
 EDITORIAL FLYLEAF

What an amazing fall it has been! But, we only have a little space in this issue in which to address the current world scene. Our last “Editorial Flyleaf” devoted attention to the Russian invasion of Georgia, but it would be an understatement to say that the world has been on quite a dramatic ride in the short few months since our last issue. Economic crisis, enormous political and ideological shifts in the U.S., growing strains in the Middle East over the nearness of Iranian nuclear achievement, rising concerns over a resurgence in global terrorism, Israeli elections on the horizon after the collapse of a corrupt government and a Russia that is growing more belligerent by the day - as it sees the U.S. stumble in the face of critical domestic issues. This should be a lesson that circumstances can change almost overnight and that the world is on an accelerating pace towards “The Day of the LORD”.

The United States: All we can do here is state the obvious in regard to what our readers are fully aware of – *economic chaos*. The outlook is not good and the fact is - the U.S. is desperately sick, and in reality bankrupt, in that the government is in far more debt than the net worth of its citizens. Through dramatic economic and political change, the U.S. appears to be a hobbled giant, opening up the door for other developments on the world scene. We saw an interesting sign in front of a church recently – “*The Kingdom of God will not need a bailout.*”

Russia: Little attention has been given to the Georgian situation due to the media’s focus on U.S. elections and the economy, but a recent Debka File report has indicated that Russia has been involved in a massive military and naval buildup (exponentially larger than the August invasion) on the border of Georgia and in the Black Sea. Two objectives are stated, “testing the incoming US president ... and finally removing Georgian president Mikhaïl Saakashvili”. → Russia is suffering due to the drop in oil prices, but their financial reserves are sizable to sustain them for the time being. Other oil producing nations are not doing so well. → Russia has been making moves within the U.N. (along with other nations) to pass a resolution to force whoever the next Israeli leader is to continue negotiations towards a “two-state” solution.

Israel: On November 25th the U.N. celebrated an “international day of solidarity” with the Palestinian people. Not only was this a show of support for the Palestinians but very much a blatant anti-Israel demonstration by the world organization. → Israeli elections are set for February 10th, with Benjamin Netanyahu heading the conservative Likud party and Tzipi Livni trying to salvage the remnants of the Kadima Party. Current signs are leaning towards a Likud victory, which would mark a return of a more hawkish and independent minded direction for Israel, as the world itself seems to head in the opposite ideological direction. → Interestingly enough, Israel remains relatively strong in the midst of the current economic crisis. We can’t help but think that this will only prompt more jealousy rather than admiration by the world community.

 THE
 SANCTUARY – KEEPER

*A Magazine for the Exposition and Defense of
The Holy Scriptures*

“*Ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar*”

Num. 18:5

“*Ye are...an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices.*”

I Peter 2:5

“*Thou hast kept My Word and hast not denied My Name*”- *Rev. 3:8*

 VOLUME 18

 4TH QUARTER, 2008

 NUMBER 4

HEIRS OF SALVATION

What a privileged condition! What a glorious inheritance is implied by the word salvation! Yes, salvation is something to be inherited. (Heb. 1:14). Salvation abstractly means “safety, soundness” – Dr. Robert Young’s Concordance. In Acts 27:34, the word generally translated “salvation” is rendered health. The vague and undefined ideas that religious people generally entertain of salvation, requires attention and sober thought, lest we be found sowing to the wind. It is the privilege of all seeking salvation to know what salvation is.

The writer appreciates the importance of the subject and is concerned about the well-being of man hereafter, but from a careful study of the “world of life” he has a thorough conviction that the masses of religious people do not, and cannot believe in Christ Jesus. You may be astonished at this, but calmly consider what the subject is. What is Salvation? One will say it is justification – the forgiveness of sins; to be saved from our sins, etc. This cannot be correct for Paul does not say that salvation is in our present experience, but to the Romans he wrote, “it (salvation) is nearer than when we believed.” (Rom. 13:11). Showing that it was approaching, but not a present blessing. Salvation is not at the beginning of the course – it is the prize at the end.

Others hold stiffly that salvation is the reward of the righteous in Heaven. This view is wide of the truth, for we read salvation is to be “revealed in the last time, (1

Peter 1:5), it is “the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (1 Peter 1:13), it is something to come with the coming kingdom of God (Rev. 12:10). Christ is not salvation to any until he re-appears bringing salvation with him, to them that wait for him (Heb. 9:28; Isa. 25:9). “And it shall be said in that day: Lo! This is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” Christ will “appear a second time without sin unto salvation:” – that is, to bring about or bestow upon the “heirs” the “salvation” promised. It is seen by the testimony that the foregoing views on salvation are unscriptural and therefore misleading.

The believer can rejoice in the forgiveness of sins and be thankful that by obedience to the faith, he has been adopted into the family of God, but with all this, he is only an *heir of salvation*. This makes it interesting and important to know, what is it we are heirs of? Of salvation as stated, but what is that, or where is it? Paul endured all things for the elect’s sake that they may also obtain *the salvation which is in Christ Jesus*, with eternal glory, (2 Tim. 2:10). This salvation in Christ is a quality of being that relates to life, for Paul adds to it thus: “For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him (verse 11).

In being “in him” and we “living with him” denotes that salvation will proceed from him, we shall thereby live with him and so are “joint-heirs with Christ.” Heirship denotes the prospective possession or share in that held by a proprietor. The Father of all blessings is the author, with him is strength and salvation. He, however, has been pleased to meet us in his son and has made him head over all to the ecclesia, even to make salvation by him, (1 Thess. 5:9) or “in him.” This confines the subject then to Christ, so that believers are heirs of “the salvation” that is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). “For in his name is salvation,” (Acts 4:12), “he is given for salvation unto all the ends of the earth,” (Acts 13:47) for He is the author and captain of our salvation, leading many sons unto glory – leading them into the same glorious state of being as himself. To be made “like him” is to be saved, - to be made sound in incorruptibility – to be safe from the influence of time and corruption.

This (*sooteeria*) safety, soundness, health, is in Christ corporeally. The glory of the incorruptible God shines, is radiant from his immortal son, he holds it in treasure for the “heirs of salvation,” so that he said encouragingly, “Behold I am alive forever more and have the keys of Hades and death,” (Rev. 1:18) and again, “He is able *to save* (or to be salvation) unto the uttermost, seeing, He ever liveth to make intercession for them (Heb. 7:25).

This salvation which is the climax of Christian hope, was “first”, or began to be spoken by the Lord, (Heb. 2:3). Now we can get at the pivot of truth, for whatever be the salvation that we are “heirs” of – it was spoken by the Lord Jesus, at the “first” or beginning of his mission. So we will turn to Him for light on the salvation he spoke of. He says, “My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me,” (John 7:16). “The Father gave me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak, and I know that His commandment is LIFE EVERLASTING” (John 12: 49,50). “For

Knowledge Commentary). Mark claims that the good news begins with Jesus, the Son of God, not with Augustus or his descendants. This opening would be both recognizable and a challenging assertion for a Roman reader.

Mark’s citation of the Old Testament is also supportive that he is addressing a Latin or Roman audience. Whereas Matthew meticulously documents Jesus’ fulfillment of very specific Messianic prophecies Mark uses a more general format. The emphasis is not so much on the specificity of the prophecy, as in Matthew, but more on the fact that Jesus’ life fulfilled prophecies of old as in Luke. Establishing antiquity was critical in world of the first century. Whereas our society and culture values innovation and newness, the world of the first century valued antiquity. New ideas would raise the question, “If this new thing is so great, why hadn’t anyone thought of it before?” To which the answer was, “If it was good someone would have already thought of it long ago.” Old institutions, old establishments were legitimate. New things were suspect. Josephus makes the same appeal to antiquity to establish legitimacy. “*Now I have undertaken the present work, as thinking it will appear to all the Greeks worthy of their study; for it will contain all our antiquities, and the constitution of our Government.*” Part of Josephus’ goal was to prove the Jewish religion was old in order to establish its legitimacy. The Greeks and the Romans went back in history to the Trojan War and Homer. The Jews went back even further in history. While the Jewish religion was strange and foreign to Greeks and Romans, it was legitimate. The legitimacy is evident in many areas exempting Jews from military service or recognition of the Sabbath. How does the question of antiquity relate to Mark (and Luke)? Belief in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is contemporary event, and that relative newness would be suspect to a Greek and Roman audience. However, that can be addressed by tying Jesus to antiquity through prophecy. Luke does that really well in tying together the Septuagint to his work.

Finally, Mark’s gospel may be tied to a Roman audience through his association with Peter. First, by a margin of more than two to one, Peter appears more prominently in the gospel of Mark than any other apostle. Also, reviewing what is known about the preaching style of Peter (e.g. Acts 10:34-43), it appears Mark follows his outline of minimal information about John the Baptist, lots of action (healings), but no long discourses or sermons. Finally, Mark is in the company of Peter in Rome (1st Peter 5:13). These facts have led some to agree with the historical tradition that this gospel is really based on Mark’s recordings of Peter’s preaching. (Eusebius *The History of the Church*)

In his *Guide Book to the Gospels*, HP Mansfield commented, “The Romans admired action, and this Gospel depicts the Lord as a worker.” The book of Mark corresponds to the face of an ox on the cherubim (Ezek 1:10). Oxen were working animals acceptable for sacrifice, and critical to the survival of the people as a source of labor and food. Jesus was the unblemished, atoning sacrifice. Our association with Christ is necessary for life. Likewise, Isaiah (1:3) stated *the ox knoweth his owner*, and Jesus knew the will of his Father and submitted to it.

Josh Vest

and Luke. However, using the same approach of looking at language, citations, and assumed knowledge, it may be safely concluded that Mark wrote for a Roman audience.

