

# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

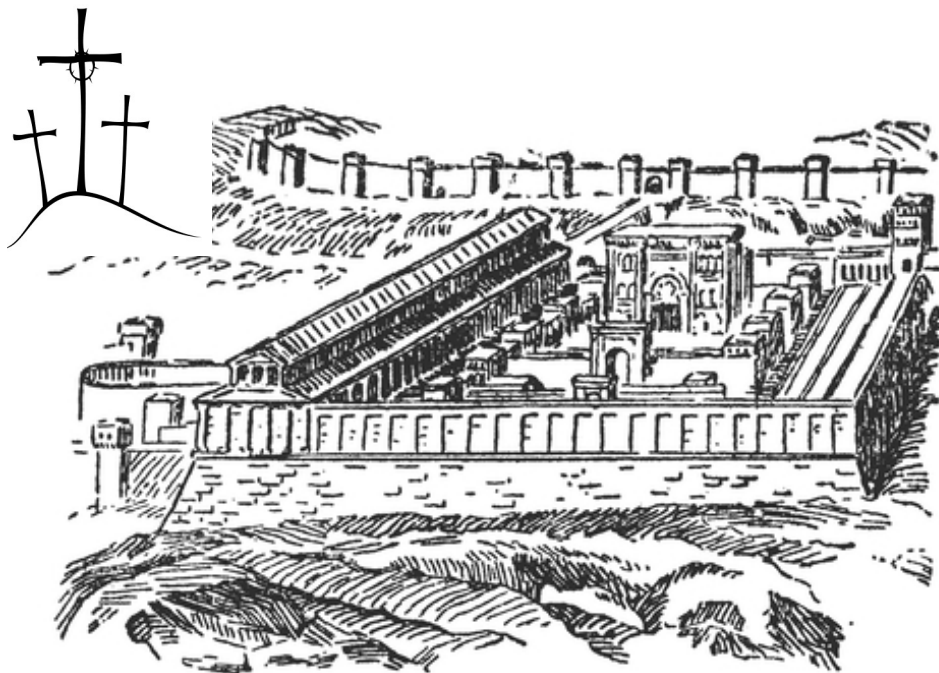
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*"He (Jesus) stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."* (Luke 9:51)



# 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

### Jesus stedfastly set his face toward Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51)

Jerusalem was the capital city of Israel and the site of the Temple and only true place of worship in the nation. Three times a year the Israelites were supposed to go to Jerusalem. It was also to be the place of Jesus' death as a ransom for all. We trace Jesus from Galilee in the north to Jerusalem in the south; a long and winding road filled with people wanting to hear him speak and to be healed of their physical health problems. Along the way there was time to prepare his disciples but also himself and time to dwell on what was going to happen. Have we ever set out on a journey where we have no interest in arriving at the destination?

#### Necessary to get to Jerusalem

Early in Matthew, Peter makes a bold statement that his Lord Jesus was the Messiah. The acknowledgment has consequences for the whole Christian era so in Matthew 16:21 (NLT) "Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead." Even in his message to his disciples Jesus says, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me" (v.24) implies his, Jesus' own sacrifice. Indeed it even gave us the understanding that Jesus knew his death would be in Jerusalem.

#### The Transfiguration

Jesus took Peter, John, and James up on a mountain to pray. And as he

was praying, the appearance of his face was transformed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly, two men, Moses, and Elijah, appeared and began talking with Jesus. They were glorious to see. And they were speaking about his exodus from this world, which was about to be fulfilled in Jerusalem. Luke writing in retrospect adds Jerusalem as the place of Jesus' death but clearly in the transfiguration it tells of Jesus' death and possibly its imminency. (Luke 9:28-31)

### **Final departure from Galilee (Luke 9:51)**

He knew he would be leaving Galilee because a time would come *“that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.”* We can try and enter into Jesus' mindset. He knew the place and time of his death. He knew the Jewish leaders were plotting his death. The Old Testament had marked it out. Therefore steadfastness was necessary to hold his course like a sailing boat or a walk to work or school on a windy day. Determination is necessary and no real reward.

### **Teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem**

Luke points out our Lord's path to Jerusalem and one imagines a winding route taking the places with people he wished to see and talk to. There were dangers even in Galilee as it was reported that Herod wanted to kill him. (Luke 13:31) Nevertheless Jerusalem is the appointed place as verse 33 says *“it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem”* or as the NLT *“for it wouldn't do for a prophet of God to be killed except in Jerusalem!”* It is even intimated in verse 34 when Jesus despairing, yet caring says *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!”* Note the naming of Jerusalem although at times the use of the name Jerusalem is used to express Israel as a nation here on earth.

### **Ten healed of leprosy**

As *“Jesus continued on toward Jerusalem, he reached the border between Galilee and Samaria.”* (Luke 17:11 NLT) This time Jesus heals ten men of leprosy. The sad state of the nation is indicated in that it is only the Samaritan that stays behind to thank Jesus.

### **Jesus again predicts his death**

Taking the twelve disciples aside, Jesus said, *“Listen, we're going up to Jerusalem, where all the predictions of the prophets concerning the Son of Man will come true. He will be handed over to the Romans, and he will be mocked, treated shamefully, and spit upon. They will flog him with a*

*whip and kill him, but on the third day he will rise again.”* (Luke 18:31-33 NLT) Not that the twelve understood the meaning of it, but it is meaningful today, and he trying to warn them and yet reassure them he knows what is going to happen and where. A phase arrived where he is beginning to repeat himself as the time gets closer and his awareness of the timing becomes more prominent in his mind and concerns. As Luke 18:34 states the disciples did not understand the import of what they were hearing. It was hidden from them, but at a later date the Holy Spirit enabled them to recall and share it with us.

### **Because he was nearing Jerusalem**

Jesus told them a story, the Parable of the Ten Servants, to correct the impression that the Kingdom of God would begin right away. He said, *“A nobleman was called away to a distant empire to be crowned king and then return. Before he left, he called together ten of his servants and divided among them ten pounds of silver, saying, ‘Invest this for me while I am gone.’ But his people hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We do not want him to be our king.’”* (Luke 19:12-14 NLT) The disciples thought Jesus would establish the kingdom as the Messiah and reign. Jerusalem was the capital city from which David and Solomon had reigned. However Jerusalem at this time would be the place where he would be rejected as king and leave Jerusalem and leave them. Imagine he was nearly at the place of his rejection.

### **A sabbath’s day journey from Jerusalem**

Then we find Jesus six days before the Passover coming again to Bethany, just far enough from Jerusalem and too late in the day for them to arrest him. Mary prepares him for his burying with the expensive spikenard. It was probably a 12-ounce jar and possibly worth a year’s wages, a scarce product likely bought by the whole family. Bethany was a sabbath’s day journey from Jerusalem. He was so close to the appointed place. He is clear that he was being prepared for his burial. What a thought being prepared for your burial in just six days.

### **Jesus’ triumphal entry**

“As Jesus and the disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the town of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. ‘Go into the village over there,’ he said. ‘As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, ‘The Lord needs them,’...This took place to fulfil the prophecy that said, ‘Tell the people of Jerusalem, ‘Look, your King is coming to you. He is humble,

riding on a donkey—riding on a donkey’s colt.’ The two disciples did as Jesus commanded. They brought the donkey and the colt to him and threw their garments over the colt, and he sat on it. Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Jesus was in the centre of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, ‘Praise God for the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD! Praise God in highest heaven!’ The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as he entered.” (Matt. 21:1-10 NLT) What a king’s welcome! How David-like, appearing on a humble animal not a warhorse. Just right for the king of the Jews. Following the parable of the ten servants how similar to a nobleman being crowned king. Did the disciples think he would begin his reign?

*Jesus’ triumphal entry*

Jesus had wept over the city. Tears of sadness, not tears of joy and release of emotion like an Olympian following a great personal triumph of a lifetime’s aim. The reaction of a relative. But it clearly was a very real emotional moment being in Jerusalem for the final time.



### **Many in Jerusalem for the feast**

“Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, ‘Sir, we want to meet Jesus.’ Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus. Jesus replied, ‘Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives.’” (John 12:20-24 NLT) So we see many from overseas in Jerusalem for the first feast of the year and he is talking about death and that death bringing life and glory. He had reached the appointment place at the appointed time. There would be no leaving of that city and its villages now till the place and time of his sacrificial death by the plotting of evil thoughts, the hands of the chief priests, and the co-operation of the Roman overlords.

*NAC*

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.

## HIS MEMORIAL

*“O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows”* (Nah. 1:15).

The Apostle’s admonition to “keep the feast” (1 Cor. 5:8) comes with special solemnity at this season of the year. With sincerity of heart and quiet joy Christians memorialise four great matters:

First—the death of our Lord as the Passover Lamb.

Second—our relationship to the sufferings of Christ, the death of Christ, as followers in his steps and sharers in his cup.

Third—the great deliverance which will follow the passing over of the present night-time. This deliverance will affect first of all those passed over, the Church, the antitypes of the priesthood and the Levitical tribe. The deliverance of these will come in the morning of the Millennial Age.

Fourth—the great “feast of fat things” (Isa. 25:6) which will follow the passing over of the Church, when the passed-over ones have been associated with their Lord, in his heavenly kingdom, as the great Prophet, Priest, Judge, Mediator and King over all the earth, to bless and uplift the human family through the merit of his blood.

These different points should be kept separate and distinct from each other if we would have the greatest blessing from this Memorial.

