah; and they that have gathered it shall drink it in the courts of my sanctuary.

10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up an ensign for the peoples. 11 Behold, Jehovah hath proclaimed unto the end of the earth, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, His reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 12 And they shall call them The holy people, The redeemed of Jehovah: and thou shalt be called Sought out, A city not forsaken (Isa. 62:1-12).

This chapter falls into three divisions:

God's great concern for Israel's salvation (vv. 1-5).

The command to pray for the peace of Jerusalem (vv. 6-9).

Jehovah's command to present-day believers to proclaim the truth to Israel (vv. 10-12).

God's great concern for Israel's salvation is most powerfully expressed in verse 1: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth." According to this revelation, the Lord will not hold His peace until Zion is saved. Moreover, He will not take any rest until Jerusalem's righteousness goes forth as brightness and as a lamp that burneth. The Lord, in expressing himself thus, is speaking anthropomorphically, but His statements must be taken at face value. From Genesis, chapter 12, throughout the entire Old Testament, God, speaking through the prophets, continually discusses Israel's salvation and restoration to His favor. In the New Testament the same subject is discussed, especially in the Jewish section of the Epistle to the Romans, chapters 9-11. In view of these facts, one sees that God talks about Israel's salvation, as He has stated He would do, in Isaiah 62:1. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

When Israel is thus saved, he will become as a crown of beauty in the hand of his God. Then he will become a channel of world blessing.

According to verse 6, God has set watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem who "shall never hold their peace day nor night." These watchmen are on the walls of Jerusalem and are engaged in worship, prayer, and praise. Since no men are there, these watchmen evidently are celestial beings. They are continually praising God and are engaged in divine services. Since those who are addressed as "Jehovah's remembrancers" are urged to pray for the deliverance and prosperity of Jerusalem, and since they are mentioned in connection with the watchmen on the wall, one may safely conclude that all are engaged in prayer for the prosperity of Jerusalem.

Who are Jehovah's remembrancers? They are the people who know God's will as revealed in the Scriptures, and who are urged by the Lord continually to bring in faith before God the divine plan. Thus God's servants co-operate with Him in prayer. Prayer changes things. Prayer changes people. Prayer brings victory.

It behooves every true servant of the Lord to study the Scriptures faithfully in order that he might know God's will, as revealed in the Word, and in order that he might pray intelligently. God wants those who know Him and believe in prayer to "take ye no rest and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (v. 7). In other words, the Lord wants a volume of believing prayer regarding the future of Jerusalem and the Jewish people ascending to His throne day and night, for prayer changes things.

In verses 10-12, God commands His remembrancers—prayer warriors—to proclaim the message of redemption to the Jewish people. He gives this command in terms of constructing a highway: "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up an ensign for the peoples" (v. 10).

This highway is to be made for the coming of Messiah. Those constructing the highway are to "gather out the stones"—the stumbling-block, as seen in Isaiah 57:14. The figurative language of Isaiah 62:10 is interpreted literally in verse 11. According to this verse, God has sent forth a proclamation to His prayer warriors throughout the entire earth. This proclamation is the royal order of the day, commanding them, "Say ye to the daughter of Zion ..." In this verse are orders from the throne of God in heaven to His faithful people on earth to proclaim to the Jewish people the message regarding the coming of Messiah.

"Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him." The heralds are to announce to the Jewish people, the daughter of Zion, that their salvation cometh. To what does the expression "thy salvation" refer? The answer is found in the next sentence: "Behold his reward is with him, and his recompense before him." These statements show that the salvation mentioned is a person. Who is this one? Obviously He is the one who will deliver Jerusalem and Israel. He is the Messiah of Israel, of whom the prophets spoke so very glowingly.

But there are two comings of the one Messiah, which are separated by the period during which this Messiah is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, awaiting the time that Israel will pray for Him to return. The coming here referred to is the second advent; because, when He returns, He will bring rewards for His true servants. Confirmation of this interpretation is found in the fact that, when He came nineteen hundred years ago, He purchased redemption for all. When He comes in fulfillment of this prediction, He will bring rewards to His faithful servants and mete out punishment to His enemies.

All faithful believers in Jesus as the Messiah are ordered by heaven to proclaim the message of salvation to all Israel and to announce that the second and glorious coming of Messiah is close at hand.

II. ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 28:18-20

Having examined the principal passages in the Old Testament in which God commands believers to proclaim the message of truth to Israel, we now turn to the New Testament and investigate Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

By appointment the risen, glorified Lord Jesus met the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some of them were in doubt. Events had taken a turn unexpected by the apostles. Some of them were, therefore, bewildered. Knowing that the misgivings of those who were in doubt would soon be dissipated, the Lord spoke to the group, saying, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." Everything in heaven and on the earth was turned over to the Lord Jesus as the God-man, who had conquered Satan and all the forces of evil. As the Lord of all creation, therefore, He commanded the apostles, saying, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." According to verse 19, Jesus instructed the apostles to make disciples of all nations. Israel, of course, is included in the expression "all

the nations." They were, of course to teach those who accept Christ as Lord and to baptize them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

At the last appearance of Jesus to the apostles, He urged them to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit, who would bring new spiritual power to them, "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

According to this verse, the twelve apostles were given instructions as to how they should proceed on their world-wide mission. They were to be witnesses of that which had occurred, and that which they had seen concerning Jesus, first in Jerusalem. Then they were to fan out into all Judaea. Next they were to go northward and preach the truth in Samaria. This work having been accomplished, they were to go forth into all the world. The apostles followed the Lord's instructions literally. In the Book of Acts, we have a very terse history of the beginnings of Christianity, as it spread from Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the earth. Echoes of this world-wide ministry are heard in Romans 10:18 and Colossians 1:6, 23.

As soon as the Apostle Paul was convinced that Jesus was the Hebrew Messiah and Saviour of the world, he accepted Him, while he was still in Damascus. Immediately he proclaimed in the synagogues that Jesus was and is the Son of God (Acts 9:20). At Antioch in Pisidia Paul preached in the Jewish synagogue and gave his countrymen an opportunity to receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour (Acts 13:13-51). When the Jews of Antioch would not receive the message, the Apostle turned to the Gentiles of this community and preached Christ. From Antioch the apostolic band of which Paul was the leader went to Iconium and preached in the synagogue of that place (Acts 14:1-7). When the Apostle went into Macedonia, he preached the gospel first in the synagogue (Acts 17:1-3). Upon arriving at Corinth, Greece, he first went to the synagogue and proclaimed Christ. When the Jews violently rejected the message, he turned to the Gentiles (Acts 18:1-11). Upon reaching Ephesus, Paul went and preached in the Jewish synagogue. When the Jews of Ephesus rejected his teaching, he preached in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:8ff.). When the Apostle reached Rome, he preached to the Jews of the imperial city first. When they rejected the message, he turned to the Gentiles (Acts, chapter 28).

From the passages referred to above, it is clearly seen that the inspired Apostle put the Jew first on his program of preaching the gospel.

It is, therefore, by the authority of the glorified, risen Lord that the gospel should be proclaimed to all Israel.

III. ACCORDING TO ROMANS 1:16, 17

In the letter to the church at Rome, the Apostle Paul declares that the gospel is "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The expression "to the Jew first" is the occasion of much controversy. Because of this misunderstanding it becomes necessary to follow the facts very closely in order to ascertain what is meant by this expression. One group of expositors insists upon interpreting this phrase dispensationally, that is, that the gospel was to be given to the Jew first in this dispensation, and that since Israel as a nation rejected the message, the Church is to cease preaching to the Jew and is to devote all her energy and time in preaching to the Gentiles. Furthermore, these expositors insist that the Jew is not to be saved by the preaching of the gospel, but by literally looking upon the Lord Jesus at His Second Coming (Zech. 12:10ff.).

The second group of expositors believes that the expression "to the Jew first" is to be interpreted literally, that is, in every place and at all times the Jew is to be given the gospel first; then it is to be given to the Gentiles. According to these expositors, if there is a community to be evangelized in which both Jews and Gentiles reside, the gospel is to be given to the Jews of that community first; then it is to be preached to the Gentiles of the same locality.

The Apostle Paul wrote the Roman epistle in A.D. 58. At that time the gospel, which began to be proclaimed at Jerusalem, had reached out to the ends of the earth (Rom. 10:18). Although the gospel had been preached to all creation under heaven by A.D. 63, when the Colossian letter was written (Col. 1:23), the Apostle Paul felt an obligation to proclaim the gospel to all people; "For it [the gospel message] is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). In view of these facts, one cannot interpret the controversial phrase "to the Jew first" dispensationally as the first group of expositors claim.

One must therefore take the expression at its face value. In every case and at all times, when there are Jews and Gentiles living together in the same community, God's order is to give the gospel to the Jews first. After this is done, it is to be given to the Gentiles.

The assumption of this passage is that God has commanded His people to give the gospel to all nations, as seen in Matthew 28:18-20, but the Jew is to have it first.

IV. ACCORDING TO THE COMMAND "HEAR YE HIM" (MATT. 17:5)

To Mount Sinai the Lord descended and from its heights spoke the Ten Words, the Ten Commandments, to Israel, assembled in the plain beneath (Exodus, chapter 20; Deuteronomy, chapter 5).

Frequently, the Lord spoke to Moses, giving him laws, which He enjoined upon Israel to obey—not only in the letter, but in the spirit—regulations, commandments, statutes, and ordinances.

When God spoke from the mountain, Israel was terrified by the unusual phenomena taking place before their startled gaze. They, therefore, implored Moses that God speak to him directly and that he, in turn, relay the message to the people. The Lord granted this request and at the same time unfolded before them one of the greatest Messianic predictions:

15 Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; 16 according to all that thou desiredst of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17 And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him (Deut. 18:15-19).

From time to time the Lord spoke through the prophets, urging Israel to give heed to all His commandments. Constantly He kept bringing before their minds the coming of the Messiah to whom they must give unqualified allegiance of heart and obedience. "I will raise them up a prophet ... and I will put my words in his mouth ... And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deut. 18:18,19). From this quotation it is quite obvious that the people of Israel were enjoined to obey the law as given by Moses until God would raise up this Prophet, who is none other than the Messiah of Israel.

On one occasion Jesus went up into a high mountain with Peter, James, and John, and was transfigured before them. It seems that His divine nature on this occasion began to scintillate through His human flesh and to radiate His eternal glory. As usual, Peter immediately spoke up, saying, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. 5 While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:4,5).

Heretofore, the God of Israel had commanded His people to hearken to the voice of Moses, and also to the Prophets. Realizing the high and authoritative positions held by Moses and the Prophets, Peter, impetuous and not thinking things through, exclaimed "Lord, ... if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles: one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." By making this suggestion, Peter elevated Moses (who stood for the law) and Elijah (who stood for the Prophets) to the high and exalted level on which the Son of God stands. While Peter was yet speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed the group, "and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." The people of Israel had been looking to Moses and the Prophets as absolute authorities in all matters. Now God speaks, saying in substance: "You are no longer to look to Moses or Elijah, or any of the prophets, as having authority in matters of life and conduct. Jesus of Nazareth, your Teacher and Master, is my well beloved Son. He, and He alone, has all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, hear ye Him" (Matt. 11:27). "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18b).

In this connection it is well for us to consider the question as to why God spoke through Moses and the Prophets, but now speaks through His Son:

1 God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, 2 hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in *his* Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; 3 who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; 4 having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they (Heb.1:1-4).

Concerning the law, the Apostle Paul declares:

23 But before faith came, we were kept inward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24 So that the law is become our tutor *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor... 1 But I say that so long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a bondservant though he is lord of all; 2 but is under guardians and stewards until the day appointed of the father. 3 So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world: 4 but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Gal. 3:23-25 ... 4:1-5).

When Jesus died on the Cross for the sins of the world, He abrogated the law:

13 And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses; 14 having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; 15 having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it (Col. 2:13-15).

The law, having served the purpose for which it was given is no longer in force. "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:17-20). The Lord Jesus gives the sum and substance of the law in the following quotation:

34 But the Pharisees when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together. 35 And one of them, a lawyer asked him a question trying him: 36 Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second like *unto it* is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 40 On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets (Matt. 22:34-40).

Since the law has been fulfilled, it is no longer binding upon anyone as a legal code or way of life. If one continues to look to Moses as an absolute authority regulating his life and service to God a veil of blindness covers his eyes. When, however, one sees that the law was a schoolmaster in bringing him to Christ, and accepts Christ the veil of blindness is taken away. For the Spirit of God, speaking through the Apostle Paul, declares:

4 And such confidence have we through Christ to God-ward: 5 not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God; 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. 7 But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face; which *glory* was passing away 8 how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be with glory? ... 12 Having therefore such a hope we use great boldness of speech, 13 and *are* not as Moses, who put a veil upon his face, that the children of Israel should not look stedfastly on the end of that which was passing away: 14 but their minds were hardened: for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remaineth, it not being revealed *to them* that it is done away in Christ. 15 But unto this day, whensoever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart. 16 But whensoever it shall turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit (II Cor. 3:4-8 ... 12-18).

Is one to conclude from what the inspired Apostle says in the Scripture just quoted that no one is to read Moses? and that if one does, his eyes will be blinded? By no means. What the Apostle means is that one is no longer to read Moses as an authoritative guide in respect to life, worship, and conduct—now that the law has served its purpose, has been abrogated, and the gospel of divine love and grace has taken its place. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

One is to read Moses and the Prophets for information, instructions, and edification. The Apostle explains the proper use of the writings of Moses and the Prophets in the following words:

13 But evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 Every scripture¹ inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: 17 that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work (II Tim 3:13-17).

Someone has tersely said "The New Testament is infolded in the Old Testament; and the Old is unfolded in the New." All sixty-six Books of the Bible constitute a unit. "The sum of thy word is truth" (Ps. 119:160). The treasures of truth are to be found in the Bible, the divine library.

¹ In the first century all writings were spoken of as scripture. The word *scripture* comes from the Latin, which means to write. Only those writings that are inspired of God are profitable for guidance.

CHAPTER IV

ISRAEL'S REPUDIATION OF THE NATIONAL SIN

In Chapter II of this book, Israel's confession of his national sin is discussed. The prophets foretelling this epochal event are Moses, Hosea, Isaiah—and the Lord Jesus Christ. In several other passages, one hears a faint echo of this confession, but they have not been examined because of lack of space. In the present chapter the repudiation by Israel of the national sin and his return to God are discussed, as it is presented in Jeremiah, chapter 3; Zechariah, chapters 12-14; and Acts, chapter 3.

I. PENITENT ISRAEL'S RETURN TO GOD ACCORDING TO JEREMIAH

Jeremiah, chapter 3, is a single oracle, a literary unit. Like a gently flowing brook, the major theme of this oracle quietly, but steadily, flows onward to the end.

The chapter falls into the following divisions:

The corruption of the people and their punishment (vv. 1-5).

Judah more corrupt than Israel (vv. 6-10).

First invitation for Israel to return to God (vv. 11-13).

Second invitation for Israel to return to God (vv. 14, 15).

A vision of Jerusalem the Golden (vv. 16, 17).

Israel restored to the land of the fathers (v. 18).

Israel on the march back to God (vv. 19-25).

A. *The Corruption of the People and Their Punishment*

3 They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, will he return unto her again? will not that land be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith Jehovah. 2 Lift up thine eyes unto the bare heights, and see; where hast thou not been lain with? By the ways hast thou sat for them, as an Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness. 3 Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; yet thou hast a harlot's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed. 4 Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth? 5 Will he retain his anger for ever? will he keep it to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and hast done evil things, and hast had thy way (vv.1-5).

Jeremiah begins his oracle by asking the following question, which was a common saying among the people: "They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him and become another man's, will he return unto her again?" The answer expected is "No, he will not." Matrimony is holy in the sight of God. Men and women must not tamper with it (Matt. 19:3-12). Marriage, separation, and remarriage very frequently open the doors for various and sundry evils. The inspired Prophet gives the divine answer to the question by asking another one: "Will not that land be greatly polluted?" "Yes, it will," affirms Jeremiah.

Like those who lightheartedly and, one might say, flippantly deal with the marriage relationship, Israel had dealt lightheartedly with her spiritual marital relationship, with Jehovah. "But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith Jehovah." A perusal of the history of Israel from the Exodus out of Egypt to Jeremiah's day corroborates the Prophet's indictment of the nation relative to spiritual adultery. In order to prove this point, the Prophet lifts his eyes and calls attention to the high places throughout the land where the people had engaged in spiritual adultery—worshiping foreign gods (v. 2).

Because of this unfaithfulness to God, the Lord had withholden the showers and the latter rain (v. 3). Then the Prophet urges the people from that time onward to cry to the Lord, saying, "My Father, thou art the guide of my youth? 5 Will he retain *his anger* for ever? will he keep it to the end?" (v. 4, 5a). God had been the guide of the people of Israel from their youth. He will not keep His anger for ever.

B. *Judah More Corrupt Than Israel*

6 Moreover Jehovah said unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. 7 And I said after she had done all these things, She will return unto me; but she returned not: and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 And I saw, when, for this very cause that backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a bill of divorcement, yet treacherous Judah her sister feared not; but she also went and played the harlot. 9 and it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that the land was polluted, and she committed adultery with stones and with stocks. 10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not returned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith Jehovah (vv. 6-10).

According to verses 6-10, the northern kingdom had been very sinful. But her treacherous sister, Judah, had done worse things than the people of the northern kingdom had done in that Judah had enjoyed more light and greater opportunities than Israel. Increased light brings added responsibility. According to this principle, God deals with His people.

C. *First Invitation for Israel to Return to God*

11 And Jehovah said unto me, Backsliding Israel hath showed herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. 12 Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith Jehovah; I will not look in anger upon you; for I am merciful, saith Jehovah, I will not keep *anger* for ever. 13 Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against Jehovah thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith Jehovah. (vv. 11-13).

As noted above, God gives an urgent invitation for backsliding Israel to return to Him. As the Lord had instructed Jeremiah, He looks toward the north saying, "Return ... I will not look in anger upon you; for I am merciful ... I will not keep *anger* for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against Jehovah ... and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers ... and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith Jehovah." Notwithstanding Israel's having played the harlot with foreign gods, the Lord urgently invites the sinful people to return. He states their guilt and pleads with them to return without any coercion on His part. God never forces the will of any man, but uses moral suasion, always stopping short of stepping over the threshold of the individuality of His creatures.

As has been seen, the word *return* of verse 12 was an invitation to the people of Jeremiah's day to lay aside their idolatrous practices and return to God. In verse 14 the word *return* is again used. Does this word repeat the invitation of verse 12? or does it refer to something else? When the people of Israel heed this admonition and accept the invitation,

God promises that He will take them, one of a city, and two of a family, and will bring them to Zion. Moreover, when they accept this invitation, He will give them shepherds who will feed them with true knowledge and understanding. Then the Prophet connects these promises with a vision of Jerusalem when it is the praise of the whole earth. These facts prove that, when the Prophet uses the word *return* the second time, he is looking out into the future and speaking of the Kingdom Age. Following the law of double reference, Jeremiah blends the two invitations into a single picture—a principle which the prophets often follow. In Isaiah 11:1,2, for instance, the Prophet speaks of the first coming of the Messiah; in verses 3-5 he speaks of events that will occur in connection with His Second Coming. Another example of this principle is found in Zechariah 9:9,10. As the facts show, verse 9 deals with the first coming of the Messiah; verse 10, on the contrary, foretells His Second Coming and the events connected therewith. The centuries separating these two events are in these verses passed over without mention, and the two comings of the one Messiah are here blended into a single picture.