Firstly, a brief examination of Mark reveals he was not writing to a primarily Jewish audience. Comparing parallel accounts between Mark and Matthew demonstrates Mark's readers were not familiar with Jewish customs and the Law. Matthew (15:1-2) records the Pharisees' question *Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread?* For this same instance, Mark (7:1-4) explains to his readers the importance and significance of the question by: 1) recording washing was a common practice; 2) it occurred after being in the market; 3) it was not limited to hands only; 4) and that eating with unwashed hands was defiling. In this example, Mark had to include context for his audience to make the question understandable. Again in contrast to Matthew, Mark also excludes material that would have been of interest to a Jewish reader. The question the Pharisees pose to Jesus in Mark 10:2 and Matthew 19:3 differs only by three words. Matthew includes the phrase *for every cause* whereas Mark omits it. On this verse the New American Study Bible comments, "Matthew possibly included it because he was writing to Jews who were aware of the dispute between the schools of Shammai and Hillel over the interpretation of Deut 24:1-4." A Jewish audience knew the Pharisees were not a uniform group, but divided into different factions. By his omission, Mark indicates his readers would not know the Pharisees had internal debates, or that they would have any interest in them.

Also from language it is obvious Mark is not writing to a Jewish audience. The local language, the language spoken by Jesus and the disciples, was Aramaic. Mark quotes Jesus speaking Aramaic on three occasions (5:41; 7:34; 15:34). In all three instances, Mark translates the words for his audience, indicating they could not speak it. However, language also helps identify Mark's primary audience and not simply exclude possibilities. In his account of the death of John the Baptist, Mark (6:27) states that an executioner or *spekoulator* (G4688) beheaded John. This is a Latin word, not a Greek one. There are also more Latin phrases like "*quadrans*" (12:42), "*flagellate*" (15:15), "*census*" (Mark 12:14), "*sextarius*" (7:4), "*praetorium*" (15:6), than in the other three Gospels. Mark's preference for Latin is particularly noticeable when comparing Matthew's word choice for the same individual. In Matthew 27:54, the Greek word for centurion (*hekatontarchos* G1543) is who looks on, but Mark (15:39) uses the actual Latin word centurion (*kenturion* G2760). In addition to favoring Latin words, the opening of the Gospel carries allusions recognizable to a Latin or Roman audience. Mark begins (1:1) with a declarative statement, "*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*" This simple statement is a bold challenge to Roman politics and religion, for it is similar to inscriptions in honor of the Caesars who were revered and worshipped as gods by their citizens. About Caesar Augustus it was written "*the birthday of the god Augustus was the beginning of the gospel (or good news) for the world.*" Or the description of Nero was as "*the good god of the inhabited world, the beginning of all good things.*" (The Bible Background

the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." (John 6:33). As the manna gave health, soundness, safety, to the Jews in the wilderness and was a temporary salvation from death, so he that mentally digests the Christ character, will be saved with "an everlasting salvation" proceeding from Him, for it is written, "so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (verse 57), "he that eateth of this bread shall live forever" (verse 57). "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" (John 17:2). "I am come that they might have life, etc" (John 10:10). These passages with many others prove, that the salvation spoken by the Lord was the *salvation of life*.

"For the Son of man is not come to destroy *men's lives* but to save them" (Luke 9:56). In teaching the Jews and contending with them, Jesus claims to have power to quicken the dead, even as the Father – to have life in himself as the Father, and to impart that life to whom he will, also to execute judgment, (John 5:20,26). Then he adds, "these things I say that ye might be saved." (verse 34). So then to believe that Jesus has life "in himself" and that the quickening power is in him, is to take hold of the first element of the salvation he spoke of, for he spoke these words that those believing might be SAVED.

Therefore, if we hold to anything that destroys the salvation "spoken by the Lord" we are not likely to be "heirs" of the THINGS he spoke of. His salvation is offered as "living bread" to the hungry; as "living water" to the thirsty; as "strength" to the weak; as "rest" to the weary and heavy laden; as "health" to the sick; as "soundness" to the infirm, and as "life" to the dead. All His miracles are evidence of his salvation, that its object is to give soundness, safety and health, where before was weakness, decay, disease and death. His miracles were but tokens or tastes of the powers of the world to come. They give us an idea of the "great salvation" "that is to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1:5) when death will be swallowed up in victory."

This salvation of life, spoken by the Lord is the one we are heirs of, it is the incorruptible inheritance reserved in heaven (incorruption is soundness, safety, of being free from decay). It is the life hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3) – the immortality – he brought to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10). The only immortality Jesus brought to light is that which now glows in his glorious body. It is the only source whence it will radiate to all the "heirs" or members of his body (the ecclesia); it is the only life that he spoke of to men, viz: that which was "in himself". So on this point I conclude that as the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 1:1) is the foundation of the gospel - so the salvation which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 2:11) is the RESULT of eternal life being infused into mortal beings producing an "eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9), making them "sound" in every atom of their being, and "safe" from the power of death.

The "heirs of salvation" then can rest in hope, knowing that "the life" is in safe keeping in Jesus; but when he appears and his life thrills the anxious throng, then shouts of salvation shall resound in the heights of Zion (Isa. 51:11) "for there He

commanded the blessing EVEN LIFE forever more” (Psa. 133:3). He that believeth this must be comforted in the prospect. But what of him that has an almost inborn belief in man’s theory of immortality, viz: “the immortality of the soul?” He claims to believe in what has been set forth in regard to Christ and eternal life, but friend, you cannot believe what is set forth herein, no more than you can believe that 2 and 2 make 5.

You cannot believe as true two propositions that are mutually destructive, or doctrines that clash at every point; you have to choose one or the other. To illustrate: Moses states that God formed man directly from the dust of the ground. Modern philosophy claims that man is evolved from the lower animals. Now it is clear that the two ideas cannot be true, it is just as clear that we cannot believe both, because we see that both are destructive of each other. So it is with salvation and eternal life, it is herein set forth and according to the Scriptures, that eternal life and salvation are in Christ Jesus (1 John 5:11; 2 Tim 2:10).

Now what is eternal life and salvation? It is that which is now “in himself”, his ever-living glorified nature. This he proposes to share with the “joint heirs”. If on the other hand it is claimed that man has immortality, i.e. a never dying soul, you claim for man a quality of being that the Scriptures apply only to Christ and God. If man is a never dying being, then he does not need life eternal from Christ, if he is immortal he is “safe” from the power of death, and the offer of immortality would be superfluous and useless. So you have to choose to believe either that eternal life or immortality is treasured up in Christ for us, or that man is now immortal, if the latter then you are an unbeliever in the life he offers.

A thorough conviction of immortality in and through Christ wipes out any opinions on the immortal soul, this is the conviction of all who have studied the subject, for you cannot believe in two immoralities, one in man’s soul, the other in Christ, unless you would say the Christ’s immortality is not for man; then you would belie the Scriptures which declare it is for man. “I give unto them eternal life and they shall not perish” (John 10:28). “Eternal life” and “immortality” are interchangeable terms: the latter means not liable to death: the former means, living forever. One is a negative, the other a positive statement of the same thing. Choose now whom you will honor - Christ or man; if man, be admonished again for you frustrate the grace of God that bringeth salvation and disqualify yourself as an “heir of salvation” for heirship denotes the partaking of what another has. True Christians seek that which Christ has to share – immortal life – a kingdom – and glory (Rom. 2:7; Rev. 3:21) in the ages to come (Eph.2:7).

W.B., The Christadelphian Advocate, May, 1885

Editor’s Comment: In light of the fundamental errors that have recently found promotion, tolerance, and safe haven among Unamended Christadelphia in regard to the false premise that “*everything that can be done for us in the way of salvation occurs at baptism*” (e.g., page 24, July, 2005 *Shofar*; and also see Chapter 3 of *The*

Once this happens, Scripture shows how the King will demand the subjection of the rest of the world, but his ultimatum will be resisted by “the kings of the earth”.

Psa 2:2 “*The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.*”

The apostle Paul saw national deliverance for Israel as something to be accomplished in the future (Rom. 11:26); it was still a matter of hope – a hope that we find echoed through the Psalms and the Prophets as they speak of Israel’s restoration, salvation and glory under the righteous rule of their Messiah.

Psa 72: 4-7

- 1) He shall judge the poor of the People, He shall save the children of the needy, And shall break in pieces the oppressor.
- 2) They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.
- 3) He shall come down like the rain upon the mown grass: As showers that water the earth.
- 4) In his days shall the righteous flourish; And abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

This should be part of our hope, as it has been for Christadelphians from years past, as we look for the complete restoration of Israel and the final overthrow of the kingdoms of men – all under the unerring and all-righteous rule of Jesus Christ.

Joel Thomas

MARK’S AUDIENCE

Just as the cherubim have four different faces, the four different gospel writers highlighted particular aspects of the Lord’s life for their particular audience. Matthew, the lion, wrote for a Jewish audience emphasizing Jesus’ credentials to be the Messiah and his life in accordance with the Law of Moses. Luke’s primary audience was the gentile converts of Paul. Luke emphasized the faith of the Gentiles and wrote in a recognizable Greek style. Luke’s gospel is represented by the human face, as Luke treated the work of Jesus “from the standpoint of his humanity, tracing his genealogy back to Adam.” (Mansfield HP. Guidebook to the Gospels). Having that established, attention may now be turned to Mark’s primary audience. Mark does not provide nearly the same number of clues as to his intended audience as do Matthew

After David there was Solomon. *“Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. And all the princes and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of King David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the king. And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.”* (1st Chron. 29: 23-25)

It was at this time that the kingdom of God first existed on this earth. However, Solomon fell from the worship of God to offer incense to the gods of the Canaanites. After Solomon, Rehoboam was the appointed heir of the Throne of David, but with Jeroboam’s rebellion the Kingdom split in two...now called Israel and Judah.

