

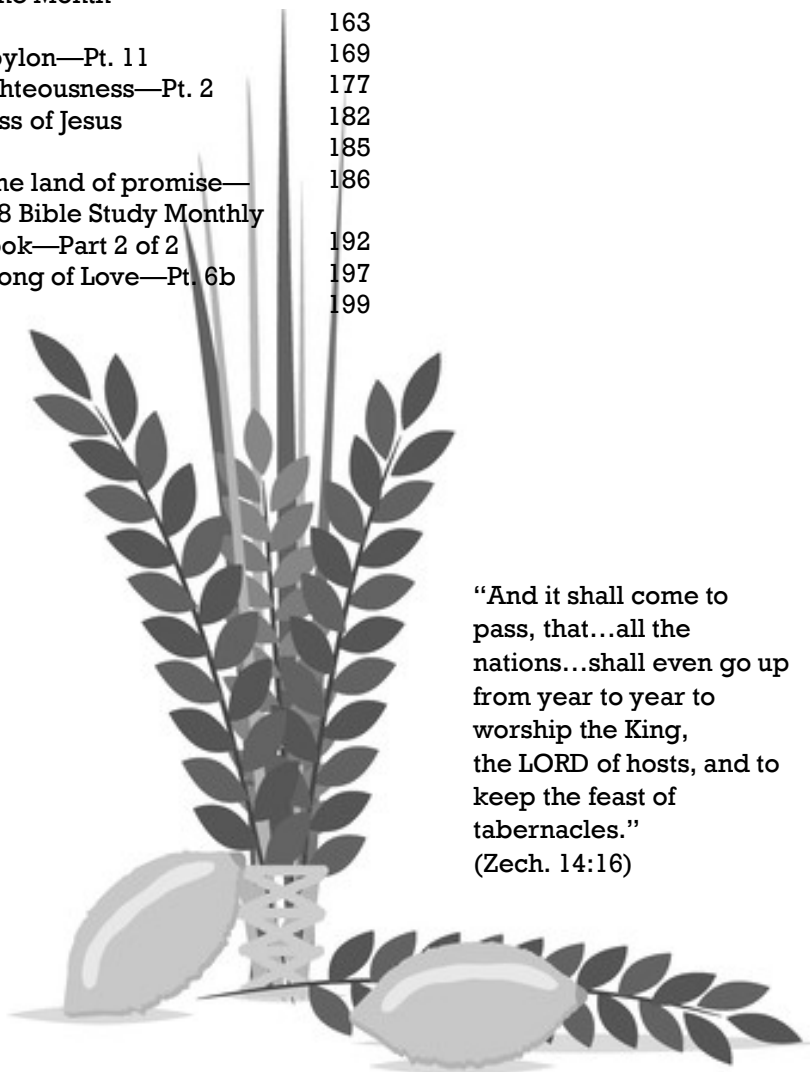
# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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“And it shall come to pass, that...all the nations...shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”  
(Zech. 14:16)

# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

FOUNDED 1924

The Bible Study Monthly, published to promote knowledge of the Bible, sees the Scriptures as a true record of God's dealings with the human race, needing to be understood in our generation. It stands for the pre-millennial advent of our Lord, and His reign of peace and justice on the earth.

*"Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ."* (Ephesians 4:15 NRSV)

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Secretary & Treasurer: Nicholas Charcharos

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

*"It shall come to pass, that....all the nations...shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."* (Zech. 14:16)

The third feast of the agricultural and religious year under the law arrangement in Israel was Sukkot. It was the final harvest; the first being the barley harvest when our Lord died at the Passover and was raised from the dead as the first-fruits of them that slept. (1 Cor. 15:20) The second was the wheat harvest at the feast of weeks just seven weeks later at Pentecost when the holy Spirit came and the gospel message went out for Israelites to become the sons of God. Just three and a half years later it is reckoned the call went out to the nations, the Gentiles. The final feast comes months later. Anyone can see who visits Israel, Turkey or other countries around the Mediterranean there is the harvest after all the figs, vines and other agricultural produce are brought in. Therefore it pictures the harvest of the world in the age to come; the Messianic age.

2023 marks two anniversaries: firstly of 75 years of the state of Israel which country is so often in our news, and secondly it is 100 years since the Ottoman empire ended which also changed matters affecting the promised land and with it the beginning of the return of favour to Israel.

Magazine content; What is published is believed to have a wide interest, but everything printed may not necessarily be the opinion of the editor and his colleagues.

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## SUKKOT

The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated from the 15th till the 21st day of the seventh month, the month of Tishri. The Festival of Tabernacles was part of the autumn holiday cycle. This cycle began with the Festival of Trumpets, Rosh Hashanah, which fell on the 1st of Tishri and began a new agricultural year. It was a joyful feast; the shofar was blown and the New Year was announced. According to tradition, the sound of the shofar was also supposed to recall the day of final judgment.

On the 10th of Tishri followed Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement. On that day, everyone was obliged to humble themselves before God and repent of their sins. The Bible says that everyone who would not humble himself before God on this day, would be cut off from Israel. Yom Kippur is the saddest and most solemn holiday in Israel. (Leviticus 23:27-32). But after the Day of Atonement, on the 15th of Tishri, we have another celebration, this time a joyful feast. If we follow the descriptions of the Feast of Tabernacles in the Bible, we can notice how the meaning of this feast has been changing. Each description gives it a slightly different meaning. The first description of the Sukkot feast is in Exodus 23:16. The holiday is not even named as the Feast of Tabernacles, it is simply called the End of the Year Harvest Festival, after the fields were harvested. We find that the harvest festival is deeply embedded in human culture, and it is clearly celebrated more widely, not only in Judaism.

In the Bible Sukkot in its original form was to be a festival of harvest, feasting and rejoicing from the abundance of the crops. It did not even have a specific date, as we read in Exodus 34:22.

Another description of this holiday is in Lev. 23:34-44. Here God is giving a name to this holiday and there is a detailed description of it. From there onwards it takes a more specific form and it has a specific date. The Lord commanded Israel to celebrate the Feast of Booths (Tabernacles, Sukkot) from the 15th to the 21st of Tishri. On the first day of Sukkot, the 15th day of Tishri, was a Sabbath day of rest, it was forbidden to work and a holy assembly was held. After the seven days of this feast there was another day of Sabbath rest and a holy assembly to be held on the eighth day, the 22nd of Tishri, but it was no longer exactly Sukkot.

In the Leviticus 23:34-44 description we find out four elements of this feast:

1. A harvest festival
2. A holiday dedicated to the Lord
3. Offerings and sacrifices
4. Living in tents—an element commemorating the history

### **The harvest festival—an element of joy**

The feast was a direct implementation of what God said to Moses in Exodus, and so it was a festival established after the end of harvest (Lev. 23:39), and it was a joyful festival. There was feasting on the fruits of the harvest and rejoicing, cheering with palm branches, myrtle, and willow branches. So, the festival of Sukkot was first of all a feast of joy, when all Israel was to enjoy the harvest, to rest and feast before God (Lev. 23:39-41). Sukkot was a celebration of joy not only for those who did well, but also for the servants, for the Levites who had to be given a share from the harvest, for a passer-by, for the poor, for the orphan and for the widow, who was left some of the crops on fields. (Deut. 16:13-15; 24:19).

### **A holiday dedicated to the Lord**

When we read the description of the Feast of Tabernacles in Leviticus 23, we notice two parts of the holiday. The description does not start with the harvest festival part, as we read in Leviticus 23:33-36 (NKJV): “Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, saying: the fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.” It starts with the announcements and the information that the holiday is first of all dedicated to God, a holy assembly and service was called. A holy assembly in this case meant that every Jew had a duty to come for the feast to the place indicated by God. In the days of Samuel it was Shiloh, and from the time of King David it was Jerusalem. Every Jew was supposed to go to Jerusalem at least three times a year:

1. For the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread.
2. For the Feast of Weeks, later called Pentecost, and which, like Sukkot, was a joyful holiday when food offerings were brought.
3. The Feast of Tabernacles.

In Israel, celebrating was supposed not only to be fun, but every joyful event and feast had to be associated with worshiping God. Every Jew had to rejoice, he had to rest from his work, and was supposed to remember

his God. In moments of joy, he would come to Jerusalem and give Him glory.

From these Sukkot regulations there is also a lesson for our lives. God teaches us that when we celebrate, our celebration should be combined with giving glory to God. Today, when we have a holiday, we say it is time to do something for myself, sometimes for the family or for children. Spending time with our family is good and necessary. This element of rest and family celebration is included in the description of the holiday of Sukkot. But celebrating in Israel was always connected with the religious element, with giving glory to God. How can we do that today? How can we spend our holidays, time off work, so that we could on one hand, do something for ourselves, having this element of feast and joy, and on the other hand to remember God? Remembering God during our holidays in this laicized secular world can be challenging.