D. Second Invitation for Israel to Return to God

"Return, O backsliding children, saith Jehovah; for I am a husband unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion. 15 And I will give you shepherds according to my heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jer. 3:14,15).

Frequently, the prophets were carried forward in vision from their day across the centuries to a time in the future and described what they saw and heard. Speaking for God, Jeremiah with tenderness and gentleness, calls upon backsliding Israel to return. Like Jeremiah, Micah presents God as ready to forgive sins and to blot out all iniquities.

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 (Micah 7:18-20).

Notwithstanding the fact that backsliding Israel has played the harlot, engaging in idolatrous worship from time to time, the Lord affirms, "I am a husband unto you." To the same effect Isaiah speaks to Israel:

4 Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth; and the reproach of thy widowhood shalt thou remember no more. 5 For thy Maker is thy husband; Jehovah of hosts is his name: and the Holy One of Israel is thy Redeemer; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. 6 For Jehovah hath called thee as a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, even a wife of youth, when she is cast off, saith thy God. 7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. 8 In overflowing wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting lovingkindness will I have mercy on thee, saith Jehovah thy Redeemer (Isa. 54:4-8).

God cannot arbitrarily overlook and pass by sin and iniquity, for He is righteous and His holiness cannot countenance sin in any form. When, however, the sinner repents and forsakes his evil ways and throws himself, figuratively speaking, at the feet of the God against whom he has sinned, pleading for mercy, God will accept and receive him. The thief who was executed along with Jesus on the cross cried out in faith, "42 And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom. 43 And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:42,43). Of all the Jews living at the time foreseen in this passage by Jeremiah, only those who heed the warning and accept the salvation which God provides will be admitted into the Kingdom. "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and

I will bring you to Zion." Those not heeding the warning or not accepting the salvation full and free will be purged from the nation and cast into outer darkness.

The leaders of Israel are often spoken of as shepherds. The prophets frequently denounce them for dereliction of duties. The implication of Jeremiah 3:15 is that the shepherds of Israel of the end time are unfaithful in the discharge of their duties; responsibilities; and service to the flock, the great masses of the Jewish people. God, therefore, through the Prophet, promises to give them the proper kind of shepherds. "And I will give you shepherds according to my heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jer. 3:15). God is going to hold the leaders of the people—both Jew and Gentile—to a strict account for the way in which they discharge the duties of their positions. The inspired Apostle Paul urges Timothy to preach God's Word faithfully to the people and charges him before God saying, "I charge *thee* in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching" (II Tim. 4:1,2).

Isaiah speaks of the regathering of Israel and thinks of the people as a flock of sheep in a forest that is exposed to the attack of the wild beasts. The watchmen are not interested in the welfare and the protection of the sheep. On the contrary, they are interested in satisfying the carnal desires of their own depraved nature.

9 All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest. 10 His watchmen are blind, they are all without knowledge; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber. 11 Yea, the dogs are greedy, they can never have enough; and these are shepherds that cannot understand: they have all turned to their own way, each one to his gain, from every quarter. 12 Come *ye, say they*, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, a day great beyond measure. (Isa. 56:9-12).

Beasts, when used symbolically as in this passage, always refer to civil governments. Thus the governments, according to verse 9, are permitted to devour the flock of Israel because the watchmen are not protecting their sheep. What Isaiah said about the leaders of his own countrymen can be truthfully said about many preachers and ministers in the Christian world. A man who assumes the position of proclaiming God's Word will have to give a strict account to the Lord for what he preaches, does, and fails to do: "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the straw to the wheat? saith Jehovah. 29 Is not my word like fire? saith Jehovah; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:28,29).

Ezekiel also condemns the unfaithful and unworthy leaders of his people (Ezekiel, chapter 34). These shepherds, concerning whom the Prophet is speaking, are probably both the political and religious leaders of the nation.

34 And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, 2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, even to the shepherds, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Woe unto the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the sheep? 3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill the fatlings; but ye feed not the sheep. 4 The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought back that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with rigor have ye ruled over them. 5 And they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and they became food to all the beasts of the field, and were scattered. 6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my sheep were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and there was none that did search or seek *after them*.

7 Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of Jehovah: 8 As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely forasmuch as my sheep became a prey, and my sheep became food to all the beasts of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my sheep, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my sheep; 9 therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of Jehovah: 10 Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Beh old, I am against the

shepherds; and I will require my sheep at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the sheep; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; and I will deliver my sheep from their mouth, that they may not be food for them. (Ezek. 34:1-10).

Since these shepherds are so very unfaithful in caring for the flock entrusted to them, the Lord promises to become a shepherd in order to care for His flock. "For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I myself, even I, will search for my sheep, and will seek them out" (Ezek. 34:11). This language is specific and forceful. It must be interpreted in the light of the facts presented in the chapter. The shepherds whom the Prophet condemns are men, and as men they bear a certain relationship to the people of Israel whom they are supposed to guide and protect. Since as men they fail utterly in the discharge of their duties, the Lord God says in substance, "I will take upon myself the form of a man and as a man I will perform faithfully the duties which the shepherds have failed to fulfill."

In order to emphasize Ezekiel's thought and logic, I wish to use this illustration. A stock raiser has a large flock of sheep that has been cared for by a shepherd, or a shepherder as shepherds are called in Texas—who has quit his job. This stockman has to get someone or something to take care of his flock. Would he purchase a horse to care for the sheep? No. A cow? No. A dog? No. He will procure the services of a man who can attend to the sheep as a shepherder does. In like manner, since the shepherds of Israel were unfaithful in the discharge of their duties, God declares that He Himself, is going to dismiss them and perform the duties of a shepherd. In order to do so, the Lord will have to take on the form of a man. This promise, therefore, assumes that one of the divine personalities constituting the Triune God will lay aside temporarily His eternal glory and will take the form of a man, in order to shepherd Israel, His flock. Isaiah foretells how God can take the form of a man, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). The gospel records prove that the Second Person of the Holy Trinity did enter the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. When He came the first time, He preached redemption by the sacrifice of Himself. Not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God, the Hebrews as a nation rejected Him. When He returns at the invitation of penitent Israel, He will shepherd the Chosen People, in fulfillment of the following passage,

11 For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I myself, even I, will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them with good pasture; and upon the mountains of the height of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie down in a good fold; and on fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. 15 I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord Jehovah. 16 I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but the fat and the strong I will destroy; I will feed them in justice. (Ezek. 34:11-16).

According to the promise made by Jesus to His apostles, they will assist in shepherding the Chosen People, "... Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28).

It is probable that Jeremiah 3:15 refers to the apostles who assist in shepherding Israel: "And I will give you shepherds according to my heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Other saved, glorified people may also assist in shepherding the Chosen People.

E. A Vision of Jerusalem the Golden

16 And it shall come to pass, when ye are multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith Jehovah, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of Jehovah; neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they miss it; neither shall it be made any more. 17 At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart (Jer. 3:16,17).

One of the most important pieces of furniture belonging either to the tabernacle or to the temple was the ark of the covenant, the top of which was called the mercy seat. On it the Shekinah glory rested. On the mercy seat the blood of atonement was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement. Thus the ark of the covenant was practically the center and circumference of the thinking of the average Hebrew.

But in the future when Israel is restored to favor with God, the ark of the covenant will not be thought of, neither will it be made any more; "And it shall come to pass, when ye are multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith Jehovah, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of Jehovah; neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they miss it; neither shall it be made any more" (Jer. 3:16). The Jerusalem that has existed for centuries will have passed away. The Jerusalem of the future may be thought of as "Jerusalem the Golden," for it will be built on a gloriously magnificent scale: "11 O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will set thy stones in fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. 12 And I will make thy pinnacles of rubies, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy border of precious stones. 13 And all thy children shall be taught of Jehovah; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isa. 54:11-13). The reason for this splendor and glory is stated in the following passage, "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart" (Jer. 3:17).

Why will Jerusalem be called the "throne of Jehovah"? There can be but one answer. Messiah Jehovah will be there. Isaiah had a clear vision of Messiah Jehovah as He will reign in Zion.

17 Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold a land that reacheth afar ... 20 Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tent that shall not be removed, the stakes whereof shall never be plucked up, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. 21 But there Jehovah will be with us in majesty, a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. 22 For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king; he will save us (Isa. 33:17, 20-22).

According to verse 21, "Jehovah will be with us [the Hebrew people] in majesty." Jehovah will be present in Jerusalem as king, according to verse 22. Jehovah, King Messiah, will be the judge, the lawgiver, and the king.

Zephaniah the prophet likewise portrays the vision of Jehovah, King Messiah, reigning in Jerusalem.

14 Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. 15 Jehovah hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even Jehovah, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not fear evil any more. 16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; O Zion, let not thy hands be slack. 17 Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing (Zeph. 3:14-17).

The united testimony of Moses and the prophets is to the effect that, when Israel accepts her rejected Messiah, He will return, lift the curse from the earth, establish His throne in Jerusalem, and reign over all the nations.

F. Israel Restored to the Land of the Fathers

"In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I gave for an inheritance unto your fathers" (Jer. 3:18). Upon the death of King Solomon the ten northern tribes of the Children of Israel revolted against the house of David and set up a rival kingdom known as the Kingdom of Israel, Ephraim, or Jacob. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained faithful to the Davidic dynasty. There was continual enmity, which broke out in wars at times, between the two kingdoms, that is, the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah. This rivalry and enmity continued until the overthrow of the northern kingdom. Of course, there were exceptions to the rule, so far as individuals were concerned, but this enmity by the rival tribes will vanish, and the twelve tribes will lay aside all enmity and jealousy, and as one people will return to God—as Jeremiah 3:18 foretells.

Isaiah the Prophet foretells the restoration of Israel, which will occur at the end of this age.

11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, that shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. 12 And he will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth (Isa. 11:11,12).

At that time the enmity and jealousy that marred the lives of all the Israelites of the time will vanish. "The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and they that vex Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim" (v. 13).

The restoration of Israel to the land of the fathers is set forth in Ezekiel, chapter 37, under the symbolism of the vision of the valley of dry bones. An examination of this passage shows that the return to the land of the fathers is set forth as a process, an advancing movement. In this connection, the Prophet was commanded to take two sticks. On the first one, he was to write upon it, "For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions," and another he was to write "For Joseph [the northern kingdom] the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions" (v. 16). Then the Prophet was commanded to tie them together into a single bundle. These sticks become a rod setting forth the passing away of the enmity and jealousy between the tribes, and the reunion of the nation. At that time the thought, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps. 133:1) so far as the Children of Israel are concerned, will become a reality.

G. Israel on the March Back to God

God's first call to Israel to return to Him (Jer. 3:12,13) went unheeded. The strokes of judgment, therefore, had to fall on them. The second call to return (v. 14) will not go unheeded.

After giving a vision of Jerusalem in the great Kingdom Age of the future, the Lord calls the attention of the people of Israel to the promised blessings which they would have received if they had followed Him implicitly. "But I said, How I will put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of the nations! and I said, Ye shall call me My Father, and shall not turn away from following me. 20 Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith Jehovah" (Jer. 3:19,20). According to Leviticus 26:1-13 and Deuteronomy 28:1-14, the land of Israel would have been Paradise regained, practically speaking, if the people of Israel had followed the Lord, trusting and obeying.

In vision, however, Jeremiah sees a host of Israel marching penitentially back to God.

21 A voice is heard upon the bare heights, the weeping and the supplications of the children of Israel; because they have perverted their way, they have forgotten Jehovah their God. 22 Return, ye backsliding children, I will heal your backslidings.

Behold, we are come unto thee; for thou art Jehovah our God. 23 Truly in vain is *the help that is looked for* from the hills, the tumult on the mountains: truly in Jehovah our God is the salvation of Israel. 24 But the shameful thing hath devoured the labor of our fathers from our youth, their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. 25 Let us lie down in our shame, and let our confusion cover us; for we have sinned against Jehovah our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day; and we have not obeyed the voice of Jehovah our God (Jer. 3:21-25).

In this vision the Prophet sees the land of Israel as a desolate waste and the remnant of Israel "marching to Zion," weeping, and pouring their heart out to God, "because they have perverted their way; they have forgotten Jehovah their God."

God, who knows the hearts of all men, will realize that the remnant of Israel of the end time is dead in earnest—that the people have genuinely repented of their sinfulness, and sincerely crave His blessings. God, therefore, responds to this situation, saying, "Return, ye backsliding children, I will heal your backslidings." By this invitation God assures the penitent ones that He will accept them.

To this divine response the penitential ones, by faith, look up into the face of God, confessing, "Behold, we are come unto thee; for thou art Jehovah our God. 23 Truly in vain is *the help that is looked for* from the hills, the tumult on the mountains: truly in Jehovah our God is the salvation of Israel. 24 But the shameful thing hath devoured the labor of our fathers from our youth, their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. 25 Let us lie down in our shame, and let our confusion cover us; for we have sinned against Jehovah our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day; and we have not obeyed the voice of Jehovah our God."

According to this quotation, the returning remnant vows that the God of Israel is their God. Then, according to verse 23, they will confess that idolatrous worship is vain, "Truly in vain is the help that is looked for from the hills." Moreover, no help or assistance can be expected from the masses—"the tumult on the mountains." They will realize that, "truly in Jehovah our God is the salvation of Israel." They close their confession of sin and wickedness by calling attention to the fact that the nation, from time to time, has engaged in idolatry from the beginning of its existence.

When the remnant penitentially returns to God, He will lovingly receive them and bless them in order that they may be a blessing to the world.

II. PENITENT ISRAEL LOOKING UNTO HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED ACCORDING TO ZECHARIAH

Zechariah, one of the three post-exilic prophets, with his older contemporary, Haggai, stirred the discouraged and disheartened exiles to new hope. When the captives returned to the land of their fathers under the leadership of Zerubbabel, they began to lay the foundation for the Temple of God. The enemies of the Jews in the land caused the work to cease. For fifteen years the returned exiles made no other attempt to rebuild the Temple. At this time, however, God raised up Haggai, an old prophet, and Zechariah, a young man, whose prophesying and preaching fired the discouraged people with a holy zeal for God and for divine services. Notwithstanding the persistent opposition of the enemy, the work of rebuilding the Temple continued, and after six years was completed.

The Book of Zechariah, with its visions and prophecies, has been pronounced one of the most vital books of prophecy. Someone has spoken of the messages of Zechariah as the cream of prophecy which he skimmed from the writings of the pre-exilic prophets. This young Prophet, guided by the Spirit of God, touched upon the major themes of prophetic utterance. The last prophecy of the Book of Zechariah (chapters 12-14) towers above all the other prophecies of the Book. These three chapters fall into eight natural divisions:

The War of the Great Day of God the Almighty (12:1-6).

Divine Assistance Given to the Remnant (12:7-9).

Penitent Israel Mourning Because of His Sin (12:10-14).

The Fountain for Sin and Uncleanness (13:1).

Israel Purged of Idolatry and Evil Spirits (13:2-6).

The Cross of Jesus "Tow'ring o'er the Wrecks of Time" (13:7-9).

The Return of Messiah Jesus (14:1-8).

The World-wide Reign of King Messiah (14:9-21).

A. *The War of the Great Day of God the Almighty*

12 The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel.

Thus saith Jehovah, who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him: 2 behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling unto all the peoples round about, and upon Judah also shall it be in the siege against Jerusalem. 3 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the peoples; all that burden themselves with it shall be sore wounded; and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered together against it. 4 In that day, saith Jehovah, I will smite every horse with terror, and his rider with madness; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the peoples with blindness. 5 And the chieftains of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in Jehovah of hosts their God. 6 In that day will I make the chieftains of Judah like a pan of fire among wood, and like a flaming torch among sheaves; and they shall devour all the peoples round about, on the right hand and on the left; and they of Jerusalem shall yet again dwell in their own place, even in Jerusalem. (Zech. 12:1-6).

Different prophets speak of this final war, which will be fought to stop all wars. Light is thrown upon this war in Revelation 16:12-16:

12 And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sunrising. 13 And I saw *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs: 14 for they are spirits of demons, working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. 15 (Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.) 16 And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-magedon.

We may believe that Satan will marshall all his subjects for this mightiest of all conflicts—"the war of the great day of God, the Almighty."

B. *Divine Assistance Given to The Remnant*

7 Jehovah also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem be not magnified above Judah. 8 In that day shall Jehovah defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of Jehovah before them. 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem (Zech. 12:7-9).

The combined forces of the armies of the world backed up and energized by all the power of Satan could wipe out the small forces of Israel at one stroke—but God. The Lord, by His omnipotence, will energize the faithful remnant so that the weakest one will become as David, the mightiest warrior of Jewish history, "and the house of David shall be as God."

The same promise of divine assistance in the last and final struggle with the world powers is promised to the remnant of Israel.

27 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from Jehovah, and the justice *due* to me is passed away from my God? 28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard? The everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of his understanding. 29 He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31 but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint (Isa. 40:27-31).

Jeremiah also refers to the miracles of divine assistance and deliverance extended to the remnant by the Lord in the end time: "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that they shall no more say, As Jehovah liveth, who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; 8 but, As Jehovah liveth, who brought up and who led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries whither I had driven them. And they shall dwell in their own land" (Jer. 23:7,8). Ever since the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage to the present time, the prophets, the psalmists, and the singers of Israel have spoken most glowingly and enthusiastically concerning the mighty works and the miraculous deliverance which God performed in behalf of Israel. The very atmosphere in which Israel moved at the time of the Exodus was supercharged with the supernatural. No other period is comparable to it. Nevertheless, in the final scene of the drama of this Age, the miraculous element in behalf of the Chosen People will reach an all-time high. The miracles of protection and deliverance will be so mighty and powerful that they will eclipse even those wrought at the time of the Exodus, so that the people of Israel "shall no more say, As Jehovah liveth, who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; 8 but, As Jehovah liveth, who brought up and who led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries whither I had driven them. And they shall dwell in their own land."

C. *Penitent Israel Mourning Because of the National Sin*

By the terrific judgments of the Tribulation, the remnant of Israel will be brought to their knees—in a manner and to an extent as has never been experienced by any people. Dr. Abba Silver states in *Messianic Speculations in Israel* that in every major crisis through which Israel as a nation, or a portion of it, has been forced to pass, the people have sought comfort and consolation in the Messianic hope, as set forth in the writings of Moses and the Prophets. We may therefore be certain that in the final crisis, the Tribulation, they will again seek hope of deliverance in the Messianic prophecies. Undoubtedly they will be in dead earnest, searching what God has actually revealed. In their quest for knowledge and facts, they will study diligently, we may be certain, every Messianic passage in the Scriptures. Naturally, they will study the prophecy found in Zechariah 12:10, which, figuratively speaking, will prove to be a highly polished mirror into which the people of Israel will look and see themselves as God sees them. Doubtless, at first questions will arise in the minds of one here and another there as to whether or not Zechariah saw them in their predicament and thus spoke. The first impression of identifying themselves as those seen by the Prophet will rapidly deepen into a positive conviction and

spread over the entire nation. As the light breaks in upon these truth seekers, suddenly God will pour out the Holy Spirit upon the nation, who will dispel all doubts, and who will burn into the very souls of the people a profound and unshakeable conviction that in crucifying Jesus of Nazareth nineteen hundred years ago, the leaders of Israel executed the Messiah for whom the nation had been longing.

Notwithstanding the simplicity and the clarity of the thought and expression of the prophecy, several points have been raised, around which a ceaseless controversy rages. Every person supports the position held by himself and by that translation which is formed in the mold shaped by his peculiar theological bias.