Through many different kings...good and evil...the two kingdoms existed side by side for about a century and a half, at times being at war with each other and with the surrounding nations. Eventually the Assyrians captured Samaria, the capital of Israel, and some 100 years later Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took Jerusalem and led the people captive to his capital. The deportation of Judah was about 600 years before Christ. Those of the northern Kingdom are not recorded as returning to their land, but after the Medo Persians had conquered Babylon, Cyrus granted permission to the captives of Judah to return to Jerusalem. Many of the captives returned and the temple was rebuilt for the worship of God, but the kingdom was never restored. God had said through Ezekiel to Zedekiah, the last king of Judah,

“And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.” (Ezek. 21: 25-27)

WHO DOES THE LAND BELONG TO NOW?

This land, the Promised Land, has many who claim it as their own by Divine right.

- The Jews: as natural descendents of Abraham through Isaac claim it as theirs
- The Arabs: claim to be the seed of Abraham through Ishmael, say it is theirs
- The Catholics: trace their origins through early Christianity and Constantine’s legacy say they are “the rightful custodians of the holy place.” *“Modern Zionism is not the true heir of Biblical Israel, but a secular state...Therefore, the Holy Land and its sacred sites belong to Christianity, the true Israel.”* Vatican, 1948

Gentile governments, of course, will disdain any claim to the Land based upon the Scriptures. Thus the great issue of the ages will develop and “The Controversy of Zion” will come to a head. The events described in Ezekiel 38 (and throughout the prophets) will settle the controversy in the Land itself—and the Messiah of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ will take control of the situation, establishing his authority there.

Judaizers), we found this article to be a fitting and refreshing contrast to such current views. Errors that have sprung from this faulty premise include the idea that we “spiritually” have “eternal life now”, “that we are in the Garden now”, or that we are in some kind of “spiritual” application of the Kingdom now.

Though it should be clarified here and understood that there is a preliminary application to the principal of being “saved” once the believer is released from the constitutional relationship with Adam and freed from the condemnation (*katakrima*) inherited from Adam through the waters of baptism (e.g. “washing of regeneration” Titus 3; also 2nd Tim. 1:9); such an understanding does not warrant us to view baptism as the act by which salvation is a complete or finished matter. Baptism frees us from the constitutional shackles of sin and death allowing us to begin our walk in the “way of salvation”. Baptism makes us “heirs of salvation”, but until we actually become inheritors of the salvation promised (i.e., eternal life/immortality and entrance into the Kingdom), such salvation is something that still awaits Christ’s return to this earth to judge the worthiness of those who have set out on the way of salvation through the waters of baptism – “my reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev. 22:12).

With these thoughts in mind, we provide the following clear expressions from bro. Thomas Williams that appear in the following month’s “Question & Answers” section:

“Do you think a Christadelphian is justified in giving an affirmative reply to the question, ‘Are you saved?’ ”

Answer – No. Paul wrote to the Christadelphians at Philippi to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (chap. 2:12). He wrote to the Thessalonians that they had “for a helmet the *hope of salvation*, (1 Thess. 5:8). We are now *heirs of salvation*,” (Heb. 9:28). Paul in writing to the Corinthians (first letter, chap. 15: 1,2), says that they were saved by the gospel *if* they kept in memory what he had preached unto them, and that if they did not keep the gospel in memory, their past belief would be in vain. A very good way of answering this question, is to say: No, but I am trying to “work out my salvation with fear and trembling.” There are times however, to “answer a fool according to his folly” and then again there are times when we may “answer not a fool according to his folly.” Wisdom will determine the times, and help to discriminate between the different kinds of fools. For further treatment of the subject involved in the above question, see article by W.B., in last month’s Advocate. – June 1885

It is regrettable (if not tragic) that matters that once were clearly articulated, and demonstrated an unambiguous line between the Truth as held by Christadelphians and the error of “orthodox” Christianity, are now blurred to the point of almost exact identity with the expressions and beliefs of the churches. Without acknowledgement of these errors, as well as clear and uncompromising efforts by individuals and ecclesias to stem the tide of this steady slide back into the belief and practices of Rome, we can expect that the Truth will continue to suffer. – S.K.

MIDWEST & CANADIAN UNITY EFFORTS

This past August two separate (but similar) unity efforts came to light. The first we will briefly consider was entitled the *Midwest Unity Agreement*, which includes three Unamended Ecclesias out of Illinois along with at least 15 Amended ecclesias, and 3 congregations associated with the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith. We were forwarded a packet that consists of some 45 pages, with a cover letter signed off by a Peter Bilello (Secretary, Unity Working Group) and Mark Drabenstott (Convener, Unity Working Group).

The packet includes a reproduction of the NASU, the BASF, BUSF, and the CGAF Confession of Faith, combined as a unified expression of Faith and a basis of fellowship. In the “Principles of Belief” section that precedes the reproduction of these statements it is declared, “*It is understood and agreed that the doctrines to be believed and taught by us are the first principles of the One Faith as revealed in the Scriptures.*” It goes on to state that it is agreed upon that the BASF, BUSF, and CGAF statements “*as understood in the October 2003 North American Statement of Understanding*” each is “*a faithful expression of these principles*”, even though the CGAF were not a part of the original NASU Effort. And even though it is declared that all the statements somehow equally represent the “*principles of the One Faith*”, it is recognized (just as was concluded in the NASU agreement) “*that the basis of inter-ecclesial/congregational fellowship is the BASF.*”

The packet was sent out to an undisclosed number of groups for consideration with the plan for a review of the feedback on October 1st (2008). Since this effort came to light in August we have not heard of any further developments in this endeavor. Since the more liberal/ecumenical minded groups of the Midwest have been working repeatedly towards “unity” for decades now, and there seems to be a great deal of cooperation and inclusiveness between the Unamended, Amended and CGAF groups of the Midwest region, this recent effort should come as no surprise.

The other “unity” effort, which has operated separately from the Midwest Agreement, is the “Unity Agreement – 2008” amongst various Amended and Unamended ecclesias in Ontario, Canada. A letter (dated July 10, 2008) precedes a document that is a reproduction of the NASU agreement along with some additional points of implementation and clarification. Similar to the Midwest Unity Agreement and quoting from the NASU, they also claim that both the BASF and BUSF “*represent a true and common definition of the One Faith*” (page iii of their “Unity Agreement” preamble), but with no mention of the CGAF.

4. The covenant requires that a relationship be formed between God, Abraham, and the seed - Gen. 17:7
5. Abraham’s seed be multiplied and to possess the gate of his enemies – Gen. 22:17-18.

The land promised is not just the tiny piece of land of modern Israel. The Land promised to Abraham & his seed stretched across the entire Middle East from Egypt to the Euphrates river.

In addition to promises which have not been realized in full, but which will ultimately be completely fulfilled, a prediction was made to Abraham that his immediate descendents should be strangers in a strange land, and after about 400 years from the prediction, they should return to the land of Canaan. This came to pass just as foretold.

After time, Jacob and his family went to Egypt, and after they had multiplied into a numerous people and had endured affliction as Pharaoh’s slaves, the people were brought back to the land of Canaan. There were marvelous manifestations of the power of God, and deliverance of the Israelites by the hands of Moses and Aaron. On the way to Canaan, the following events occurred...

- Moses gave the people a code of laws which he received direct from God.
- A proper worship of God was organized, with a priesthood headed by Aaron.
- God formed the people into a nation, and ruled them as King.
- After 40 years of wandering, God brought them to the land of Canaan, the promised land.
- Here their civil government was placed in the hands of specially appointed judges, and their religious government remained with the priests.

As time went on, the people grew tired of being ruled by a King they could not physically see. They asked Samuel, the last of the judges, that a king should be given to them like the kings of the surrounding nations, who should personally and visibly be at their head in all their activities. Samuel was hurt and distraught by this, but he informed God of their request. God answered, “*Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.*”

Saul was chosen as king, but because he disobeyed specific commands from God through Samuel, he was rejected, and the kingdom was taken from his family. After Saul’s death in the battle with the Philistines on Mount Gilboa, David became king. After reigning seven and a half years at Hebron, and having taken Jerusalem from the Canaanites, he made that his capital for the rest of his reign, and resided on Mount Zion. David recognized that he was ruling for God, that the kingdom was in fact God’s Kingdom, and that he was only appointed by God to rule for Him. In his rule he proved to be a man after God’s own heart.

PART 1: KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD

We have defined the word “kingdom” by reviewing the meaning of the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. However, we did not define the other type of kingdom. What other type of kingdom is there? - The Kingdom of men or more accurately...the Kingdom of Sin.

Going back to one of our earlier questions - What man first established a kingdom for himself? It was Nimrod who first established a kingdom for himself – a kingdom that would be ruled by men and not God; signified through a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven.

For centuries men ruled their kingdoms according to their own wishes, and invented their own religions as a convenient substitute for faith in the Word of the One True God. The ancient kingdom of Egypt is a most interesting illustration of this. They worshiped the wisdom of the serpent - This animal’s wisdom or craftiness was chosen over the revealed word of God and its doctrine. “Ye shall not surely die” became embodied in the false notion of the immortal soul. This teaching of the immortality of the soul - of a continued existence of some kind after the death of the body - has been the trade-mark of those religions within the dominions of men.

Thus it is the kingdoms of men in their various manifestations down the centuries that have dominated the earth, even overrunning the Middle East, and the Holy Land itself, claiming it as their own. Babylonians, Persians, the Greeks and the Romans have each ruled over this land. They were followed by the Christianized Roman empire, then the Islamic peoples, the Crusaders, the Ottoman Turks and the British. All of them have been kingdoms of men - and therefore kingdoms ruled by “the mind of the flesh” which is at enmity with God. Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

A PROMISED LAND

We would now like to take a few minutes to talk about the Promised Land spoken of in the Old Testament.. It is in the book of Genesis that we read about Abram being called out of Ur of the Chaldees and so out of this kingdom of sin. Nearly 4,000 years ago God called Abram to the land of Canaan, making to him specific promises. **Gen 12:1-3**, “ Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Promises were actually made to Abraham on five different occasions.