In the context of Sukkot and spending our time for the glory of God we recall Deut. 14:22-29. This passage is not about Sukkot, it is about giving tithes to the Lord. Sukkot was in autumn after the gathering of crops and harvest, and at this time tithing was also separated. Deut. 16:13 testifies that we can combine these descriptions. It says when you separate your tithing, you will take everything with you and you will go to the place chosen by God and you will be rejoicing, celebrating with your family. Of course, there were also sacrifices and offerings to be made. But tithing exclusively for Levites was to be done once every three years. However, two out of three years, tithing was intended for a kind of family trip. Note that this holiday was connected with giving glory to God. How did it look like in practice? We can learn from the story of Elkanah, the father of Samuel. We read about it in 1 Samuel 1:1-9, Elkanah walked, with his family every year to give glory to God, to Shiloh, where the tabernacle was. Elkanah also brought sacrifices and had a feast with his family before the Lord, as we read in Deut. 14:22-29.

### **How can we combine enjoying our holidays and giving glory to God?**

It seems that we have such possibilities. We can sing together or talk about God. That is why I like the concept of a convention or meeting, where there is time for day trips and fellowship, and there is time for God. Let us look for opportunities to worship God when we have free time. Perhaps this is what Sukkot teaches today.

### **Offerings and sacrifices**

The description of the holiday of Sukkot from Leviticus 23 mentions

offering sacrifices consecrated to the Lord, but it does not specify which were these sacrifices. (vv.36-37). The details can be found in the next book, Numbers 29. This is another proof that the customs of Sukkot were not instituted at once, and that the customs of this feast were shaped over time before they took on a final form. In Numbers 29:12-39 repeatedly includes the three offerings; the burnt offerings along with grain offerings and drink offerings.

The kind of animal sacrifices Jews offered in general were:

1. Burnt offerings, where almost a whole animal was burned, except the skin, which was taken by the priest (Lev. 7:8).
2. Peace offerings from which people sacrificed and the priest ate, and only the fat and kidneys were burned on the altar (Lev. 7:11-18).
3. Sin offerings, whose flesh belonged to the priest and the fat and kidneys were burned. Unless it was the sin-offering of the priests, or the blood was brought into the tabernacle, as on the Day of Atonement, then all flesh and skin were burned outside the camp (Lev. 6:25&26).

What sacrifices were offered on the Feast of Tabernacles?

1) Burnt offerings:

- Calves—13 on the first day, 12 on the second day,...7 on the 7th day
- Rams—2 daily
- Lambs under one year old—14 daily

2) The sin offering:

- Goat—1 daily

3) Grain and drink offerings accompanied each burnt offering and sin offering.

### **Living in tents—an element commemorating the history**

The feast of tabernacles was also held as a remembrance, so that the future generations would know that their ancestors lived in tents when they were brought out from Egypt by God. (Lev. 23:42-43)

Should we commemorate anything in our lives? There are things we can commemorate by telling children and others stories of brothers and sisters, who gave their lives for the truth and the gospel. In order to commemorate something, it is worth doing something that will remind us of it. That is why the Jews bind commandments on their hands and nail them to the door of their houses. That is why God commanded to tell children of Israel what Passover means, that is why He ordered them to live in tents on the Feast of Sukkot. For this reason Jesus instituted a memorial of his death. We need to commemorate important things so we don't forget who we are and what we believe.

**Another element: to learn the Law**

Another goal was an educational one. Every seven years, in the year of cancelling debts, during the Feast of Tabernacles, the Law was read to the people. (Deut. 31:10-13). Sukkot was to teach people the law, it was also the beginning of a new era.

**The prophetic meaning of the festival of Sukkot**

In Zechariah 14 we find a description of the invasion of Israel by all nations, and God's dealings with the opponents of a newly gathered Israel. This seems to be the final victory over the opponents of God. In verse 9 (NRSV) we find that "The LORD will become king over all the earth; on that day the LORD will be one and his name one," then in verse 11 it is said that "There shall be no more curse." (RSV) The prophecy ends with the record that people of all nations will be making pilgrimages to Jerusalem and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. Why exactly this feast and not the Passover, or the Day of Atonement? Sukkot in its first meaning, as a harvest festival, at the time after the harvest, when you can take a break from work, it is associated with earthly joy, happiness, and feasting. Is it a state of abundance, peace, and joy? Simply the start of God's kingdom? A similar description is in Micah 4:2-4.

The start of God's kingdom is also the time for burnt offerings, and their meaning is giving glory to God. In the book of Hebrews it is written that the new temple needs better sacrifices. They will no longer be calves nor rams, but praises to God. Then will be the time when all people are looking for the word of the Lord, and the Lord teaches them His ways. Why then does Zechariah write that all people will keep the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, since the entire Kingdom of God will be in a condition as the Feast of Tabernacles? That might fulfil the role of commemoration. Just as the Jews lived in tents to commemorate their coming out of Egypt, the annual commemoration in God's Kingdom, will be necessary to remember the history of sin and redemption.

Is the Feast of Tabernacles within us? Is our life a time of happiness, joy, and rest? Probably not, we all have worries, troubles, stresses, and illnesses. Can we rest? But how to rest when I have nothing to live on, when I do not have a job. How to rest when my child is sick, how to rest when worries do not allow you to think about anything else? Let us remember the relief we can experience in prayer. When we are powerless, when we cannot see the way out of a situation, entrust your concerns to God. Entrust to God not only your requests, but also your plans and your desires. Sometimes people may tell you that earthly things are not to be

prayed for, but do not believe them. How do we ask for understanding of spiritual things when we are worried about tomorrow?

God wants us to entrust our desires to Him. I believe that our highest desire is to serve and glorify God. But how to sing hymns of praise when we have worries or bitterness in our heart? I am inspired by the words of Jacob's vows, which he took in Bethel when he fled from his brother Esau. (Gen. 28) When he had a dream about the ladder and the angels, he became scared and made a vow to God. Jacob said to God: Lord God, if you will bless me, if you will keep me, if I have something to eat and clothes to wear, and if you let me happily return to my father, I will praise you. I will give you a tithe from everything and I will worship you. Jacob asks God: I want to praise you, I want to tithe you, but I am asking your blessing so I can do it.

But you, entrust your desires and your expectations to God. Tell him what the desires of your heart are. When you are scared in life, when you stand at crossroads tell Him what you want to do for Him and ask for His blessing and He can make you instruments of His glory.

This is what I wish you and myself, that we may rest in God here on earth, that we may rest in faith so that we may live today in the Feast of Tabernacles and may already be His instruments of His Glory.

*TS*



## HARVEST FESTIVAL

This is the time, when from the fertile fields  
 The harvest of the year is gathered in;  
 When all the fruits that kindly autumn yields  
 Are safely stored ere winter's frosts begin;  
 And men are bringing to the house of prayer  
 Their offerings of fruit and flowers and grain,  
 To celebrate God's providential care,  
 And to adorn His Altar once again.  
 Come, then, ye patient tillers of the soil,  
 Whose lives are spent in hard and honest toil  
 And think of Him Who opens wide His hand  
 And scatters blessings freely o'er the land;  
 With the portals of His house appear,  
 And thank Him for the harvest of the year.

*Poems of the Way*  
*W.H. Pepworth*





## DANIEL IN BABYLON

### 11. Belshazzar's Feast

The Feast of Belshazzar is one of the best-known incidents of scripture. This pagan orgy, interrupted at its height by the mysterious fingers of doom writing their dreaded sentence on the wall of the banqueting hall, presaging utter disaster soon to come, has gripped the imagination of men in every age and in every land to which the story has penetrated. To such an extent is this true that the expression "the writing on the wall" has passed into a popular proverb, and nowadays many use it habitually to describe the foreshadowing of events soon and certain to come perhaps without even knowing from what source the expression is derived.

The seventeenth year of the reign of Nabonidus and the twelfth year of his son Belshazzar's joint reign with him was destined to see the end of the Babylonian empire, the "head of gold" of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The armies of Cyrus had been abroad in the land for six years past and were now fast closing in on the doomed city. Nearly two centuries previously the prophet Isaiah had foreseen this day and spoken of this man by name. *"Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him...I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives...he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure..."* (Isa. 45:1,13 and 44:28).

Although, in the days of Babylon, Persia was still an obscure province in the powerful empire of Media and owed allegiance to the kings of the Medes, yet for twenty years before Babylon's fall Cyrus the Persian had been steadily making himself the most powerful figure in the kingdom and by his military prowess had become in fact, if not in name, the virtual ruler of Media. The second year of Belshazzar when Daniel saw the vision of the two-horned ram, the greater horn coming up last representing the kings of Media and Persia, commenced only a few months after Cyrus had waged successful war against Astyages the king of Media. Although Cyrus left a semblance of royalty to the defeated monarch, he was the real ruler from then on. As time passed, the victories of Cyrus reduced every country except Babylon to subjection, and the young king Belshazzar was left increasingly to guard the city of Babylon whilst his father Nabonidus led his armies in the field against the Persian invader.