Aben-Ezra, for instance, who wrote after Rashi, says: "All the heathen shall look to me to see what I shall do to those who pierced Messiah, the son of Joseph." Abarbanel, who was familiar with the expositions of Rashi and Kimchi, comments as follows: "It is more correct to interpret the passage of Messiah, the son of Joseph, as our rabbis, of blessed memory, have treated it in the treatise Sukkah, 'For he shall be a mighty man of valor of the tribe of Joseph, and shall at first be captain of the Lord's host in that war (namely, against Gog and Magog) but in that war shall die.'" This comment suggests an ancient interpretation current in Jewish circles concerning the two Messiahs: Messiah ben Joseph and Messiah ben David. The former, who is of the tribe of Ephraim, according to this interpretation, in the final catastrophe when Jerusalem is besieged by the armies of the world (Ezek. 39:17-29; Zech. 14:1-8) will lead the hosts of Israel against Gog and Magog, or Gog of the land of Magog. In the midst of the struggle he will be slain. Hence Aben Ezra says that the heathen shall look unto Me (God) to see what I will do to those who have pierced Messiah, the son of Joseph. The latter, who is Messiah ben David, is a descendant of David, who will reign in power and glory over Israel when she is no longer the tail of the nations but the head. This doctrine of the two Messiahs, which can be traced back only to the third or fourth century of the Common Era, probably is the exposition of certain Jewish scholars in explaining the seemingly irreconcilable teachings of the prophets concerning the sufferings and the glories of Messiah. Had these scholars studied carefully the Scriptures, ... they would not have invented the doctrine of two Messiahs but would have seen the two comings of the one and only Messiah: the first when He comes in humiliation and is rejected by His people; the second when He returns from heaven, to which He goes after His rejection and suffering, to reign in power and glory over the earth.

Moses Alshech, of Safed, Palestine, who flourished in the second half of the sixteenth century, commenting on the death of Messiah ben Joseph, sees the work of atonement in his death: "I will do yet a third thing, and that is, that 'they shall look unto Me,' for they shall lift up their eyes unto Me in perfect repentance, when they see Him whom they pierced, that is, Messiah, the Son of Joseph; for our Rabbis, of blessed memory, have said that He will take upon Himself all the guilt of Israel, and shall then be slain in the war to make an atonement in such manner that it shall be accounted as if Israel had pierced Him, for on account of their sin. He has died; and, therefore, in order that it may be reckoned to them as a perfect atonement, they will repent and look to the blessed One, saying that there is none beside Him to forgive those that mourn on account of Him who died for their sins; this is the meaning of 'They shall look upon Me.'"

Since there are not two Messiahs, but one Who is seen at His two different advents, if one will remove the expression, "the Son of Joseph," from the quotation above and insert "the Son of David," he will have a fairly accurate interpretation of the atoning death of the real Messiah Who is "pierced" for the sins of the nation as is seen in Isaiah, chapter 53 ... Of course, the position that Messiah is slain in battle is without Scriptural authority. The substitutionary death of Messiah is

plainly reflected in this quotation. Likewise, the way to appropriate the atonement of Messiah's death is clearly stated: "therefore, in order that it may be reckoned to them as a perfect atonement, they will repent and look to the blessed One," etc. Since nothing is said in the context of Zechariah, chapter 12, of the atoning work of Messiah, except the fact that He has been pierced, and since the teaching of this passage on Zechariah 12:10, from Alshech corresponds to that of Isaiah, chapter 53, in the matter of the atoning death of the Pierced One, it is evident that Alshech and "our Rabbis, of blessed memory," recognized a most vital connection between these two passages. Not knowing the Scriptural teaching of "the Outline of Messiah's Career" and being unable to harmonize the seemingly irreconcilable teaching of the sufferings and glories of Messiah, they invented the doctrine of the two Messiahs and attributed the atoning death to the imaginary Messiah ben Joseph.¹

A second Jewish translation is that found in the "Jewish Family Bible," which was printed with the sanction of (the late) Rev. Dr. Adler, the chief rabbi. ("This version (British) is claimed to be the Authorized or Anglican Version, revised by Friedländer, Principal of the Jews' College, published in 1881"). This passage is thus translated: "But I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they whom the nations are piercing shall look upon me, and shall mourn over it." To one who is familiar with the original text this quotation is not a translation but is an interpolated Targum designed for polemic purposes. It is very evident to scholars that words have been inserted into the text in order to eliminate all reference to a suffering and atoning Messiah. Therefore this rendering needs no further comment.

A third Jewish interpretation and translation are found in the "Appendix of the Revised Version," issued by the Jewish Community in England in 1896. The translation is as follows: "And they (i.e. the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem) shall look up to me because of him whom they (i.e., the nations which come against Jerusalem) have pierced." This translation was suggested by Rashi, adopted by Kimchi, and later elaborated by Rabbi Isaak of Troki, who thus comments: "If it should happen that any of the Israelites should be pierced, namely, in that war, even though it should be one of the most inconsiderable, they shall wonder greatly how this could happen, and will think that this is the beginning of a fall and defeat before their enemies, as Joshua did. When the men of Ai smote thirty-six of Israel he said: 'Alas! O Lord God, why didst Thou cause this people to pass the Jordan?' And again: 'What shall I say when Israel turn their backs before their enemies?' (Josh. 7:8). So will it be at that time if they should see any of them pierced, they will be astonished, and look on Me on account of him whom they pierced." This translation is contrary to the grammar and to the natural sense of the context. The words אֲשֶׁר אָתָּא cannot possibly mean "because of Him whom" but simply "whom" which is preceded by אָתָּא, the definite sign of the object. This translation, like that in the translation of the Jewish Publication Society, makes "the house of David" and "the inhabitants of Jerusalem" the subject of the verb "shall look," but the "nations" of verse 9, which come against Jerusalem, the subject of the verb "pierced." It is a well-established and universally-known rule of every language that the noun which immediately precedes a verb is, unless the context indicates

¹ Though the doctrine of a Messiah ben Joseph may be traced back to the fourth century, the Servant of Isa. 53 was interpreted as Messiah ben David to the time of Rashi. Gradually in certain circles the atoning work of Messiah was attributed to the fictitious Messiah ben Joseph.

otherwise, the subject of said verb. Since these two verbs come together so very closely in this short sentence and are connected by "and," and since nothing indicates otherwise, to suppose that the prophet had a different subject for each of these verbs is illogical. Therefore, this translation is unjustifiable.

The fourth translation is that given by Isaac Leeser: "But I will pour out over the house of David, and over the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they will look up toward me (for every one) whom they have thrust through, and they will lament for him, as one lamenteth for an only son, and weep bitterly for him, as one weepeth bitterly for the first-born." The translator has inserted the phrase, "for every one" into the text. He has, however, placed it in parentheses by which fact evidently he intended to let it be known that it is not in the original. Instead of making the text plainer by his explanatory phrase, he has obscured its meaning. Doubtless, he would say that "the house of David" and "the inhabitants of Jerusalem" are the subject of the verb, "will look." What is the subject of "have thrust through"? He probably would say, "the nations." Who are those who "will lament"? The following context shows that they are the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The interpolated phrase has thrown the sentence into hopeless confusion. Since this phrase is not in the original, and since it beclouds the issue, this translation cannot be accepted.

One wonders why there is such a diversity of opinion among the different translators. The following facts may throw light upon the subject. Rashi (1040-1105) in his commentary of the Bible on this passage, according to David Baron, says: " 'They shall look back to mourn because the Gentiles had pierced some amongst them and killed some of them.' But in his commentary on the Talmud he says: 'The words, "the land shall mourn," are found in the prophecy of Zechariah, and he prophesies of the future that they shall mourn on account of Messiah, the son of Joseph, who shall be slain in the war of Gog and Magog' (Sukkah; fol. 52, Col. 1)." Continuing his comments on Rashi's methods of exegesis, Baron states: "for instance, Isaiah, chapter 53, which, in his commentary on the Bible, he expounds of the Jewish people; but in his commentary on the Talmud he explains of Messiah." One could explain the contradictory interpretations of the same passage upon the basis that he wrote these commentaries at different times and that he changed his views between his writing the first work and the second, if it were not for his statement in his commentary on Psalm 21, where he says: "Our rabbis have expounded it of the King Messiah, but it is better to expound it further of David himself, in order to answer heretics" (Baron). Hence it is certain that Rashi was moved by theological bias. It is altogether possible that the same factor has entered into the translations presented above. Such predisposition, however, did not enter into the rendering of the translation of Jewish Publication Society, which is true to the original; but this theological bias does find expression in a footnote.

The original text is as follows:

וְשָׁפַכְתִּי עַל־בֵּית דָּוִד וְעַל יוֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם רוּחַ חַן וְנְתַחֲנוּנִים וְהִבִּיטוּ אֵלַי אֶת אֲשֶׁר־דָּקְרוּ וְנִסְּדוּ עָלַי

"And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced ..." (Zech. 12:10).

The expression "I will pour" is the same promise of the coming of God's Spirit as is mentioned by Joel 2:28 ff; Ezek. 39:29; Isa. 44:3, etc.

"The Spirit of grace and supplication" is none other than the Holy Spirit of whom Isaiah speaks in 11:2. Here He is called "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." He is thus spoken of because it is He who imparts the graces enumerated to those who trust in Him. In the

present passage, He is called the spirit of grace and supplications because He will melt the heart and dispose the soul of the penitent remnant toward God. He will likewise cause them to pray as they have never before. The words "grace" and "supplications" are related as cause and effect.

"They shall look." While the original word means simply looking with the physical eye, it also carries the idea of "trustful hope and longing." It likewise means "to regard," "to consider," and "to contemplate." It is used thus in Numbers 21:9: "And Moses made a serpent of brass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld it (or 'looked unto'), the serpent of brass, he lived." The same word is likewise used in Numbers 12:8 in referring to Moses' looking upon God. Thus the penitent remnant of Israel at the second advent, being thoroughly convicted of sin, will look with hopeful trust unto Him whom the nation pierced at His first coming.

The words וְהִבִּיטוּ אֵלַי "they shall look unto me" of the Masoretic text have been the occasion of much dispute both by Jews and rationalistic critics. This reading is supported by the ancient versions and extant manuscripts with very few exceptions. It is also accepted as correct by the four Jewish versions quoted above. Some few manuscripts have "unto him" as their marginal reading (קִרְבָּן). This marginal reading has in several instances been incorporated into the text through mistake. Since, however, the ancient versions and the majority of the manuscripts are against it, it cannot be correct.

The ancient scholars evidently knowing that "Me" refers to God (the speaker), seeing that He is pierced and being unable to understand how such can be the case, placed "unto him" in the margin as an explanation of the difficulty. The speaker, as is stated in verse 1, is "the Lord who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him." As is seen in Isaiah 48:12-16, He is the first one of the two Divine Persons mentioned there whom וְהִבִּיטוּ אֵלַי sent. In other words, He is the second one of the Divine Personalities.

"They shall look unto me whom they have pierced." The word translated "pierced" occurs in Numbers 25:7,8 and also in Zechariah 13:3 and means to pierce or thrust through with a spear or lance as is clear from the context. This piercing of the Lord is evidently the piercing of "the servant of the Lord" of Isaiah 53 and "the silent sufferer" of Psalm 22. The facts ... show that the Pierced One of these Scriptures is none other than Messiah. The Pierced One of the Zechariah passage, as has been interpreted by the earliest Jewish scholars, is also Messiah, God manifest in the flesh. The seeming difficulty connected with the piercing of God becomes very clear in the light of Isaiah 9:5,6 which foretells God's taking human form, while Isaiah 7:14 states that it is by virgin birth. Therefore after God assumes human form, the inhabitants of Jerusalem pierce Him. No one is to think that this passage means that all of the inhabitants of Jerusalem actually do the piercing. A thing is said to be done by the man who gives the order as well as by the one who actually carries out his instructions. Furthermore, since throughout the Tenach the solidarity of the Jewish race is assumed, and oneness of spirit animates the nation throughout its history, the besieged and distressed remnant of the nation in the final conflict is said to have pierced Him.

"They shall mourn for him." In the preceding clauses it is said that the inhabitants of Jerusalem look unto me (God), but in this clause it is said "they shall mourn for 'Him.'" There is a sudden and abrupt change from the first person to that of the third which has occasioned much controversy among scholars. The flow of thought demands, however, that the "Him" and "Me" refer to the same one. Why such a change? Throughout the Psalms the writers frequently change very abruptly, in a dramatic way, from the second to the third person and vice versa. One has no difficulty, however, in

understanding the import of such passages. Why should one experience any trouble here? "But just as the words, 'They shall look *unto Me*,' set forth the essential oneness of the Pierced One with the Lord, so does the sudden transition in the same verse from the first person to the third, and the words, 'they shall mourn *for him*,' teach us that, as to His person, He is yet *distinct* from God." Thus appears in this glorious passage the teaching of the *Tri-Unity* of the God of Israel: the Lord God, the Holy Spirit, and the Pierced Messiah—a Divine Person in human form. At the time Israel accepts Him Whom she pierced, the following prophecy will be fulfilled: "in that day shall the Lord be one, and his name one," which statement is but an abbreviated method of saying God will be recognized as "the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people" (Jer. 31:1). He will also be the God of all families of the earth and be worshipped by all.

"And they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son." The suffering remnant shall see the mistake of centuries, both its own and that of their fathers, and in genuine contrition and repentance will mourn over him. It will be such intense mourning as that which only fond parents can experience over a first-born son. Since the Messiah is God manifest in the flesh and is called by the Lord, "My Son," He is God's Son in a special and unique sense. He has a human mother, as is declared by Isaiah the prophet, but no human father. Therefore in a very real sense He is God's "firstborn." The mourning, on the part of the remnant, over Him will be, therefore, like the mourning for an only son, as seen in Zechariah 12:10-14.

With spiritual vision illuminated and with an overwhelming sense of guilt when the surviving remnant looks unto God Whom they have pierced, there will be such a universal mourning and genuine repentance as has never been throughout the annals of history. The entire nation will see its mistake and wholeheartedly will accept the pierced Messiah as its real Shepherd. By so doing, the people of Israel will be enabled to see the "fountain ... for sin and for uncleanness" which was opened for them when Messiah came at first and was pierced for their transgressions (Zech. 13:1; Isaiah, chapter 53).

The truth gleaned from the prediction regarding the tragic death and vicarious suffering of Messiah, as found in Zechariah 12:10-13:1,7, stands out in bold relief when studied especially in the light of Psalm 22. This hymn sets forth the sufferings of Messiah at His first coming (vv. 1-21) and the glory that shall follow at His Second Coming (vv. 22-31).

The Execution of the Suffering Servant

In approaching the study of this passage it is well to note the clear outline and individuality of the sufferer. Note his birth, "but Thou art He that took me out of the womb; Thou didst make me trust when I was upon my mother's breasts." That the Psalmist is depicting an individual is seen from the fact that the sufferer speaks of his "bones" and "heart" (verse 14 (15), "tongue" and "jaws" (verse 15(16), "hands and feet" (verse 16(17), and "his garments" (verse 18(19).

His situation is described very minutely. He is in a certain place for "All they that see me laugh me to scorn" (verse 7(8), and "a company of evil-doers have inclosed me" (verse 16 (17). He has been deprived of his clothing, for says he, "I may count all my bones" (verse 17 (18). In this nude condition public gaze is directed upon him for "they look and stare upon me." His enemies have stripped him and have his garments, for "they part my garments among them, and upon

my vesture did they cast lots" (verse 18 (19). He has suffered bodily mistreatment for "they pierced my hands and my feet" (verse 16 (17)).

Furthermore, the implication of the words יִבִּיטוּ יְרֵאוּ * "they looked about, they gazed at me" is doubtless that the observers have difficulty in seeing or identifying the sufferer. This inference suggests two possibilities: firstly, that he is associated with others in suffering and the observer upon his arrival at the scene has difficulty in distinguishing him from the others; secondly, that darkness obscures the scene on account of which the onlookers experience difficulty in gazing upon him.

Finally, the sufferer has been subjected to at least one form of bodily suffering, namely, "they have bored through my hands and my feet."[†]

At the time of the suffering the victim is friendless and alone; for his friends have either forsaken him or are in the background.

He has violent, bitter, and strong enemies, which fact is proved by his being a "reproach of men" and "despised of the nation." The first of these expressions refers to the contempt of men in general toward him; the second, to the bitter hatred of his own nation. Those looking upon him "laugh him to scorn" and taunt him with the words "commit thyself unto the Lord; let Him deliver him; let Him rescue him, seeing He delighteth in him." These enemies he compares to "strong bulls of Bashan"; likewise, he compares each of them to a "ravening and a roaring lion" and finally he calls them "dogs," after which statement he plainly shows that they are wicked men, for he refers to them as a "company of evil-doers." Among his opponents are the officials or representatives of the government, for he refers to the latter in his prayer, "deliver my soul from the sword." The sword is a symbol of the government, its power, and its use of weapons to enforce law. See Isa. 2:4.

His sufferings are extreme and prolonged. His strength is poured out like water; the members of his body are violently pulled; hence "all my bones are out of joint"; his physical vigor and resistance are diminishing, for his "heart is like wax"; it is melted within him; his physical strength approaches the vanishing point, for "my strength is dried up like a potsherd"; he suffers from thirst because his "tongue cleaveth to my jaws"; and finally, he is conscious of the near end of life, for "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death."

This innocent victim has been trusting in his God from the day of his birth for "Thou art He that took me out of the womb; Thou didst make me trust when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon Thee from the womb; Thou art my God since my mother bare me." In this crisis he recognizes that he still sustains his life-long relationship to God who at present has withdrawn from him, which withdrawal is the occasion of his enemies' persecuting him.

* That these Hebrew words have such significations is clearly seen in I Samuel 17:42.

† The word יָרָא "bored through" or "pierced" undoubtedly is to be taken literally. The Masoretic scholars, who invented the vowel pointings and who did their work about the 8th century of the Christian era, have pointed the text and made it read "like a lion my hands and my feet." Of course their selection of the vowel pointings for this line was determined by their theological interpretation of the passage. It is a well-known fact that the fundamental difference between Judaism and Christianity had become in their day more or less chronic by reason of the fact that the controversy had lasted about seven hundred years. It is quite possible that honest scholarly men might be influenced unconsciously by theological bias; hence a translation or interpretation of such a crucial passage as this one, which was made by scholarly devout men prior to the rise of the controversy, would more likely represent the original meaning of the passage. Such a translation as that made by the Hebrew-Greek scholars who translated the Septuagint is more reliable on such controverted points as this one. This translation uses the word ὄρυζαν, "dugged through." This fact confirms the reading of the English translation, namely, "they pierced my hands and my feet."

The sufferings, groanings, and cryings of this innocent sufferer do not for a moment draw forth the slightest intimation of any guilt or sin on his part. When the sufferings seem to reach their climax, suddenly the groanings cease. This cessation comes with the words at the close of verse 21 (22); עָנִיתִנִּי "Thou hast answered me." In the words of another let it be said "When it ceases it ceases altogether; there is absolutely no recurrence of pain, no trace further of a single sob."