Looking unto Jesus as “the Lamb of God,” we behold his spotlessness, *“holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.”* (Heb. 7:26) We behold how “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth.” (Acts 8:32). By speaking the word He could have resisted those who were intent upon his destruction. He assures us that no man took his life from him; He laid it down himself, voluntarily. He laid it down, not in obedience to law, for justice could not demand sacrifice, but in accordance with the Father’s Will, saying, “I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy Law is (written) within my heart.” (Psa. 40:8 RSV)

From this standpoint the Christian believer can rejoice greatly that the Redeemer spared not himself, but freely delivered himself up with foreknowledge that in the Divine purpose the effect of his sacrifice would redound (bring) first for the blessing of his followers and subsequently for the blessing of all people. Hence in partaking of the broken bread we memorialise the purity, the sinlessness of One who gave himself to be the ransom price for all humanity. From this standpoint his shed blood signified that his death was necessary in order that our condemned humanity might be restored to life. Our hearts should here pause to

appreciate not only the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, but also the love of the Father, who designed the programme, and the justice of God thus exemplified, and the wisdom of God in making the arrangement, and the faith to grasp the power of God as it will ultimately be manifested in the full carrying out of all the glorious purposes and promises which are memorialised.

The second point is scarcely less important than is the first. The first blessing from the Redeemer's sacrifice has been offered during this Gospel Age to such as have a hearing ear and an appreciative heart. This blessing is most outstanding. It purposes a still further favour to such of humanity as turn from sin and accept by faith the grace of God in Christ, and present their bodies living sacrifices, in full consecration, vowing to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. To all such during this Gospel age, and until the completion of the elect number, the Redeemer will accept their offering to the intent that they may experience the begetting of the Holy Spirit now and in birth to a spiritual life in the resurrection. Thus as his glorified members they may be associated with him in his Millennial kingdom, when He shall act as Mediator between God and men.

The partaking of the bread symbolically represents the appropriating the fleshly perfection of the man Jesus. We partake of his perfection by faith, and not actually. He covers in the Divine sight the blemishes and imperfections of our fleshly bodies, which we have tendered to God as living sacrifices. Since we have the treasure of the new nature in this earthly, fleshly vessel, the Father's acceptance of us includes our justified flesh, and all of its interests. It is only those who have thus partaken of the merit of Christ, and whose sacrifice God has accepted, who are privileged in conformity to their covenant of sacrifice to drink of our Lord's cup and to be immersed daily into his death.

The cup is not ours, but our Lord's. The life symbolised by the blood is not ours, but our Redeemer's. We are given the privilege of partaking of it. This offering to us of the privilege of participating in the Cup of Christ's suffering and death is not to indicate that it was insufficient nor to mean that we could add anything to it. The offer illustrates the grace of God—that He is willing to receive us and to make us joint-heirs with our Lord and Saviour, if we have his Spirit.

The spirit which actuated Jesus was one of devotion to the Heavenly Father's will even unto death. This same spirit must be in all those whom the Father accepts as members of the Body of Christ, his Church. Hence

our Redeemer emphasised the matter, saying that all who would sit with him in his throne must drink of his cup of self-denial, self-sacrifice, and be immersed into his death. This is what Paul points out to us; namely, that our Lord is the true Bread, the Loaf which came down from heaven, and that we are invited to be participants in the one Loaf and ultimately accepted by him according to the Father's plan and thus become members with our Lord in the larger Loaf. Hence, as Paul suggests, when we break this bread together as a memorial not only do we symbolise our Lord's broken body, but in a larger sense we symbolise the breaking of the Church and our breaking or dying as members of that Church. "*The bread (loaf) which we break, is it not the communion (the common union or participation) of the body of Christ? For we being many, are one bread (loaf), and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread (loaf).*" (1 Cor. 10:16,17).

The cup of the fruit of the vine symbolises the sacrificed life of our Lord. But, additionally, it teaches that in becoming his disciples we accepted his invitation to share his cup. To us this means faithfulness in self-sacrifice as the Lord's representatives, even unto death. "*The cup of blessing which we bless (for which we give thanks as the greatest imaginable favour of God bestowed upon us), is it not the communion (the general union, the fellowship) of the blood of Christ?*" (1 Cor. 10:16) Does it not represent our Lord's sacrifice and our share with him in his sacrifice, by his invitation and in harmony with the Father's pre-arranged plan, in which He foreknew us with Jesus from before the foundation of the world?

What depth of meaning attaches to the communion cup from this standpoint! What heart-searching should go on with the accepting of it! How evident it is that this communion cup represents not merely the turning from sin, not merely believing in Jesus, not merely preference for right over wrong, but chiefly the presentation of believers' bodies as living sacrifices to God—sacrifices considered holy, sacrifices which God has accepted, begetting the offeror to the new nature as a "new creation." (Rom. 12:1).

Let each year then make increasing appreciation of this glorious memorial in its expression of "love Divine, all love excelling" whose breadth and length, and height and depth, surpasses all human comprehension.

*March / April 1983*

*LOVE divine, all love excelling,  
Joy of heaven, to earth come down:  
Thou hast made with us Thy dwelling,  
Love doth all Thy favours crown.*

*Father, Thou art all compassion;  
Pure unbounded love Thou art;  
Thou hast brought to us salvation;  
Thee we love with all our heart.*



## DANIEL IN BABYLON

### 8. The Beginning of Visions

The seventh chapter of Daniel begins what is virtually an independent book—the book of visions. The first six chapters are histories; they relate events that took place during the space of some seventy years from the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign to the beginning of Cyrus’ reign—all the time of the first universal empire, that of Babylon. Chapter 7 goes back some seventeen years, to the first year of Belshazzar the last native king of Babylon, and tells of the visions which came to the aged prophet and have been of such surpassing interest to every generation of “watchers” from that day to this.

At this time Daniel was about seventy-four years of age. His old master and friend, King Nebuchadnezzar, had been dead for eleven years. He was no longer chief of the wise men of Babylon; all his official ranks had gone and he lived as a private citizen, almost certainly among his own fellow-exiles in some residential quarter of the city. His only friend at court was probably Queen Nitocris, younger daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, wife of Nabonidus the reigning monarch, and mother of Belshazzar, who this very year had been promoted to joint rule with his father. The voice of Ezekiel had been silent for twenty-one years so that although he was only Daniel’s age, we do not know whether he was alive or dead. As far as the Book of Daniel itself indicates, the prophet was alone, and in solitude recorded for future generations the vivid vision-pictures with which we as prophetic students have become so familiar.

Here then in the first year of Belshazzar Daniel slept and dreamed. In earlier years, the purposes of God had been conveyed to the mind of the great king by means of dreams—the dream of the great image, the dream of the great tree, and Daniel had been employed as the agent in making known to the king the meaning of the dreams. From those dreams we have our first understanding of the Divine arrangement of Gentile Times followed by the setting up of the Kingdom of God. Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome; these are the four successive empires, from Nebuchadnezzar’s day to our own, succeeded by the incoming and all-conquering Kingdom of God, pictured by the manlike image of gold, silver, copper and iron. The “Seven Times” during which the tree of the dream was to be bound with iron and copper has been held by many to indicate in symbolic language the duration of those Gentile Times; without embarking on the hazardous seas of chronological speculation it can certainly be admitted that the mystic number 2520\*, which is the equivalent of symbolic “seven

\* $360 \times 7 = 2520$

times” is a significant one in the succession of periods which make up human history as it is punctuated by events momentous from the standpoint of the Divine Plan. (A “time” in Daniel, Heb. *iddan*, is the Sumerian time measure which they called the “day” of God or “Divine day,” a period of 360 years), hence the 3½ times of prophecy is 1260 years and seven times is 2520 derived from the 1262-year period in which eclipses of the sun and moon recur in the same order). It cannot be denied that the cycle of 2520 years, from the inception of the “head of gold” empire brings us just about to the present day when it is patent to the most casual observer that the feet of iron are about to collapse into the sea of burning flame and so go into utter destruction, just as is indicated under other symbols in the vision of Daniel 7 which we are now about to examine. We have therefore already a direct connection between the days of Daniel and our own day as the beginning and ending of an epoch in the outworking of God’s purposes leading directly to the inauguration of the greatest epoch of all—the Kingdom of God upon earth.

The king’s vision was one of human pride and achievement—a colossal image of a man, towering up into the skies. Daniel’s dream was of something very different—a manifestation of beast-like forces begotten of chaos, striving together for mastery, and finally disappearing before the superior power of the Lord from Heaven. There are therefore important lessons for all Christians to be learned from the pictures that flickered across the prophet’s sleeping mind on that quiet night in ancient Babylon so many thousands of years ago.

Detailed interpretations of the dream, both Historical and Futurist, are legion and there is no intention here of adding to the number. In a treatise which is descriptive of the life of Daniel in Babylon such detailed interpretation of prophecy would not be altogether in place. But because this treatise *is* a life of Daniel in Babylon something of what it meant to Daniel and his people at that time, is most decidedly in place, and upon that background the prophetic students may, if they will, proceed to elaborate their interpretations.

*“I saw in my vision by night,”* says Daniel, *“and, behold, the four winds of heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.”* (Dan. 7:2-3). The account goes on to describe the first beast as like a lion with eagles’ wings, rearing up on its hind legs in the endeavour to walk as a man, and, too, having a man’s heart. Then came a second, like a bear, in a recumbent position, but with one foreleg flexed as though in the act of getting up. Thirdly, a leopard

with four heads and four wings, and finally, a beast so alien to all known animals and so terrible in its aspect that Daniel was hard put to it to find words sufficiently descriptive.