1. Abraham to become a great nation - Gen. 12: 1-3
2. Abraham and his seed are promised the land which he sees, forever - Gen. 13: 14-17
3. The land is described from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates - Gen. 15: 18-21

There are only two clarifications provided, with the second being very specific regarding what they believe to be the proper view of the Resurrectional Responsibility issue in relation to the matter of fellowship: “*That it is affirmed, that: Men are responsible to the resurrection to condemnation who refuse subjection to the will of God when their circumstances are such as to leave them no excuse for such refusal, and that rebels and unbelievers, who deserve punishment will rise at the resurrection to receive that punishment without reference to the question whether they are baptized or not. It is impossible for any man to say who are so deserving. We know that God is just and will do no unrighteousness.*” As continues to be the case, it always is clear that any “unity” efforts that are put together clearly favor the Amended position. “Unity” is always a misnomer – and it is always a capitulation by the Unamended to the Amended position. As Solomon stated, “there is nothing new under the sun”.

The effective date of this agreement was supposed to be September 1, 2008 (according to the Toronto West Christadelphian web site – www.24langside.com), but it is our understanding that this action was postponed until sometime in October.

According to the Toronto West website, Amended ecclesias who had signed on to this as of September 30, 2008 were: Toronto West, Toronto East, Mississauga West, Church Street, Peterborough, Greenaway-Hamilton, North Bay, Elgin, Brampton, Barrie, Ottawa Orangeville, and Niagara. On the Unamended side were: Guelph, Ossington, and Picton.

It was indicated to us, after a recent conversation with a member of the Guelph ecclesia (and former NASU steering committee member), that this Unity agreement had been implemented and was currently being practiced by the named ecclesias in regard to inter-ecclesial fellowship. We have also been given indications from another source that some of the Amended ecclesias who are not on board with this agreement are not happy with the idea of the Unamended participants breaking bread back-and-forth between BASF and BUSF ecclesias. To what extent they have put their foot down we honestly do not know at this time. But it is interesting (and sad) that it tends to be the Amended (and not so much the Unamended side) that have the strength of their convictions to take a stand against efforts that attempt to allow back-and-forth fellowship practices between the two communities.

With this brief overview of current “unity” efforts we wish to draw the reader’s attention to some thoughts that were sent to the editors of The Advocate, The Truth Gleaner, and The Sanctuary-Keeper by bro. Josh Vest that provides some clearheaded observations regarding continued unity movements.

STATEMENTS OF FAITH?

Without a doubt, the respective readers of the Advocate, Sanctuary Keeper, and the Truth Gleaner are all aware of the continued reunion or unity movements by several ecclesias. Without needlessly reviewing the history or potential course of

unity attempts, the current efforts at re-establishing fellowship with the Amended (and evidently now in one instance even the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith) essentially distills to the simple contention that each respective statement of faith is a “faithful expression” of the same first principles.* Sadly, this is another example of the blurring of the lines of fellowship by dismissing articulated doctrines. The practical import of such declaration cannot be understated; in effect, such a stance requires a person to contend that the different statements of faith under consideration are indistinguishable and interchangeable. Is such a position in this instance even logically defensible?

As fallible erring creatures, we must give verbal expression to our interior thoughts. Statements of faith are these expressions. These expressions are certainly not Scripture, but are nonetheless something that cannot be cast aside or placed into the category of inconsequential. The Body of Christ is not an “amorphous mob” where individuals can enter on their own terms, with their own doctrines, or own values. Those immutable truths are defined by God and the Statement of Faith is our best effort to specify those doctrines necessary to ensure the “basis of fellowship.” The statement of faith is our community’s understanding of the essential doctrine (*Doctrines Forming Their Basis of Fellowship*), the essential errors (*Doctrines to be Rejected*), and the essential instruction (*The Commandments of Christ*) of God’s word.

As the community created and supported authoritative declaration of beliefs, the entire brotherhood rightly has the expectation that any one individual claiming to be a member of the household of faith espouses the propositions within the statement of faith as accurately defining God’s Truth and their beliefs. Brother Thomas Williams summarized this common endorsement of one belief. “Seeing that the brethren of Christ are forbidden to fellowship doctrines not in harmony with ‘the first principles of the Gospel of Christ,’ there must be an understanding reached by all who would unite in doing those things that will please God, as to what doctrines constitute in the aggregate *the Truth* to be believed and obeyed as a basis of fellowship.”† In order to have fellowship within the household, we must have confidence in the conviction of all those with whom we would unite in a common set of articulated beliefs. The very nature of a statement of faith is to define a set of beliefs in common, which may not be voluntarily expanded or contracted by any one individual or group.

May more than one well thought out statement of faith articulate *the Truth*? Yes, without doubt. We have examples through history of statements that epitomize *the Truth*;‡ however, that is certainly not the case of the Birmingham Unamended Statement of Faith and the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith under consideration in the current unity efforts. The contention the BUSF and the BASF

* Midwest Unity Agreement, August 2008

† T Williams. *The Christadelphian Advocate* 4(6-7): 162; 1888.

‡ For example, see the 1660 Baptist Statement of Faith & [The Protesters](#) by Alan Eyre.

before; however, it is crucial that we do not lose sight of what they mean and represent. Our consideration will help answer the following key questions:

- What does the word “kingdom” mean or represent?
- What man first established a kingdom for himself?
- Has a kingdom of God ever existed on the earth?
- What is the mission of the future kingdom of God?
- What are the six elements of the kingdom of God?

Now, if it is truly all of our hope and all of our desire to enter into the kingdom of God, shouldn’t we be able to visualize, comprehend and understand what our hope is and what the kingdom of God represents? **Ps. 72: 1-3**, “*Give the king thy judgments, O God, And Thy righteousness unto the king’s son. He shall judge Thy People with righteousness, And Thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, And the little hills, by righteousness.*”

THE KINGDOM

The word “kingdom” signifies the power, rule or authority of a king – from the Old English “king” and “dom”... “rule” or “jurisdiction.” It can refer to the following:

- the state or condition of being a king
- to the territory or country over which a king rules
- to the collective body of those who are under his dominion

Therefore the phrase, “*the kingdom of God*,” refers to the rule or government of God, or to the territory or people under His jurisdiction. The phrase occurs many times in the New Testament, as does also the equivalent phrase, “*the kingdom of heaven*.” Now this can be made complicated by other religions when in fact it is actually very basic. Since God is in heaven and rules from heaven, His kingdom is spoken of as the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 8:1 “*And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him.*”

Luke 9:1 “*Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.*”

Acts 19:8 “*And he (Paul) went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.*”

From these examples, we see that the Kingdom of God was what constituted the gospel preached by Christ and by his disciples.

23:4 – “He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.” This will be the time in history when “the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in His wings” (**Malachi 4:2**) going forth, along with his associates to teach righteousness to the remnant of the inhabitants of the world.

In order to summarize our thoughts on the subject of the Day of the LORD, I think we should always remember the purpose and objective of all the collective Days of the LORD. Let us turn to **Joel 3:9-21** and read of the great purpose of Yahweh. Ultimately, the LORD will be the hope of His People and the strength of the children of Israel; Jerusalem will be holy and Judah shall dwell for ever and ever and Jerusalem from generation to generation. God’s name, His people, His Land and His Holy city will be the focal point of the entire world and the glory of God will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea and God will be all in all.

B. Henderson

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

PART 1

Fundamental Considerations

Scripture Reading: Psalm 72

Our main theme for this consideration will be the Kingdom. However, with this subject matter we have chosen to divide our comments into two sections.

- 1) Previous kingdoms of this world.
- 2) The future Kingdom of God.

The Scriptures declare that the “kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ” (Rev. 11:15). Since God has predetermined such a marvelous revolution, a revolution that must necessarily take time and require perfect wisdom and omnipotent power, it is reasonable to believe that He has an arranged program to be followed in its execution.

God is a God of order. His plan is being worked out, and what to us may seem as confusion is but the means of the Master builder erecting a beautiful city, whose builder and maker is God.

We start off with a few questions to give the reader a better idea of our subject matter and a better understanding of where our focus should be in these last days. Most, if not all of these questions are ones we have heard and studied many times

represent fundamentally different doctrines and requirements of fellowship is not simply my claim only, but one that has been repeatedly pointed out over the course of the last 100 years and established as fact through the admitted intentions of those at the forefront of the amendment.

The amended rendering of proposition XXIV unequivocally demands a belief in the appearance of the enlightened rejecter at the Judgment Seat of Christ in conjunction with the household, and “disconnects the resurrection and judgment from the sacrifice of Christ and the everlasting covenant ratified by the shedding of his blood.”[§] This latter fact results in cascading doctrine shifts that exist even beyond the scope of the statement of faith (for example: belief Christ could have died a natural death and still affected the atonement;^{**} knowledge is the basis of resurrection;^{††} etc). Likewise, the amended proposition has from its inception been forced as a test of fellowship, clearly proving the intention of the amendment was to create two mutually incompatible statements of faith. The following notice from the Birmingham ecclesia accompanied the publication of the amended proposition: “That we reaffirm Proposition XXIV of the Statement of faith in the following amplified terms, and that we fellowship those only who hold the same doctrine.”^{‡‡} Other ecclesias followed suit.^{§§}

From this brief overview, it is abundantly clear, from analysis and intention, the statements of faith under consideration for the present unity efforts cannot be “faithful expressions” of the same principles. While the adherence to contradictory statements of faith is a blatant illogical position, the editorial comment included in a 1986 reproduction of the Christadelphian Statement of Faith (unamended) articulates the point in a superior fashion. “In the past two decades there has been a de-emphasis of sound doctrine and a merging of liberal attitudes in which any of several statements are considered acceptable. Lip service to a statement is not belief in that statement, nor is it indicative of “holding fast to that which is good” to accept several disparate statements in a spirit of ecumenism. If two statements are in agreement in spirit and in truth they should be worded identically to avoid the confusion that has marked the Christadelphians for 88 years.” Double mindedness leads to instability (James 1:8).