Daniel lived in the city during this period but evidently no longer held any kind of official Court office or rank. He was merely a private citizen.

Belshazzar, not more than twenty years of age at his accession, was surrounded by an entirely different class of advisers. Historians describe him as weak, dissolute, and licentious, and the story of the feast bears out that description. Daniel, comparing this youth's character with that of his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar, probably realised that even from the natural viewpoint the kingly dynasty of Babylon had had its day and could not stand for much longer against the disciplined energy of the invaders. Knowing how the outcome had already been prophesied by both Isaiah and Jeremiah in past years, and revealed to himself in more recent times, he must have waited calmly for the inevitable climax.

That climax came in the year 538 B.C. The Babylonian troops in the field were defeated and Nabonidus besieged in Borsippa, fourteen miles from Babylon. One of Cyrus' generals, Gubaru, marched swiftly to Babylon and laid siege to the city. And at that crucial time in the fortunes of the empire Belshazzar the king chose to hold a State banquet.

*“Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father (grandfather) Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein...they drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.”* (Dan. 5:1-4).

Small wonder that Babylon fell so easily, when the man to whom had been entrusted its defence so dissipated the crucial hours. The enormous main hall of the royal palace shone with a blaze of light, the scintillating radiance from its many lamps illuminating the sculptured walls and the rich hangings. At the long tables sat the many guests, the nobility and gentry of Babylon, careless of the future, intent only on indulging themselves to the full in the encouragement offered them by the dissolute youth who was their king. Up on the dais, at the richest table of them all, sat Belshazzar himself with his Court favourites and his wives and concubines, leading the revels into ever wilder scenes of excess and debauchery. In a final gesture of profanity he ordered the sacred vessels of the Temple of Jerusalem to be brought before him, to be defiled by liquor drunk to the honour of the false gods of Babylon.

The order given; the feast proceeded. The Temple of Bel-Marduk, the god of Babylon, in which Nebuchadnezzar had placed those vessels sixty years before, was nearly a mile from the palace and the messengers might

well have had some difficulty in persuading the custodian priests to surrender their treasures. It might have been an hour later that they returned with their burden, an hour during which the silent, relentless Median soldiers steadily continued surrounding the city.

So the cups and flagons which once had ministered to the worship of God in his own Temple at Jerusalem were set out in that godless assembly and made the instruments of a wild orgy in which every false god known to the Babylonians—and they were many—was praised and venerated. The chaste craftsmanship which had been consecrated to the touch of holy priestly fingers became sullied now by the grasp of hands steeped in every kind of vice and immorality. And Heaven, looking down, uttered its decree: “This is the end.”

*“In the same hour, came forth fingers of a man’s hand, and wrote over against the candlestick (lampstand) upon the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.” (v.5).*

The exactitude of Scripture is a constant marvel to the reverent mind. The remains of the Great Hall of the Royal Palace of Babylon are still there for anyone to inspect—ruined walls about four feet high enclosing a room a hundred and fifty feet long by fifty feet wide, the floor covered with the rubble and broken brickwork of the ruined building just as it has lain there for thousands of years—and mingled with the rubble there are pieces of white plaster, plaster which once covered those walls, the plaster mentioned in this verse, upon which those mysterious fingers wrote that fateful message. All who were present at that feast have long since returned to their dust; the empire which was theirs is no more; the glory that was Babylon has utterly passed away; but the white plaster upon which the cryptic message appeared that night in the year 538 B.C. lies still under the ruins, mute witness to the integrity and accuracy of the narrative we are following.

What deathly hush must have silenced that riotous assembly as the eyes of all present followed the king’s terrified gaze to the point high up on the wall where those fingers from another world deliberately traced their message. The brightly burning lamps cast the full brilliancy of their light upon the spot; this was no optical illusion, no trick of shadow and flickering flame. This was reality; there really was something up there, inscribing words of mysterious import. What could it mean? What strange intervention of the gods was this? Faces that a few moments ago had been flushed with wine now took on an unnatural pallor. Women who had been

impudently flaunting their charms now drew their robes tightly around them and shivered. And still the hand wrote on.

“MENE; MENE; TEKEL; U-PHARSIN.” The strange inscription stood revealed in its entirety. The hand was gone, but the characters remained, incised deeply into the plaster, written in the wedge-shaped cuneiform characters of Babylon. “*Numbered; Numbered; Weighed; Divided.*” The words themselves were simple, everyday words; it was the circumstances of their appearance which affected the superstitious pagan king so that his “*countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.*” (v.6) Perhaps, at last, he had been told of the marvellous happenings that had taken place in the days of his royal grandfather, when the Most High God intervened to save his servants from the fiery furnace, and made the proud king like unto a beast, and restored him again a chastened man. Perhaps, too late, he thought of the Median army outside the city, and of his own father in their power. He looked again at the mystic writing, and shivered.

The customary routine was put into operation. Before long, that motley assembly, the astrologers, the wise men, the soothsayers, were all trooping into the hall to go through the familiar rigmarole. This particular problem should have been well within their province; the explanation of a few words that no one else present could understand would normally have been easy work for these gentlemen. But on this occasion the usual glib exposition was not forthcoming. Verse 8 says that “*they could not read the writing,*” but this can hardly mean that they failed to comprehend a few Babylonian words written in Aramaic. Their normal educational level would have been quite equal to that. What is more likely the meaning of the phrase is that they could “*make no sense*” of the words themselves and, feeling that there was something behind this occurrence beyond their own understanding, preferred to have nothing to do with the matter. And that put King Belshazzar into a greater panic than he was in before.

It would seem that the hubbub and confusion into which the feast had degenerated came to the ears of the queen, and she made it her business to come in person to the banqueting hall. (v.10). This queen was the wife of Nabonidus, who was the true king at the time, their son Belshazzar having been associated with his father twelve years earlier and given the title of joint king. Nitocris was the younger daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, and it was by reason of her marriage to Nabonidus, who was not of royal blood, that the latter became king. In the days of her childhood she would of

course have been closely acquainted with Daniel, some fifteen years her senior, as he attended on her royal father, and the glowing eulogy of Daniel's wisdom and understanding which is accredited to her in verses 11 and 12 indicates that Nitocris had by no means lost her esteem and respect for her father's one-time Chief Minister.

Belshazzar eagerly accepted his mother's advice, and Daniel was summoned to the palace. For more than twenty years he had been out of public life, and by now was evidently quite unknown at Court. This much is evident by the form of the king's greeting to Daniel when the aged prophet—now about eighty-four years of age—at length entered his presence. The first panic had probably subsided, but there would certainly be considerable anxiety mingled with the interest with which the assembled company looked upon this grave and dignified man of God, now standing in their midst.

Did Daniel's mind go back to that other scene in this same hall, nearly forty years earlier, when it had been his stern duty to proclaim the imminent judgment of God upon a previous king of Babylon; to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the tree, followed by his royal master's seven years of madness? But that judgment had been lifted and the king restored to his former glory. This time there would be no restoration; the disease was incurable; this was the end. The hour of doom had struck, and Babylon must surely fall.

The king offered honours to Daniel if he could interpret the writing; he should be "the third ruler in the kingdom." (v.16). This is another unwitting testimony of the accuracy of the narrative, for Nabonidus was first and Belshazzar second in the kingdom, so that to be the third was the highest honour Belshazzar could offer. Quietly and respectfully Daniel indicated that he did not need gifts and rewards as inducement; he would, unconditionally, make known the interpretation. But before doing so, Daniel had something else to say.

*"O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father (grandfather) a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour..."* (v.18) In measured tones the prophet recapitulated the glory and power that had come to King Nebuchadnezzar, and then told how that when his heart was lifted up in pride, he was deposed, and driven from among men and made to dwell with the beasts, until he learned his lesson and knew that the Most High is the ruler of men and disposer of the affairs of nations. Then came the tremendous accusation *"and thou, O Belshazzar, hast not*

*humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this...*" (v.22) There was no excuse of ignorance; Daniel found no redeeming feature in the position. The king was guilty, and it remained but to pass sentence. It is significant that when Daniel interpreted the dream of the tree to Nebuchadnezzar he put in a plea for repentance and change of conduct; "*it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity;*" (Dan. 4:27) but to Belshazzar he addressed no word of hope or advice. He knew that the Divine decree had gone forth and could not be recalled, and he spoke in the light of that knowledge.

Now he turned to the mystic words, still showing up sharp and clear in the lamplight. He needed no supernatural guidance to understand their import and he did not have to retire to prayer to ask for the interpretation. Daniel's vision of the four world empires pictured by four wild beasts was twelve years in the past and during all those twelve years he had seen the enemy pressing more and more heavily upon Babylon. He knew the inherent weakness and corruption of Babylon and that Nabonidus, a rather indecisive man of over eighty years of age, and Belshazzar, a weak and dissolute monarch, were incapable of defending the empire against the active and war-like Cyrus. He knew that the enemy troops were outside the city, and the mysterious words glowed with meaning as he looked upon them.