The life of the four beasts was brief. There came a great appearance in the heavens, the setting of celestial thrones and the coming of the Most High for judgment; the arraignment of those beasts before him and their condemnation and destruction in the fiery flame. Then the sequel; the advent of a mighty one, the Son of Man, to receive the kingship of earth and rule over it in a kingdom which should never pass away. Four beasts, born of chaos, doomed to destruction, are succeeded by an everlasting kingdom. Taken in conjunction with the earlier vision of the great image, the application and the meaning almost immediately suggests itself.

Daniel had lived in Babylon for more than fifty years, the greater part of his life. He was thoroughly versed in the history, the mythology, and the folklore of the Babylonians. He had been Chief of all their wise men, their priesthoods, and their philosophers. It would not be surprising therefore if the “background” of his dream, or as we might say, the “setting,” had a distinctly Babylonian flavour. In such a manner the meaning and application of the dream would be much more readily grasped by those devout Jews in Babylon who were to be the immediate recipients of this Divine revelation.

The four winds “strove upon the great sea.” That expression goes right back to the beginning of Babylonian mythology. The old stories of creation told of a time before the gods had made man, or the solid earth that was man’s home, when all was chaos, a dark and dismal abyss in which the winds and waters raged and howled, and nothing had any shape or form. That chaos was personified by the Babylonians and pictured as a terrible monster named Tiamat. When the time of creation drew near, Bel-Marduk the life-giver, the Son of Ea the God of the sea, came forth with his arrows of light to overcome and slay Tiamat and turn the dark chaos into the ordered earth illuminated by the light of the sun, preparatory to creating man upon it. All of which, of course, can be traced back pretty clearly to the original truth expressed in Genesis, “In the beginning...the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light’ and there was light.” (Gen. 1:1-3) And the subsequent work of creation was carried out by One “without him (whom) was not anything made that was made” the only-begotten Son of God. (John 1:3)

The Hebrew word for “deep” in Gen. 1:2 is “tehom” which is the Hebrew equivalent of “Tiamat” and is directly derived from that Babylonian word.

So Daniel saw these four beast-like creatures emerging from the darkness and confusion of chaos and of evil. They were not from God; they did not have their origin in the heavens; they came from the earth and from the basest elements of the earth, and because they were thus born of chaos they must sooner or later meet the powers of heaven in mortal conflict, and be overthrown. That at least was the first fundamental truth Daniel drew from this vivid dream.

The first beast was like a lion with eagle’s wings, a familiar creature to Daniel. There were many such in Babylon. Stone lions with eagles’ wings and usually with human heads stood guard at every palace gateway and temple portico. There are two standing at present in the British Museum. Walls, buildings, and gateways were adorned with sculptured reliefs of the same creatures. The winged lion was the symbol of Babylon, just as Landseer’s lions in Trafalgar Square are the symbols of Britain. Daniel, seeing that creature in his dream, knew at once and without any doubt that he was looking upon the symbol of the world-empire that had been pictured in the “head of gold” of the image—the empire of Babylon.



But this lion was standing, rearing itself up on its hind legs like a man, whereas the winged lions of Babylon are usually pictured standing on all fours or recumbent. That, too, must have suggested something else to Daniel’s mind. When the lions or other creatures of Babylonian mythology were pictured as rearing up on two legs it was because they were fighting an enemy. So with the lion of Daniel’s dream. It had a man’s heart, the sagacity and intelligence of a man—maybe the outstanding soldier whose skill and sagacity established the empire, Nebuchadnezzar—but it was fighting for its life all the time and eventually it went down before its foes.

Daniel saw that happen in the dream. The K.J.V. is not quite correct. Verse 4 should read “I beheld till the wings were plucked *wherewith* it was lifted up from the earth...” Daniel lived to see the wings plucked.

The second beast was a bear, a beast alien to Babylonian mythology, for there were never any bears in Babylonia. Bears are creatures of the wooded mountains and the land of the two rivers has no mountains and

few trees. Here was an alien power which “raised up itself on one side.” That part of the picture would be familiar to Daniel, for the sculptures of Babylon did show animals with one foreleg bent in recumbent position and the other straightened as the beast “rose up to the prey.” So, eventually, Persia, the land of mountains and of bears, the silver breast of the image, sprang upon Babylon, Egypt, and Lydia (Western Turkey), and devoured them, just as the bear in the vision devoured the flesh from the three ribs it carried in its mouth.

Daniel could not have known, by his own unaided knowledge, what was prefigured by the four-winged and four headed leopard, the third beast of his dream. Very possibly though his mind was enlightened by the Holy Spirit, so that in some dim way he was able to see into futurity and sense something of the swiftly-moving armies of Greece which spread the third empire so rapidly over the four quarters of the world, and when it had reached its wildest limits at the death of Alexander the Great, became divided into four realms under four heads. It remained for later historians to show how accurately the march of events fitted the circumstances of the dream.

Then came the fourth beast, “dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth...and it had ten horns.” (v.7) This beast was evidently unlike any known earthly animal and its aspect was such as to strike terror into the beholder. This was the beast which figured most prominently in the Divine judgment shortly to come, and with that hint as to its continued existence right up until the time of that judgment it is not surprising that most students think of Rome, the successor of Greece in world rulership, destined to rule until the Son of Man should come in the glory of his Kingdom and sweep away every vestige of man’s rule from the earth. According to Daniel, this beast more than them all was the enemy of God’s saints and made war against them; this, said the angel, shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth and shall not only prevail over the saints but shall speak blasphemy against the Most High and prevail during the mystic period of trial and persecution, the time, times and half a time, (Dan. 7:25; 12:7) the twelve hundred and sixty days which always betokens oppression, persecution and testing of the faithful in God. One wonders if this strange and terrible beast which Daniel saw in his vision was in fact the dragon or serpent of Babylon, the mysterious *sirrussu* (mushussu), whose form is so often seen on the sculptures of that ancient city. That was a creature like nothing known in Nature. The four bronze serpents guarding the gateway of the Temple of Bel-Marduk in Babylon were *sirrussu*. More than anything else that mythical creature symbolised

the power of evil and the archangel of evil, the Devil himself, and when in the Scriptures the dragon or the serpent is mentioned it is always this strange and terrible beast that is in mind. From Daniel to Revelation there is the same idea made prominent; the dragon of ancient Babylon is manifest in that great power which for twenty out of the twenty-five centuries of Gentile Times has wielded its crushing iron rule over the nations and persecuted the saints of God.

But this was not the end of the dream. The forces of heaven were moving to judgment and away in the celestial realm the outraged holiness of God was ready now to sweep back into the oblivion of chaos all these beast-like systems which for so long had usurped his domain.

AOH  
(To be continued)

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### NOTE ON PROVERBS 16:4

*“The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.”* (Prov. 16:4)

That text as it is rendered in the Authorised Version (KJV) looks suspiciously like an attempt to make God responsible for the existence of evil, both in the heart and in the world; from that it is an easy step to assert a moral obligation upon God to recover all men from evil and usher them into everlasting bliss at last irrespective of their own wish or will, and this has been a tenet held by some Christians in almost every generation since the beginning of the Age. Quite apart from the oft-debated question whether all men will or will not eventually be saved—and since the deliberate expunging of the 42nd article\* in A.D. 1562 that has to be regarded as an open question in orthodox Church theology—it is altogether out of accord with the known character and attributes of God to picture him as in any sense of the word initiating or introducing or actively pursuing evil or evil works in order to accomplish his purpose. Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of his throne, (Psa. 97:2 RV) and He is of purer eyes than to behold evil. (Hab. 1:13) When God created, He saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. Evil is an intrusion subsequent to the time of creation, and had its origin in the deliberate and conscious rebellion of created beings against the laws of God. That their Creator did not stamp out the rebellion at once and nullify its effects in the creation it threatened does not make him responsible for the introduction of evil but only for its permission, for toleration of its existence for a span whilst He works out his purpose among the rebellious ones, allowing them to learn by bitter experience the destructive effect of

evil and by his persuasive love be induced, if capacity for repentance be not entirely destroyed, to renounce evil and be restored to harmony and reconciliation with him. The word “himself” in the text more properly denotes purpose or destiny, and other translations render the phrase more lucidly; thus Margolis (JPS) has “*the LORD hath made every things for His own purpose*” and Leeser “*for its destined end.*” Here is enshrined an important principle, that of purpose in all that God does. The whole progress of Divine creation from the moment when the first atoms appeared out of nothingness to the time yet to come when the temporary intrusion of evil will be a thing of the past and every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father, is the embodiment of a great purpose existing in the mind and Will of God and therefore certain of realisation. Within that purpose lies the end of evil. The Septuagint renders the verse “*All the works of the Lord are done with righteousness; and the ungodly man is kept for the evil day.*” There is expounded the law of retribution. What a man soweth, that shall he reap. (Gal. 6:7) The wicked are kept for the day of evil that both evil day and evil men, if such there then be, shall perish out of God’s universe together. That will not be until God has used every weapon in his armoury to induce the erring one to repent, and be reconciled, and take his rightful place in God’s creation. It will be the work of the coming Age to demonstrate that not one son of Adam is left without abundant opportunity thus to accept of the grace of God in Christ. If, after that, there are those who prove themselves completely and irrevocably impervious to the entry of Divine life and Divine love there can be only one possible end. “*He... shall not see life.*” (John 3:36)

AOH

\*Possible expunged 42<sup>nd</sup> article 1552

XLII. All Men Shall Not Be Saved at the Length.

They also are worthy of condemnation who endeavour at this time to restore the dangerous opinion that all men, be they never so ungodly, shall at length be saved when they have suffered pains for their sins a certain time appointed by God’s justice.

### RESURRECTION

Is it “a thing incredible...  
That God should raise the dead”?  
It is the Bible’s teaching clear—  
This resurrection hope.