The Delivered Sufferer

With verse 22 (23) the curtain, as it were, rises. He who has agonized in such excruciating pain, and who has also suffered such inward mental and spiritual agony in verse 22 (23), now steps forward into the midst of his brethren to whom he declares the Name of God. It cannot be doubted that it is the same voice that thus suddenly breaks out into praise, for the meter is the same, the direct address to the Lord is the same, and, allowing for change of tone, the theme is the same: the lament has been "he hath not heard"; the joy now is "he hath heard." Moreover, as if to make this point clear, the very terms of the announcement, which the late sufferer now makes to his brethren brings to them vivid reminiscences of the shame and pain through which he has passed: by man he has been detested and deeply humbled, God hid His face, and the sufferer has cried for help. Now all is changed and by every sign of continuity of speech, one is warranted to rest in the conclusion that it is the same voice that tells the joyful news. Among the certain marks identifying the late sufferer with the speaker in the great assembly in verses 22-31 (23-32), is the use of the personal pronoun I which refers to him who lately cried, but who, having been heard, now praises God for his deliverance. In an impersonal way he refers to his affliction out of which the Lord has delivered him, in the following words: "For he has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Neither hath he hid his face from him; But when he cried unto him, he heard." It is doubtless, probable that those referred to by "ye that fear the Lord, praise Him," are Gentile worshipers of God, and those called "all ye the seed of Jacob ... all ye the seed of Israel," the purified and cleansed remnant of Israel, both of whom constitute the great assembly to whom he declares God, His Deliverer's Name and in the midst of which he praises God, saying, "Of thee cometh my praise," because God has heard and delivered him from his sufferings.

Before and during the suffering the tortured one has no brethren in view, but later on there is a vast throng to whom he proclaims God's Name. In verses 27-31 (28-32) he sees the time when the whole world shall constitute one great kingdom of God and all nations shall worship God and Him only.

That there is a connection on the one hand, between the suffering of the subject of this Psalm and, on the other hand, the gathering of "the great assembly" and the consolidation of all kingdoms into "the kingdom" of the Lord, over which He rules, is evident from the fact that *the delivered triumphant sufferer* appears in the midst of the great assembly and proclaims the Name of God to his brethren.

Who Is This Sufferer?

Of whom is the Psalmist speaking? To this question one of four answers is usually given. These answers are: (1) David, (2) the nation of Israel, (3) a remnant of Israel, (4) the Messiah of Israel. All four answers cannot be correct in the absolute sense of the term. Amid this diversity of opinion it behooves each one to seek honestly and conscientiously from the context and from parallel passages which answer is the correct one. (1) In support of the first answer, namely, that David is the sufferer, let it be said that though he did suffer much, being persecuted by Saul severely, his sufferings never reached such depth of sorrow as that of the sufferer of this Psalm. Therefore one cannot allow the language to stand as it is proclaiming its message and at the same time apply it to David.¹

(2) In reply to the position that Israel is the sufferer, likewise, let it be noted that the context and the personal individual tone precludes such an interpretation. The writer readily admits that Israel through twenty centuries has suffered untold persecution at the hands of the so-called "Christian nations" but this fact does not identify the Hebrew people as the innocent sufferer of this Psalm. That the nation may be compared to an individual who is sick is readily admitted, for Isaiah (1:2-9) used that figure; but, in this case the *context* clearly indicates that though he uses the expressions "the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it but wounds, and bruises and fresh stripes: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with oil," he is speaking of the nation.

If these words were taken out of their context, one would be forced according to the rules of interpretation of language to believe that the prophet was speaking about some one individual who was sick; but since the context shows clearly that he is reproving the nation for its sins, it is very obvious that the sick man is the nation and not an individual.

To put this interpretation beyond all possibility of debate, the reader will bear with the writer in his using the following illustration. Should there appear in any publication a picture of a sick man lying in bed, while on a table near his head are several bottles of medicine, in the absence of clear positive evidence indicating definitely otherwise, one would conclude that the one who made the picture had some one individual in mind. But should the patient be a tall old man with chin whiskers, wearing a suit of clothes made of an American flag, every one, even a small child, would recognize that it does not refer to any individual, but to the United States of America which is afflicted with some great national problem or calamity. Therefore in the absence of special features which show that Psalm 22 is to be interpreted in a symbolic representative way of the nation, one is forced irresistibly to the conclusion that such an interpretation does not with the facts as presented. Another fact which discredits the interpretation that makes the sufferer a symbol of the suffering nation is that this sufferer is conscious both of his relationship to God and of his absolute innocency; whereas Israel as a nation has always been and shall continue to be conscious of sin and rebellion against God and of alienation

¹ The question arises, "If the writer were not speaking of his own personal experiences, how is it that he uses the personal pronouns 'I,' 'my' and 'me'?" The answer is found in the fact that the prophets frequently spoke in the first person when they did not refer to their own personal experience. A notable example of this principle is found in Isa. 48:12-16, "Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called: I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. Yea, my hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spread out the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together. Assemble yourselves, all ye, and hear: who among them hath declared these things? He whom the Lord loveth shall perform his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm *shall be on* the Chaldeans. I, even I, have spoken yea, I have called him; I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; from the beginning I have not spoken in secret; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord יהוה hath sent me, and his Spirit." Here Isaiah spoke as if he were the originator of the message, using the personal pronouns of the first person. An examination of the text shows that the real speaker is the One Who founded the heaven and the earth by His omnipotent power. Hence though the prophet uses the pronouns of the first person, he is speaking for God. Therefore when the author of Psalm 22 speaks in the first person it becomes necessary for one to examine the entire context to see whether the experience there related can possibly be the experience of the author or whether he though speaking from the point of view of the first person, is speaking of the suffering of another.

Growing out of this principle of prophecy is another well-established principle which obtains throughout the prophetic word, namely, the prophet frequently begins to speak of his own personal experience and then moves out into a larger circle of experience which by far transcends the events of his life.

from Him because of these sins. (See Jer. 3:20f.) These reasons lead one to the absolute conclusion that the sufferer of the passage is not the nation.

(3) The third interpretation, namely, that the sufferer is the pious remnant of the nation cannot be correct, for there is nothing in the context to indicate such a symbolic use; hence the objections brought against the second interpretation apply with equal force against this one. Furthermore, the sufferer is distinguished from the nation in verse 23, or a remnant of the nation. In verses 23 and 24 he (the sufferer) in the midst of the great assembly which consists of those who "fear the Lord" and "all the seed of Jacob" and "all ye the seed of Israel" addresses said assembly urging them to praise God. Therefore this interpretation is incorrect.

(4) The interpretation which makes the sufferer the Messiah remains to be discussed. As has been seen, he is an individual. It now remains to identify him, if possible. Likewise, it has already been shown that the sufferer of the first twenty-one verses, who has cried to the Lord, whose sufferings abruptly cease with verse 21, and who claims that God has answered him, is the same speaker who appears in the great assembly of fearers of God and all the tribes of Israel. In this great assembly he is the leading character; in fact, he is the master of the entire situation. In verse 22 he claims a special relationship to the entire assembly when he makes the statement, "I will declare Thy (God's) Name unto my brethren." Since the great assembly consists not only of the entire house of Israel, but also of the fearers of God, who doubtless are Gentile believers in God, and since he speaks to them as "my brethren," it is quite evident that he bears a special relationship to them that is above the natural and literal meaning of the word *brethren*. He can call "all the seed of Jacob" his brethren, referring to fleshly ties, but to the fearers of the Lord, Gentile believers, he does not sustain that natural relationship. Hence *brethren* is used in a higher sense.

The language of verses 25 and 26 confirms the argument just made: "Of thee cometh my praise in the great assembly: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied; They shall praise the Lord that seek after Him: Let your heart live forever." The delivered sufferer claims that, when he pays his vows, the meek shall eat and be satisfied. This language, of course, is an echo from the Torah, which granted to the priests the privilege of partaking of the offerings and vows of the people. Likewise, the poor, widows, fatherless, et al., were granted the privilege of sharing these things and thus being satisfied (see Deut. 14:28,29; 26:12; 16:11). There is no Jew who is so very rich that, when he pays his tithes, offerings and vows to God, the meek of the world may partake and be satisfied. But, since, when this sufferer pays his vows, the meek (the word *meek* unqualified is all-inclusive, referring to the meek of all the earth) are satisfied, he stands in a class by himself. Of all individuals conceivable, there is but one whose wealth, power, and goodness of heart enable him to fulfill this passage, namely, the Messiah. This fact becomes apparent when one realizes that the Messiah is the only One Who will have the wealth of the nations (Psa. 2:7-9), the power (Isa. 9:6,7), and goodness of heart (Isa. 11:1-5); therefore the only conclusion to which one may come is that the sufferer is Israel's long expected Messiah, Who comes into the world and suffers for man; Who, as set forth in Psalm 110, returns to the right hand of God most high, and Who will return and reign in power and in righteousness over the entire world.

Hosea the prophet foretold that the rejected Messiah would go away, returning to His place—heaven—and would remain there "till they [Israel the nation] acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me earnestly" (Hos. 5:15).

The Lord Jesus Christ, the pierced One, confirms the prediction of Hosea, applying the prophecy to Himself and foretelling that He will go away, that He will not return until Israel acknowledges that He is the one who came in the name of the Lord—at His first coming—and that He is the Blessed One, the Messiah.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. 39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord (Matt. 23:37-39).

According to Hosea and the Lord Jesus, He, the Messiah of Israel and Saviour of the world, will remain in heaven until the Chosen People, in deep conviction of sin, acknowledge their crime against Him and plead for Him to return. When they do turn to Him in penitence, He will return and will change the entire world situation—and not until then. He will then lift the curse from the ground and establish a reign of righteousness throughout the earth. The cessation of war and the stopping of all calamities and diseases are contingent upon the return of the Lord Jesus to the earth. Since the correction of all evils is conditioned upon the Lord's return to earth, and since His return awaits Israel's repudiation of the national sin of rejecting Him as their Messiah, the most important event in the world is Israel's right-about-face with reference to Jesus of Nazareth.

D. *The Fountain for Sin and Uncleanness*

In the revelation made by Moses, animal sacrifices played a prominent part. The blood of these sacrifices was to make an annual atonement for the sins of the worshipers. On the great day of Atonement, the blood of the sacrificial animal was sprinkled on the mercy seat in order to atone for the sins of the nation. But these animal sacrifices could never make atonement for sin. Only ceremonially and temporarily did they have any significance, typifying and looking forward to the real sacrifice that could cleanse from all sin. These facts are clearly set forth in the following passage:

10 For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. 2 Else would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins. 3 But in those *sacrifices* there is a remembrance made of sins year by year. 4 For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith,

Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not,

But a body didst thou prepare for me;

6 In whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hadst no pleasure:

7 Then said I, Lo, I am come

(In the roll of the book it is written of me)

To do thy will, O God.

8 Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law), 9 then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second (Heb.

10:1-9).

In the great servant passage, Isaiah 52:13-53:12, the Prophet foresees the servant of Jehovah, the God-man, offering Himself for the sins of the world.²

Concerning the Atonement made by Jesus of Nazareth, the God-man, consider what the inspired Apostle Paul said in the following passage: "For it was the good pleasure *of the Father* that in him should all the fulness dwell; 20 and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens" (Col.1:19,20).

The fountain for sin and uncleanness was opened nineteen hundred years ago in the death, the burial, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. Millions of people have by faith come to this fountain and drunk of the water of life freely. No one, no sincere believing person, who has come to this fountain has been turned away. The call has gone forth to the entire world. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

Though vast throngs have drunk of this water of life to the satisfying of their souls, countless hosts of people have never heard of this fountain. Yet great hosts have heard of it, but through indifference and unbelief have turned a deaf ear. For them it is the same as if there were no fountain. This situation reminds one of Hagar and Ishmael who were perishing for water in the desert. Finally, the angel of the Lord spoke to her and showed her a fountain of water within a stone's throw. The water was there all the time, but her eyes were not open to see it. Thus it is with myriads who have never drunk of the fountain of living waters (Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Ps. 36:9).

When the people of Israel accept Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah and Saviour, the fountain for sin and uncleanness will become clearly visible to their opened eyes. Converted Israel will purge the land of spiritism and idolatry. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1).

As has been shown above, Jeremiah thinks of God as a fountain, to which the thirsty soul may come and satisfy his thirst. "For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13). "O Jehovah, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be put to shame. They that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken Jehovah, the fountain of living waters" (Jer. 17:13). Zechariah, on the other hand, thinks of this fountain for sin and uncleanness not as a place of drinking of the water of life, but as a place of bathing and cleansing. The imagery used by Zechariah is based originally upon the water of purification (Numbers, chapter 19). King David, likewise, speaks of the purification of the soul in terms of ceremonial cleansing:

Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow (Ps. 51:7).

Ezekiel doubtless had the water of purification in mind in the following passage: "And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you" (Ezek. 36:25).

² For full discussion of this servant passage see Chapter 18 of my volume, *The Eternal God Revealing Himself to Suffering Israel and to Lost Humanity*.

E. *Israel Purged of Idolatry and Evil Spirits*

Israel, converted and cleansed, seeing reality as it is, will be moved by a spirit of revulsion against all things that are false and of satanic origin. The people will, therefore, rise up against anyone who dabbles in the occult or has any part with those who profess to be prophets but are not. The sentiment for right will be so very strong that even parents will sanction the execution of their own children who are guilty.

2 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered; and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. 3 And it shall come to pass that, when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of Jehovah; and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth. 4 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he prophesieth; neither shall they wear a hairy mantle to deceive: 5 but he shall say, I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the ground; for I have been made a bondman from my youth. 6 And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds betwixt thine arms? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. (Zech. 13:2-6).

F. *The Cross of Jesus Towering Above the Wrecks of Time*

7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn my hand upon the little ones. 8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith Jehovah, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. 9 And I will bring the third part into the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, Jehovah is my God. (Zech. 13:7-9).

A glance at verse 7 of this passage shows that God the Father is in charge of this tragic drama. He speaks to the sword, urging it to awake against His Shepherd. In this exhortation the sword is either personified, or those who wield it are addressed and urged to awake in active opposition against God's Shepherd. They are to smite this Shepherd. When they do so, God will take care of the scattered sheep.

God speaks of this Shepherd against whom the sword is to awake as the man who is His fellow. The word in the original, rendered *fellow*, means one's *equal*. Since God is the one speaking, and since He calls this man His equal, it is certain that this Shepherd is the God-man who enters the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. In this prophecy we have a forecast of the execution of the Messiah of Israel.

The poet was correct in speaking of the Cross of Jesus of Nazareth as "towering above the wrecks of time." The fact of its standing unmoved by the changes of time is proof of its origin and purpose. The faint glimmer of it, though the outline of it is very indistinct, is found in Genesis 3:15. To the serpent God speaks of the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent: "He [the seed of the woman] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

In Psalm 22:1-21 God gives a clear and distinct picture of the Messiah hanging on the Cross, surrounded by the raging and fanatical mob, which is compared to vicious bulls and howling dogs.

In Isaiah 52:13-53:12, again we see the Messiah of Israel being offered by God the Father, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. The outlines of the Cross, however, though they stand in their sublime grandeur, are eclipsed by the glory and significance of the purpose of God.

Once more the glory of the Cross is seen in Zechariah 13:7. In this passage the Cross is glorified by Him whom God calls "my fellow," and by whose death salvation was purchased for all.

This Cross was erected on Golgotha, outside the city walls of Jerusalem. Having passed through several trials in which there was a miscarriage of justice, Jesus of Nazareth was nailed to the Cross on which He hung from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. From 12 noon to 3 p.m. God the Father, who was supervising the events of this occasion, veiled the scene in darkness so that no mortal eyes could look upon the greatest of all events in human history.

The blind leaders of Israel, who in their ignorance fostered this execution, intensified their opposition against the followers of Jesus. Nevertheless, the Cross—the emblem of the heroic vicarious suffering of Jesus—figuratively speaking, remained intact.

The old rugged Cross survived the storm of opposition that was hurled against it by imperial Rome. During the first three centuries of the existence of Christianity, one persecution after another was launched against the Christians, who welcomed the martyr's crown and glory. Individuals, such as Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian the Apostate, used the pen, which often is mightier than the sword, against the Church. Although believers in Jesus were murdered by the tens of thousands, the Cross during this reign of terror still stood unshaken by the attacks of Satan.

In the seventh century the Moslem hordes, like a mighty flood, came pouring over the boundaries of the Empire and all but inundated the Christian civilization. Nevertheless, the Cross of Jesus stood unmoved.

During the Dark Ages, ignorance, superstition, human jealousies, rivalries, dogmatism, and human fleshly abuses all but shrouded the old rugged Cross in darkness.

From the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation, rivalries, heightened by the spirit of jealousy, of religious debates, and of dogmatism have rent the body of Christian believers into contending factions. Yet the Cross has been clearly visible by innumerable hosts, and He who was suspended upon it has been received as Saviour and Lord.

In modern times rationalism, erroneous evaluation of science in many fields, over-emphasis upon the evaluation of philosophy, together with religious dogmatism and a faulty exposition of the Scriptures, have continued to split the body of Christ into many contending sects. Nevertheless, the Cross of Christ stands out in all its sublimity and glory—and it shall ever stand. Truly, the Cross of Jesus Christ towers over the wrecks of time.

IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST

In the cross of Christ I glory,
 Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time;
 All the light of sacred story
 Gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me
 Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
 Never shall the cross forsake me:
 Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of bliss is beaming
 Light and love upon my way,
 From the cross the radiance streaming
 Adds more luster to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
 By the cross are sanctified;
 Peace is there that knows no measure,
 Joys that thro' all time abide.

JOHN BOWRING.

G. *The Return of Messiah Jesus*

14 Behold, a day of Jehovah cometh, when thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. 2 For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. 3 Then shall Jehovah go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. 4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall be cleft in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. 5 And ye shall flee by the valley of my mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azel; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; and Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with thee. 6 And it shall come to pass in that day, that there shall not be light; the bright ones shall withdraw themselves: 7 but it shall be one day which is known unto Jehovah; not day, and not night; but it shall come to pass, that at evening time there shall be light. 8 And it shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. (Zech. 14:1-8).

When Israel, with eyes open to spiritual realities and undisputed historical facts regarding Jesus of Nazareth, pleads for Him to return, He will rend the heavens, return to the earth, and champion the cause of Israel.

11 And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True; and in righteous he doth judge and make war. 12 And his eyes *are* a flame of fire, and upon his head *are* many diadems; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself. 13 And he *is* arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white *and* pure. 15 And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, KINGS OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come *and* be gathered together unto the great supper of God; 18 that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: 21 and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh. (Rev. 19:11-21).

H. *The World-Wide Reign of King Messiah*

9 And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one. 10 All the land shall be made like the Arabah, from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; and she shall be lifted up, and shall dwell in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananel unto the king's wine-presses. 11 And men shall dwell therein, and there shall be no more curse; but Jerusalem shall dwell safely.

12 And this shall be the plague wherewith Jehovah will smite all the peoples that have warred against Jerusalem: their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their sockets, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. 13 And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from Jehovah shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor. 14 And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. 15 And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in those camps, as that plague.

16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. 17 And it shall be, that whoso of *all* the families of the earth goeth not up unto Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, upon them there shall be no rain. 18 And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, neither *shall it be* upon them; there shall be the plague wherewith Jehovah will smite the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. 19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. 20 In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLY UNTO JEHOVAH; and the pots in Jehovah's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. 21 Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto Jehovah of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and boil therein: and in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts (Zechariah 14:9-21).

The prophets spoke in the most glowing terms of the personal reign of Messiah over all nations. When He returns, He will lift the curse from the earth, and reign from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

20 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed *it* over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I *saw* the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Rev. 20:1-6).

Earth's golden age is as yet in the future.

III. GOD'S EIGHT-POINT PROGRAM FOR ISRAEL

The Apostles Peter and John were going up to the Temple to pray. At the door of the Temple called Beautiful, a lame man was laid daily, who asked alms of those entering. Naturally, he asked Peter for assistance. In response Peter and John declared that they had no money—but that they had something which was better than money for him: "What I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." By the authority of the Lord Jesus, the Apostle Peter commanded the lame man to walk—telling him to do what he could not of himself do. But let us remember that God's commandings are His enablings. By faith the man leaped and began to walk around, being totally restored to normal condition.