MENE—measured. "*God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.*" (Dan. 5:26) The word in Babylonian commercial usage meant to measure an article and cut it off to a determined length or size, or to measure out an agreed sum of money to conclude a bargain. Here, on this fateful night, the empire of Babylon, the "head of gold" of the image, had run full length and was to be cut off without compunction.

TEKEL—weighed. "*Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.*" (v.27) A personal word to the king. Daniel had only to look around him at the evidence of the orgy which had been so abruptly interrupted, and reflect that this man should by right have been actively engaged in the defence of his city, to find the right words which fitted this part of the inscription.

PERES. Most readers are puzzled by the appearance of "peres" as the fourth word in v.28 when in v.25 it is given as "upharsin." The explanation is that "peres" is the singular form of the word of which "pharsin" is the plural. The "U" in front of "pharsin" is the conjunction "and" so that the inscription literally read "*Numbered, Weighed and Divided.*" The word "peres" means "division" and the plural from "pharsin" by a play on

similar sounding words could be made to sound like the word for “Persians.” Hence Daniel was able to say on the basis of this word “*Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.*” (v.28)

It was probably pure superstition which led Belshazzar immediately to honour his pledge to make Daniel the third ruler in the kingdom. He had flouted and dishonoured the Most High God and now that very God had caused this message to be sent him, this message of immediate and irretrievable disaster. Perhaps if he honoured the prophet of that God and restored him to the position he had occupied in the days of Babylon’s glory, when all the nations rendered submission and tribute, the threatened disaster might even yet be averted. It might be that something of that nature was in the king’s mind. We do not know. We only know that even while these things were being done and said in that brightly lit magnificent palace, the warriors of Media and Persia had gained access to the city in the darkness and were making their way through the streets, ruthlessly beating down such feeble resistance as was being offered by the citizens.

It is said by some scholars that the Hebrew expression in v.30, “*In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain*” does not demand that his death occurred on the same night as the feast, but only that it was at a time not too far remote. On the other hand, Herodotus and other historians declare that Babylon was captured at a time when the city was given over to feasting, and that Gubaru, the general who actually captured the city—for Cyrus was some distance away at the time—made his way to the palace and slew the king with many of his courtiers. It is very probable therefore that after Daniel had retired from the banqueting hall, and the company had begun to disperse, a swarm of armed men burst in and the last scene of the drama was played out to the end.

It was a long time before Babylon perished altogether. Daniel was yet to serve first a Median and then a Persian king for a few brief years before he was in his turn gathered to his fathers. He was yet to have the joy of seeing his countrymen leave for Judea to restore their native land. Some twenty years later, long after Daniel’s death, Babylon made a final bid for independence under Belshazzar’s younger brother, named Nebuchadnezzar after his illustrious grandfather, but Darius Hystaspes the Persian king laid siege to the city and this time destroyed the towering walls which had been the city’s pride and confidence. Thus were fulfilled the words of Jeremiah, “*The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire.*” (Jer. 51:58). The river Euphrates changed its course and silted up, and the seagoing merchant vessels could

no longer reach the city; two centuries later Seleucus the Greek king built his new city of Seleucia on the Tigris and the commercial importance of Babylon vanished; the citizens gradually drifted away to other homes and by the second century of the Christian era the great city which had called itself “the lady of kingdoms” was reduced to a barren waste of derelict and decaying buildings, the homes of jackals and owls.

*“How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations!”* (Jer. 50:23)

*(To be continued)*  
AOH

## Your Garden of Life

What have you planted in your garden of life?  
It's not too late to...

**Plant three rows of peas:**

Peace of mind  
Peace of heart  
Peace of soul

**Plant four rows of squash:**

Squash gossip  
Squash indifference  
Squash grumbling  
Squash selfishness

**Plant four rows of lettuce:**

Let us be faithful  
Let us be kind  
Let us be patient  
Let us love one another

**No garden without turnips:**

Turn up for meetings  
Turn up for service  
Turn up to help one another

**And you must have thyme:**

Time for God  
Time for family  
Time for friends

**Water freely with patience and cultivate with love!**

Remember, you reap what you sow.



*Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook*



## A KING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

*A short study in the Millennial Visions of Isaiah*

### Part 2

“*By me kings reign, and princes decree justice*” declares Wisdom, speaking as a person in Prov. 8:15-16. “*By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.*” That is the ideal but it does not appear in practice as yet, and will not until the king that shall reign in righteousness has commenced his beneficent rule. In the day to come Wisdom will be enthroned on high and there will no longer be the spectacle of earth’s rulers hesitating and vacillating about their policies, sacrificing principle to expediency or quite openly and frankly using their positions to oppress their subjects and serve their own indulgence. Righteousness includes every right and uplifting quality, and a king who reigns in righteousness is a king who is guided in all his ways by unerring wisdom. So the King of the Millennial Age will be characterised by that wisdom from above which James says is pure, peaceable, full of mercy and good fruits: without partiality and hypocrisy.

“*Princes shall rule in judgment.*” (Isa. 32:1). This must without doubt refer to the “princes in all the earth” of Psa. 45:16, the “judges” and “counsellors” of Isa. 1:26. The writer to the Hebrews tells, in his eleventh chapter, of men who maintained their loyalty and faithfulness to God at different times in past history and were laid aside in death having “received not the promise” (v.39) but yet were persuaded that God had “prepared for them a city.” (v.16) And so He has. In the day that Christ reigns as spiritual King from his exalted place in the heavens, these men of Old Testament days, these “Ancient Worthies” as they have been called, will be raised from the dead to assume the positions of administration upon earth for which their past lives’ experiences have qualified them. Sterling characters such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Daniel, Nehemiah—certainly, Isaiah himself—besides others whose names have not been recorded and whose deeds are not known, will certainly be found in the forefront of affairs in that day. They will be men who can be trusted with the oversight of affairs upon earth because they, like the Lord Jesus Christ himself, have esteemed the service of God and of their fellowmen of greater worth than anything else that life can offer. Already well versed in the plans and purposes of God, and firm in their stand for the principles of Divine government, they will indeed be “princes” that “rule in judgment.”

The manner in which these “princes” will take control of earth’s affairs

and begin to lead mankind into the ways of peace is somewhat problematic. It is evident that their raising from the dead must be some appreciable time before the revelation of their identity to the world at large; they all will quite obviously require some time to become adjusted to life as it is lived today and to acquire the necessary knowledge of the course of history between their original lives on earth—two, three or more millenniums ago—and the time of their awakening. It may well be that their obviously exceptional intellectual powers and their quick perception of humanity's troubles will speedily bring them to the forefront so that men are half ready to accept them as leaders when the tremendous manifestation of Divine intervention that is to mark the establishment of the Kingdom occurs. Suffice it then to realise that when they are revealed they will be men who can be trusted, princes who "rule in judgment."

*"And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."* (Isa. 32:2).

Who is this "man"? Are we to understand a third factor in the ruling administration of the new Kingdom here introduced to notice, or in the alternative another aspect of the rulers already mentioned? There seems to be little doubt that the "king" of v.1 is here referred to. He is a king, but he is not like earth's usual kings, remote, untouchable, surrounded by a panoply of royalty which separates him from the touch or gaze of the common multitude. He is, as it were, one of them, one who knows their condition and their needs, and can claim to have walked with them, borne their griefs and shared their sorrows besides carrying those same sorrows. He is a merciful and faithful king because he knows what his subjects must have for their true welfare and happiness and he intends them to have it. And the first thing they need, he knows full well, is defence and protection. They have been so buffeted and tormented, persecuted and driven, by enemies of all kinds in life before, that now they need more than anything else a time of respite from trouble, a freedom from fear and apprehension, that they may begin to take fresh heart, and look up to the heavens, and listen to the voice that is to speak to them in words of wise guidance and vital instruction. So the first aspect of this kingly work of the Millennial Age is couched in terms indicative of covering and of protection. "A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." The simile is taken from Palestinian scenery. The hot winds from the *midbar*, the southern desert lying between Judea and the Red Sea, laden with sand and dust, beat fiercely upon the

unprotected traveller, so that, like Jonah at Nineveh in similar plight, he might well wish to die and not live. This king will be a protection from the incessant winds of adversity and give the traveller time to recover. He will defend from the rains and tempests of disaster. He will provide refreshment and sustenance, “rivers of water in a dry place,” and He will be as the shadow of a great rock on a sun-baked plain, tempering the heat of midday with his presence.