And so tho death still takes its toll,  
The toll of the condemned;  
It took the life of one as well  
Who had the *right* to live.

Which right he sacrificed in death  
That man might ransomed be;  
That life Christ gave he took not back,  
His perfect *human* life.

And these life rights to Justice given  
Shall lift from man the curse.  
And tho to some incredible,  
God’s power shall raise the dead.

## THE MINISTRY AND GENIUS OF ISAIAH

Isaiah was the greatest of the Old Testament prophets; the outstanding evangelist of the Hebrew race. His name is a compound one; it means “*the salvation of Yahweh*.” The prophet was conscious of his name, and realised that he did not bear it accidentally. Jesha and Jeshuah are among his favourite words, and seem to infer that, like Abraham he lived by faith in the day of the future Jesus, who is the personal salvation of Jehovah. (John 8:56; Heb. 11:13).

His father, Amos\*—no relation to the prophet of that name—appears to have been a citizen of Jerusalem. The social position of Amos cannot be defined, but Isaiah seems to have held high rank, for when Hezekiah, King of Judah, enquired of him, he sent a deputation of his chief officials. (2 Kings 19:2). His prophetic ministry extends through the reigns of four kings, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, covering a period of at least forty years. Isaiah’s prophecies have much in common with those of the other great prophets of the same period, Amos, Hosea, and Micah.

Many pieces of prophetic history are interwoven in the book of Isaiah. That these pieces are from the pen of Isaiah is probably on this account, for prophecy and historiography were from the beginning never absolutely separated. The Chronicler refers to a portion of these historical pieces as incorporated in the book of Isaiah. (2 Chron. 32:32) He also informs us that Isaiah was the author of a historical monograph which embraced the whole reign of King Uzziah. (2 Chron. 26:22).

His prophecies are divided into two parts: chapters 1-39 forming Part I, and 40-66 Part II. Some modern scholars insist that Part II was written by an unknown author who lived in Babylonia about the close of the Exilic period. This unknown writer has been referred to by the names of the “Deutero-Isaiah,” the “Babylonian Isaiah,” and the “Great Un-named.” Needless to say, the most spiritually minded evangelical scholars do not share this view. Luke, the writer of the Third Gospel, knows nothing of a “Second Isaiah.” He states that there was delivered unto Jesus the book of the prophet Isaiah. Jesus opened the book and read from the sixty-first chapter. (Luke 4:18). John speaks of Jesus doing many signs, yet without convincing the people “*that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake.*” John then records the opening verses of Isaiah, chapter fifty-three (John 12:38 RV). Paul does not share the modernist view, for he only speaks of one Isaiah. One of the chief difficulties of the modernist school is inability to comprehend how Isaiah could prophesy



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concerning Cyrus, King of Persia, 174 years before he reigned.

*“The question,”* says Prof. A. B. Davidson, *“is one of fact and criticism exclusively, and not a matter either of faith or practice.”* The thoughts of the great Jewish Expositor, Samuel David Luzzatto, in Padua, are much to be preferred. He said: *“As if Isaiah had foreseen that later scepticism will decide against the half of his prophecies he has impressed his seal on all and has interwoven the name of God, Holy One of Israel, with the second part, just as with the first, and even more often.”* Isaiah makes mention of the phrase, “Holy One of Israel” no less than seventeen times in the second part of his writings, and twelve times in the first.

It is convenient to divide Isaiah’s ministry into five periods, which, although unequal in length, are marked each by features peculiar to itself. The first three may be said to be Assyrian in outlook, the fourth Assyrian and Babylonian, and the fifth Babylonian.

The first period extends from the death of Uzziah, about 740 B.C., to the beginning of the reign of Ahaz, and is dealt with chiefly in Isaiah, chaps. 1:5; 9:8-21; 32:9-14. Like Amos, Isaiah appears here mainly as a preacher of righteousness and judgment to come. His ministry begins at a time when Israel had forsaken God and placed their confidence in worldly prosperity, warlike resources, superstition and idolatry. Middle-class luxury, oppression of the poor by wealthy merchants and tradesmen, wantonness of women, excess in festive drinking, and perversion of moral distinctions, abounded on every hand. He portrays this tragic condition of the spiritual life of Judah in these words: *“And the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.”* (Isa. 1:8 RV) He describes their waywardness in these words: *“The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.”* (Isa. 1:3) Isaiah traces all the manifestations of national corruption to a single source; absence of a religious spirit, or the knowledge of God, in the men of his time. This truth he graphically describes in the unique story of the vineyard. (Isa. 5:1-7)

The second period covers the critical period of the Syro-Ephraimite invasion of Judah, about 735 B.C., and is described in chapters 9:8-21; 5:25-30; 17:1-11; chapters 7 and 8; perhaps also 9:1-7. This period finds Isaiah in an entirely new role, that of a political adviser. This fact can be better appreciated when we look at the contrast which in this respect he presents to Amos and Hosea in the North. Like Isaiah, they looked forward to a future time of blessing for Israel, yet their writings contain no

hint of political direction for the leaders of the state. It may be said here that Isaiah revives this political function of prophecy which had been in abeyance since the days of Elisha.

One of the outstanding events of this period is the impressive interview between Ahaz and Isaiah as a result of the invasion of Judah by the combined forces of Syria and Ephraim. By this unbrotherly act the Northern Kingdom sealed its own doom. Both it and Syria fell a prey to the advancing Assyrians under the leadership of Tiglath-pileser. Isaiah, chapter seven, sets out the interview between God's prophet and the faithless Ahaz. Isaiah assures the king that the conspiracy will come to nought, and holds out a promise of deliverance on the condition of faith in God. Ahaz replied: "*I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD.*" (7:12). Isaiah then continued the conversation, and gave utterance to the remarkable promise concerning a coming king in these words: "*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*" (7:14). The king's unbelief is answered by the threat of an Assyrian invasion.

Isaiah did not accept the king's decision as final, but made an appeal to the people at large. From the court he delivers his messages in the form of a series of oracles which are contained in chapter eight. They probably extended over a period of some months. Isaiah could see that the Syro-Ephraimite conspiracy would be destroyed by the king of Assyria. He endeavoured to impress this encouraging fact upon the minds of the people by the erection of a motto: "To Maher-shalal-hash-baz." (8:1 RSV) Months later he gave the interpretation of the motto in connection with the birth of a son to whom he gave the motto as a name. (8:3,4) The people did not believe him, his message fell on deaf ears. The prophet was right. Damascus was overthrown in 732 B.C., and Samaria some ten years later. Judah, however, did not become a theatre of war between Assyria and Egypt.

The rejection of the prophet's message by the common people marks a temporary cessation of his public activity. (8:16-18) The Lord hid his face from the house of Israel, in that he withdrew the guidance of the prophetic word which had been so coldly received. The next period is marked by the strange absence of any record of Isaiah's reflections on the events with which it is associated, namely the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C. This event is foretold in several of Isaiah's most striking prophecies. Read Isaiah 5:26-30; 8:1-4; 17:1-11; 28:1-4. The fall of Samaria must have profoundly affected Judah, especially so when it is realised that the Ten Tribes

comprised the larger portion of God's people. This following by the proud boast of the Assyrian: "*Shall I not, as I have done to Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols (images)?*" should have had a very chastening effect on the heart of Judah. (10:11). Judah seems to have concluded that if God failed to avert the doom of the Northern kingdoms, there was no assurance that He would protect her. This may have been the cause of the desperate struggle which afterwards took place to throw off the Assyrian yoke.

We now come to the most eventful stage of Isaiah's career, which covers a period from 720 B.C. to 701 B.C., during which time Hezekiah is king of Judah. It must be remembered that, throughout his prophetic career, Isaiah had always urged upon Judah the need for a position of isolation and absolute dependence upon God. Ahaz absolutely refused to be guided by the prophet, and, fearing the consequences of a Syro-Ephraimite conspiracy, tendered his allegiance to Tiglath-pileser, who promptly responded to his appeal. (2 Kings 16:7).

The first hint that Hezekiah might endeavour to free himself from the pact to which his father was a party, might be found in the short oracle of Isaiah 14:29,32, which is thought to have been the year of Hezekiah's accession to the throne. (v.28) The next time that unrest is witnessed in Judah we find the Southern kingdom in the black books of Sargon. It has been suggested that Isaiah chapters 28-31 consist of the prophet's protests against negotiations on the part of Hezekiah with Egypt with a view to a revolt against Assyria. It is interesting to note that the originators of this revolt against Assyria in favour of an Egyptian alliance were anxious to keep the prophet in the dark in regard to their plot. (29:15; 30:1) They did not succeed. Isaiah draws attention to their attempt to outwit the Almighty (29:15, 30:1-12; 31:1-2).

Isaiah then resorted to an even more drastic attempt to turn public opinion against rebellion. For three years he walked the streets of Jerusalem "*naked and barefoot*" as a sign of humiliation which awaited not only Egypt—the power with which certain statesmen of Judah sought alliance—but the power of Ethiopia at the hands of Assyria. (20:2,4). To quote the words of Dr. Skinner: "*Isaiah consistently upheld the maxim that the safety of the state lay in abstinence from all attempts to recover its independence, and in quiet resignation to the will of God.*" There is no reason to suppose that the prophet held out any hope that such alliance would spare them from the trial of an Assyrian invasion.