This miracle of healing was manifest to all. Immediately, a great crowd assembled in Solomon's porch. Being amazed at the miracle, and not understanding the situation, the people seemed to think that Peter by his own power had restored the man. Peter disclaimed special godliness or power. Then he explained that God had honored His Servant Jesus, whose power had restored the lame man. Peter's use of the term "his Servant Jesus" is without a doubt an echo of the great servant passage of Isaiah 52:13-53:12. This truth becomes evident to the one who reads Isaiah 53:1-9 in the light of Acts 3:13-16.

In order that we might see most clearly God's eight-point program for Israel, Peter's sermon on this occasion must be analyzed,

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. 14 But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, 15 and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. 16 And by faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. 17 And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. 18 But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. 19 Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; 20 and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, *even* Jesus: 21 whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old. 22 Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. 23 And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. 24 Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days. 25 Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities. (Acts 3:13-26).

When I was a young boy, I lived with my parents in the country near the city limits of Nashville, Tennessee. In our community was a country store. In the winter, especially, the men of the countryside on Saturdays usually gathered at this store only to talk, to see, and to be seen. As a rule, there was a checker game in progress. Often one man would make a move, but the other one would wait as he thought of the various possibilities of each move that might be made. Finally, his opponent would say, "Its your move." His suggestion did not make the other man move. In my childish fancy and ignorance I wanted to move for the man. Each one had to confine himself to the rules of the game, exercising his own will as to various moves without coercion from the other.

Knowing all future events, without predetermining the free actions of men but overruling all events for the good of all concerned, God is, figuratively speaking, engaged in the great game of life with Israel, His Chosen People. Each makes his move or moves in his turn. There are eight points or moves in this great game. God made the first move by sending the promised Messiah on scheduled time and according to the Scriptures (see the four Records of the Gospel). Israel made the second move by rejecting Him and demanding His execution. Then God made the third move by raising Him from the dead and inviting Him to ascend into heaven and to sit at His right hand where He has been ever since and where He will remain until Israel, learning the real facts of the case, repudiates the national sin of rejecting Him and pleads for His return. Thus the first three moves of this eight-point program have already been made.

In Acts 3:19,20 the Apostle Peter calls upon Israel as a nation to repent and to turn again. "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord;

20 and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, *even Jesus*." Israel was commanded to make moves four and five—to repent and to turn again. Since the Jewish people as a group have never done either of these things, and since they were commanded to do them, they will yet do them, both in the letter and in the spirit of the command.

There are two words in the Greek language that are translated *repent*. One of them means to be sorry, to regret, and to have remorse of conscience. The other one means etymologically "with the mind or thinking." One abridged Greek lexicon gives the definition as follows: "To change the thoughts, purposes, and intentions of the heart or mind." This definition is concise and true to usage.

In fulfillment of the prophecies regarding the Messiah, Jesus came and literally fulfilled every prediction relating to His first coming. Not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God, most of the leaders of Israel rejected Him. "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:11, 12). But in rejecting Jesus, the leaders in their blindness simply carried out what God had revealed they would do.

"And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. 18 But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled" (Acts 3:17,18).

In the command that all Israel repent, God calls upon the nation to change their thoughts, plans, and purposes regarding Jesus of Nazareth. In issuing this command for the nation to repent regarding their action and their attitude toward Jesus, God said what he meant and meant what He said.

God is not a man, that he should lie,
Neither the son of man, that he should repent:
Hath he said, and will he not do it?
Or hath he spoken, and will he not make it good? (Num. 23:19).

The Lord, through Peter, not only called upon all Israel to repent of their actions and attitudes toward Jesus of Nazareth, but He also commanded them to "turn again ..." What is the significance of *turn again*? I shall answer this question by referring to my volume, *The World's Greatest Library Graphically Illustrated*, page 106. The King James Version of the Scriptures has "be converted." This translation is due to a misunderstanding of the Latin text. The original Greek word used by Peter literally means "turn to." It occurs in Acts 9:35; which reads as follows, "And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord." The context shows that Peter had cured a man who had kept his bed for eight years. This miracle caused the people to give heed to the message which was preached by Peter. They turned to the Lord as a result of the preaching, and of the miracle which confirmed the message. The word rendered "turned to" in this passage is the very one used by Peter in Acts 3:19. The same term occurs in 11:21, "And a great number that believed turned unto the Lord." Without doubt, in these two passages it can mean nothing except receiving the Lord Jesus Christ personally as Lord and Saviour. It also appears in Acts 14:15 and 15:19, being followed, however, by the word *God*; but the same general idea is dominant in both instances. Thus when Peter used it in the passage under consideration, he called upon those who had rejected Jesus to repent of that crime and to turn to Him from whom they had previously turned away. These facts show that Peter called upon Israel to repudiate the national sin and to accept Jesus Christ personally as Lord and Saviour. The language can mean nothing else.

Can the people of Israel, as a nation, repent of what their ancestors did to Jesus of Nazareth and accept Him as Lord and Messiah? A great section of the nation, the ultraorthodox wing, still largely accept the false teaching that the father of Jesus was a Roman soldier and his mother a Jewish prostitute. Moreover, according to floating traditions, Jesus went to Egypt and learned the art of black magic, returned to Israel, and attempted to lead the nation into demonic error. The leaders of the nation were therefore justified in having Him executed as a malefactor and as one who was attempting to lead the nation away from God.

Generally speaking, the reformed Jews acknowledge that Jesus was a good man and a great teacher. Denying the doctrine of the Trinity, they cannot believe that He was the God-man who left heaven and entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. Though many of them deplore the fact that He was unrighteously executed as a malefactor, they accept Him simply as a great man and an idealistic peasant who tried to lift His nation to a higher plane; but, the odds being against Him, He failed.

So long then as the Jews hold such erroneous ideas regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, just that long will they reject Him and His claims of being the Son of God, the Saviour of the world and the Messiah of Israel. It is therefore psychologically impossible for them, believing as they do, to repent of having rejected Him and having demanded His execution. Believing that He was an impostor or that He was simply a good man, they cannot turn to Him for spiritual, eternal salvation.

But Peter, speaking by the Spirit of God, demands that the nation repent of rejecting Him and turn to Him, accepting Him as the Messiah of Israel. Since God does not force any man's will, He will wait until the nation has learned the truth and the facts concerning Jesus, and will of its own free choice and accord come in genuine repentance, repudiating the national sin and accepting Him as its long-expected Messiah and Saviour.

God has laid this solemn duty upon His people who see the truth to give it to the Jewish people, so that they can intelligently weigh the facts and accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Thus God's eight-point program for Israel is being held up by the Hebrews' not repenting and accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Since the truth must be given to the people of Israel in order that they might make moves four and five, those who should give it to them are in reality holding up God's program.

When Israel repents and turns to the Messiah (Acts 3:19,20), God will make moves six and seven—by sending "seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord: 20 and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, *even* Jesus ..." These "seasons of refreshing" are times of spiritual revival. The same thought is expressed by Zechariah in different words, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication" (Zech. 12:10a). Thus a mighty spiritual awakening will sweep over the entire nation of Israel, drawing them back to God. The "seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" will be brought to a close by the personal return of the Christ to the earth—this same Jesus whom they rejected at His first coming. Thus God the Father makes moves six and seven immediately after Israel makes moves four and five.

When the Lord Jesus returns to earth, He will make the eighth and last move of God's eight-point program with Israel—He will bring in "the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old" (Acts 3:21). The times of restoration are the Kingdom Age, when the curse will be lifted from the creation, and the earth itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children

of God (Rom. 8:18-25). All things will not be restored, but only those things which God mentions through the holy prophets. When the messages of the prophets are studied thoroughly and understood, one sees that the glorious Kingdom Age far surpasses Eden with all its glory.

Israel's failure to make moves four and five is indeed holding up God's program. Let us do all within our power, in love and sympathy, to show the truth of God's Word to His Chosen People.

IV. ISRAEL TRIED AND ACQUITTED

3 And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right hand to be his adversary. 2 And Jehovah said unto Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan; yea, Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? 3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the angel. 4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take the filthy garments from off him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with rich apparel. 5 And I said, Let them set a clean mitre upon his head. So they set a clean mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments; and the angel of Jehovah was standing by (Zech. 3:1-5).

Haggai and Zechariah aroused the captives, returned from Babylon, out of their lethargy and indifference to spiritual matters—by their dynamic preaching of the Word of God. Zechariah was granted seven visions, all of which deal with some phase of the future of Jerusalem and of the Jewish people. Although the message of each of these visions is of vital importance and demands careful and prayerful study, the fourth one is of paramount importance for a proper understanding of Israel's future in relation to the nations of the world.

A. *Literal or Symbolic*

Is the passage quoted above to be understood literally or symbolically? Let us bear in mind that every passage must be interpreted literally unless there are reasons for interpreting it otherwise. Joshua appears in this vision, not as an individual person, but as the high priest representing the Jewish nation. In the beginning of the vision the attendants remove the tattered garments of Joshua and clothe him in priestly attire with a clean mitre upon his head. The fact that the vision starts with Joshua as high priest and closes with him attired in rich and priestly apparel shows conclusively that the vision is not literal, but symbolic.

In support of this proposition is the further fact that in answering the charges brought by Satan against Joshua the high priest, Jehovah, the Judge, rebukes Satan, saying, "Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan; yea, Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem." In answer to the accusations leveled by Satan against Joshua, the high priest, Jehovah refers to the fact that He has chosen Jerusalem and has plucked this people out of captivity and persecution. Thus, in answering Satan, Jehovah calls attention to the fact that He has chosen Jerusalem, the place where He would put His Name.

An additional fact is that in giving instructions to the court attendants to remove the tattered, filthy garments from Joshua, the Lord says, "Take the filthy garments from off him [Joshua]. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with rich apparel." The filthy garments, therefore, are symbolic of sin and iniquity. In view of these facts, it is clear that the vision is symbolic and must be thus interpreted.

B. *The Personnel of the Cast*

Frequently, the imagery employed by the Biblical writers is borrowed from the local situation with which both speaker and audience are familiar. A knowledge of the imagery used aids very materially in the understanding of a given passage. Often the prophets created their own comparisons from material which was not present, but with which the audience was familiar. By a careful analysis of Zechariah 3:1-5, it is very clear that Zechariah borrowed the imagery of this passage from a court scene.

In this passage one sees the judge, the prosecuting attorney, the defendant, and the court attendants.

1. JEHOVAH THE JUDGE

Expressed in modern philosophical phraseology, the word Jehovah means the uncaused cause of all things. In speaking of Jehovah, Moses declares: "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity" (Deut. 6:4, literal translation).³ Both Moses and the Prophets speak of three divine personalities in the Scriptures. These personalities are Jehovah the Father, Jehovah the Son, and Jehovah the Holy Spirit. Each of these is omnipotent (Ps. 62:11; Rev. 19:6), omniscient (Ps. 139; Heb. 4:13), and omnipresent (Ps. 139; Isa. 57:15). They are likewise coequal and coeternal.

Each is the very embodiment of goodness, holiness, love, righteousness, and justice. At the same time their holiness makes them hate sin and iniquity of every type:

6 And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness and truth; 7 keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation (Ex. 34:6,7).

Which of these divine personalities is Jehovah the Judge of this passage? Jehovah the Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity, came to earth, took upon Himself the form of man, giving His life a ransom for all (Isaiah, chapter 53). Because of these facts, Jehovah the Father has committed all judgment to Jehovah the Son "and he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man" (John 5:27). When King David sinned by numbering the people, God through the Prophet Gad gave the king the choice of one of three strokes of judgment. Realizing that God is merciful and righteous, David chose to fall into the hands of the living God:

12 Go and speak unto David, Thus saith Jehovah, I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. 13 So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thy foes while they pursue thee? or shall there be three days' pestilence in thy land? Now advise thee, and consider what answer I shall return to him that sent me. 14 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of Jehovah; for his mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of man (II Sam. 24:12-14).

From this and other Scriptures one learns that Jehovah, the Judge of all the earth, does right (Gen. 18:25,26).

³ See *The God of Israel*, by David L. Cooper.

2. SATAN THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

The first appearance of Satan in the Biblical account is found in Genesis, chapter 3. He appeared to Eve as a serpent. Satan, who is the adversary of God and of all that is good, assumes different forms; for, we are told, "... Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light" (II Cor. 11:14). "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years" (Rev. 20:1,2). Satan is a powerful foe, who uses every type of deception and lying possible. (See Job, chapters 1 and 2). The Lord Jesus says, "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do" (John 8:43,44). Satan also often blinds God's people and causes them to sin against God. He is the great accuser of the brethren in the presence of God (Rev. 12:10).

From what we see in the Scriptures, Satan has an inveterate, implacable hatred against Israel, God's Chosen People. He moved Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to order the destruction of every male infant of the Hebrews in an attempt to curtail the normal increase of the population. At different times one or more of the neighboring nations, in cold blood, launched wars of loot and pillage, leaving death and destruction in their path. In Bible times some of the great powers—Assyria, Babylon, and Rome—unleashed campaigns of ruthless extermination. In medieval and modern times Israel has been a football of the nations "kicked and cuffed about from pillar to post."

Inspired by demonic powers, Hitler launched a campaign of butchery and slaughter, liquidating one-third of world-Jewry. According to Zechariah 13:8,9, two-thirds of the Jewish race will be liquidated in the Great Tribulation. In the light of all these facts, Satan is represented as the prosecuting attorney in Zechariah's vision, in the passage under consideration.

But Satan met one who was more than a match for him—the Lord Jesus Christ. (See Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-12). He suffered signal defeat at Calvary. He is doomed to suffer throughout all eternity, being cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:10).

3. JOSHUA THE DEFENDANT

In this court scene Joshua, the defendant, represents Israel. One may be certain that Satan, in keeping with his character and activities, hurls every imaginable slanderous charge against Joshua—Israel.

4. THE COURT ATTENDANTS

In Zechariah 3:4 one reads that Jehovah spoke to those that stood before him. Who are these? In all probability they are angelic beings. Confirmation of this position may be seen by a glance at Daniel 7:9,10:

9 I beheld till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit: his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, *and* the wheels thereof burning fire. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousands of thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

This passage in Daniel is a court scene similar to the one under consideration. Here we see a host of angels, who minister as the Lord directs. "Bless Jehovah, ye his angels, That are mighty in strength, that fulfill his word, Harkening unto the voice of his word" (Ps. 103:20).

C. The Trial

Zechariah does not give a full account of the trial, for it is underway when he begins relating what he sees in this vision. When he begins to give us this account of the proceedings, the prosecuting attorney, Satan, has finished his indictment, supporting his accusations, we may believe, with diabolical shrewdness and lies. One can, however, glean from the Judge's reprimand the character of Satan's speech: "And Jehovah said unto Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan; yea, Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (v. 2). When one is talking over the telephone, those sitting in the room with him can often judge, from what he says, some of the statements made by the person at the other end of the line. In other words, echoes of what the other person says are heard in the conversation, by those in the room. It is clear from verse 2 that the prosecuting attorney has made statements that are not true and has thrown out unjustifiable innuendos.

1. THE ACCUSATION

One of the echoes of Satan's speech in his indictment of Joshua is heard in these words: "Jehovah, rebuke thee, O Satan." Since Jehovah, the Judge, speaks only that which is true and right, He rebukes Satan for certain misrepresentations, misstatements, and lies. A second echo of Satan's speech is found in the words, "Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem." This statement is indeed revealing, for it shows that the essence of Satan's speech is an attack upon God's having chosen Jerusalem and the Hebrew people as the channel of world blessing. The third echo is the implication that God made a miserable failure in selecting the Hebrews as the channel of blessing for all mankind, since the Jews have tragically failed and fallen far short of being the "holy people unto Jehovah" (Deut. 7:6)—a diabolically scurrilous attack on God's wisdom and knowledge. The fourth echo is an implication that God made a mistake in His selection of the Jews as His Chosen People—the choice being a matter of God's sovereign grace. As to whether or not Satan, the prosecuting attorney, included other accusations, one cannot say. Speaking in human terms, one would say that the Judge became enraged at the lies and misrepresentations of facts by the prosecuting attorney.

2. THE JUDGE'S REACTION

When the prosecuting attorney finished his indictment and accusations, the Judge from the bench answers him: "And Jehovah said unto Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan; yea, Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (v. 2). This turn of affairs reminds me of what I saw and heard when I visited one of the king's courts in London in 1936. The suit being tried involved 135,000 pounds (a pound at that time was worth \$5). A man was on the witness stand when I arrived. Then a woman was called. As she was testifying, the old judge seemed to be asleep, but he was anything but asleep. Suddenly he looked up at the witness and said to her, "Mrs. ..., you are lying to this court." Like the old London judge, Jehovah, the Judge of this court, before whom Israel is being tried, speaks directly to the prosecuting attorney with no uncertain sound. One may be confident that this omniscient, righteous Judge answers every charge that Satan has made and exposes the misrepresentations, and at the same time He states the facts as they were and are.

God chose Abraham and his seed to be the channel of world blessing (Gen. 12:1-3 and parallel passages). According to Deuteronomy 12:5-14, the Lord chose Jerusalem as the place where He would put His name. The Psalmist points to

Jerusalem as the city of God: "His foundation is in the holy mountains. 2 Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion More than all the dwellings of Jacob. 3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God" (Ps. 87:1-3). Again, the Psalmist foretells that Jerusalem will be the joy of the whole earth: "Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised, In the city of our God, in his holy mountain. 2 Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, Is mount Zion on the sides of the north, The city of the great King. 3 God hath made himself known in her palaces for a refuge" (Ps. 48:1-3). Jeremiah the Prophet foretells Jehovah's throne located in Jerusalem of the Millennial Age: "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart" (Jer. 3:17). Isaiah foresees Jerusalem as the place where all nations will go for worship in the Kingdom Age of the warless world. On this point, as on all others, Satan was absolutely wrong.

3. THE APPEARANCE OF JOSHUA THE HIGH PRIEST

"Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the angel" (v. 3). As has already been shown, Joshua was clothed in filthy garments. This filthy apparel symbolizes the filth of sin and iniquity on the part of Joshua, the representative, of Israel, in this passage. Think of this spectacle: Joshua clothed with filthy garments standing in the presence of the holy God. But there is something that can wash away every stain of sin, for those who will come and reason with the Lord. For Isaiah, speaking by the Spirit of God, pleads with Israel: "Come now and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 20 but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it" (Isa. 1:18-20).

4. THE ACQUITTAL

"And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take the filthy garments from off him, And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with rich apparel" (v. 4). When Israel accepts the Lord's invitation to come and reason with Him, the holy God will remove the filthy rags of man's righteousness and sinful living:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

There is an antidote for sin and all uncleanness (read Isaiah 53:1-12).⁴ When Israel, as we have already seen, accepts Jehovah's offers of mercy, the court attendants will remove the filthy garments of human depravity and wrong doing.

5. JOSHUA ATTIRED IN RICH APPAREL AND WEARING THE PRIESTLY MITRE

As Joshua, the high priest, appears in the court scene of this passage, all Israel appears before God—until the filthy garments are removed and all Israel comes under conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of His Word. Then God will order Israel to be attired in the rich garments of His holiness.

Thus, the holy nation of Israel will become the priestly nation, approaching God in behalf of all humanity.

⁴ See Isaiah, chapter 53, (author's translation) "" *The Eternal God Revealing Himself to Suffering Israel and to Lost Humanity*, Chapter XVIII, Pages 213, 214, by David L. Cooper.

"There is a fountain filled with blood
 Drawn from Immanuel's veins.
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood
 Lose all their guilty stains."

"... Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22)

D. THE TRIUMPH OF SOVEREIGN GRACE

God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions (Eccl. 7:29). It is the will of God that not one person should perish, but that all should come to repentance—and be saved eternally (II Pet. 3:9). The Apostle Paul declares that God "would have all men to be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). The Lord Jesus tasted death for every man (Heb 2:9). "For the eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him ..." (II Chron. 16:9).

Man is a free moral agent. Though it is the will of God that all should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth, the Lord will never force any man's will. He does, however, bring all possible influences to bear upon everyone, always stopping short of coercion.

Jehovah God is the creator of all things and is the sovereign of the universe.

10 Wherefore David blessed Jehovah before all the assembly; and David said, Blessed be thou, O Jehovah, the God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. 11 Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heavens and in the earth *is thine*; thine is the kingdom, O Jehovah, and thou art exalted as head above all (I Chron. 29:10, 11).

Thus Jehovah, the Judge in the passage under consideration (Zech. 3:1-5), in reprimanding Satan, the prosecuting attorney, emphasizes the fact that He has chosen Jerusalem and the Hebrew race as the channel through which God's blessing will yet flow out to all nations. God's choice in calling Israel, which is based upon His sovereign grace, cannot be changed, regardless of what man or Satan does. In speaking of Israel's status before God, Paul declares that it is inviolate: "As touching the gospel, they are enemies for your sake; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake. 29 For the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of" (Rom. 11:28, 29).

E. *Israel the Priestly Nation*

The court scene closes with Joshua, the high priest, arrayed in rich priestly apparel and crowned with the priestly mitre. At Mount Sinai God called the Hebrew nation to be the channel of world blessing and promised that He would make them a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, if they would only obey Him and keep His word diligently. Spontaneously, they declared that they would do all that God said they should do:

3 And Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: (Ex. 19:3-6).

But Israel failed miserably. Since, however, the gifts and calling of God are unchangeable, unalterable, being based upon divine grace, the Lord will yet make Israel a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. Isaiah, the great evangelical prophet, in vision saw Israel after they have become the royal priesthood, whereas the Gentiles will be engaged in secular work.

4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. 5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and foreigners shall be your plowmen and your vine-dressers. 6 But ye shall be named the priests of Jehovah; men shall call you the ministers of our God: ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves. 7 Instead of your shame *ye shall have* double; and instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be unto them (Isa. 61:4-7).

If the salvation of the soul were simply a matter of God's love, every person would be saved; if it were purely a matter of God's righteousness, no one would be saved; again, if it were a matter of man's obeying the law, no one would be saved; "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all" (James 2:10).

Since all human merit and good works avail nothing in commending one to God, what is the fundamental principle of anyone's being acceptable to God?

How was Abraham, the illustrious progenitor of the Hebrew race, made acceptable to God? This question is answered in the following quotation: "And he [Jehovah] brought him [Abraham] forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:5,6). Further light is thrown on this question from Romans 4:1-8:

4 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, hath found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God. 3 For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. 6 Even as David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works, 7 *saying,*

Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, And whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom, the Lord will not reckon sin.

Thus, Abraham's standing in the sight of God was a matter of God's pure, sovereign grace and of Abraham's faith. Salvation, special blessings, and the callings of God are matters of God's grace, appropriated by faith on the part of man.

Israel's call to be the Chosen People of God through whom He blesses all nations is a matter of God's sovereign, unchangeable grace:

6 For thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God: Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth. 7 Jehovah did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all peoples: 8 but because Jehovah loveth you, and because he would keep the oath which he sware unto your fathers, hath Jehovah brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt (Deu t. 7:6-8).

Since Abraham's standing before God and his being called to become a channel of world blessing are based upon God's sovereign grace, which is appropriated by man's faith, and since Abraham is held up in the Scriptures as a type or an example of all believers—Jews and Gentiles—who are approved of God, we come to the conclusion that in Zechariah 3:1-5 Israel, represented by Joshua the high priest, is acquitted of all charges and accusations brought against them, upon the principle of salvation by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8) and stands accepted of Him.

Confirmation of this principle is found in the following passages:

34 And Peter opened his mouth and said,

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. 36 The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all) — 37 that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judaea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 *even* Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. 40 Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, 41 not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, *even* to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. 43 To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins (Acts 10:34-43).

6 And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter. 7 And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them,

Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; 9 and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke up on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they (Acts 15:6-11).

CHAPTER V

ISRAEL THE CHANNEL OF WORLD BLESSING

One of the greatest speeches, humanly speaking, ever made was delivered by the Apostle Paul to the intellectuals of the Athenian Supreme Court. The depths of this masterpiece of logic and oratory have never been uncovered, nor have the heights been explored.

22 ... Ye men of Athens, in all things, I perceive that ye are very religious. 23 For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you. 24 The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: 28 for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said,

For we are also his offspring.

29 Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. 30 The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: 31 inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. (Acts 17:22b-31).

Skimming the surface of the Scriptures, one sees that God has plans and specifications, so to speak, which He followed in His creating the universe and in His guiding and directing all human affairs—toward a grand and glorious consummation. In the center of God's plan are the children of Israel. We see this fact as events move forward through the centuries of human history. When God dispersed the people from Babel and scattered them over the world, He directed each group and related all of them to the children of Israel—evidently for a purpose.

8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,

When he separated the children of men,

He set the bounds of the peoples

According to the number of the children of Israel.

9 For Jehovah's portion is his people;

Jacob is the lot of his inheritance (Deut. 32:8,9).¹

According to Ezekiel 38:12, the Holy Land is the center of the earth. Since Abraham and his seed are by divine election related to all nations, it was eminently fitting for God to give the Holy Land to them in order that they might become the channel of blessing to all peoples.

¹ According to chronological data found in Scripture, Abraham was born about three centuries later. Since, however, all eternity is one eternal present with the Lord (Isa. 57:15), there is, therefore, with Him no past, present, or future. Nevertheless, in talking to man, He uses human categories, adapting His thoughts to man's understanding.

I. DIVINE PROMISE TO THE PATRIARCHS

A. *To Abraham*

God, who knows the hearts of all men, saw in Abraham the possibilities of a faithful servant. He, therefore, called him forth from the heathen country in which he was born to a land which He promised to show him:

"Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: 2 and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: 3 and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).

Frequently the call of God is to separation and service. There is always, however, a marvelous reward for the one who in faith obeys.

"And Jehovah said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward: 15 for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Gen. 13:14,15).

When Abraham, by faith, rescued his selfish nephew, Lot, and refused to be enriched by gifts from the king of Sodom, God promised to be his shield and his exceeding great reward.

15 After these things the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward. 2 And Abram said, O Lord Jehovah, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and he that shall be possessor of my house is Eliezer of Damascus? 3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. 4 And, behold, the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, This man shall not be thine heir; But he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. 5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness. (Gen. 15:1-6).

At the command of God Abraham took Isaac, his only son, and attempted to sacrifice him to the Lord. Before he could make the fatal stroke, God commanded him to stop. There was a ram caught in the underbrush. Believing in the overruling providence of God, Abraham took the ram and sacrificed him. "And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son" (Gen. 22:13). Then Abraham called the name of the place "Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of Jehovah it shall be provided" (v. 14).

The angel of Jehovah called Abraham the second time saying,

15 And the angel of Jehovah called unto Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said, By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, 17 that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; 18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Gen. 22:15-18).

According to this promise, God intends to bless all nations in and through the seed of Abraham.

B. To Isaac

To Isaac God reaffirmed His oath regarding his posterity and the future plan regarding blessing all nations through his seed.

2 And Jehovah appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; Dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: 3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; For unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father. 4 And I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these lands. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; 5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws (Gen. 26:2-5).

C. To Jacob

When Jacob was at Bethel, in flight from the wrath of his brother Esau, God appeared to him in a dream and assured him that in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed.

12 And he dreamed: and, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, Jehovah stood above it, and said, I am Jehovah, the 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: 14 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. 15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever 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 (Gen. 28:12-15).

Thus to Abrahams literal descendants through Isaac and Jacob is the promise made that God will bless all families of the earth. Ishmael was a literal seed of Abraham, but he was excluded. Esau was a literal seed of Isaac, and he also was excluded. This promise made to Jacob, as well as that made to Abraham and Isaac, includes only those that descend from Abraham through Isaac, his son, and through Jacob, his grandson.

What is the meaning of the promise "... In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18), and "... In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 28:14)? Obviously, both statements mean the same thing. One passage uses the word *nations* and the other, *families*. The context of the quotation from Genesis 22:18 will assist one in determining the significance of the promise. The angel of Jehovah said,

16 By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, 17 that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. 18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Gen. 22:16-18).

According to verse 17, the time here foreseen is the era when God multiplies the Jewish people as the stars of the heavens, and his seed possesses the gate of His enemies. When these promises are fulfilled, God will bless all nations in and through the seed of Abraham. In the light of these facts it is obvious that the time here foreseen is the great Kingdom Age of the future.

What is meant by "seed"? The word in the original Hebrew is a collective noun, and has two significations. Sometimes in a given context it refers to the Messiah of Israel (Gal. 3:16); whereas, in another setting it refers to Abraham's literal descendants (Gen. 15:5). In Genesis 22:17 both meanings appear. The literal descendants are referred to in the statement, "In multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore"; but in

the prediction, "And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies ...," the Messiah is referred to, because He is the One who alone will conquer the world and establish a regime of righteousness in all nations. "Behold, my servant [Messiah], whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles" (Isa. 42:1). Clearly then this promise has never been fulfilled.

Some expositors, however, think that, because certain ones in the various nations have received a blessing through Abraham's literal seed and through the Messiah of Israel, the promise has already been fulfilled. But notice the exact words of the promise, "all nations"—not individuals of the nations—are to be blessed. According to this promise, in no sense then can one say that the promise has already been fulfilled. It therefore awaits fulfillment in the future in earth's Golden Era.

II. ISRAEL'S PLACE IN THE PLAN OF GOD

According to the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the blessing of all nations is tied up with the Jewish people—the seed of Abraham—as seen in many passages. At that time King Messiah will have returned and established His world-wide kingdom, in which all tribes, families, and nations will be included.

A. *Messiah, King of Kings*

The Messiah of Israel comes to earth, being born of a virgin, and becomes the ruler of the entire world: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14).

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this (Isa. 9:6,7).

This promise is in accord with the one found in Zechariah 14:9, "And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one," and in Zephaniah 3:14-17, the prophet shouts:

14 Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. 15 Jehovah hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even Jehovah, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not fear evil any more. 16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; O Zion, let not thy hands be slack. 17 Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing.

According to Zephaniah, Jehovah is to be the King in the midst of His people. This Jehovah who will reign in Israel is none other than Jehovah the Messiah of Israel, who enters the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. The people of Israel are called upon to rejoice exceedingly because of His reign in the midst of Israel.

B. *Jerusalem the Capital of the World*

Notwithstanding what the Antichrist does, it is God's plan to establish His King upon the holy hill of Zion.

Psalm 2

- 1 Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples meditate a vain thing?
- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against Jehovah, and against his anointed, *saying*,
- 3 Let us break their bonds asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.
- 4 He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh:
The Lord will have them in derision.
- 5 Then will he speak unto them in his wrath,
And vex them in his sore displeasure.
- 6 Yet I have set my king
Upon my holy hill of Zion.
- 7 I will tell of the decree:
Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son;
This day have I begotten thee.
- 8 Ask of me, and I will give *thee* the nations for thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
- 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Ps. 2:1-9).

With Messiah thus installed as King in Zion, His kingdom will reach to the ends of the earth.

2 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. 4 And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (Isa. 2:1-4).

C. *Israel the Head of the Nations*

In the language of Moses Israel has been, and still is, the tail of the nations. When Messiah returns and asserts His authority, Israel will be the head of the nations. "And Jehovah will make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if thou shalt hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do *them*" (Deut. 28:13). When Israel becomes the head of the nations, the peoples of the world will render service to Israel whom God will make the head of the nations.

11 Thy gates also shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the wealth of the nations, and their kings led captive. 12 For that nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. 13 The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine, and the box-tree together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of

my feet glorious. 14 And the sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee The city of Jehovah, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 60:11-14).

D. The Earth Freed from the Curse

When man rebelled against God, as is seen in Genesis, chapter 3, the curse of the Almighty fell upon all the earth. Since then, to the present time, the creation groans under this curse, but God promises to lift it and to deliver the world from the crushing load of sin.

When the curse is lifted, Edenic conditions will prevail throughout the earth.

17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and there shall be heard in her no more the voice of weeping and the voice of crying. 20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for calamity; for they are the seed of the blessed of Jehovah, and their offspring with them. 24 And it shall come to pass that, before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith Jehovah (Isa. 65:17-25).

III. THE UNFOLDING OF THE DIVINE PLAN

When God created Adam and Eve, He placed them in the Garden of Eden, an ideal spot for them, considered from every angle. Satan who is the enemy of God and of all that is good, plotted man's downfall. The Lord Jesus Christ, to His enemies who were attacking Him, laid bare Satan's innermost heart: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do, He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof" (John 8:44). In accordance with a well-laid plot to accomplish the downfall of the human race, Satan approached man by sending the serpent, who was more subtle than any beast of the field, and who planted in Eve's mind doubt concerning God's goodness to her. The misgivings and suspicions thus planted in the heart of Eve caused her to put a wrong construction on the words and the actions of God, to add to His words, and finally to disobey Him.

On this occasion, did Satan influence the serpent, a mere animal, using him as a cat's paw; or did he himself assume the form of a serpent? That at times he does change his appearance is certain from the language of the Apostle Paul. At Corinth certain false teachers posed as apostles of Christ. Concerning these impostors the inspired Apostle declares: "And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. 15 It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (II Cor. 11:14,15). The Apostle John in Revelation 20:2 speaks of Satan on this wise; "And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years." The dragon, to which reference is made in the Book of Revelation, is a symbol of Satan, whom John called the old serpent the Devil. This language can mean that Satan assumed

the form of the serpent. Obviously the old serpent of this passage is the serpent of Genesis 3:1. In view of all the facts, one cannot be dogmatic as to which of these positions is correct. In the downfall of the human race, Satan was successful in accomplishing his purpose.

A. *Two Basic Prophecies*

At the time of the fall, God appeared in the Garden of Eden and reproved the woman for her conduct and Adam for his behaviour. Then turning to the serpent, the Lord said to him, "Because thou has done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life; 15 and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:14,15). The expression, "the seed of the woman," as is recognized by all conservative scholars, is a veiled reference to the Saviour of the world. In this passage, the promise of the deliverer of mankind is in its embryonic form, but in subsequent revelations the full-sized stature of the world deliverer is presented.

A second basic passage is found in Genesis 12:1-3: "Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: 2 and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: 3 and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

In this covenant which God made with Abraham, there are seven marvelous promises. One of the most important promises, if not the most important, is expressed in these words: "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." In these words are reflected the plan and purpose of God in bringing blessings to the whole world.

This Abrahamic covenant the Lord repeated to Isaac in the following words: "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 26:4).

To Jacob the Lord reaffirmed this covenant and showed him a vision in which he saw a ladder connecting the heavens with the earth, and angels of God ascending and descending on it. "Jehovah stood above it, and said, I am Jehovah, the 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 in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 28:13,14). From the passages noted above, it is clear that God announced ahead of time that it is His plan and purpose to bless the world through Abraham and his seed. From an examination of all passages bearing upon this subject, it is obvious that the expression *thy seed* has two connotations: first, Abraham's literal seed through Isaac and Jacob; and second, an individual, the Messiah of Israel, the seed *par excellence*. That thy seed refers to Abraham's literal descendants is evident from the following facts: God appeared to Abraham one night and said, "Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be" (Gen. 15:5). Here, *seed* indicates Abraham's literal descendants, the Jewish nation. Again in Genesis 22:16-18 God said, "By myself have I sworn ... that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore ..." Without cavil or questionings, *seed*, in these verses, refers to the literal descendants of Abraham.

In the last clause of verse 17, however, *seed* is used in the singular number: "and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." When this promise is studied in the light of parallel passages from various prophets, it is seen that the

Messiah of Israel, the God-man, is the only one who can and will overcome the world power and will reign over all nations. According to Psalm 2:7-9, God the Father in conversation with God the Son, the Messiah, promises:

- 7 I will tell of the decree:
 Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son;
 This day have I begotten thee.
- 8 Ask of me, and I will give *thee* the nations for thine inheritance,
 And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
- 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
 Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

The Prophet Isaiah also shows that the Messiah is to have world dominion:

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this (Isa. 9:6,7).

These two passages show what the promise in Genesis 22:17 means: "and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies."

One sees from the facts presented in the Scripture quoted above that God's plan and purpose is to bless all nations in and through the Jewish people. The term seed finds its highest expression in the Messiah, through whom the world will eventually be blessed and completely so.

B. *Partial Fulfillments*

From the time that God made this promise to Abraham to the present hour, He has been blessing all nations through Abraham and his literal descendants. Figuratively speaking, the Lord made Israel the hub of the nations around which all events, of any consequence, revolve.

- 8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,
 When he separated the children of men,
 He set the bounds of the peoples
 According to the number of the children of Israel.
- 9 For Jehovah's portion is his people;
 Jacob is the lot of his inheritance (Deut. 32:8,9).

To Israel at Mount Sinai the Lord gave the law of Moses. This revelation proved to be a blessing, not only to Israel, but to all nations because the fundamental principles of government, the conduct of men with men, and the basic principles of life have influenced, more or less, all civilized nations. What was true of the revelation through Moses is also true of the messages which God speaks through the Prophets. The messages of God through His servants, the Prophets, quietly and imperceptibly have been affecting the civilized nations of the world and have gradually lifted them to the high level, culturally speaking, where they now stand. This fact becomes evident when the civilized nations of the world are compared to the heathen nations.

God blessed all humanity by sending the Lord Jesus Christ to earth to purchase redemption for every man. Never man spake as He did. Never man lived as He lived. Never man died as He died. Someone has said that Socrates died as a philosopher, but Jesus Christ died as God. Never has any man been raised from the dead as Jesus Christ was raised. He triumphed over death, hell, and the grave, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel. Wherever the true message of the living and immortal Christ is proclaimed, the blessing of God is felt. Even where a distorted and warped gospel is preached, the influence of the living Christ is in a measure felt.

At different times and in various places of the world, through the preaching of the Cross of Christ, God has sent revival in which numbers of people have been saved. Though, as a rule, such revivals have been greatly limited, a wholesome influence lingers on and to a certain extent affects the people.

Though there have been revivals here and there during the Christian Dispensation, of which there are now a few in local communities, at the present time we need not expect any revivals on a large scale. The proof for this position is set forth in II Timothy 3:1-7:

3 But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; 5 holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: from these also turn away. 6 For of these are they that creep into houses, and take captive silly women laden with sins, led away by divers lusts, 7 ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

According to the prophetic Word, there will be a mighty revival that will sweep around the world during the first part of the Tribulation, the last seven years of the Christian Dispensation. Isaiah the Prophet speaks of the conditions that will obtain throughout the world "in that day." This phrase is used technically by the prophets to refer to the Great Tribulation. Concerning that time the Prophet says, "In that day shall men look unto their Maker, and their eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel. 8 And they shall not look to the altars, the work of their hands; neither shall they have respect to that which their fingers have made, either the Asherim, or the sun-images" (Isa. 17:7,8). The word in the original Hebrew, translated *man* is the King James Version and *men* in the American Standard Version (1901 edition), is used both in the singular and in the plural number. The facts of the context have to determine which is meant. The possessive pronoun *their*, modifying Maker, is in the plural number and has as its antecedent the word *man*. This fact shows that the word man in this instance has a plural connotation. *Men*, therefore, is the correct rendering. In the clause, "in that day shall men look unto their Maker ...," men here refers to men in general. We may be safe in saying that more than half the people of the earth will turn to the Lord in that time.