Brothers and Sisters, contrary to the current unity efforts, the fact is we do not have statements of faith that are in agreement in spirit and truth. Unity cannot exist where differences of beliefs do. “Unity is a beautiful and desirable thing, but it has conditions that cannot be forced, and it requires no pleas. Where it exists, it asserts itself like a law of nature. Union may require its pleas; it is union the well-meaning

[§] JE Farrar. Seven Reservations Concerning the Amended Statement of Faith. 1995.

^{**} CC Walker. The Christadelphian. 38:489; 1901.

^{††} *Ecclesial Action on the Responsibility of Rejectors*. The Christadelphian. 35:357; 1898.

^{‡‡} *Birmingham Miscellanies*. The Christadelphian. 35: 79; 1898.

^{§§} For examples in the UK and US see The Christadelphian. 36:254-255; 1899 and The Christadelphian. 35:124; 1898.

brother means. He has used the wrong word.” (R Roberts. The Christadelphian. 35:126; 1898.) Union may be achieved by ignoring real differences, but that formula cannot create unity. Antipathy to doctrine and statements of faith outside and even inside the so-called churches of the world is the mood of our time. (SJ Duffy. Religious Studies Review. 31(1-2):37-45; 2005) As individuals, as ecclesias, and as an entire Body we must be concerned with rightly dividing the word of Truth and without hesitation or reservation proclaim and defend our doctrinal position.

Josh Vest

OUR “ACHILLES HEEL”

We supply the following excerpts for the reader's consideration as an interesting analysis of part of why Unamended Christadelphia is in the confused and compromised state that it is in – The continued struggles with “reunion issues”, the tolerance of false doctrines, the confusion among the young people and the list goes on. We did not arrive at this sad state of affairs overnight and the warnings have been called out before.

“Very definitely have I for years regarded WCF as not only a threat to the Unamended community, but more than that, as having been to a large degree responsible for the psychological division that has existed for the past fifteen years within the Unamended community. Their Amended-slanted, liberal philosophy has hit our body in two places of weakness: (1) our impressionable young people and (2) the non-discerning, emotionally immature element of the older generation. There is considerable interrelationship between these two groups since many in the second group are influenced by their children's views. As one brother whom you know once said to me years ago, “It appears that the blood of human relationship is thicker than the waters of baptism.”

“Of course, the “Achilles heel” of the Christadelphian body as a whole is its substantial abandonment of serious and careful study of God's Word. Having built its house on sand, what can our body expect to happen in these days when the stormy winds of human passion beat upon the house? I really do not think that the Amended are in a bit better condition of spiritual health than are the Unamended. They only have a superficial appearance of greater strength because of the aggressive, authoritarian “leadership” to which they all kowtow...”

Addressing the WCF issue again, “I find their emphasis channeled down very specific lanes leading to popular appeal and acceptance. People are not going to outright condemn love, compassion, forgiveness, unity (of the Spirit), and brotherhood. But these totally Scriptural concepts can be given a humanistic “twist” that appeals to human sentimentality. You are at as much of a disadvantage “bad mouthing” them as in condemning motherhood. Given the spiritual temperature and appetites of the body at the present time, they have all the advantage in a propaganda campaign for the hearts of the people.”

James Stanton, “This is WCF #3”, January, 1989 *Sanctuary-Keeper*

to not let Yahweh's heritage be given over to the heathen armies. The LORD in his mercy will hear and accept the pleas of his beloved nation and will remove and destroy the Gogian confederacy. We should note that this only happens after the people have been in a severe position of testing, mourning and finally displaying an attitude of true repentance. In the **12th chapter of Zechariah**, we also read of a national mourning. The destruction brought about by the Gogian confederacy during this great and terrible Day of the LORD must be the cause of this period of national mourning in the situation described by both prophets. It will be during this time of mourning when the Israelites will recognize their coming Messiah, He who is the Captain of Yahweh's immortalized army who will be the deliverer of the nation from the invading armies from the north. **Ezekiel 39:7** also states that it will be at this time when Yahweh will make His holy name known in the midst of His people Israel. To make His name known among the children of Israel can be nothing less than the recognition of He who wears the name of His Holy Father, even the only begotten of the Holy Father. **Ezekiel 39:7, 22** tells us that the children of Israel do not come to know the Name of Yahweh until after the destruction of the Gogian confederacy. This verse provides us one of the best and strongest prophetic clues as to the timing of the future invasion into the land of Israel by Gog and her allies. First we have the invasion, then the destruction of the invader and then true repentance and finally the nation of Israel will know the name of the LORD God from that day and forward. This means that Israel's longed for Messiah comes after the invasion from the northern army and not before.

In the latter part of Joel 2, we read of the reversal of the woes and tragedies that Yahweh sent against his nation of Israel, because of their continual disobedience over the centuries. In **verse 23**, the prophet speaks of the restoration of the land and Yahweh's provision of the natural sustenance that is required to make the land glorious again. It is interesting as we contemplate the future restoration of these blessings to the land and to the people that we realize that the phrase “the former rain” can be rendered as “teacher” and the word “moderately” as “according to righteousness”. Therefore, when we read this phrase – “former rain moderately” – then we could read this as a teacher of righteousness. Who else could this be other than the Lord Jesus Christ and His immortalized body of believers in whom Yahweh has sent to deliver His people from the destruction of the great armies from the north? This brings us full circle back to the original purpose of the Days of Yahweh. For God's earth to be filled with His glory requires that the world, starting with the nation of Israel, is taught of the righteousness of the Creator. It requires a just and righteous set of divine laws administered by those whom Yahweh has blessed with his eternal nature. It requires a divinely approved and appointed system of worship where everyone's entire focus is on the things of Yahweh.

This is the day that Yahweh has appointed in which he will judge the world in righteousness as stated in **Acts 17:31**. The Day of the LORD will all of its terrible judgments, with all of its darkness, storms and clouds will change over to another Day of the LORD. This last day of the LORD will be as described in **2nd Samuel**

Joel's Latter Day Invader of the Land of Israel	Corresponding Scriptures from other Prophets describing the latter day Gogian confederacy
Multitudes of the invading army will be in the land and will be destroyed in the valley of decision – 3:14	Multitudes of the invading army will be in the land and will be destroyed in the valley of Hamon-gog (the multitude of God) – Ezek 39:11
After the destruction of the northern invader, Israel finally comes to the true knowledge of Yahweh their God – 3:17	After the destruction of the northern invader, Israel finally comes to the true knowledge of Yahweh their God – Ezek 39:22

Any discussion on the message of the prophet Joel would be remiss without discussing the similarities between the Valley of Jehoshaphat which is mentioned in **Joel 3** and the symbolical name of Armageddon found in **Revelation 16**. We could do no better than to read the words of Bro. Thomas in regard to these two chapters. Dr. Thomas defines the word Armageddon as “a heap of sheaves in a valley of judgment.” In Eureka, vol. 5, pp. 256 our brother writes about these two symbolic places:

“He (Gog) shall besiege Jerusalem; and to do this he must occupy the Valley of Jehoshaphat, a narrow glen which runs from north to south, between the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and Mount Moriah, and through which flows the Kidron. Of this valley, it is said in Joel 3:2,12 – ‘Yahweh will gather all the nations (that is, the forces of the nations) into the Valley of Jehosaphat, and will plead with them there.’ ‘Yehoshaphat’, in Hebrew, signifies ‘the judgment of Yah’. Joel also styles the glen, the Valley of Threshing: ‘Multitudes, multitudes’, says he, ‘in the Valley of Threshing; for the Day of Yahweh is near in the valley of threshing’. Apocalyptically, the same locality is styled Armageddon – ‘And he gathered them together in a place called Hebraistically, Armageddon’. Yahweh gathers them together without their perceiving the hand that led them on to the slaughter. ‘I will’, saith he, ‘gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle’. Various derivations have been given of this mystical name; for such it is, inasmuch as there is no such name of a place in the land of Israel. Micah says: ‘Yahweh shall gather many nations as sheaves into the floor, that the Daughter of Zion may arise and thresh them’ (Ch 4:11-13). The floor of threshing of which they are to be made the chaff (Dan 2:35) is the valley of Jehosaphat. Under this aspect of things, they are a heap of sheaves, upon the threshing floor; and this idea is represented by the word.” End Quote

At the time of the invasion of the northern army, the nation of Israel will be in dire straits and is pictured in **Joel 2:12** as being in a severe time of fasting, weeping and mourning. They and their leaders (**verse 17**) will plead to Yahweh to spare them and

A HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Recent constructions upon the doctrine of the Kingdom of God by some who call themselves Christadelphians, as well as the rally of support such deceivers have gained in some quarters, have motivated us to compile the following information for the reader to compare and consider.

The following quotations are gleaned from various authors of the past 2,000 years. We have interspersed quotations from present day deceivers who would corrupt “the simplicity that is in Christ” with inventions of a “spiritual aspect” of the Kingdom. By this method the similarity of the faulty arguments may be seen.

Mosheim records in his “**Ecclesiastical History**”:

“Among the controversies which divided Christians in this century [the 3rd], the most considerable were concerning **the millennium**, the baptism of heretics, and **Origen. That the Savior is to reign a thousand years among men before the end of the world, had been believed by many in the preceding century without offence to any**; all, however, had not explained the doctrine in the same manner, nor indulged hopes of the same kind of pleasures during that reign. In this century **the millenarian doctrine fell into disrepute, through the influence especially of Origen, who opposed it because it contravened some of his opinions.**” Century 3 2:3:12

The proof that could be adduced to support Mosheim’s statement concerning the popularity of a belief in the Millennial Reign is extensive, but we do not have space to provide it here. Suffice it to say that there was a general belief in the 7,000 year plan, and that the last of these millennia would be ruled over by Christ and his resurrected, judged and immortalized saints from Jerusalem. This is in harmony with the covenants made unto the fathers, the testimony of the prophets, and the gospel preached by Christ and the apostles. Though there were a few who denied a kingdom throughout the first few centuries after Christ’s resurrection, Origen, whom Mosheim referred to above, was the first to pervert the doctrine of the kingdom with the success of popular support.