One cannot help noticing the care with which these symbols are selected, as if Isaiah meant very definitely to indicate the protection that would be given, in that day, from the great plagues that do at this present time afflict humanity. His four symbols are wind, waters (the tempest), drought, and noon-day heat. Those four are symbolic in the Scriptures of great curses that afflict mankind—war (wind and tempest), famine (drought) and pestilence (heat). The fear of all these things will disappear completely when Christ is king and is in control; violence and want shall be no more. This man will be as an hiding place and men will realise as never before the meaning of the old saying “The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.” (Prov. 18:10)

Zechariah, much later on, saw this king in the glory of his symbolic manhood, this Son of David who is also David’s Lord, and said of him (6:12-13) “*Behold the Man whose name is the BRANCH*” (his very descent from David in the days of his flesh becomes a title of honour forevermore) “*and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD...and shall sit and rule upon his throne: and he shall be a priest upon his throne.*” There is some clear indication here that, in the Millennial Day, men will be constantly reminded that the glorious One Who is now their King was once of themselves, walking the earth with them, talking to them about their troubles and triumphs, their joys and sorrows, sympathising, counselling and helping...

“*And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.*” (Isa. 32:3&4). Here the work of the Millennium commences in earnest. The first necessity of the sin-blinded and sin-weakened human race is education, instruction, and it must be given without any opposing influence being allowed to retard its work. The archenemy of humanity, Satan, will have been bound for the entire period, the “thousand years” of Rev. 20:1-2, and there will no longer be blindness and deafness imposed from without. No more will it be said as it is said of this present day “the

god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (2 Cor. 4:4). Leeser seems to appreciate this fact when in his translation he renders this passage “the eyes of those that see shall not be blinded *again*.” They were blinded once, in the past, but now they shall see, and see more and more plainly as they make progress in the knowledge of the things of God that are manifest in that Day. “The heart also of the rash” says Leeser again “shall be attentive *in order to know*.” (Isa. 32:4) There will be a thirst for knowledge and men will eagerly come to the fountain of wisdom that they might learn the way of life.

Now the prophet turns himself and surveys another class of men who will be in evidence in that day. Not all will come to the proffered way of life for not all will want to embrace the ways of righteousness. Some there will be who, at first at any rate, will want none and will have none of this new order of love and unselfishness, and who will endeavour to go back to the old ways of self and sin. They will be quite unable to harm their fellows, for nothing will be permitted to cause any kind of hindrance to those seeking the way of righteousness—“they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain” (Isa. 11:9)—but those whose hearts are fully set in them to do evil will succeed in doing a lot of damage to themselves and unless they do eventually repent and come to the fountain of life they must inevitably reap sin’s penalty—death. But Isaiah is not seeing as far as that in this particular vision; in fact he seems to be viewing only the commencement of the Age, its first early years, and his words must be understood in that light. What he does say is illuminating enough. He says that there will still be vile (Heb. *nabbal*, brutish, worthless, senseless) persons and that they will still speak and work their villainy with the object of oppressing their fellow-creatures. But the “liberal”—noble, bountiful, is the meaning of the word—will have devised effectual countermeasures and in consequence the machinations of the vile will be of no effect.

The Septuagint gives what is perhaps the clearest rendering of this particular passage—at least the sense is more easily understandable in relation to the context—and when applied to the operations of those who in the early days of the Kingdom attempt to oppose its work is very eloquent. “*For the fool shall speak foolish words, and his heart shall meditate vanities, and to perform lawless deeds, and to speak error against the Lord, to scatter hungry souls, and he will cause the thirsty souls to be empty. For the counsel of the wicked will devise iniquity, to destroy the poor with unjust words, and ruin the cause of the poor in*

*judgment. But the godly have devised wise measures, and this counsel shall stand.” (Isa. 32:6-8).*

These are they who in another place are said to “yield feigned obedience.” Outwardly obedient to the laws of the Kingdom, conforming to the general regulations which will be made for the conduct of daily life in general harmony with the principles of righteousness, they will nevertheless be seeking opportunity to work their schemes to the detriment of others and most certainly will refrain from that service of helping others that is to be so characteristic a feature of Kingdom conditions. The parable of the sheep and goats makes mention of these same. These are they who, standing before the great white throne, are accused that, having the opportunity to do good to their fellows for whom Christ died, refused so to do, and the Christ the King tells them that in that failure they offend, not only against their fellows, but against him also. Refusing to accept in their own lives those principles by which alone human life on earth—or life on any plane of being—can be conducted harmoniously and to give glory to God, they are but as the wastage of God’s creation and can have no part or lot in that edifice which He is building to stand for all eternity.

*(To be concluded)*

*AOH*

PRAISE to our King who is coming to reign,  
 Glory to Jesus the Lamb that was slain.  
 Life and salvation His empire shall bring,  
 Joy to the nations—when Jesus is King.



*Oh, that will bring, praise to our King,  
 Praise to our King, praise to our King.  
 Sing the glad song who to Jesus belong  
 Glory to Jesus, to Jesus our King.*



All men shall dwell in His marvellous light,  
 Races long severed His love shall unite.  
 Justice and truth from His sceptre shall spring,  
 Wrong will be ended—when Jesus is King.



Men shall learn right in His kingdom of Peace.  
 Freedom shall flourish and wisdom increase.  
 Foe shall be friend when His triumph we sing,  
 Sword shall be sickle—when Jesus is King.

All shall come back who have lived long ago.  
 Love like a banner shall over them flow.  
 Sin shall be conquered as light shines within,  
 O hail happy day—when Jesus is King.



*Isa. 11.1-10; John 5:28*

*Bible Students Hymnal*

## THE LONELINESS OF JESUS

*A glimpse of our Lord's life*

All references RSV unless otherwise specified

Almost the first concern evinced by our Lord on entering upon His public ministry was for companionship. He gathered round Him selected companions, *“that they might be with Him.”* (Mark 3:14 NIV). His choice was made mainly from the working classes, men of action, men who toiled for a living with their hands, men who had no resources apart from what they could earn, men who had looked life in the face and knew its hardest facts.

He had little interest in rich men as such, nor in the complexities that riches bring. He desired simplicity, “plain living and high thinking” but above all, He sought fellowship, for His life was lonely. Human relationships had been discarded; *“My brother, and my sister, and mother,”* (Mark 3:35 Weymouth) said He, are they who shall do *“the will of My Father in Heaven.”* (Matt. 12:50 NIV) Apart from such, He had no intimates in life. How lonely is a life without a soul with whom one may converse in loving intimacy; such human loneliness was Jesus’ lot. Did He find fellowship in those He called about Him; did they fill His need, understand Him, and sympathize? Were they not, on the contrary, self-centred, self-occupied and self-concerned?

Hear them as the storm raged about them on the Lake of Galilee: *“Do you not care if we perish?”* (Mark 4:38) Listen to Peter, as with astonishing self-complacency he remarked: *“Lo, we have left everything and followed you. What then shall we have?”* (Matt. 19:27). Was there ever such a speech made to One who had left the glory of Heaven for the sake of sinful men? Towards the end of His ministry, after more than three years of fellowship, precept, and holy example, what must He have felt as He came upon them quarrelling among themselves who should be the greatest? No; He had no ‘brother, sister or mother’ fellowship; to the last he walked a lonely path. How often we read: *“He was alone on the land”* (Mark 6:47); *“Jesus was left alone”* (John 8:9); *“Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself”* (John 6:15). Not that the disciples meant to withhold from their Lord the fellowship He so much desired. Indeed when many went back and walked no more with him, the twelve refused to go away, and He gladly recognised this. *“You are those who have continued with me in my trials”* (Luke 22:28) He said. They continued with Him, but, oh, how self-occupied even in that companionship!

At length they set off on that last sad journey to Jerusalem. The end was in His view, though not in theirs. Must He face this alone? Tenderly He opened the subject to them as they went together.

Surely this would draw out their loving sympathy, so He told them what was about to happen, that He must “*suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.*” (Matt. 16:21), but He was met by a rebuke; they refused to believe the news. It was so utterly opposed to all their hopes. Was such a calamity to end their cherished visions of a glorious Messianic reign in which they were to share? Impossible; it would not be! So our Lord was left alone to His thoughts and sorrows, and they walked with Him wholly out of fellowship with what so moved His heart.

With infinite patience later on He tried again. (Matt. 17:22-23). He unfolded the coming betrayal and the dreadful killing, and then the rising again. They listened in silence, and deep depression fell upon them all; “*and they were greatly distressed*” sorry that, after all, the calamity must come, that it must be accepted as inevitable, that their prospects were an illusion, and hope was gone. They did not understand; they were so taken up with themselves that they did not enter into what it meant to Him.

Again a third time (Matt. 20:17), Jesus took them apart in the way and told it all again, adding this time the mocking and scourging, as though appealing to their hearts for sympathy. Did they extend it to him? They had had time to think and talk together, and a new aspect of the matter dawned on them. All was not so dark; He would rise again; the Kingdom would come after all. They had not followed Him in vain, and while He dwelt on the betrayal, the mocking, the scourging and the death, their self-centred hearts were occupied with their place in the Kingdom that would follow! At such a time as this, two of them actually came forward with a request for first place. Jesus continued His path to the ‘valley of shadows’ alone, with no human heart to sympathize or understand or share His sorrows.