The conclusion that there will be a mighty world-wide revival in the Tribulation, as set forth in Isaiah 17:7,8, is confirmed by Isaiah 24:14-16a: "These shall lift up their voice, they shall shout; for the majesty of Jehovah they cry aloud from the sea. 15 Wherefore glorify ye Jehovah in the east, even the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the isles of the sea. 16 From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs: Glory to the righteous." Isaiah 24:1-20 is a vivid description of the Great Tribulation. Isaiah lived in Jerusalem and engaged in his ministry there. He sees the world writhing in pain and anguish. In contrast with the suffering of the times, he, looking westward, sees a mighty spiritual movement and exclaims, "These ... shall shout; for the majesty of Jehovah they cry aloud from the sea [the west]." Obviously these have the joy of the Lord in their souls; for, notwithstanding the hardships which they are enduring, they

are shouting for the majesty of Jehovah—He is sovereign of the universe and will solve the problems of the world in due time. These joyous ones send a message to those in the East, saying, "Wherefore glorify ye Jehovah in the east [probably Holy Land], even the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the isles of the sea." This message from the western world seems to electrify, spiritually speaking, those addressed, who take up the battle cry of the saved: "Wherefore glorify ye ... the name of Jehovah ... in the isles of the sea." Then the Prophet sees this spiritual movement fanning out to the utmost part of the earth. Everywhere the songs are being sung, the heart of which is "Glory to the righteous." Thus in the Tribulation Isaiah sees a world-wide revival.

"In that day" the song which consists of Isaiah 26:1ff. will be sung in the land of Judah, State of Israel. This song deals largely with prophecy. In verse 9 appears this statement: "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness." Those singing this song will do so with sincerity of heart. According to this statement, "When thy [God's] judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness." What is the meaning of this sentence? Since the Prophet is talking about the Tribulation, "in that day," the judgments referred to are the special judgments which God will send upon the world at that time, and which are set forth symbolically and graphically in Revelation, chapters 6, 8 and 9, and 16. Who will learn righteousness at that time? The Prophet answers this question: "The inhabitants of the world." What is the significance of the phrase, "the inhabitants of the world"? Will literally all the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness? Such cannot be the meaning, because we know from many passages that such an interpretation is not correct. Can it mean only a few—a mere handful of people? Or does it mean the greater portion—more than half the world? An examination of this idiom, whenever used, shows that it always indicates that the greater portion of the persons or things under consideration is meant. From these three passages examined, one can see that the Prophet foresaw and foretold a world-wide revival, which occurs in the Tribulation, and in which the greater portion of the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

Since God plans to bless all nations in and through Abraham and his seed, and since this mighty revival, of which we learn in the three Isaiah passages studied, is world-wide in its scope, the possibility—yes, the strong probability—is that the Lord will use Israel to bring it about. When one studies carefully Revelation, chapter 7, taking the language at what it says, that which is suggested as a possibility or a probability is lifted to the high level of absolute certainty.

When one considers the great commission to evangelize all nations (Matt. 28:19,20), to him Revelation, chapter 7, is one of the most important passages in the Bible. Because of its bearing upon world evangelization, I herewith give the chapter in full:

7 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or upon any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascend from the sunrising, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. 4 And I heard the number of them that were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel:

- 5 Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand;
- 6 Of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand;

- 7 Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand;
- 8 Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand;
Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

9 After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 and they cry with a great voice, saying,

Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 saying,

Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they? 14 And I say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: 17 for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes (Revelation, chapter 7).

From the position of chapter 7 in the Book of Revelation, it is clear that this mighty world-wide revival occurs in the first half of the Tribulation. According to verses 1-4, 144,000 persons of the twelve tribes of Israel are sealed against being injured in any way. These verses are similar to the situation mentioned in Ezekiel 9:1-8. In both instances those marked are thus protected from the judgments which the Lord sends upon the people against whom He is pouring out His wrath.

In verses 5-8 there are listed twelve tribes of Israel from each of which twelve thousand persons are selected. How is this language to be interpreted—symbolically or literally? It is to be understood literally unless there is positive evidence that it is used symbolically. One will search in vain for evidence pointing in the direction of symbolism. When the Lord said that Israel wandered in the wilderness forty years, how is that language to be taken? Literally, of course. Jeremiah foretold that the Babylonian captivity would last for seventy years. How is that statement to be taken? Literally, of course. Paul stated that from the promise made to Abraham to the giving of the law there were 430 years (Gal. 3:17). How are we to understand this period of 430 years? Literally, of course.

How are we to interpret the 144,000 of this chapter? Some answer that they are the same ones mentioned in Revelation 14:1-5. The 144,000 of this latter passage are people who have lived clean, spotless lives, and who "were purchased from among men ..." (vv. 4,5). The 144,000 of Revelation, chapter 7, are from the twelve tribes of Israel. They are, therefore, of Jewish extraction and can under no conditions be interpreted as being the 144,000 spotless persons purchased from among men of chapter 14.

Who are these 144,000 of Revelation, chapter 7? They are servants of our God ... (v. 3). They are, therefore, Jews who are servants of God. They are not drones, but servants. Since they are servants, they must be serving God—otherwise God would not call them His servants.

What service do these 144,000 render to God? This question is not answered categorically, but from the context one can be absolutely certain as to what they do. Immediately after mentioning the sealing of these servants of God, John

speaks of the greatest revival of all ages. "After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9,10). As we have seen, God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that in their seed would all nations be blessed. In Revelation, chapter 7, we see all nations being blessed as never before. It is God's plan to save people through the preaching of the gospel (I Cor. 1:21; II Cor. 5:18,19; Rom. 10:17). Evidently there are certain ones who conduct this world-wide revival. The mentioning of the sealing of the 144,000 Jews in this connection implies that these sealed servants of God are the ones who conduct this mightiest of all soul-saving campaign.

A person cannot give that which he does not have. The Jews, as a people, do not have the message of the gospel. It will have to be given to them before they can give it out. Since they are going to preach to the world, and since they do not now have the gospel, obviously it will yet be given to them.

Do the Scriptures give any hint as to who is to give the gospel to Israel? According to Isaiah 40:1-10, there is a group of people who have words of comfort for the Jewish people, and who are exhorted to comfort them. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins ... O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your God!" (Isa. 40:1,2,9b). In Isaiah 62:10-12 those people who trust God and really believe that He answers prayer are urged to preach, heralding the Second Coming of the Messiah.

Upon the faithful people who know God and His truth, God lays the burden of proclaiming redemption to the entire Jewish nation. Are we heeding the Lord's admonition? There is no time for delay. "The King's business requires haste." Let us arise in the strength of Israel's God and do the King's bidding.

One of the elders asked John saying, "These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they?" John replied that he did not know. Then the elder said to him, "These are they that come out of the great Tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Note the statement, "These are they that come out of the great Tribulation." Literally, the Greek text declares that they come out of "the tribulation, the great one." This is the strongest idiom possible to emphasize the fact that the Tribulation concerning which he is speaking is the great one, one that is differentiated from all others. There is but one Great Tribulation, the one with which the Christian Dispensation closes.

To the churches which Paul established on his first missionary tour and which he visited, the Apostle declares that "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:21,22). It is clear that Paul meant that all who would live godly in Christ Jesus should suffer persecution. No Christian of any period can hope to escape being persecuted on account of his godly life in Christ Jesus. Some interpreters claim that in Revelation 7:14 John was talking about the same tribulations mentioned by Paul. Such a position is impossible since John by the idiom which he used pointed to a definite time and called it *the Tribulation, the Great one*.

C. *The Complete Fulfillment*

In the discussion thus far, we have seen that God has at different times and in sundry ways partially fulfilled the promise made to Abraham—that in his seed should all families of the earth be blessed. Now let us see what the Scriptures say concerning the final and complete fulfillment of this promise. In Psalm 67 the answer to our question is found. The Book of Psalms is Israel's song book—inspired and infallible. Since Psalm 67 is one of the hymns of the inspired Psalter, its message is final:

Psalm 67

- 1 God be merciful unto us, and bless us,
And cause his face to shine upon us; [Selah]
- 2 That thy way may be known upon earth,
Thy salvation among all nations.
- 3 Let the peoples praise thee, O God;
Let all the peoples praise thee.
- 4 Oh let the nations be glad and sing for joy;
For thou wilt judge the peoples with equity,
And govern the nations upon earth. [Selah]
- 5 Let the peoples praise thee, O God;
Let all the peoples praise thee.
- 6 The earth hath yielded its increase:
God, even our own God, will bless us.
- 7 God will bless us;
And all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

The entire Psalm is a prayer and at the same time a prophecy. In vision the Psalmist sees the nation of Israel praying for God to bless it, "that thy way may be known upon earth, thy salvation among all nations." At the time that the nation of Israel is praying this petition, God's way will not be universally known upon earth, neither will His salvation be the joyful experience of the nations. Seeing and understanding God's plan for Israel to be the channel of world blessing, and seeing that the promise has never been fully realized, the penitent remnant of the nation of Israel will pray for forgiveness and restoration to fellowship with God in order that they might make known His way among the nations and that all people might have an opportunity to be saved.

Continuing their petition, the remnant will ask the Lord imploringly, "Oh let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For thou wilt judge the peoples with equity, And govern the nations upon earth" (Ps. 67:4).

In what way and for what reason does the remnant want the peoples of earth to praise God? In this connection, these words on the lips of the penitent remnant of Israel are virtually a pledge to the Lord, assuring Him that they will make Him known among the nations if He will forgive and restore them to fellowship with Himself. For the necessary inference from these facts is that God will let the nations of earth praise Him by His forgiving and using Israel to make Him known among the nations.

Three times the worshipers implore God to bless them that they may prove a blessing to all peoples of the world (vv. 3,4,5). As we have already seen, God promises to bless all nations in and through the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In this passage we see Abraham's seed praying that they may be used of God as a channel of world blessing, as God

foretold (Gen. 12:1-3). Then will be fulfilled the marvelous prediction, "In days to come shall Jacob take root; Israel shall blossom and bud; and they shall fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isa. 27:6).

CHAPTER VI

THE ETERNAL ORDER AND ISRAEL

As has been abundantly shown, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel, returns to earth at the end of the Tribulation, mounts the throne of David, establishes a world-wide kingdom, and reigns for a thousand years. At the end of Christ's millennial reign Satan is released from the bottomless pit and allowed to come back to earth for a short time. Then he stirs up a rebellion against the authority of Christ, leading a vast host against Jerusalem, the capital of the world, and against the camp of the saints. Fire comes down out of heaven and consumes this rebellious host. Then Satan is cast into the lake of fire where he shall be tormented for ever and ever.

7 And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Rev. 20:7-10).

I. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

All the saved of earth come up in the first resurrection, which is in three installments, and which is before the thousand years' reign of Christ. All the lost, upon death, descend into Sheol, or Hades, and remain there during the thousand years' reign of Christ. At the end of His reign upon earth, all the lost are raised from the dead and appear before Christ at the judgment of the Great White Throne.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. 15 And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

All the unsaved dead, the great and the small, appear before the throne to be judged. The books containing the record of the life of each one and the "book of life" also are opened. Then each one is judged according to the facts recorded in these books.

There are two books¹ of life: one, the book of life, which originally contained the name of every individual who ever lives; and "the book of life of the Lamb," in which only the names of the saved are inscribed. Life is a period of probation for every individual. The invitation goes out to one and all to accept Christ and His salvation. The name of every one who refuses or neglects to do so and passes out of this life is blotted out of the book of life. On the other hand, if one

¹ It is obvious from the context that "book of life" and "Lamb's book of life" are figurative expressions. Since man keeps records in books, God chose these terms to convey eternal truth in human expression.

accepts Christ and His salvation—and is genuinely born again—his name remains in the book of life, but it is also inscribed in the Lamb's book of life. "And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; 28 so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation" (Heb. 9:27,28). There will be many erasures from the book of life, but not one from the Lamb's book of life. The names of those appearing before the judgment of the Great White Throne are erased from the book of life because they have never been regenerated.

II. THE PASSING OF THE PRESENT ORDER

When the Great White Throne Judgment is set, the entire material universe will pass away—vanish. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them" (Rev. 20:11). A second time John mentions the passing away of the heaven and the earth. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more" (Rev. 21:1). The Lord Jesus foretold the passing away of the material universe in Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Notwithstanding the fact that Jesus foretold the passing away of the heaven and the earth, and John spoke to the same effect, there are those who call attention to Psalm 148:5,6, attempting to prove that the psalmist affirms that the literal heaven and earth will stand forever:

- 5 Let them praise the name of Jehovah;
For he commanded, and they were created.
- 6 He hath also established them for ever and ever:
He hath made a decree which shall not pass away.

Here, therefore, appears to be a contradiction between the psalmist on the one hand, and Christ and John the Apostle, on the other. There are no contradictions in the Word of God. What often appears to be a discrepancy vanishes upon one's ascertaining the real facts in the case.

The true explanation to this difficulty is found by an investigation of the Hebrew word *forever*.² When the facts of the context are examined, where *for ever* is used, it is seen that this expression indicates continuity, duration, and perpetuity, the meaning being limited by the facts presented. King David, for instance, speaking of his reign, which lasted forty years, said that God had chosen him to be king over Israel forever, "Howbeit Jehovah, the God of Israel, chose me out of all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever" (I Chron. 28:4a). In this passage *for ever* means continuity, duration. It cannot mean everlasting. Many passages could be presented which show that *for ever* does not mean everlasting, but continuity without interruption during the period of which the writer is speaking. There is, therefore, no contradiction between King David on the one hand, and the Lord Jesus and John the Apostle on the other.

² The expression *forever* in the scripture text is two words, but in modern English it is written as a single word.

At the conclusion of the Millennium, when the judgment of the Great White Throne is set, the material heaven and earth, constituting the present order of the physical creation, will pass away.

III. THE CREATION OF THE ETERNAL ORDER

The passing away of the present material universe is not a happen-so—an unforeseen catastrophe—but is one of the steps of an orderly development designed by the God of the universe for the blessing of His creatures and for the manifestation of His glory.

The Apostle John saw in a vision the eternal order, which consists of the eternal heaven and the eternal earth. Out of the eternal heaven descends the eternal Jerusalem—the city foursquare—and rests upon the eternal earth. According to John the Apostle, this city will be fifteen hundred miles in each direction—length, breadth, and height. The description is far beyond our comprehension. New rays of eternal glory are constantly flashing from this description of the eternal order as the earnest truth seeker meditates upon it.

21 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God: 4 and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. 5 And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true. 6 And he said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part *shall be* in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

9 And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, who were laden with the seven last plagues; and he spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb. 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God: her light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal: 12 having a wall great and high; having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 on the east were three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he that spake with me had for a measure a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal. 17 And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, *according to* the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. 18 And the building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; 20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the several gates was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. 22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. 23 And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. 24 And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. 25 And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): 26 and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it: 27 and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life.

22 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve *manner of* fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves

of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall serve him; 4 and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. 5 And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever (Rev. 21:1-22:5).

IV. THE CITY FOURSQUARE, THE ETERNAL HOME OF THE REDEEMED

The glowing description of the eternal Jerusalem is found in Revelation 21:9-27. When one reads it, he sees that it beggars description by mortal man. The city is surrounded by a wall "great and high." There are twelve gates, at which are twelve angels. On each one of these gates is the name of a Jew, the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. This wall is erected upon twelve foundations, on each of which is the name of a Jew, the name of one of the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why is such prominence given to the Jews in connection with the eternal Jerusalem, the home of the redeemed? A hint that may lead to the answer is possibly found in the relation that Israel through history has sustained to all nations.

- 8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,
 When he separated the children of men,
 He set the bounds of the peoples
 According to the number of the children of Israel.
- 9 For Jehovah's portion is his people;
 Jacob is the lot of his inheritance (Deut. 32:8,9).

The thought contained in this quotation has led someone to speak of Israel as the hub of the nations. This statement being true, we can see how the events of history have always eddied around the people of Israel. It is reasonable to suppose that the same principle will obtain in the eternal world.

There proceeded out from the throne of God and of the Lamb a river of water of life, flowing in the midst of the street. There doubtless will be myriads of streets, but the one of which mention is made is the principal one.

On both sides of this river is seen the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the health of the nations. Since there will be no disease or sickness in the eternal order, it would be better to translate the word in the original as *health of the nations*—that which keeps the people in perfect physical condition.

In this eternal city there will be no night. Those who will live in the eternal Jerusalem "shall reign forever and ever."

V. SOLEMN WARNINGS AND PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS

Having presented the picture of the Eternal Order (Rev. 21:1-22:5), the inspired Apostle John concludes his message to the churches with some solemn warnings and earnest exhortations.

6 And he said unto me, These words are faithful and true: and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. 7 And behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John am he that heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that showed me these things. 9 And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book: worship God.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand. 11 He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still. 12 Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. 14 Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right *to come* to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. 15 Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: 19 and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book.

20 He who testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen (Rev. 22:6-21).

Whatever God says is faithful and true, "For no word from God shall be void of power" (Luke 1:37).

In view of the Lord's return (Rev. 22:7), "Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book." One must study the Book of Revelation in order to know the message written therein.

According to verses 8 and 9, John asserts that he both heard and saw the things that are written in the Book of Revelation. John attempted to worship the angel who showed and gave him the message. The angel stopped him, however, and said, "Worship God." Man may respect others, but never to the point of worshiping them, neither is he to worship a celestial creature.

The angel told John not to seal up the words of the prophecy, "for the time is at hand" (v. 10). When nineteen hundred years are added to the date of the writing of the Book of Revelation, it becomes evident that we now are in the very last days. Let us be loyal to our absent Lord, being always busy about our Father's business.

When one reads verse 11, he is impressed with the thought that man, from one standpoint, is "master of his fate." God never forces or coerces anyone. Man is free to make his own choices. In this sense he is master of his own fate. God wants all men to be saved, but it is left to the individual to determine whether or not he will accept God's free sovereign grace.

Jesus reminds the churches that He is coming quickly and that He will reward each one according to his work (v. 12).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the "first and the last." He is the One through whom all things were created and for whom they exist (v. 13).

According to verse 14, those are blessed who wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. They will have a right to the tree of life and will enter in through the gates of the city.

Everything will be holy within the city, but all moral perverts will be without the city (v. 15).

According to verse 16, Jesus, the Messiah of Israel, is the offspring of David. Moreover, He is the bright and morning star. The morning star appears just before dawn. Christ will appear before the dawn of the Millennial Age as the bright and morning star for those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

According to verse 17, the Holy Spirit sends out a world-wide invitation to all who are athirst for the water of life. It is the will of God that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Anyone who has partaken of the water of life may invite others to come.

In verses 18 and 19, God sounds a solemn warning against adding to, taking from, or in any wise changing the contents of the message of the Book of Revelation. God gave a similar warning to Israel regarding the revelation that was made through Moses.

4 And now, O Israel, hearken unto the statutes and unto the ordinances, which I teach you, to do them; that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which Jehovah, the God of your fathers, giveth you. **2** Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you (Deut. 4:1,2).

Since God would not allow any alterations in the books of Moses, nor in the Book of Revelation, it stands to reason that these warnings apply to all that God has said—all the Scriptures.

In verse 20, John quotes Jesus as saying, "Yea: I come quickly." Then the Apostle John responds saying, "Amen, Come Lord Jesus." All born-again, spirit-filled, and scripturally taught people who understand prophecy say the same thing: "Come, Lord Jesus."

John's final message to the Church is found in verse 21: "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen."