In this, as in other periods, we find Isaiah against the spirit of unbelief and unfaithfulness which inspired Judah to seek deliverance through human wisdom and effort and alliances with surrounding heathen states. It seems clear that Isaiah expected the defeat of Egypt and Ethiopia at the hands of Assyria (chap. 20). He foresees a great expansion of the Assyrian empire under their victorious king, Sargon. Isaiah also realises that Assyria is an instrument in the hand of God to fulfil a Divine purpose. But, as one historian asks: "*How could an immoral force (Assyria) be used for moral ends? When and where and how would the Assyrian overstep the limits of his commission and appear in open conflict with the will of him who had raised him up? And when this point was reached, how would God rid himself of the formidable tool He had fashioned to execute his strange work on the earth?*" This is the subject matter of Isaiah 10:5-34, which covers the major portion of the period under review.

The contrast should be noted between God's purposes in raising Assyria up and the unholy ambitions of that despotic world power (10:5-15); the annihilation of this mighty military power under the metaphor of disease and conflagration (10:16-19); the encouraging message to the faithful remnant in Israel (10:20-27); the destruction of Assyria under the very walls of Jerusalem. (10:28-34). The picture ends with the attempt of Assyria to overrun the earthly seat of God's visible government in Jerusalem, as he stands over against the capital, swinging "*his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion.*" (10:32). His armed forces suffer a mortal blow, and Judah is saved from the Assyrian terror. "*The LORD of hosts shall lop the bough with terror; and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty (lofty one) shall be humbled.*" (10:33) Thus is the epic defeat of the Assyrians under Sennacherib foretold by God through the mouth of his faithful prophet. This prophecy was fulfilled in 701 B.C. Other references to this defeat are to be found in Isaiah 14:24-27; 17:12-14 ; and chapter 18.

Isaiah felt that the hour had arrived when God would destroy his enemies, and thus vindicate the truth that He was indeed the "Holy One of Israel." This was probably the gravest challenge to the power of God since the day when Samuel exclaimed: "*Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God; for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.*" (2 Samuel 7:22). Read also Isaiah 28:7; 31:5,8; 30:27-33.

In order that we might obtain a clear impression of this crisis, it is necessary briefly to review the policy of King Hezekiah. He had formed

the opinion that Sennacherib's enterprise against Babylon had considerably weakened his armies. On the other hand, Egyptian might, under the influence of the Ethiopian Kings of Napata appeared to be in the ascendancy. The traditional Egyptian interest in the Plain of Esdraelon—a triangular plain that breaks the central range between Galilee and Samaria—was now likely to increase. Just as the close of Tiglath-pileser marked a change in the foreign policy of Judah, so the close of the reign of Sargon, also a king of Assyria, witnessed another change in the policy of Judah. The prospect of freedom from the financial yoke of Assyria, imposed during the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah, together with the visit to Jerusalem of a mission of the envoys from the Ethiopian kings of Napata, caused Hezekiah to believe that the psychological moment for action had arrived. From this time onward, Hezekiah acted swiftly. He fortified Jerusalem and placed in protective custody in the capital Padi, Assyrian vassal king of Ekron. The toil of the king was unavailing. God did not intend Judah to think that, within herself, she had the power to deliver herself from impending disaster, or that her ends could be accomplished through alliances with heathen kings.

As soon as Sennacherib, king of Assyria, was free from Babylonian commitments, he lost no time in directing his attention to the powers with whom King Hezekiah had associated himself. They were all soundly defeated, thus leaving the road to Judah clear for a full-scale invasion. The puppet king, Padi, was surrendered by Hezekiah and restored by Sennacherib to his throne. The campaign against Judah then followed. The record of Sennacherib—now in the British Museum—and that in 2 Kings 18:13-16, are in broad agreement, Hezekiah was defeated and subjected to a heavy fine.

Certain difficulties arise when comparing the foregoing account with Isaiah, Chapters 36 and 37. Of the various explanations that have been presented, it is generally held that after the capture of Ekron, Sennacherib set about the systematic reduction of the cities of Judah. Separate corps had the responsibility of capturing the capital. The Arabian army which Hezekiah had enlisted to his cause was easily defeated. Realising that further resistance was futile, Hezekiah sued for peace, which he obtained at the price of a very heavy fine. Assuming that he did not include the surrender of Jerusalem in his peace overtures, Sennacherib must have repudiated the agreement and gone back on his peace terms, for a siege of Jerusalem followed.

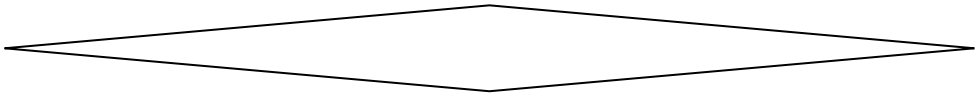
Hezekiah realised the helplessness of his position against so formidable a

foe. In his extremity he went into the Temple, and humbly and earnestly appealed to God for protection against the opposing forces. He beseeches God to “*see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which (he) hath sent to reproach the living God.*” (37:14-20). Isaiah was commissioned to reassure Hezekiah that the Assyrian army would not lay siege to Jerusalem, nor “*shoot an arrow there (at it), nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it.*” (37:33).

Hezekiah’s extremity was God’s opportunity. Sennacherib’s army perished in a night: the angel of the Lord performed his work swiftly, suddenly, and in silence. (37:36) Of the miraculous destruction of this mighty host, it has truly been said that “*it is one of the outstanding examples of pacifism in practice.*”

A historian has summed up the crisis of the fate of Jerusalem in these words: “The crisis of Jerusalem’s fate becomes the occasion of that final revelation of the majesty of God to which Isaiah had looked forward from the beginning of his work, and which he with increasing distinctness connected with the overthrow of the Assyrian power. The whole history of redemption converges to this one event; it is the consummation of God’s work of judgment both on Israel and on Assyria, and the inauguration of the reign of holiness and righteousness and peace reserved for the purified remnant of the nation.”

*AOH*



#### NOTE ON ISAIAH 18:4

The ancient name of a Hebrew calendar month, *Tzah*, hitherto unknown, has been deciphered on a clay jar found at Arad in Israel. The present names of Hebrew months were derived from Babylon at the time of the Captivity and up to the time of this discovery only three of the original names were known. The interest attaching to this discovery is the light it sheds on Isa. 18:4 where the prophet is made, in the A.V. (KJV), to refer to a “*clear heat*” after rain where “clear” has been rendered from “*tsach.*” No one has ever suggested exactly what was meant by a “clear heat.” Now that the meaning of “*tsach*” is known the rendering is obviously “the heat of (the month) *tzah* after rain,” from which it is deduced that *tzah* was one of the summer months following the spring rains.

*March / April 1966*

## FIVE CITIES IN EGYPT

*Examination of a strange text*

*“In that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt which speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the LORD of hosts. One of these will be called the city of the Sun.” (Isa. 19:18 RSV).*

A strange statement, one that most commentators have studiously avoided in consequence of its strangeness. Why should five particular cities in pagan Egypt, including one named after the Sun-god, forsake their own language for that of the Canaanites and Hebrews, and declare their allegiance to the God of Israel? Whatever the meaning, its fulfilment must lie in future times, for never in past history has such a state of things existed in Egypt.

Look first at the setting. Verses 16-25 clearly constitute a prophetic description of conditions involving Egypt at the end of this Age, when the “kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord” (Rev. 11:15) and Christ is supreme in the Millennial world. The passage opens with Isaiah’s favourite introduction “in that day.” In almost every instance of that phrase in his book it refers to the events surrounding the end of this Age and the commencement of the next. “*The land of Judah*” he says, “*shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid.*” (v.17) Never in the past has Egypt stood in terror of Judah, whether ancient or modern. But in our own day it has become fact. But, says Isaiah, Egypt will cry unto the Lord and He shall deliver them. The Lord will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall serve the Lord. They shall return to the Lord, and He shall heal them. And the chapter closes with the Lord saying “*Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.*” Here is a picture of three nations always in history at war with one another now joined together in a bond of peace, and united in their allegiance to the Lord. Such outcome can only be achieved in the Millennium, and the doctrine of the Millennium is essential to hold if this passage is to be understood.

So back to the five cities. Why five, and why one specifically identified? A certain amount of investigation does yield one interesting fact. Egypt under the Pharaohs was divided for political and administrative purposes into forty-two nomes, or provinces, something like the States of the United States of America, each province having its own capital city. Of those forty-two capital cities the Old Testament mentions and records the names of five. And one of those five is the city of On, whose High Priest’s

daughter Asenath became the wife of Joseph in Egypt. (Gen. 41:45; 46:20). Four centuries after Isaiah's day, On was renamed Heliopolis by the then Greek rulers of Egypt, and that name means "city of the sun." Isaiah four centuries previously by inspiration of the Spirit foretold that name change! The names of these five cities, with their later Greek names, are: No (Thebes RSV) Jer. 46:25; Hanes (Herakleopolis) Isa. 30:4; Noph (Memphis RSV) Isa. 19:13; On (Heliopolis AMP) Gen. 41:45; Zoan (Tanis CEB) Num. 13:22. These five, these five only.

They are to "speak the language of Canaan." This word "language" here is not "*lashan*" which denotes a national language in the ordinary sense, but "*saphar*," derived from the motion of the lips, as of one speaking. Again, "speak" in this text means to declare abroad rather than the mere act of speaking. Five cities are to proclaim the speech of Canaan, to ally themselves with what is said and declared by those in Canaan. And why "Canaan," a territorial name which had dropped out of use five or six centuries before the days of Isaiah? What had once been known as Canaan was now Judah in the south and Israel in the north! It would appear that there is a significance in this going back to the ancient name, which needs a little thought.