“*The hour is coming, indeed it has come,*” said He to them on the last evening of his earthly life, “*when you will be scattered, every man to his home, and will leave me alone; yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.*” (John 16:32). One heart fully understood and cared and sympathized with the Saviour, and one heart alone—the Father’s.

When the three who were nearest to Him went with Him to the garden they failed Him even there. They could not watch one hour. He withdrew Himself; He was alone. Thus the Lord sought fellowship with His own who were in the world—His own whom He loved to the end, the uttermost; yet whose response was so meagre, and whose love so cold. Such was His experience then; what is it now?

Jesus still seeks the fellowship of his people; we who are called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Cor. 1:9). Does He receive the fellowship He seeks, or do we fail to give it to Him? Is our contact with Him after all, mainly selfish? Do we seek Him only for what we can get ourselves, pardon, protection, help, guidance? Is our need our first concern, or is our real objective that of Paul, “*that I may know him...and the fellowship of his sufferings*”? (Phil. 3:10 KJV) Are we prone to forget that our Lord seeks something from us and that apart from us He is still alone in relation to men? He longs for our co-operation in His plans and purposes, even to the extent of our suffering on behalf of others, as He set us an example. Like the disciples of old, we can be so taken up with ourselves, even though, like them, we have left all to follow Him, that His thoughts and purposes and yearning desires take a minor place, and our needs and hopes fill all our thoughts, and even our prayers. We are so selfish in our spiritual outlook that even our most holy things are sometimes tinged with it. How often it is we seek our own, and not the things that are Jesus Christ’s. (Phil. 2:21) The Lord looks to us often in vain for that understanding, sympathy and fellowship with Him in His world plans, in comparison with which our little personal concerns, hopes and fears are insignificant indeed.

May He forgive us, and teach us how to enter into a life of real communion with Him in the days that yet remain to us.

TH

### QUIETNESS

To sit at his dear feet, and learn of him, As Mary did	And yet, like Martha, I have work to do All through the day;
To look with rapture on his blessed face,	But in these tasks my heart has been at rest
To feast and feast again upon his grace Is my desire.	For the companion in my toils hast blest All along the way.

*Olga J. Weiss  
Songs of the nightingale*



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## 1878

The year 1878 was a turning point in the history of Israel. The land was in the hands of the Ottoman Empire governed from Turkey, but that empire was in decline especially following the Russo-Turkish War from 1877 to 1878. This necessitated the Congress of Berlin in 1878 when Benjamin Disraeli led the British delegation. It was also the year the first Jewish kibbutz was set up and chronologically marked out for return of favour to Israel.

The Congress of Berlin ran from 13 June to 13 July. Disraeli attended with future prime ministers Lord Salisbury and Salisbury's nephew Arthur Balfour. The latter would later be known for the 1917 Balfour declaration to establish a homeland for the Jews in Israel. (Participating nations included Greece, the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) and Russia. Russia had won that war but support by Britain helped the Ottomans maintain control by allowing the Jews and other minorities to have rights not only in the land of Israel but places like Romania, Serbia and Russia as well as Turkey and Greece.)

A request was placed directly to the Congress for the "Jews in Palestine" to be given their independence. Although this was not part of the discussion at the Congress itself.

The first kibbutz Petah Tikva was established in 1878. It was inland from modern-day Tel Aviv. Initially there were problems with the land there which only really thrived once the land was extensively cleared to make it habitable. It certainly was a landmark moment.

In December of this year Naphtali Imber wrote the poem 'Hatikvah' which became the Israeli national anthem. The chorus is as follows:

"Our hope is not yet lost,  
The ancient hope,  
To return to the land of our fathers,  
The city where David encamped."

Chronologically it fits. Isaiah 40:2 says "*Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins.*" Jeremiah was given the same message about the time "*first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses*

*of their detestable and abominable things.”* (Jer. 16:18) This idea of a double means an equal period of time one of favour and a second one of disfavour. 1813 BC marks the death of Jacob whose name was changed to “Israel” when then the twelve sons of Israel formed the nation albeit they were living in Egypt. 1845 years mark the period from Jesus’ death in 33 A.D. to 1878.

NAC

## PROGRESS IN THE LAND OF PROMISE

A commentary on recent events affecting Palestine  
Extracts from Bible Students Monthly, the prior name of this publication

### September 1946

The recent acts of violence in Palestine are deplored by all right-thinking people. Any nation trusting in such methods for its establishment cannot expect to become the instrument of Divine reconciliation with the world. It is for this reason that no existing nation—not even Britain—can be that instrument, for all depend upon force to maintain their rule, as Britain has shown in connection with these same events in Palestine. The people of this country are liable to condemn all Palestinian Jews for these acts, not realising that this policy of terrorism is that only of a small proportion, not more than five thousand out of six hundred thousand Palestinian Jews. The apparent failure of the remainder to co-operate with the British authorities in dealing with the situation is understandable in the light of British failure to implement the policy of the Mandate and the pledges given by the present Government prior to the last election. Our own understanding of the Divine Word is that not until Israel abandons all resource to force and violence, and in implicit faith trusts entirely in God for the fulfilment of His promises, will they become masters in their own land. We cannot expect them in their present frame of mind to accede to that principle, and it seems clear that there will be a period of strife the outcome of which cannot at the moment be foreseen; but the ultimate outcome is sure. As Dr. (Chaim) Weizmann said the other day: *“During the last thirty years we set ourselves to the implementation of this promise. It cannot now be stopped. It will go on. It must go on. It is our destiny, of which we cannot free ourselves if we would.”* Although, it may be the Zionist leader bases his assurance upon political developments rather than the Divine promise, he might well, like Isaiah of old, be uttering truths the significance of which he himself only partially grasps.

The dignified statement issued by Dr. Herzog, Chief Rabbi of Palestine, shows that some voices at least are being raised even now calling attention to that power which will eventually be acknowledged by all Israel, and so

make Jerusalem “the joy of the whole earth...the city of the great King.” (Psa. 48:2) His statement runs in part:

“Just over a quarter of a century ago Britain solemnly pledged herself before God and the nations to facilitate the return of Israel to Zion. The late King George V on one occasion made public mention of his gratification at being enabled by Providence to be the instrument of fulfilling the Biblical prophecies concerning Zion’s restoration. By virtue of her solemn undertaking—and by that alone—Britain was entrusted with the Mandate over the Holy Land. Has the conscience of Britain grown mute? Have those vast streams of the spirit, which have always watered the soul of a great nation, dried up? Will the people hold their silence while their national honour and morality are cast to the winds and bleeding Israel is flung to the abyss of uttermost despair?”

And unto my people I call, fear not, and be not dismayed. Our Father in Heaven hath many a time heretofore led us forth from the valley of darkness. Our endeavour draws its strength and inspiration from sources which lie beyond the reach of the tempting hands of mortals. In this hour of greatest distress stand Homeland and Dispersion, knit together by our undying faith.

“The Covenant which I made with you on your going forth from Egypt and My spirit live in thee —Fear not!”

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An interesting incident occurred at the opening, in the middle of July, of a new settlement near Mount Tabor, the generally reputed scene of the Transfiguration, where Jewish ex-service men have set up a colony of 1,700 acres. At the inaugural ceremony a delegation of Arab elders from the neighbouring village attended to welcome the Jewish settlers, and their chief, Ibrahim Altayh, said this: “I have searched our history and have failed to find any cause for enmity between the sons of Ishmael and Isaac, both of whom were sons of Abraham.” He went on to say that it was only intriguers who sought to sow discord between the two peoples and expressed the hope that the present clouds would disperse and that a peaceful time for all would soon begin.

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Immigrants arriving at Haifa. One is reminded of Isa. 66:20, where the expression “swift beasts” is probably more correctly translated “swift ships.” The Hebrew word is thought to be equivalent to the Greek *cercuri*, a particular type of fast merchant vessel in use in the Eastern Mediterranean in Isaiah’s day and for several centuries thereafter. If so, this...is an example of prophecy in course of fulfilment! For the sake of Israel’s

speedy peace and prosperity we may hope that some...viewing the land that henceforth was to be their home heard within their souls words ringing down the centuries "Arise, shine, for thy light is come...surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far...to the Holy One of Israel." (Isa. 60:1&9)

## September 1948

### Do the Dry Bones Live?

The rapid succession of significant events in and around Palestine since the end of the war is of intense interest to all students of the Scriptures. God has promised that He will send for fishers and hunters to gather His earthly people into the land of their fathers. (Jer. 16:16) The fishing and the hunting has been going on now for a long time but still the land is not the home of a peaceful and prosperous nation, ready for God's hand for His purposes. At what point in prophecy do we stand today? Is Jerusalem still "trodden down of the Gentiles"? (Luke 21:24) Will the new State of Israel frame its policies in accord with the ways of God, and so link its destinies more surely with that which is to come? Will it, on the other hand, become merely one of the "kingdoms of this world" and so have to give place to a better order of things that will more fully justify the high hopes with which Zionism, fifty years ago, first set out upon its troubled career?