He taught the following: In “**On First Principles**” 1:6:2

“And in keeping with this is the declaration of the same apostle, when he exhorts us, **who even in the present life are placed in the Church**, in which is the form of **that kingdom which is to come**, to this same similitude of unity.”

Take note of the fact that in this early writing, Origen sees the “church” as a form of the kingdom, but still recognizes “that kingdom which is to come”. His “form of

the kingdom” teaching seems to eclipse his teaching of “that which is to come” in later writings.

In “**Against Celsus**” 1:61

“For he saw not the sleepless guardian power that is around those who deserve to be protected and preserved for the salvation of men, of whom Jesus is the first, superior to all others in honour and excellence, who **was to be a King indeed, but not in the sense that Herod supposed, but in that in which it became God to bestow a kingdom, - for the benefit, viz., of those who were to be under His sway**, who was to confer no ordinary and unimportant blessings, so to speak, upon **His subjects, but who was to train them and to subject them to laws that were truly from God.**”

In his “**Commentary on Matthew**” 10:14

“And according as each thought is attained, and grasped abstractly and proved by example and absolute demonstration, can one understand the kingdom of heaven, so that **he who abounds in knowledge free from error is in the kingdom of the multitude of what are here represented as “heavens.”** So, too, you will allegorize the word, “Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand,” (Matt. 3:2) as meaning that the scribes - that is, those who rest satisfied in the bare letter - may repent of this method of interpretation and be instructed in the spiritual teaching which is called the kingdom of the heavens through Jesus Christ the living Word.”

12:14

“And perhaps, also, each virtue is a kingdom of heaven, and all together are a kingdom of the heavens; so that according to this **he is already in the kingdom of the heavens who lives according to the virtues**, so that according to this the saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” (Matt. 3:2; Matt. 4:7) is to be referred, not to the time, but to deeds and dispositions; for Christ, who is all virtue, has come, and speaks, and on account of this the kingdom of God is within His disciples, and not here or there.”

12:30

“**Christ’s return signifies His disclosure of Himself and His deity to all humanity** in such a way that all might partake of His glory to the degree that each individual’s actions warrant.”

The preceding quotations seem to indicate that Origen abandoned his original belief in an eventual kingdom to come, and focused entirely on his spiritual/ecclesiastical invention. It is vital to observe that this corruption, at its inception, simply added a present “spiritual” aspect to the doctrine of the Kingdom of God, while fully recognizing a future aspect. This will be seen again.

It was an ideal time for such a perversion of the truth to be introduced, for the prophecy in Rev. 12 of Constantine’s elevation of “Christianity” (so-called) was soon

the feet. In Joel 2:2, I think that the prophet is referencing this latter day confederacy. The KJV reads as such – “There hath not been ever the like, neither, shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.” However, other versions (Rotherham) reads like this – “It shall not be again until the years of many generations.” This implies that the prophet is speaking of an invasion sometime well into the future from the prophet’s age. Could this be one of the references that Ezekiel speaks about in Ezekiel 38:17? Look at the chart below for a list of similarities between this invading nation in Joel and the latter day Gogian confederacy. Many more similarities may be drawn with more study. I think these are significant to show that the northern locust – like invader that Joel writes about is ultimately the latter day Gogian host and all of her multitudes.

Joel’s Latter Day Invader of the Land of Israel	Corresponding Scriptures from other Prophets describing the latter day Gogian confederacy
A time of trouble – 2:1	A time of trouble – Daniel 12:1
The day of Yahweh – 2:1	The day of Yahweh – Ezek 38:14, Ezek 39:8, 11
A day of darkness and storm – 2:2,10	The day of storm – Ezek 38:9,22
A time of shaking – 2:10; 3:16	A time of earthquake – Ezek 38:19; Zech 14:4
The northern army – 2:20	The king of the north – Dan 11:40; Ezek 38:15
The Lord’s army – 2:11	I will bring them against my land – Ezek 38:16
A great and strong people without number – 2:2; 1:6	A great company – Ezek 38:4
The appearance of horses – 2:4	Possesses many horses – Ezek 38:4
Lodging between two seas – 2:20	Lodging between the two seas – Dan 11:45
The destruction of this invader will cause a great stink – 2:20	The destruction of this invader will cause a great stink – Ezek. 39:11
All nations will be gathered – 3:2	All nations will be gathered – Zech 14:1,2
The purpose of the invasion is to take a spoil – 3:2-7	The purpose of the invasion is to take a spoil – Ezek 38:12; Zech 14:1

Exodus 10 - THE LOCUST PLAGUE	Joel 2 – THE DAY OF THE LORD
Will fill thy houses, the houses of thy servants and the houses of all Egyptians	Will enter the city and all of the houses (Verse 7-9)
The plague would be more terrible than anything that had ever been seen (Verse 6)	There have not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations (Verse 2)
Sent by Yahweh (Verse 4)	Yahweh's army (Verse 11)

In this **second chapter of Joel**, we see the continual progression of the prophecy from the prophet. First, as mentioned above, in **Chapter 1:3-4**, he describes the destruction that is brought about by a locust invasion. He then turns our attention to an invading nation in **verse 5**. Now, in **chapter 2**, he gives a more detailed description of the characteristics of this invading army.

We should now turn our attention to the identification of this locust like nation that invades God's Holy Land in the great and mighty Day of the LORD. As we meditate on the identification of this invading powerful nation, we realize that there are different ideas about the identity of this nation. Hopefully, the following thoughts may provide food for thought to all.

We note from Chapter 1:3, that the prophet presents four phases of this locust-like invader, each more and more destructive against God's vineyard, his nation of Israel. As stated earlier, since this prophecy is not specifically dated, I think that Yahweh is instructing us to look at the message of the prophet and how it fits into God's overall plan for His creation. Therefore, we ask ourselves if there is any other place in God's Holy word where we may find a discussion of four invading armies, each more destructive than the ones before. Hopefully, all of our readers may be thinking about the four world empires that the prophet Daniel presents in the vision of Nebuchadnezzar. But, one may object that Joel describes these four locust-like invaders in verse 5 as one nation. We should take notice that in Daniel 2:35, the prophet states that the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold were broken to pieces together. They would be brought together at the time that the stone would smite the image on its feet. The inclusion of these four nations in the one image indicate that in God's overall prophetic plan, these four nations are to be considered as one entity, the Kingdom of Men – not kingdoms. Therefore, I think the correct interpretation of Joel's prophecy is that he is speaking about all nations that would come against the land of Israel from his day and forward. These are the invading forces of the one entity of the Kingdom of Men.

Does Joel's message have any other similarities to Daniel's message? As we noted that in Daniel 2:35, he states that the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold were broken to pieces together. This indicates that these nations will be joined together in some manner in the days when the stone cut out without hands strikes the image on

to be fulfilled. The good fortune that was to come upon the "church" caused this "spiritual" kingdom invention to take on some literal interpretation in the hands of the Catholic Church.

Eusebius, a Catholic bishop and church historian, was incited to write the following as he witnessed the church rise in freedom and power around 326 AD.

"What so many of the Lord's saints and confessors before our time desired to see and saw not, and to hear and heard not, that behold now before our eyes! **It was of us the prophet spake when he told how the wilderness and the solitary place should be glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the lily.** Whereas the church was widowed and desolate, her children have now to exclaim to her - Make room, enlarge thy borders: the place is too strait for us. The promise is fulfilling to her, In righteousness shalt thou be established: all thy children shall be taught of God: and great shall be the peace of thy children."

Bro. Thomas makes the following comment regarding the "great swelling words" of Eusebius:

"This opinion of Eusebius and his coreligionists, that the church is the kingdom of God, took deep hold of the catholic mind of his generation; and in the nineteenth century is a characteristic of those who know not the truth. Catholics, papists and Protestants all believe that what they call church is the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven. Of course, Millenarians may claim exception from this rule. **Still, few of them are free from the tradition; for while they expect the reign of Christ upon earth, they hold the church to be the kingdom in some sense;**" (Eureka, Vol. 4, Pg. 113-114)

Augustine of Hippo, dubbed a "saint" by the "church", was the most influential teacher of the spiritual/ecclesiastical kingdom doctrine. In his early years he subscribed to the doctrine of the Millennial Kingdom, but he renounced this, setting forth his spiritualization of the kingdom in a book titled "City of God". He contrasts this "City of God" or "City of Heaven" to the "City of Earth" or "City of Men". He taught that the two run parallel to each other, though in the end the "City of Men" would be destroyed and the "City of God" would be perfected and continue eternally. What the majority of "Christians" believe concerning the Kingdom of God is based upon Augustine's interpretation.

The following is a sample of contemporary popular "Christian" belief, under the influence of Augustine.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, (Doctrine & Covenants 87: 6):

"...considers **the church itself as the Kingdom of God on the earth. However, this is limited to a spiritual or ecclesiastical kingdom until the Millennium when Christ will also establish a political Kingdom of God.** This will have worldwide political jurisdiction when the Lord has made 'a full end of all nations'."