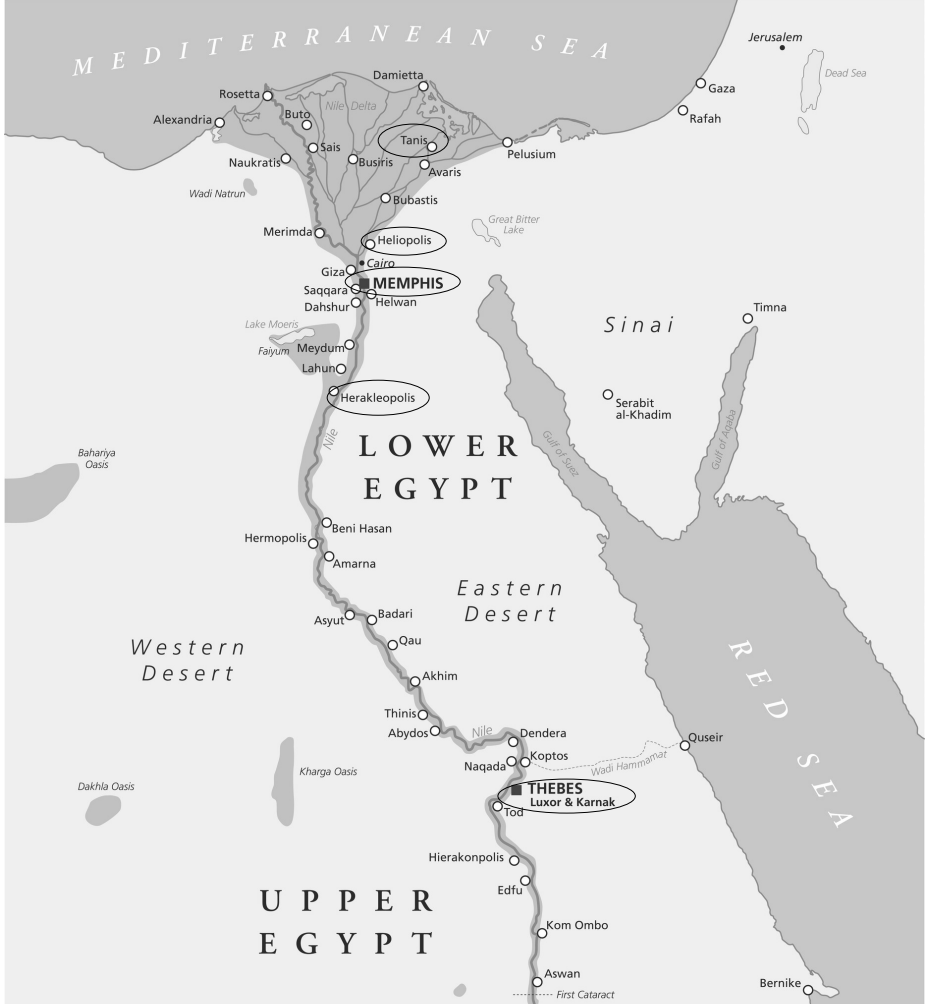
Back in the days when the land was known as Canaan, the worship of the Most High God was there. The worship of many gods with all its attendant degradation had come into the world only about five centuries before Abraham and it started in his native land of Sumer. He left that land for one "which God would show him," and so he came into Canaan where he found a people still worshipping the Most High God alone, ruled by their priest-king Melchisedek. Not far away he encountered another Canaanite people subject to their equally devout king Abimelech. Here, in Abraham's day, was a national faith purer and more sincere by far than that of Judah in the days of Isaiah—and this was the "speech of Canaan" to which the five cities are to turn rather than the mixture of one God and many gods characteristic of Judah and Israel in those later times. So the Egyptians are to turn, not to the adulterated faith of eighth century BC Judah but to that of second millennium BC Abraham. Back to the primitive faith which men knew when the world was young.

So the chapter closes with Egypt returning to the Lord in sincerity, first a partial move back, the five cities of v.18, then a more universal turning to him in vv.21-22, and finally the full and complete conversion of v.25 which leads the Lord to say "Blessed be Egypt my people." All this must see its fulfilment in the Age to follow this present, the Millennial Age,



under the beneficent reign of Christ, the day concerning which the Lord said to Zephaniah “for then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent” (Zeph. 3:9)—the “language of Canaan.”

AOH



Historical Map of Ancient Egypt and its cities using the Greek names

*The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving.*

*Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook*

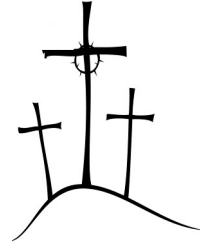
## CHRIST GAVE HIS LIFE FOR ME—A HYMN

CHRIST gave His life for me,  
His precious blood He shed,  
That I might ransomed be,  
And quickened from the dead.  
He gave, He gave his life for me;  
How grateful I should be!

His Father's house of light,  
His glory-circled throne,  
He left for earthly night,  
For wand'rings sad and lone;  
He left, He left it all for me,  
Have I left all for Thee?

He suffered much for me,  
More than I now can know,  
Of bitterest agony;  
He drained the cup of woe;  
He bore, He bore it all for me,  
What have I borne for Thee?

He now has brought to me,  
Down from His home above,  
Salvation full and free,  
Pardon and life and love.  
He brings, He brings rich gifts to me—  
Lord, I give all to Thee.



*Bible Students Hymnal 42*

Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879) wrote this hymn. It is rare to find it in many hymn or tunebooks among the many famous hymns with her name against them. Nevertheless it is very timely for the season when we think of our Lord Jesus dying as the Passover lamb. Frances was born in Astley, Worcestershire and died in Swansea, Wales.

Here are some verses which may have inspired her to pen these words:

**1 Timothy 2:5-6** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

**John 6:38** I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

**Philippians 2:8-9** Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him.

**Hebrews 12:2** Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**1 Peter 1:18-21** Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

**1 Peter 3:18** Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 15:22-23** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

**Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.

**Isaiah 53:3-12** He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and...we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed...He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin... He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great...because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

## THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

*“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Rom. 8:11).*

The resurrection of Jesus brought strength and unity to the Early Church. Following the crucifixion, the disciples were as dead men. All that they had toiled and hoped for had suddenly vanished and they were plunged into gloom and despair. He whom they had trusted to restore the glories of Israel, lay dead in the tomb, crucified as a criminal.

When Christ rose from the dead, He gave to his followers new life which they had never known before. From being frightened, ignorant and powerless, they became happy, full of spiritual vitality and imbued with a faith which weathered many a storm of persecution. They were, in the words of Peter in Acts 1:22, witnesses of his resurrection. The change which took place in the early disciples is perhaps the strongest historical evidence for the resurrection. The power which had wrought so great a miracle as the raising from the dead of the Son of God became available for the spread of the Gospel by his followers. As we trace the story of the Church, as recorded by Luke in Acts of the Apostles, the effect of the power upon individual disciples and the Christian communion as a whole is often quite striking. There had not been or ever could be a “religious faith” anything like that which surrounded the Gospel of Christ. It was quite different from the philosophies of men and religions of the east. They were based upon intellectual knowledge, argument, and ethics. Even the members of Jewish religion never enjoyed the personal relationship with God which they should have done. In the church of Jesus Christ, however, there was a faith based on revelation and power from God. Whence came these things and why? What was it that was so different in these men and women that the eternal Creator of the Universe should confer so great a privilege?

God was able to work in and through the early Christians because they had learned from Jesus the doctrine of self-denial and complete dependence upon God. The teaching of men, whether scientific, philosophical, or religious, have always advanced the doctrine of “self.” Self-culture, self-esteem and self-expression are the modern counterparts of the same idea. Jesus had taught his disciples to be meek and contrite in heart, trusting God for everything, whether it was their daily bodily needs or the virtues to be developed by their characters.

Such a condition of mind is the result of a new relationship with God, based on redemption through Jesus, and maintained by constant prayer with God. By these things, the resurrection power of Jesus Christ was given to his first followers, and to every true disciple from then until now. Prayer played a very big part in the Master's life, and He frequently resorted to communion with his Father in order that He might know God's will. When faced with a crisis, He resorted to fellowship with his Father and therein lay the success of his ministry. (Luke 6:12; 9:28-29; Mark 9:29)

The history of the activities of the Early Church reveals a group of people who had learned to apply the lessons of prayer taught by Jesus. From the first chapter we learn that they, "*all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication...*" (Acts 1:14). After Pentecost, the same attitude is reflected in chapter two, "*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*" (v.42). In chapter three we catch a glimpse of Peter and John going up to worship at the Temple at "*the hour of prayer.*" (v.1) In chapter four we are given considerable information about a prayer meeting in the Early Church, and so great was their intercession that the very building where they met was shaken. The passage concludes with these words, "*The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.*" (vv.32,33) Later, deacons were chosen in order that the apostles might give themselves "*to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*" (Acts 6:4) Still further, Luke relates how Peter was released from prison as the result of a prayer meeting in John Mark's home.

All these examples of the early Christians at prayer, after the Holy Spirit was outpoured at Pentecost, were accompanied by a display of Divine power operating through God's people. On some occasions it was the power of the Gospel unto salvation and at others, the ministry of healing. It was not the educated, wealthy, and influential in Israel through whom God worked, although He did not despise their gifts. Thus when men of learning like Paul and Luke gave themselves to his service, God used their abilities to the furtherance of his Kingdom. Throughout his epistles Paul repeatedly exhorted those to whom he wrote to "*pray without ceasing.*" (1 Thess. 5:17)

Coupled with this power through prayer came a unity of purpose and action hitherto unknown among the disciples. They were men of different

upbringing and outlook; some were rugged, others polished but God had not looked at the outward appearance when selecting the foundation stones of the Church. Rapidly these men and women from all walks of life were welded into a united band by a common purpose and energised by a single source of power. They preached the same gospel of Jesus, crucified, and resurrected. This was the “oneness” for which Jesus had so earnestly prayed before his death recorded in John 17. It was an exhibition of the love in action about which he had so often taught them. It was the love which showed that they had passed “*from death unto life.*” (1 John 3:14).