We cannot yet answer all these questions. We do know that God cannot use a people unless that people is devoted and consecrated to His service and maintains implicit faith in Him. Nothing of that is at present to be seen in Palestine. And the land is not yet free! The Western powers have not relinquished their hold, even though British forces have been withdrawn and the Mandate has been terminated. (The) UN is as much a part of the Gentile power as any Western kingdom or country, and (the) UN has Palestine in ward at the moment. And at this very time British officers are leading Arab legionaries into action against American citizens piloting planes on behalf of Israel. Trade is slowing down, war rages openly or secretly through the length and breadth of the land, and no man's life is safe. This is not the situation presented by the prophet Ezekiel when he described the happy state of the peaceable and contented nation against which the forces of Gog and Magog are to advance at the end. And so there is evidently a further stage in the development of these things, and we must continue to watch.

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Can these things be related to the events of today? Is there any evidence that this gathering of the Holy Nation to its destined home is under way? Is the present prosperity of Palestine a commencement of that "dwelling

in unwallled villages,” happy in the possession of cattle and goods, which is described in Ezek. 38:11?

Three main conditions must be met before it can be said that the time spoken of in Ezekiel 38 has come. They are:

First: The Holy Nation settled in the land and enjoying complete control of the entire territory promised to Abraham, from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates.

Second: That Holy Nation manifesting complete faith in and dependence upon God, ordering its national life in conformity thereto, and having forsworn all material weapons of war.

Third: An era of temporal prosperity in that land unequalled anywhere else, and its rise to a prominent position in the sphere of world trade.

What we have seen since 1918 does not meet the requirements of this prophecy. The Jews who have gathered there are a mixed people, in that whilst some have returned in faith and are believers in the promises, many have no religious faith at all, and have returned in a purely nationalistic spirit. There is no general appreciation as yet that God is going to use that land and its people in the outworking of His plan. The temporal prosperity prophesied is a far greater thing than that which is evident today, and is built upon different principles. The activity of today is based upon normal commercial enterprise, and that must in due course give place to an activity directed by a consciousness of Divine power working in the nation's affairs.

In the political rearrangement following the recent war we may well expect to see another step taken on the road which leads to independence in the Near East, just as the settlement of the 1914-18 war delivered these same countries from the Turkish power and set them on the way to modern development. Likewise, we may be able to discern in the commercial rearrangements which will also come about a diversion of trade which will progress side by side with the new political set-up, and reveal to the world the nucleus of a new national power in that place. Most important of all, we must expect that the experiences through which both Jew and Gentile are now passing, and must continue to endure whilst these dark days persist, will cause some to realise the Divine call to give themselves to the creation of a people of God, a holy nation, in the land then so definitely being opened up. The regathering of Israel in faith and with supplication, eager to learn of the Lord and zealous for the honour of His Name, will be the signal that the day has come for men to speak, with meaning, of the “Land of unwallled villages.” (Ezek. 38:11)

## October 1948

“The establishment of the State of Israel is the answer to two thousand years of prayer and the beginning of a new epoch in Jewish history. The vision of Theodore Herzl and the sacrifice of generations of pioneers have brought about the fulfilment of the Zionist dream. The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland joins Jews everywhere in gratitude to Almighty God that this fateful event in Jewish history has been experienced by this generation of the Jewish people...” (*From a proclamation issued by the Zionist Federation after the announcement of the setting up of the State of Israel.*)

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An unexpected consequence of the Arab invasion of Palestine has been the reversal of the Arab superiority in numbers in the land. Whereas before the ending of the Mandate the Arabs numbered about one million, and the Jews six hundred thousand, the flight of some three hundred thousand Arabs into Transjordan and elsewhere, and the immigration of a further number of Jews, has left the superiority with the Jews, 750,000 against 700,000 Arabs.

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The State Council of Israel has issued a decree making the Sabbath, and all religious holidays, State holidays in Israel.

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It is a biting commentary upon present day political affairs that about the only subject upon which America and Russia can agree is Palestine. Both nations have recognised the State of Israel, and Dr. James MacDonald, U.S. Minister to Israel, and Mr. Pavel Yershov, Soviet Envoy to Israel, have arrived at Tel-Aviv and presented their credentials. Britain has not yet recognised the new State.

## November 1948

After four months of conflict it is interesting to take stock of the position to date. Notwithstanding the fact that seven Arab states have joined forces in an attempt to push them into the Mediterranean, the Israelis have not only held the territory originally allotted them by (the) UN, but have also captured, and now hold, Arab Galilee and the towns of Nazareth, Jaffa and Acre, and the main part of Jerusalem. A great number of Arabs have left the country and their place has been taken by Jewish immigrants; it is unlikely that the Arabs will ever come back. The State of Israel, whatever its final form as agreed by (the) UN, has come to stay, and the Arab rulers will very soon be hard put to it in explaining this fact, and the failure of their military operations, to their own people. The Western nations will make their peace with Israel and begin to bargain for trade agreements.

Trans-Jordan, at least, among the Arab states, will follow suit. And although we who are students of the Word of God know that this is not the gathering “with weeping and with supplication” (Jer. 31:9) that was foretold in ancient time and for which we look; although we must realise that there is evidently a further phase of development to be revealed before we can say “this is the end,” yet the significance of this year’s events is great and the things we now see going on before our eyes must be playing some part in, making some preparation for, the real gathering of those true-hearted sons of Israel who will build “the land of unwallled villages.”

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Under the Constitution of the State of Israel, now being framed, the President of the State is responsible for appointing the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of Israel, acting upon the advice of the Minister of Defence. In this, as in so many things, Israel has taken its stand with the “kingdoms of this world.” Can it then avoid sharing their destiny. The “Holy Nation” of the Last Days will look to, and trust, God for their defence and it is then that He will “go forth, and fight...as when He fought in the day of battle.” (Zech. 14:3) How evident it is that a great change of heart must come to that people before we can expect prophecy to be fulfilled.

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There is now a constant stream of immigrants going into the Holy Land. By the end of 1948, it is estimated, the Jewish population will number 805,000, an increase of nearly 20 per cent since the withdrawal of British forces in May. During 1949, it is expected, another 150,000 will enter, and in a few years’ time, it is thought, the nation may be three or four million strong. (The population in the time of Christ is estimated to have been about five million—there is evidently space enough). It is evident that all the tortuous policies of the Western nations and all the opposition of the Arab peoples cannot prevail against this tide. Jacob is going home.

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*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. (Psalm 122:6)*

### GOD’S FULLNESS

May the fullness of God’s Blessings encompass all our way;  
 The fullness of his promises crown every bright’ning day;  
 The fullness of his glory come beaming from above,  
 While more and more we learn to know the fullness of his love.

*Poems of the Way*

## JACOB AT JABBOK

### Part 2 of 2

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

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

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

The company was now found to be composed of two bands—one in heaven, the host of accompanying angels, and one earthly, Jacob and his camp (Gen. 32:2 margin. Compare Matt. 24:31, which may apply to both gatherings now taking place, the earthly as well as the heavenly seeds), but as Jacob now desperately applied his mind to what strategy he should use to overcome this ultimate adversary that threatened to forever stand between him and the security and peace and prosperity in the land of promise that the Lord had said would be his, perhaps he found his mind also divided between two possible tactics—one aggressive, and one placative. ["Hawk" and "dove".] He could not go on forever fighting his



brother, his own flesh and blood. How was he going to work out a solution to this ultimate challenge? This was the very point of time marked out in the purpose of God. So near, yet apparently so far away, lay the prospect of lasting bliss for which he had longed in so many years of bondage. Was this to be it? Was it to be a future of continual strife, tit-for-tat skirmishes, bloodshed, and bitterness of soul, resentment, mistrust? Was he forever to live by his wits to ever remain one step ahead of his enemy, or retaliating, an eye for an eye?

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

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

So, the Lord speaks to him and asks a remarkable question. "What is your name?" Oh, what point is in this enquiry! How well the Lord knew Jacob's name, knew his character...usurper, schemer, but Jacob must

confess it and acknowledge what he is. “My name is Jacob, supplanter, deceiver, liar, hypocrite, thief. My life has been one long career of crafty cunning and greed and reliance on self.” Then God said, “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” (Gen 32:28) As previously mentioned Israel means “God prevails.” A profound Hebrew scholar tells us that in names compounded with ‘el’ it is the ‘el,’ or God, that is the doer of the rest of the name if it should be a verb. (e.g., Daniel = God judges, Gabriel = God is my strength, etc.) Israel, therefore, means God rules, or prevails, or commands. It is the Lord’s turn now to make a play on words, and with what wisdom. When it is acknowledged that God prevails, God rules, then does man prevail and rule with God. This is the victory of full surrender to the Lord. When He is our overcomer then do we overcome in Him. The kingdom is for the violent to take by force. Their victory is total defeat of self. The battle is first with all that opposes His dominion in the heart, and the conquest is for clinging even until the dawn of new day, and not letting go until the blessing is received.