CHAPTER VII

MESSIAH AWAITING ISRAEL'S CRY FOR HELP

In the days of Isaiah, the latter half of the eighth century B.C.E., the Assyrian monarchs were making one invasion after another against the smaller nations west of them. Hezekiah, the king of Judah, and the leaders of the people were in mortal fear lest their country should be invaded. At the king's court the leaders were divided as to what course they should take. One group wanted to appease the Assyrians by payment of money; the other party wanted to purchase military aid and assistance from Egypt. But Isaiah, the court preacher, opposed both plans, insisting that, if the people would only trust God, He would deliver them from all harm and danger.

Secretly the pro-Egyptian party looted both the royal treasury and that of the Temple of the Lord to obtain the necessary funds for purchasing military aid from Egypt. They sent their ambassadors to Egypt to consummate the deal. At that time caravans of asses and camels, laden with the purchase price of Egyptian military aid, were slowly journeying through the sultry desert on their way to Egypt. The Lord revealed to Isaiah what the leaders had hidden from him. The Prophet, therefore, denounced them and revealed the entire situation to the public.

The Lord then instructed the Prophet to write the message on a tablet and in a book, exposing the corruption of the people and their determined wilfulness to have their way at all costs.

6 The burden of the beasts of the South. Through the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the lioness and the lion, the viper and the fiery flying serpent, they carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the humps of camels, to a people that shall not profit *them*. 7 For Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I called her Rahab that sitteth still.

8 Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever. 9 For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah; 10 that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits, 11 get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. 12 Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and rely thereon; 13 therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly in an instant. 14 And he shall break it as a potter's vessel is broken, breaking it in pieces without sparing; so that there shall not be found among the pieces thereof a sherd wherewith to take fire from the hearth, or to dip up water out of the cistern.

15 For thus said the Lord Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength. And ye would not: 16 but ye said, No, for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. 17 One thousand *shall flee* at the threat of one; at the threat of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on a hill (Isa. 30:6-17).

Whenever one becomes involved in something wrong and he sees his mistake, he should turn from it. This thought Isaiah expressed, saying, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (v. 15).

God made man a free moral agent. He never coerces or forces anyone's will. He does, however, use moral suasion and men and means so far as He can without forcing the will, always stopping before stepping over the threshold of one's personality. The Lord therefore always waits until men voluntarily and in faith turn to Him for the desired blessing:

18 And therefore will Jehovah wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for Jehovah is a God of justice; blessed are all they that wait for him. 19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; thou shalt weep no more; he will surely be gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear, he will answer thee (Isa. 30:18,19).

Psalm 72 is a Messianic prediction. In verses 5-11 the writer describes in glowing terms the unquestioned sovereignty of King Messiah over all the nations. But He will never force Himself against anyone's will. *He will wait for the people of Israel to call upon Him. When they do, He will come and deliver them out of all their troubles.*

13 He will have pity on the poor and needy,
And the souls of the needy he will save.
14 He will redeem their soul from oppression and violence;
And precious will their blood be in his sight:
15 And they shall live; and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba:
And men shall pray for him continually;
They shall bless him all the day long (Ps. 72:13-15)

Humanly speaking, God is disappointed in Israel.

8 Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee:
O Israel, if thou wouldst hearken unto me!
9 There shall no strange god be in thee;
Neither shalt thou worship any foreign god.
10 I am Jehovah thy God,
Who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt:
Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.
11 But my people hearkened not to my voice;
And Israel would none of me.
12 So I let them go after the stubbornness of their heart,
That they might walk in their own counsels (Ps. 81:8-12).

Notwithstanding God's marvelous deliverance of Israel from Egyptian servitude, and His making provision for their needs and comfort in their trek through the wilderness, they went after the stubbornness of their own hearts (Ps. 81:12). Then, as with a sigh, the psalmist, speaking for God, declares that the Lord would subdue all their enemies *if they would only hearken to Him.*

13 Oh that my people would hearken unto me,
That Israel would walk in my ways!
14 I would soon subdue their enemies,
And turn my hand against their adversaries.
15 The haters of Jehovah should submit themselves unto him:
But their time should endure for ever.
16 He would feed them also with the finest of the wheat;
And with honey out of the rock would I satisfy thee (Ps. 81:13-16).

Whenever Israel really hearkens to the Lord, He will answer. God is still waiting. It is now Israel's move.

In Matthew, chapter 23, is recorded Christ's discourse against the hypocrisy of certain scribes and Pharisees. He concluded His message with the following words:

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. 39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord (Matt. 23:37-39).

These words were spoken to official Jerusalem who, at various times in the history of the nation, killed prophets and stoned those that had been sent unto her, the literal Jerusalem.

Very significant is the statement, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye willed not." According to this statement, the Lord Jesus, who has all power in heaven and on earth, would have gathered the people of Israel and restored them to their land but they willed not. The Lord willed to regather them, but they willed otherwise; He therefore did not force their will. He is still waiting for them to yield their will and call upon Him. Whenever they do so, He will deliver them. Then Israel's problems will be solved, and Israel will become the head of the nations instead of being the tail.

Psalm 24 is a dramatic hymn. It is one of the most thrilling and vivid prophecies of the conversion of Israel and the return of Messiah, the King of Glory. No discussion of Israel's returning to God would be complete without this poem.

Ps. 24

- 1 The earth is Jehovah's, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
- 2 For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.
- 3 Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
- 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood,
And hath not sworn deceitfully.
- 5 He shall receive a blessing from Jehovah,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
- 6 This is the generation of them that seek after him,
That seek thy face, *even* Jacob. [Selah]
- 7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory will come in.
- 8 Who is the King of glory?
Jehovah strong and mighty,
Jehovah mighty in battle.
- 9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory will come in,
- 10 Who is this King of glory?
Jehovah of hosts,
He is the King of glory [Selah]

This Psalm falls into two natural divisions: the first section deals with the citizens of Zion (vv. 1-6); the second calls upon the nation of Israel to welcome the King of Glory into her midst.

The inspired writer calls the reader's attention to the fact that the earth with its fullness and the people living thereon are Jehovah's. The word *Jehovah* has four different connotations: sometimes it refers to the Holy Trinity (Deut. 6:4); on other occasions it refers to God the Father (Ps. 80:4,8); in still other connections it is the name of God the Son (Isa. 33:1 7-22); and in other places of the Scripture the name signifies the Holy Spirit (Isa. 61:1). We are told that the earth and its fullness belong to Jehovah "For he hath founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the floods." In other words, the word *Jehovah* in this passage refers to God the Son, who created the heavens and the earth (John 1:1-4). The world and all things therein belong, therefore, to God the Son by virtue of His having created them.

The universe belongs to God the Son by virtue of His having purchased all things, paying, as the price thereof, the blood of His Cross (Col. 1:19,20). All things will belong to the Son by virtue of His conquest when He appears in fulfillment of the prediction in Deuteronomy 32:39-43. The last picture of the coming of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords is in Revelation 19:11-21. "Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah? And who shall stand in his holy place?" (Ps. 24:3). Several passages of Scripture refer to the mountain of Jehovah's house. Isaiah speaks of this mountain in Isaiah 2:1-4. It is described in Ezekiel, chapter 48. In the great Kingdom Age the Holy Land will be like a valley that reaches afar: "As valleys are they spread forth, As gardens by the river-side, As lign-aloes which Jehovah hath planted, As cedar-trees beside the waters" (Num. 24:6).

Who will be granted the privilege of ascending into the hill of Jehovah and standing before the Lord—approved by Him? This question is answered in verse 4: "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood, And hath not sworn deceitfully" (Ps. 24:4). This verse includes the people living at the time which the Psalmist in vision sees, the good moral people whose lives are clean, from an ethical standpoint, and who are living up to the light that they have. I would call these individuals Corneliuses (Acts, chapter 10). A full description of this class of people is found in the following Psalm:

- 1 Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle?
Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
- 2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,
And speaketh truth in his heart;
- 3 He that slandereth not with his tongue,
Nor doeth evil to his friend,
Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor;
- 4 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised,
But who honoreth them that fear Jehovah;
He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not;
- 5 He that putteth not out his money to interest,
Nor taketh reward against the innocent.
He that doeth these things shall never be moved (Ps. 15).

The people of whom we are studying in these passages shall "receive a blessing from Jehovah, And righteousness from the God of his salvation" (Ps. 24:5). Such a person or persons "receive" a blessing from Jehovah. What is it that

they shall receive? The answer is "a blessing from Jehovah." In what form is the blessing? The second line of this verse, which is parallel with the first line, shows of what the blessing consists, namely righteousness from the God of his salvation. Since it is a righteousness from God, it is not something that a man does. Rather, it is imputed righteousness. The righteousness of a man—a clean moral life and good deeds performed in his unregenerated state—is as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6) in the sight of God. The righteousness of Psalm 24:5 is the righteousness of God. In Romans 1:16,17 the Apostle Paul speaks of the righteousness of God which is revealed in the gospel. The Apostle enlarges upon this doctrine in Romans 3:21-26:

21 But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; 24 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 whom God set forth *to be* a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; 26 for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.

This is the righteousness of which Paul also speaks in Philipplans 3:2-11:

Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision: 3 for we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh: 4 though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh: if any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless. 7 Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea verily and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, *even* that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith: 10 that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; 11 if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.

In Psalm 24:6 the writer speaks of "the generation of them that seek after him. That seek thy face, even Jacob." Speaking of this group, the Psalmist says: "This is the generation ..." Of what generation does he speak? Obviously of the good moral people—the ones mentioned in verse 4—who receive a blessing from the Lord in the form of being clothed in God's righteousness. Those who are thus acceptable to God are the generation that seek God's favor. Those who seek His face—His approval—are a certain generation of the Hebrew race, "that seek thy face, even Jacob." In this passage we see a generation of the Hebrews seeking after God in the manner spoken of in Psalm 42:1-3:

- 1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
- 2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
When shall I come and appear before God?
- 3 My tears have been my food day and night,
While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

Doubtless this generation of Israel is the last one scattered among the nations—they are seeking God; for when God's judgments are in the earth—the judgments of the Great Tribulation—the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9). From various passages of Scripture we know that the last generation of Israel, dispersed among the nations, will

seek God very earnestly. Zechariah speaks of this penitent remnant, foretelling that "they [the nation of Israel] shall look unto me whom they have pierced ..." (Zech. 12:10). The Lord Jesus Christ told the Jewish leaders of His day, "Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:37-39).

- 7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
 And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors:
 And the King of glory will come in.
- 8 Who is the King of glory?
 Jehovah strong and mighty,
 Jehovah mighty in battle (Ps. 24:7,8).

Obviously verse 7 cannot be taken literally. The Psalmist thinks of Israel as being in an ancient oriental walled city, the doors and gates of which are closed. He personifies gates and doors, speaking of them as if they had heads that are bowed. By the use of the figure of speech, synecdoche—a figure which speaks of the whole in terms of a part—it is evident that he is thinking, not of literal doors and gates, but of the people who enter and depart through them. Seeing in vision the prostrate remnant of Israel seeking God, as indicated by the bowed heads of the doors, the Psalmist, as the spokesman for the Almighty, calls upon Israel to arise and to welcome into their midst the King of Glory. This King of Glory will not force an entrance into their midst. God never forces anyone's will, but always waits until one voluntarily pleads for Him to act.

Who is this King of Glory? Why is He thus called? When these questions are studied in the light of Psalm 110:1-3, one sees that the Messiah, upon His first coming to earth when He is rejected and executed by the nation, accepts the invitation of God to leave earth and return to glory, where He has been ever since His Ascension:

- 1 Jehovah saith unto my Lord,
 Sit thou at my right hand,
 Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
- 2 Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion:
 Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
- 3 Thy people offer themselves willingly
 In the day of thy power, in holy array:
 Out of the womb of the morning
 Thou hast the dew of thy youth (Ps. 110:1-3).

The oracle in Daniel 7:13,14 gives additional light upon this passage. Generally speaking, it is recognized as a Messianic prediction.

13 I saw in the night-visions and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

The Ancient of Days, seated upon the throne, is God the Father. The one like unto a Son of Man is God the Son. Being the second person of the Trinity and having entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, the Son of God became historically the Son of Man, the God-man.

According to the prophetic Word, the Messiah appeared upon the earth on scheduled time and performed the work for which He came. He, as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world (Isaiah, chapter 53), was crucified and buried; but He arose triumphantly over the evil powers of the unseen world. Then, at the invitation of God, He ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High where He has been ever since. When He arose from the dead, all authority in heaven and earth was given to Him (Matt. 28:18-20). Because of these facts He is spoken of as the King of glory.

The penitent remnant of Israel of the end time, thought of as doors having bowed heads, are urged to lift up their heads and to welcome this King of glory. He will not leave glory until the people of Israel plead for Him to return. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors: And the King of glory will come in" (Ps. 24:7). The rhetorical question is asked, "Who is the King of glory?" The writer answers the question saying, "Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle." Jehovah the mighty One fought the battle with Satan and the forces of evil at the time of His Crucifixion and Resurrection. He is ready to go into battle against the Antichrist of the end time and all the forces of evil. *But He will not take the field of battle until the nation of Israel penitently call upon Him to come and champion their cause.*

Again, penitent Israel are called upon to arise and accept Messiah (Ps. 24:9). Once more the rhetorical question "Who is the King of glory?" is asked. This time the answer is given: "Jehovah of hosts [armies], He is the King of glory." Jehovah of armies—the Lord Jesus Christ—is the only one who can conquer the forces of evil and bring salvation to Israel and to the world.

Finally, as we come to Psalm 80, we are, figuratively speaking, treading on holy ground. Through the long vista of centuries opened up by this inspired hymn, the Psalmist sees a penitent Israel prostrate before God, pleading for mercy and deliverance—in the most sacred and sublime hour of all Jewish history. Realizing the sacredness and holiness of that hour and occasion, let us enter into the study of the revelation brought by the inspired poet.

This Psalm naturally falls into two divisions: First, a petition addressed to Messiah, the Son of God, found in the following words:

- 1 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock;
Thou that sittest above the cherubim, shine forth.
- 2 Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up thy might,
And come to save us.
- 3 Turn us again, O God;
And cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved (Ps. 80:1-3).

Since the shepherds of Israel—both the religious and political leaders of Ezekiel's day—were corrupt and were failing to perform their duties of shepherding the flock, God through the Prophet promises to come and fulfill the duties of the shepherd to His flock, the Jewish people.

11 For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I myself, even I, will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the water courses, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them with good pasture; and upon the mountains of the height of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie down in a good fold; and on fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. 15 I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord Jehovah. 16 I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but the fat and the strong I will destroy; I will feed them in justice (Ezek. 34:11-16).

In fulfillment of this promise, Jehovah the Son appeared as the God-man in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ more than nineteen hundred years ago and purchased eternal redemption for all who will believe Him and accept His free salvation. Not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God, many of the leaders of Israel rejected Him and were the occasion of His being crucified. Foreseeing this turn of events, the prophet Zechariah, in a most dramatic manner, foretells this tragedy: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn my hand upon the little ones" (Zech. 13:7). After the death of the Son of man, He was buried; but the grave could not hold Him in its grip; the Psalmist David (Ps. 16:8-11) foretold that He would be raised from the dead. At the invitation of God—"Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Ps. 110:1). The risen Shepherd of Israel left earth, ascended to heaven, and sat down on the right hand of the throne of God in heaven, where He has been ever since. He is awaiting Israel's call for Him to return and to deliver them from all their enemies. The prayer of Psalm 80:1-3 shows that the entire nation of Israel will know who the Shepherd of the nation is, where He is, and His plan to leave glory and to save them from their enemies.

The second petition is addressed to Jehovah God of Hosts, God the Father:

- 4 O Jehovah God of hosts,
How long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?
- 5 Thou hast fed them with the bread of tears,
And given them tears to drink in large measure.
- 6 Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbors;
And our enemies laugh among themselves.
- 7 Turn us again, O God of hosts;
And cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.
- 8 Thou broughtest a vine out of Egypt:
Thou didst drive out the nations, and plantedst it.
- 9 Thou preparedst *room* before it,
And it took deep root, and filled the land.
- 10 The mountains were covered with the shadow of it,
And the boughs thereof were *like* cedars of God.
- 11 It sent out its branches unto the sea,
And its shoots unto the River.
- 12 Why hast thou broken down its walls,
So that all they that pass by the way do pluck it?

- 13 The boar out of the wood doth ravage it,
And the wild beasts of the field feed on it.
- 14 Turn again, we beseech thee, O God of hosts:
Look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine,
- 15 And the stock which thy right hand planted,
And the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.
- 16 It is burned with fire, it is cut down:
They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.
- 17 Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand,
Upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.
- 18 So shall we not go back from thee:
Quicken thou us, and we will call upon thy name.
- 19 Turn us again, O Jehovah God of hosts;
Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved (Ps. 80:4-19).

That verses 4-19 are addressed to God the Father is indeed evident from verse 17. Jehovah the Father is implored by the penitent worshipers: "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, Upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself." It is clear that the worshipers know the facts concerning the man at God's right hand. In keeping, therefore, with the facts which the people will have learned, they will pray for God the Father to send forth this man, the God-man (Dan. 7:13,14), from glory to earth with His blessing resting upon Him.

We have abundantly seen that the remnant of Israel of the end time will penitently and in genuine faith repent of their sins against God and Messiah and will plead for Messiah to come to save them: "Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah? And who shall stand in his holy place?" (Ps. 24:3).

These rhetorical questions are answered in the following words:

- He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood,
And hath not sworn deceitfully.
- 5 He shall receive a blessing from Jehovah,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
- 6 This is the generation of them that seek after him,
That seek thy face, even Jacob.

According to these verses, Israel of the end time will be in dead earnest concerning their being acceptable to God.

The inspired Apostle Peter, at the house of Cornelius (Acts chapter 10), gave a brief message concerning Jesus of Nazareth who will accept all who come to Him.

34 ... Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. 36 The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)—37 that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judaea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 *even* Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. 40 Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, 41 not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, *even* to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to

testify that this is he who is ordained of God *to be* the Judge of the living and the dead. 43 To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins (Acts 10:34b-43).

In Acts, chapter 15, is a record of the first church conference which was called by the elders of the church in Jerusalem to confer the question as to how people are saved. Some of the brethren insisted that the formula for salvation is: faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour plus observing the law of Moses. These misguided brethren insisted that "Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1b). After much discussion apostle Peter guided by the Spirit of God, declared;

7 ... Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; 9 and he made no distinction between us [Jews] and them [Gentiles], cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they (Acts 15:7b-11).

Since salvation of the soul is the most important consideration of life, one cannot afford to neglect the settling of this question, once for all; for, asks the inspired Apostle, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Heb. 2:3). There is no hope of eternal life for the one who neglects or fails to receive Christ as Lord and Saviour. Jesus declared, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. 17 For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him" (John 3:16,17).

SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

Shepherd of Israel, keeping Thy sheep—
Never forgetting in slumber or sleep;
Folding them gently when night cometh on,
Going before them at break of the dawn!

Shepherd of Israel, true to Thine own
When the false hireling servant hath flown;
Laying Thy life down their pardon to win,
Shedding Thy blood to redeem them from sin!

Shepherd of Israel, strong is Thine arm,
Shielding Thy flock from each threatening harm;
Gath'ring the lambs as they falter and fall,
Safe in Thy bosom enfolding them all!

Shepherd of Israel, soon to appear,
Soon to deliver Thy little flock here!
Just to behold Thee, their richest reward—
Shepherd of Israel, Jesus, their Lord!

Chorus:

Shepherd of Israel! Shepherd of love!
Watching Thy flock from the glory above!
Knowing how weary their wilderness way;
Praying for them—ever living to pray!