The unity of the early Christians broke down sectarian and social cliques; it ignored national and racial barriers. Within the community of the first believers were Jews and Gentiles, rulers and slaves, scholars, and peasants. They regarded each other not by their former associations but as fellow disciples, and thereby received strength through their common bond. Repeated exhortations to love each other as brethren in Christ were necessary and even then occasional failure in their unity is reflected by such passages as 1 Corinthians 1. In his second letter to the same church Paul wrote, “*For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view.*” (2 Cor. 5:14-16 RSV) Today, that lesson in the Christian Church still needs to be learned. The spirit of Christ, given free course in the lives of his brethren must completely abolish all feelings of hurt pride and retaliation. Personal opinion and ambition must be subordinate to the common good, “*in honour preferring one another.*” (Rom. 12:10) Natural interests are crucified in order that Christ might live within us. Such an attitude towards other Christians and our fellow men in the world, is not developed by trying to be virtuous, for that just cannot be done. Human nature breaks down under the strain of inner selfishness and outward circumstances. It is only as Christ is given control of our hearts, to provide us with the guidance and strength for each daily experience, that we can be “*more than conquerors*” (Rom. 8:37) over our weaknesses and desires. So the apostle Paul learned from the Lord, “*My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*” Therefore was Paul able to say, “*Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*” (2 Cor. 12:9). Our bodily weakness should not hinder us from obeying the Divine will, for we have a reservoir of energy in Heaven which is sufficient for every service for God.

Perhaps there are few more outstanding examples of this than Peter on the day of Pentecost when he stood up as spokesman on behalf of the rest of the disciples. He had been a coward, thrice denying his Master on the day of the Trial. However in the power of the Spirit, he became a new man who many times faced persecution and death for Jesus. The outward manifestation of the Holy Spirit through the first disciples was in their witness to the world. By their preaching and healing they continued the work which Jesus began. That power has never changed, and *the God that lived in the apostles' day is still the same today*. The only alteration has been in the faith of the believers. It still requires men and women to venture forth, with implicit trust, so that the Lord will honour his promises *"even unto the end of the world."* (Matt. 28:20).

"Christian;" the name bespeaks of one who follows the Lord Jesus. Jesus trod a pathway wherein He preached the Gospel. He did not just do it now and again in the convenient phrase "as He had opportunity." His whole life was bound up in the announcement of the Good News of the Kingdom of Heaven. The first Christian community did the same thing. The apostles were hardly eager to go to the Samaritans and Gentiles, but by various means the Lord led them forth from Jerusalem unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Generation after generation through the ages their labours have continued often at the cost of martyrdom. Many have been inspired to leave the comfort and security of their homes in order to blaze the trail overseas. No less have been those remaining in their normal home and work who have sought to let their light shine. We, of this generation, must ask ourselves, what are we doing to maintain the faithful witness of the ages? Are we exempt from this service in this day and age? Can we run for the prize according to a new set of rules?

The power of his resurrection is at present confined to the immediate associates of Jesus, those who long to know him and share his sufferings. Their resurrection now is pictured for us in the words of the father in the parable of the prodigal son when that son returned to his family, *"this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."* (Luke 15:24) Such is the love of God for those who repent from their sin and become his children. The same thought was expressed by Jesus as recorded in John 5:25, *"The hour is coming...when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."* He went on to speak of an age yet to come when the power which was to bring him from death, and which was to empower his disciples, would bring everyone back from death; for He said, *"...the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth."* (vv.28-29) It was a

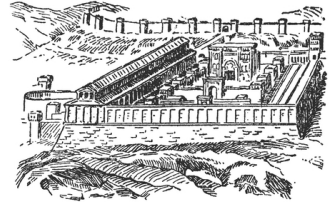
wonderful moment to which Jesus looked forward, to the day when all the conditions brought about by sin, through accident, disease and war would be removed for ever, and the mighty power of God would be exerted to give life to all who had ever fallen asleep. So writes the apostle once more, *“But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”* (Eph. 2:4-7 RSV).

AS

## MARY OF BETHANY

When Jesus knew his hour was nigh,  
As Scriptures to him testify,  
How on the cross he soon would die,  
The fallen race of man to buy;

He sets his face Jerusalem way,  
But stops he first at Bethany  
Before his hour of destiny;  
Before should end his short life's day.



The Lazarus, Martha, Mary, home,  
(Held fast in hallowed memories store)  
Doth greet him now e'en as before;  
The spot most dear 'neath heaven's dome.

'Twas here their brother Lazarus died,  
Christ's friend by death's grim hand was slain.  
But Jesus raised him up again;  
God's power used, God glorified.

...

Then Jesus said, "Let her alone,  
She hath done what she could for me:  
For burial anointed me  
Before the time; leave her alone.

"And when ye do the gospel preach,  
This act of hers ye shall recount,  
Of one who gave in large amount."  
Such love our Master us would teach.

*Extract from  
Martin C. Mitchell  
Poems of the Way*



## THE BIBLE'S SONG OF LOVE

Verse by verse through the Song of Songs Part 5b Chapter 7:2-9

All references RV unless otherwise stated

**7:2** In the intervening years since the Song was written mankind's depravity of mind and speech has coarsened the language. This has, as it were, set a fence around some of the most precious passages of the Song. The features of the human form set out here are expressions of the spiritual perfections in the body of Christ. And so in sacred simplicity the daughters continue: "THY NAVEL IS LIKE A ROUND GOBLET, WHEREIN NO MINGLED WINE IS WANTING."

Fausset\*\* shows here again that the clothed body is being described and explains the phrase in these words:-

"Navel—rather 'girdle-clasp,' called from the part of the person underneath. The 'shoes' prove that dress is throughout presupposed on all parts where it is usually worn. She is 'a bride adorned for her husband;' the 'uncomely parts' being most adorned. (1 Cor. 12:23) The girdle-clasp was adorned with red rubies resembling the 'round goblet' of spice-mixed wine (not liquor)."

"THY BELLY IS LIKE AN HEAP OF WHEAT SET ABOUT WITH LILIES."

The simile is taken from the harvest field.

The threshing floors in ancient times were in the open air and, when wheat had been threshed out, fanned and heaped up, each heap was hedged round with thorns in order to keep off cattle. On festal occasions the wheat was decorated with flowers.

"Belly—that is, the vesture on it. As in Psa. 45:13,14, gold and needlework comprise the Bride's attire, so golden-coloured 'wheat' and white 'lilies' here." (Fausset's commentary)

It is interesting to recall that in the parables of the Sower and of the Wheat and Tares the Church or Bride is pictured as made up of individual grains of wheat. That is to be the destiny of the Church in this life. To be a heap. Therefore to be well-winnowed, the chaff of mere human fancies, speculations or traditions to be carefully excluded.

**7:3** The daughters now adopt the words used earlier by the Bridegroom. Their sanctified vision sees in her the beauty recognised by her Lord.

“THY TWO BREASTS ARE LIKE TWO FAWNS THAT ARE TWINS OF A ROE.”

**7:4** They also express a similar thought to that of the Bridegroom in 4:4 when they say “THY NECK IS LIKE THE TOWER OF IVORY.” But here is not only a picture of strength of purpose but also of costliness, beauty and purity. King Solomon had a throne of ivory made for himself (2 Chron. 9:17) which indicated dignity, honour and richness implied in the use of ivory in this verse.

“THINE EYES AS THE POOLS IN HESHBON, BY THE GATE OF BATH-RABBIM.”

“Heshbon” means “strong.” The pools were a reservoir in Heshbon and the waters were clear, deep and quiet—a reservoir is made, not natural. “The gate” was a place of much traffic where business was transacted—a place of social intercourse. “Bath-Rabbim” means “Daughter of a multitude.”

From this we have the thought that there must be a holy sincerity about God’s people—no darkness but transparent clearness. As the pure water of truth issues forth into our hearts we must retain it in a spiritually clean receptacle so that its depth and purity are manifest to our Lord and to others.

The daughters seem to still show a leaning towards the works of men for in praising certain of the features of the Bride they do not always lift their thoughts beyond the achievement of men. “The pools in Heshbon” and “the gate of Bath-Rabbim” are examples and so they continue: “THY NOSE IS LIKE THE TOWER OF LEBANON WHICH LOOKETH TOWARD DAMASCUS.”

Fausset says that this tower was “a border-fortress watching the hostile Damascus.” It is appropriate that the Bride shall reveal the spiritual feature pictured by this tower of Lebanon for just as the watchmen must be ever on the alert to give the alarm on the first appearance of the enemy, so the Christian must be ready to wage perpetual war against the first risings of the flesh, the world, or the devil.

\*C.A.C. adds that “her ‘nose’ represents the power to distinguish the savour of what is of God. It is figurative of a perceptive faculty which is of great importance. If there is keenness of scent in regard to what is of

God there will also be quick perception of what has an evil savour. It was written of the Lord, ‘And his scent will be in the fear of Jehovah.’ (Isa. 11:3 mar.) ...The organ of smell is very fine in its discrimination; it can distinguish when there is nothing apparent to any other sense. An evil teacher might be clever enough to make his doctrines appear to be wholly based on Scripture, but a truly spiritual person would perceive an ill savour about them, even if he could not point out exactly what was wrong. So that this faculty is like an elevated watch-tower with a wide range of outlook. The one who has it does not need to investigate minutely, or at close quarters, what is contrary to God. The very ‘scent’ of the thing is enough, and he turns from it... The ‘eyes’ and the ‘nose,’ representing perceptive faculties, are very prominent features of the beauty of the ‘prince’s daughter.’”