The Catholic Encyclopedia:

“In reference to the Kingdom of God, **many of the critics hold that the current Jewish conception was wholly eschatological**, and that Christ's references to it must one and all be thus interpreted. **This view renders inexplicable the numerous passages in which Christ speaks of the kingdom as present**, and further involves a misconception as to the nature of Jewish expectations, which, as has been seen, together with eschatological traits, contained others of a different character. Harnack (*What is Christianity?* p. 62) holds that in its inner meaning the kingdom as conceived by Christ is "a purely religious blessing, the inner link of the soul with the living God". Such an interpretation can in no possible way be reconciled with Christ's utterances on the subject. The whole tenor of his expressions is to lay stress on the concept of a theocratic society.”

(Eschatology is defined by Webster as “a branch of theology concerned with the final events in the history of the world or of humankind”.)

So we see from the preceding quotation that Catholics deny both an entirely “spiritual” interpretation, as well as an entirely millennial interpretation of the Kingdom. Note why they deny the exclusively millennial interpretation— it “**renders inexplicable the numerous passages in which Christ speaks of the kingdom as present**”. Compare the following.

Shofar Magazine, March 2007 Pgs. 16-17:

“With Bro. Tucker’s above expressions about the **FUTURE** kingdom firmly in mind, he tackles some difficult passages that say that the kingdom was ‘near,’ ‘at hand’ or even ‘in your midst’ at the time of Christ. **Rather than trying to explain away this terminology**, Bro. Tucker suggests in his book that these passages refer to a believer’s position in Christ and relationship to the Kingdom of God, as opposed to the Kingdom of Men. He writes: “**The most natural and obvious explanation** (of these passages) is that **in some way**, shape or form, **the kingdom of God does exist now, without detracting from the future application of the kingdom of God.**”

The similarities here should be apparent to the reader. We will, however, put the light upon them. The Catholic Encyclopedia says a “wholly eschatological” interpretation “renders inexplicable the numerous passages in which Christ speaks of the kingdom as present”. The Shofar Magazine says that “Rather than trying to explain away this terminology”, i.e., present tense references to the kingdom, “The most natural and obvious explanation (of these passages) is that in some way” “the kingdom of God does exist now”. You must decide, dear reader, is it?

Again, from the **Catholic Encyclopedia**:

“The kingdom of god means, then, the ruling of God in our hearts; it means **those principles which separate us off from the kingdom of the world and the devil; it means the benign sway of grace**; it means the Church as that Divine institution whereby we may **make sure of attaining the spirit of Christ and so**

In order to fully understand the invasion of God’s land by this locust like nation, let us look at some descriptions of a typical locust plague in that part of the earth.

This information was obtained from the National Geographic website:

“Locusts are related to grasshoppers and the two insects look similar. However, locust behavior can be something else entirely. Locusts are sometimes solitary insects with lifestyles much like grasshoppers. But locusts have another behavioral phase called the gregarious phase. When environmental conditions produce many green plants and promote breeding, locusts can congregate into thick, mobile, ravenous swarms. Locust swarms devastate crops and cause major agricultural damage and attendant human misery, famine and starvation. The desert locust is notorious. Found in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, they inhabit some 60 countries and can cover one-fifth of Earth’s land surface. Desert locust plagues may threaten the economic livelihood of one-tenth of the world’s humans...A desert locust swarm can be 460 square miles in size and pack between 40 and 80 million locusts into less than half a square mile. Each locust can eat its weight in plants each day, so a swarm of such size would eat 423 million pounds of plants every day...Like the individual animals within them, locust swarms are typically in motion and can cover vast distances. In 1954, a swarm flew from northwest Africa to Great Britain. In 1988, another made the lengthy trek from West Africa to the Caribbean.” End Quote.

When we come across these locusts in God’s Holy Words, we marvel at the situations in which God would send these methods of destruction against His Creation. In **Exodus 10:5-6** and **12-15**, we read of the locust plague that God brought upon the nation of Egypt. This gives us a very good description of the appearance and devastation of this type of invasion. The Scriptures tells us that because of the huge number of these insects that they would blot out the light of the sun and the land would be darkened and all remaining vegetation of the land would be destroyed. **Verse 6 of Exodus 10** indicates that the locust plague of that day would be so destructive that the people of the land would have never experienced anything like that in the past. Let us read **Joel 2:1-11** for similar characteristics given to us by the prophet and compare the message of Joel with that provided by the prophet Moses.

Exodus 10 - THE LOCUST PLAGUE	Joel 2 – THE DAY OF THE LORD
Cover the face of the earth, so one cannot see the earth – the land was darkened (Verse 5,15)	A day of darkness, a day of clouds and thick darkness (verse 2,10)
Will eat the residue of that which is escaped from previous plagues – complete destruction (Verse 5,15)	Complete destruction (Verse 3,6)

Joel was contemporary with Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel and wrote in the last days of the reign of Zedekiah. There are at least (3) three other periods where various Christadelphian writers have suggested different time periods in which the prophet lived and prophesied. Most of the references that were reviewed for this article placed the prophecy of Joel before the invasion of Assyria and Babylon. I think the thing that we should remember when we try to pigeonhole these prophets of old in certain historical ages, is if Yahweh had wanted us to focus on the exact time period in which they lived and the immediate events of his time period, then Yahweh would have told us the exact time. When these prophecies are undated as Joel is, then I believe that Yahweh is teaching us to focus more on the message to the believers of all ages, not just the age in which the prophet lived.

The message of the prophet Joel seems to address an impending invasion of a great army. He calls for a national repentance and then provides a description of a future invasion and finally speaks of the restoration of blessings to the nation of Israel after the destruction of this latter day invader.

One expositor on the messages of the prophet Joel (From Hosea to Zephaniah – The Minor Prophets Before the Exile – Fred Pearce) suggested these divisions for the book.

Chapter 1:1-20 – The Desolation of the Land

Chapter 2:1-11 – The Army of the LORD

Chapter 2:12-17 – The Call to Repentance

Chapter 2:18-27 – The Divine Blessings Restored

Chapter 2:28-32 – The Outpouring of the Spirit

Chapter 3:1-16 – The Judgment of the Nations

Chapter 3:17-21 – The Peaceful Conditions of the Kingdom

We should read this book with these two primary subjects in mind – the judgments of God poured out against the nations of the world, including Israel, and the restoration of divine blessings to His creation after a period of true repentance is manifested.

In the **first chapter of Joel**, the prophet uses a symbol of a locust to describe the great and terrible judgments of Yahweh against the nation of Judah. Whether there was a natural invasion of these insects during the time of the life of Joel, we are not told. However, I believe it is safe to say that those who heard his prophetic utterances would be able to visualize the terrible destruction that was spoken of by the prophet. In **Chapter 1:4** – the prophet describes four different phases of this invasion of these destroying insects. These are the palmerworm, the locust, the cankerworm and the caterpillar. These names literally mean the shearer, the swarmer, the lapper and the destroyer, respectively. Each of these phases would be exceedingly stronger and stronger and more destructive than the preceding ones. In **verses 5-7**, the prophet abruptly changes his figure from the locusts to a nation, strong and without number and in **verse 7** speaks of the terrible destruction brought about by this invading nation against God's land, His vineyard, and His fig tree – all symbolic of the land of Israel.

win that ultimate kingdom of God Where He reigns without end in "the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:2)."

Shofar Magazine, May 2007 Pg. 16:

"Bro. Tucker goes on to suggest that from God's perspective there are only two kingdoms—the **Kingdom of Men and the Kingdom of God, and that we need to come out of the former and into the latter** through Christ.

'If we are not **citizens of the kingdom of God now** through the covenants of promise, we will not be **citizens of the kingdom of God in the future**. ...We change citizenship from the kingdom of men to 'the commonwealth of Israel.' This **change of citizenship is not something future, but something that happens when we believe and are baptized.**"

'We are in 'heavenly places' now **so that we might be in the kingdom of God on earth in the future**. Thus our **citizenship now determines our citizenship in the future...Being 'in Christ' is this exalted position**. This is **synonymous with the spiritual sense of being in the Kingdom of God now.**"

We trust the equality of the statements above is not hidden from the reader. What the Catholics term "those principles", Shofar terms "the covenants of promise" and "through Christ". What the Catholics term the "kingdom of the world and the devil", Shofar terms the "Kingdom of Men". The Catholics make a separation from the "kingdom of the world" a prerequisite to winning "that ultimate kingdom of God". Shofar says we must be "citizens of the kingdom of God now" or "we will not be citizens of the kingdom of God in the future".

The term "citizen" is twice applied to our hope in the Shofar quotes. When consulting a dictionary, the word citizen is found to be synonymous with the word subject. There is an important distinction to be made between the citizen-subjects of the Kingdom, and the heir-inheritors of it. The former are primarily the mortal natural Jews who will have been sifted and fitted for their elevated position, and secondarily the rest of the mortal population of the earth who will also be permitted to live as citizens of the kingdom, though after severe purging. The heir-inheritors are the immortalized saints of the preceding 6,000 years who "shall reign with Him (Christ) a thousand years" as "kings and priests". To partake in this blessed hope, we truly must be "Abraham's seed" by baptism into Christ. Such action, however, prevents us from ever being citizen-subjects in the age to come. The unfaithful saints will not be permitted to linger through that age, for they will be subjected to the Second Death. It will be the mortal people of the earth, those who survive the precursory judgments at the "manifestation of the sons of God", which will live as citizen-subjects of the Kingdom once it is established.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Par. 2816:

"The Kingdom of God...has come **in Christ's death and resurrection.**" Par. 782... "the Kingdom of God which has been **begun by God himself on earth**

and which must be further extended until it has been **brought to perfection by him at the end** of time.”

The Judaizers: Another Gospel, Pg. 151:

“Some have suggested that the Kingdom came into existence at Pentecost. It seems to me that **the resurrection of Jesus is a more likely beginning.**”

“Since the harvest **began with Jesus (the spiritual establishment of the Kingdom)**, the harvest will **complete itself with Christ’s coming (the future Kingdom on earth).**”

The interpretations appear synonymous. The Church believes the spiritual/ecclesiastical kingdom was established at Christ’s resurrection, and will see its completion at the return of Christ. The author of “The Judaizers” asserts the same.