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

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

Even as the Lord blessed him, the sun rose upon him, and his eyes

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

### **Jacob still had further stages of processing ahead**

At Shechem he pays the price of disobedience. Then the Lord reminds him of his vow at Bethel. He has to get rid of his strange gods and idols, build an altar to the Lord at Bethel, weep over the “Saviour of the world” as his own son, the greater Joseph. So, our hearts go out to the chosen race today in the land of promise, so near, yet so far from realisation of the blessedness of the Lord’s purpose for them. This is an essential part of the process leading to that full realisation. Morning indeed cometh for Israel, but also night. [The statement of Isa 21:12, “The watchman said, ‘The morning cometh, and also the night:’” is directed to Edom (Idumea), the old Adam within which must be overcome before the blessings may flow. Cp Isaiah 34 preceding 35.] The struggle against the enemy without will surely turn to dark wrestling with the enemy within, but the Lord yet will touch Jacob’s prided human glory so that it fails him, and Jacob will come to recognise the true nature of the struggle, and learn to cling to his God.

Today Jacob sits at Jabbok’s ford contemplating those torrents that threaten to engulf and sweep him away. “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes,

and the deaf that have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth. Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.” (Isa 43:1-11)

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

*DJH 2008*

Booklets of interest available from Bible Fellowship Union:  
 “Jacob’s Trouble” an exposition on Ezekiel 38 & 39,  
 Habakkuk, Prophet of Faith



## **Are You a Pumpkin?**

A woman was asked by a co-worker, “What is it like to be a Christian?”

The woman replied, “It is like being a pumpkin. God picks you from the patch, brings you in, and washes all the dirt off of you. Then he cuts off the top and scoops out all the yucky stuff. He removes the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, etc. Then he carves you a new smiling face and puts his light inside of you to shine for all the world to see.”

*Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook*

## THE BIBLE'S SONG OF LOVE

Verse by verse through the Song of Songs Part 6b Chapter 8:7-9  
All references RV unless otherwise stated

**8:7** The divine love will never wear out “MANY WATERS CANNOT QUENCH LOVE, NEITHER CAN THE FLOODS DROWN IT.” “Nor height, nor depth,” says Paul “nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 8:39)

“The last failure of the bride was not the failure of a young Christian. It is not given at the beginning of Canticles, and therefore warns us that only love for Christ will keep us true to Him under all circumstances. Zeal in His service will not do it; even a knowledge of His word is not sufficient in itself. Christianity is not a religion, but centres around a Person; it is personal friendship with Christ, whom having not seen, we love.” (M.M.B)

Love is the divine expression of life. It is the life principle as shown in our relationships with others and with our Lord, and with the Heavenly Father. “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death.” (1 John 3:14)

Christian love has been beautifully reviewed in the following words:-

- (1) *Its authority*—“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.” (John 13:34; 15:12,17; 1 John 3:23; 2 John 6)
- (2) *Its measure*—“Love one another; as I have loved you.” (John 13:34; 15:12 KJV)
- (3) *Its source*—“Love is of God.” (1 John 4:7)
- (4) *Its witness to discipleship*—“By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, *if ye have love* one to another.” (John 13:35)
- (5) *Its characteristic*—“Herein is love, *not that we loved God*, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 John 4:10,11) i.e. to love, unloved.
- (6) *Its results*—“If we love one another, *God dwelleth in us*, and His love is *perfected* in us.” (1 John 4:12 KJV)
- (7) *Its obligation*—“*we...ought* to love one another” (1 John 4:11). It is a debt we owe to God which can never be discharged. (Rom 13:8)
- (8) *Its Teacher*—“Ye yourselves are *taught of God* to love one another.” (1 Thess. 4:9) It comes *not* from the natural heart.
- (9) *Its importance*—“This is the *message* which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” (1 John 3:11)
- (10) *Its purity and fervency*—“Love one another with a *pure* heart fervently.” (1 Pet. 1:22 KJV) (Henry Groves)

At this point in the Bridegroom's discourse He seems to hark back to His last words to the daughters. It is as though He were thinking "If only those who follow me would learn that I want their love not their duty. Sometimes they appear to hold up their consecrated life as a price for my love. If only they would learn that "IF A MAN WOULD GIVE ALL THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS HOUSE FOR LOVE, HE WOULD UTTERLY BE CONTEMNED (SCORNED)." Why then should the Lord's people so often try to establish a claim on His love by reason of their efforts to please Him?

But Love is a sovereign principle, whether it be human or divine. It is in itself its only reason, and is often bestowed unalterably on most unworthy objects.

Love cannot be *compelled* in any one, it is free or not at all.

Love cannot be *purchased* at any price, it is incorruptible.

Love cannot be *persuaded* or *bribed*, or *entreated* into existence.

Love must be freely bestowed, and of its own accord.

Love creates and throws an atmosphere of its own around its object, and makes it lovely for itself.

Love in any heart can be begotten and produced only by *love*.

Love is the only acceptable return and response to the love that calls it forth.

See then the inestimable treasure God has *bestowed*, and the wealth of return (in His estimation) we, the poorest of us, can make Him, "*give me thine heart.*"

"...in fact, love cannot be defined, it is itself a definition. '*God is love.*'" (Rainsford)

"There must be in some way the giving of the person himself, the disclosure of his own heart, to truly win the affections of another. And this has been done in the fullest way, in the highest degree, by the Son of God...(Gal. 2:20). 'Hereby we have known love, because He has laid down His life for us.' (1 John 3:16 Darby)...There is a general aspect of His death, in which He died for all, and gave Himself a 'Ransom for all.' But when we think of the elect—of those given to Him by the Father—there was something directly personal about His giving Himself... Anything short of this would have been inadequate to express His love, or to procure love for Him...If we retired more into the contemplation of His personal love to us, and the self-sacrifice to which it moved Him, it would

**NOTICES**

Bible Students Seminar Day  
 Saturday 28 October 2023  
 St Martha's Hall, Park Road, Tring HP23 6BP

**Bible Students Fellowship Conference**  
 High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon  
**14-18 August 2024 DV**

have a marvellous effect upon us.” (CAC\*)

True love is never self-centred. It looks for expression in the desires of the one who is loved and so the Bride speaks to her Beloved of that which is now very much in His heart, namely that Israel of old which is beloved for their fathers' sakes.

**8:8** With the return of our Lord comes the first signs of the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isa. 49:6 which speaks of the Messiah coming to “raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore (bring back) the preserved of Israel.” And so it is of this little sister (“born of the bondwoman”—Gal. 4:22,23, 31 KJV), the joint concern of the Beloved and His Bride, that the Bride speaks.

“WE HAVE A LITTLE SISTER...WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR OUR SISTER IN THE DAY WHEN SHE SHALL BE SPOKEN FOR?”

This verse pictures immaturity and illustrates the early stage of growth as Israel is restored to divine favour.

“Brethren,” says the Apostle Paul, “my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.” (Rom. 10:1 KJV)

Such sentiments must find an echo in the hearts and minds of the Bride class. There must be (1) a recognition of Israel's place in God's purposes (Acts 15:14-16) and (2) a genuine interest in Israel's welfare.

God spoke of these early days of Israel's return to favour through the prophet Isaiah in the words "Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth at once?...Rejoice...and be glad for her...that ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory." (Isa. 66:8,10-11) The little sister...there will be a time come, when she will be mature, "that will be 'the day when she shall be spoken for' by the eternal lover whom she has slighted so long." (C.A.C.)

**8:9** The Bridegroom replies "IF SHE BE A WALL, WE WILL BUILD UPON HER A TURRET OF SILVER."

The foundation is already laid—Israel is already a "little sister" related to the Bridegroom and His beloved through the Abrahamic promise—"Thy seed (shall be) as the stars of the heaven (spiritual Israel), and as the sand which is upon the sea shore (natural Israel)," (Gen. 22:17) The "wall" is to be built on this.

A wall suggests security and protection, and separation from all outside.

Only when Israel is well-founded, recognising her place in the purpose of God, and separated from the surrounding nations will she be "built upon." Israel will yet be "the joy of the whole earth." (Psa. 48:1-3)

It is interesting to observe that the Hebrew word translated "turret" is also rendered "habitation" in Psa. 69:25, a verse which seems to prophesy the desolation to come upon the habitation of Israel. Now the Bridegroom speaks of a new habitation of truth—"a turret of silver."

Once again it is the Bridegroom and His bride who are associated with the work "we will build..." reminding us of the Apostle's words concerning the blessings to come to the faithful of Israel of old "...that they without us should not be made perfect." (Heb. 11:40 KJV)

*EEA/LB*