**7:5** “THINE HEAD UPON THEE IS LIKE CARMEL, AND THE HAIR OF THINE HEAD LIKE PURPLE.”

It seems that the phrase “Thine head upon thee” refers not to the head but the head-dress, i.e. the bridal crown, thus completing her dress from the jewelled sandals to crowing diadem of beauty. “Carmel” means “fruitful” and it is interesting to reflect that in chapter 5:15 she expressed her adoration of Him by comparing Him to *majestic* Lebanon. Here the daughters compare her to *fruitful* Lebanon.

The head-dress here is the sign of subjection to the head. “Purple”—the Bride’s tresses are described as with a sheen of purple upon them, which is true of intensely black hair. Purple, we recollect, is also an emblem of royalty. (John 19:2-3)

“THE KING,” they say “IS HELD CAPTIVE IN THE TRESSES THEREOF.”

The metaphor of the lover, as held by the locks of his beloved, is a common eastern one. (Century Bible)

In considering this description in verses 1-5 it is well to be reminded that the “bride of Christ” is not any one individual member. This is a portrait of Christ’s mystical body which has grown “up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” (Eph. 4:15-16 KJV) Might it not also be that this portrait of the Bride is an “end of the age” portrait, that is from the feet upward?

**7:6** All the spiritual graces of beauty of which the daughters have been speaking derive from love. This is the course of every spiritual virtue. “God *is* love,” says the Apostle John “and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him... We love, because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:16,19)

And so we read “HOW FAIR AND HOW PLEASANT ART THOU, O LOVE, FOR DELIGHTS!”

The word “love” used here means love itself as in such phrases as “the love of the LORD” (Hos. 3:1 KJV) and does not refer to the Bride herself.

Rabbi Leeser translates “How beautiful and how pleasant art thou, O love, in thy attractions” or as another commentator expresses it:-

“Jehovah rejoiced in like manner over the works of creation as He successively beheld each day’s work, and saw that it was very good, and when at length the six days work was ended, He looked down from Heaven and ‘saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.’ (Gen. 1:31) And shall not the joy of the new creation, the culmination of six thousand years of patient labour of the only begotten Son yield our Lord and the Heavenly Father even greater delight? For when the millennial sabbath shall commence then ‘the glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in His works.’ (Psa. 104:31 KJV) Then it shall be said to the earthly Jerusalem ‘He will rejoice over thee...with singing,’ and ‘Ye shall be a delightsome land,’ (Zeph. 3:17; Mal. 3:12) and to the heavenly Jerusalem ‘how fair and how pleasant art thou O love for delights.’ (Psa. 45:10-11)”

**7:7** The Lord sees spiritual beauty as an expression of spiritual growth and so the Bridegroom says: “THIS THY STATURE IS LIKE TO A PALM TREE, AND THY BREASTS TO CLUSTERS OF GRAPES.”

“She has come to ‘stature’....‘the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.’ (Eph. 4:13) The saints are to ‘grow up to Him in all things’... knowledge or faith or gift are not stature...We may measure our stature by 1 Corinthians 13.” How pleasant art thou O love. (C.A.C.)

The palm tree is a striking similitude of the believer. It seems intent on rearing its crown sufficiently high to display fruit. Its appearance is the very embodiment of order and calmness. Given a degree of moisture it will flourish in any soil, because the palm is not produced by the character of the soil, but by water. The palm tree is fearless of heat or wind. “The

righteous shall flourish like the palm tree...those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.” (Psa. 92:12-13 KJV)

Naturalists tell us that the palm tree will not grow crooked; and when heavily weighted it will grow faster, for naturally it is of slow growth. It never bends to earth—it is straight and upright—like the Church which is free from the spirit of bondage and fear that causes the back to be bowed down alway. (Rom. 11:10) It is regular in growth. It is fruitful, its fruit being abundant and nutritious and growing near the stem. It is evergreen and crowned with palm branches, symbols of victory. It is softest at the heart; other trees are hardest there.

The palm tree tells of spiritual stature; of well-grounded, upright character; of victory proclaimed to the heavens and seen by all who are looking heavenward. “Breasts like clusters of grapes” speak of maturity and fruitfulness.

**7:8** In the Revised Version the words “go up to” of the A.V. are translated “climb up into.” This is quite contrary to the thought conveyed by the original Hebrew for the Bridegroom is speaking of “coming to” the Palm tree, that is drawing near, not climbing the tree itself. The words of the A.V. are, therefore, chosen for the first phrase.

**“I SAID, I WILL GO UP TO THE PALM TREE, I WILL TAKE HOLD OF THE BOUGHS THEREOF.”**

The words translated “go up” are similarly translated in Ch. 6:6 (KJV) and as “come up” in Ch. 4:2. In this present verse the words express the thought of the Bridegroom drawing near.

**“LET THY BREASTS BE AS CLUSTERS OF THE VINE,”** he says **“AND THE SMELL OF THY BREATH LIKE APPLES.”**

This carries our thoughts back to Ch. 2:3 where the smell of apples illustrated the holy fragrance of our Lord. “His fruit,” she said “was sweet to my taste.” How appropriately the Bridegroom expresses the Bride’s graces and beauty in terms of refreshment. It is those qualities which will find full expression when “Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” (Acts 3:19 KJV)

These metaphors seem to suggest the maturity of the Bride: ready to

provide spiritual nourishment, health and refreshment from Christ (the vine). The boughs of palms representing victory. The “smell of thy nose like apples” (KJV) is a reminder of the fruit of that apple tree to which Christ was likened in Ch. 2:3. There should be holy fragrance around the children of God. The Bride has been resting under the shade of that tree and carries its fragrance with her.

**7:9** “AND THY MOUTH LIKE THE BEST WINE, THAT GOETH DOWN SMOOTHLY FOR MY BELOVED, GLIDING THROUGH THE LIPS OF THOSE THAT ARE ASLEEP.”

The Hebrew word translated “mouth” means literally “palate” but it is used mostly in the Old Testament to describe the words of the mouth. It apparently conveys the thought of discriminating speech just as the sensitive palate discriminates and distinguishes between flavours. The palate discerns between the food which enters into the mouth but, as our Lord implied, it is “the things which proceed out of the mouth” with which the spiritual palate is concerned. (Matt. 15:18) It is understandable that the speech of the Bride should be likened to “the best wine” for in the day when the word of the Lord shall go forth throughout all the world then Christ will drink with His Church the new wine in the Kingdom. (Matt. 26:29) The word translated “best” here is a versatile word in the Hebrew original. It appears in scripture as “best, better, bountiful, pure, good, graciously, joyfully, kind, loving, pleasing, precious, sweet,” and as nouns, “wealth, prosperity and welfare etc...” This is just what the new wine of the kingdom will mean to all mankind in the day when “the mountains shall drop new wine.” (Amos 9:13 mar.)

The R.V. places the words “for my beloved” in a different place in the verse from that given by the A.V. The Variorum version goes further and suggests that these words really belong to the following verse. Up to this point the title “My beloved” has always applied to the Bridegroom and whilst He addresses the Bride with that title in v.11 it seems probable that the words “that goeth down smoothly for my beloved” to the end of the verse are expressed by the Bride. They are without doubt a fitting rejoinder to her Lord’s praise because all she is and does is for Him. Moreover the speaker refers to what is now rather than what is the future and, although present spiritual perfection is chiefly in preparation for a future work, the verse closes with a present service to “those that are asleep.”

Wine is well-known as a reviver. It “often unlocks silence and causes silent lips to speak.” This thought of stimulation is confirmed by reference

**NOTICES**

For those who wish to keep the memorial of our Lord's death at the time nearest the anniversary, it is suggested that **Tuesday 4 April 2023 (14 Nisan) after 6 p.m.** is the appropriate date and time.

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Saturday 29 April, Studham Village Hall, near Dunstable  
11 a.m. start, Brother from America serving

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Saturday 29 July  
Saturday 28 October

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to the R.V. of Proverbs 23:31 where the same phrase "goeth down smoothly" is used of strong wine. In the words with which the verse closes we can observe that spiritual maturity grows in the course of service to others who love the Lord. To these our spiritual speech must glide smoothly into their hearts and particularly into the hearts of those who have become spiritually sleepy.

*EEA/LB*

## IF WE'D BEEN THERE

If we had lived in Jesus' day  
 How faithful we'd have been;  
 We'd not have slept but vigil kept,  
 If we'd been with him then.

If we had lived in Jesus' day  
 His feet we would have washed,  
 We'd not have waited for another  
 Upon him to attend.

And in his hour of trial and need  
 We near to him had been,  
 When he forsook, we'd have remained  
 So very near to him.

When on his way to Calvary  
 We would have volunteered  
 To aid him with the heavy load;  
 If we'd been with him there.

We cannot serve so person'ly  
 For he's no longer flesh,  
 But risen now to heights divine,  
 Forever free from pain.

But even since he's glorified  
 His words do us instruct,  
 As done to him, things done to his;  
 So dear to him his own.

To us the priv'lege doth remain  
 And we may do for him  
 By waking to the needs of his,  
 Still in the "Narrow Way."

The feet of him are with us still;  
 Still weary trav'lers tread,  
 And these we ever may refresh  
 By living waters spread.

In helping with another's cross  
 Our love we show for *Him*,  
 And thus he *knows* what we'd have done  
 If we'd been there with him!

*Poems of the Way*  
*Martin C. Mitchell*

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