Comment on **“Thought for the Week” by the author of “The Judaizers”**. 8-6-07:

“In both cases, **King Jesus, is seated on a throne. Whether or not this is the promised “throne of his father David” in Luke 1:32, I cannot say dogmatically.** That he will sit on an earthly throne in Jerusalem sometime in the future (hopefully very soon) is something that we would both agree on. That this future earthly throne is the promised throne of David is firmly established. Whether it is an extension of the former heavenly throne, I don’t know.”

We can “dogmatically” say that David never had a throne in heaven. It is therefore impossible for Christ to sit upon the “throne of his father David” so long as he resides at his Father’s right hand in heaven.

As has been exhibited by the preceding testimony from the “Church”, what began as a seemingly slight perversion to the doctrine of the Kingdom (the addition of a “spiritual” aspect), in a short time eclipsed the truth concerning the Kingdom. Today the Church’s attention is focused primarily upon the supposed spiritual aspect of the Kingdom, almost to the exclusion of the future aspect. Are Christadelphians in danger of falling into such a state? – Judge for yourself.

“The Judaizers: Another Gospel” Pg. 149:

“The present existence of the Kingdom of God has a powerful influence on us. We get very excited when we think about the Kingdom of God that is coming on this earth. **How much more excited should we be when we realize that membership in this Kingdom is ours today!**”

“Before we might have prayed ‘Lord, grant us a place in your kingdom’ or even ‘grant us a small place in your kingdom.’ **Once the concept has been grasped that your name is written in the Book of Life and you have a place in God’s Kingdom, such words become inappropriate. You don’t ask for something you have already been given. Your words change to give thanks for the gift God has given to you and for strength to walk worthy of this exalted position.**”

As we have learned in our individual and collective studies, the ultimate outcome of these Days of the LORD is to fill the earth, God’s creation, with His glory. When we come across this phrase of “The Day of the LORD” in our daily studies, let us envision that great and wonderful time in the future, where the Gospel message will be proclaimed to all of the inhabitants of the world, where the government of the world will be administered by the associates of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and finally, we should envision the eighth day when God will be all in all, and there will be no more sin, tears, pain or death. This is the ultimate lesson of the meaning of the Day of the LORD. The Scriptures teach us that there will indeed be a seventh millennial day of rest where God’s immortalized saints of ages past will rest from their daily struggles brought about by the works of the flesh in their days of probation. There will be an eighth symbolic day where there will be no more war, rebellion or sin and all things will be in accordance with the Divine will. Brethren, we have such a wonderful hope. Let us always keep the eye of faith focused on these divine wonders of the age to come.

Let us now review a small portion of the Scriptures that will instruct us on this subject of The Day of the LORD. The primary subject of the prophet Joel is to warn his countrymen and those of succeeding generations of the coming Day of the LORD. But even more important, we should understand that he was a messenger that God used to call upon His people to repent so that Yahweh may deliver them and abundantly bless them.

Joel 1:1 tells us that the prophet was the son of Pethuel. The name Joel means “Yah is El” and the name Pethuel means “enlarged of El” or “opened by El”. Isaiah 50:5 gives us a good understanding of this root word “pathah”, where the word “opened” is derived. When we combine these two names, (Joel and Pethuel) we see this meaning – “He who will be power will open the ears by his power.” As we read through these three small chapters of Joel, we see the mighty power in which the Day of the LORD is brought upon His creation. We read of the terrible judgments that are brought upon a sinning, unrepentant nation. Most importantly, we also read of the tremendous blessings that Yahweh will ultimately pour out on his favored nation. Let us who have ears to hear listen to the words of this prophet and strive to gain an understanding of the symbolic and literal language used by this prophet of old.

In **Joel 1:15** and **Joel 2:1**, the prophet tells his listeners and readers that the Day of the LORD is nigh at hand. This provides us some instruction of the time period that Joel is initially speaking about. However in the latter part of Joel, through the eye of faith and the prophetic visions provided for our benefit, we are brought to a day in the future, where the symbols used in the first part of Joel are typical of a latter Day of the LORD.

When did Joel live and receive and deliver his prophecies? One writer indicated that he was contemporary with Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel and prophesied in the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. Another writer places him some many years earlier in the time of King Jehoash of Israel. Still another writer indicates again that

- **Isaiah 13:6-9** – This day will come as a destruction from the Almighty and will come with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate and to destroy the sinners.
- **Jeremiah 46:10** – This is the day of Yahweh’s vengeance which will be brought about by the LORD God of armies.
- **Ezekiel 30:3** – This day is a cloudy day, a time for the heathen.
- **Joel 1:15** – This day is a day of destruction from the hands of Yahweh.
- **Joel 2:1** – This day will cause the inhabitants of the land to tremble.
- **Joel 2:11** – This day is great and terrible. Who shall abide it?
- **Amos 5:18-20** – This day is a day of darkness and not light.
- **Zephaniah 1:7** – This day will include a great sacrifice.
- **Zephaniah 1:14** – This day will cause the mighty man to cry bitterly.
- **Zechariah 14:1** – This day will cause a division of the spoil of the land.
- **1st Thessalonians 5:2** and **2nd Peter 3:10** – This day will come as a thief in the night against those who receive the judgments of Yahweh.

As we contemplate the history and the judgments involved in these historical Days of the LORD, we should be reminded that there will continue to be future Days of the LORD, the means by which Yahweh will ultimately establish a world wide Kingdom, ruled by His only begotten Son, where justice and righteousness will be the norm of the day and will be administered by the immortalized saints of all ages, both Jew and Gentile. As God prepares His creation for that great and mighty day, we remember that He directs the affairs of all nations and appoints over them whomsoever He wishes.

Brother Thomas makes this statement in the first volume of Eureka regarding the outpouring of God’s wrath and judgment during these Days of the LORD. This is recorded in the section where he speaks of the message of the Apocalypse as seen in the prophecies of the prophet Zephaniah.

“The result of the manifestation and outpouring of the wrath (of God) will be sevenfold:

1. The Apocalypse of Yahweh, the King of Israel in Jerusalem,
2. The taking away of judgments from Jerusalem,
3. The purification and pardon of the remnant,
4. The exaltation of Israel to fame and praise throughout the earth,
5. Their restoration to the Holy Land from all parts of the earth,
6. The abolition of all the “Names and Denominations,” and other superstitions of every form, shade and color, that now bewilder and divide mankind; and which are sustained as elements of the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the nations; and
7. The establishment of the One Religion and One Government for all the world.” (End Quote)

Here the author suggests that we should be more excited about our present position than we are about our hope of the Kingdom on earth. He even directs his readers to cease from praying for a place in the Kingdom. This is quite a contrast to what Paul exclaims—“O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24)

The Judaizers: Another Gospel, Pg 149:

“In emphasizing **the current location in heaven** and source of power **for the Kingdom of God** to his Jewish audience, Matthew was preparing them for the impending destruction of both their nation and their focus on worship – the temple in Jerusalem. In other words, this special message to Jewish believers reassured them that **the Kingdom of God** was not going to be destroyed, but **was secure in heaven with Christ the King** until such a time as it would be revealed in power on earth.”

In this final quotation the author asserts that the phrase “Kingdom of Heaven” refers to the “current location” of the Kingdom of God “in heaven”. It is quite disturbing that such words could find their way out of the pen of one called by the name “Christadelphian”, and it is certainly a sign of the times we live in. It is evident that even today there are some oppressing the ecclesia “which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie”.

Mosheim observed that the error of Origen “opened a secure retreat for all sorts of errors that a wild and irregular imagination could bring forth.” The same is true of the errors promulgated by the “Shofar” and the author of “The Judaizers”. For this reason, the framers of the Statement of Faith saw fit to preclude it from Christadelphian belief.

“Fable to be Refused” XXIII:

“Ecclesiastical and Sky Kingdoms.—That **the kingdom of God is not ‘the church,’** or a region beyond the stars, but a system of things to be established under Christ on earth, in the Holy Land.” (1877, Birmingham SOF)

An acceptance of the errors exhibited above will result in some confusing answers to the following questions. We will leave the reader with these to peruse.

- When are we “born of the spirit”? Christ says it must be done before we enter the Kingdom. John 3:5-8
- If the phrase “Kingdom of Heaven” indicates the location of the Kingdom, what is the teaching of the following passages? Matt. 5:3, 10; 7:21; 8:11
- In Acts 14:22 it is recorded that the apostles taught that “we must through much tribulation enter the Kingdom of God.” If by baptism we enter the Kingdom of God, when is such tribulation suffered?

In short, the real question is, have you “spiritually” inherited the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David? The Kingdom of God is, after all, the substance

of these promises. Have we, by baptism, inherited the promises in any sense, or do we, as Abraham, live as “strangers and pilgrims”, “not having received the promises”? We choose to associate with Abraham and his faith, for it is his faith alone (in both aspects of the things believed and the strength with which they are believed) that is able to constitute one righteous.

Adam Kuipers

Editor’s Comment:

This article is not intended to suggest that the believers of the “eternal life now” and “we are in a spiritual kingdom now” errors are leaning towards Catholicism. The purpose of this article and other S.K. articles in the past that have addressed erroneous ideas that have been promoted in the brotherhood are to show how error begets error, and how such new ideas and views (in reality, old ideas repackaged as “truth”) actually lead Believers away from The Truth and down the path that the apostasy has taken. We do not need to come up with new ideas or new ways to express our basic beliefs that continue to separate us from the darkness of the religions of the world. The confrontation of any false ideas in the S.K. magazine has never been and will never be intended as personal attacks on any of those who proclaim, support or tolerate the false doctrines that have been refuted in this magazine. We believe that it is necessary to warn and alert the Body of any false doctrines that we become aware of. It then becomes the responsibility of each brother and sister to address these false ideas in the correct Scriptural manner – with the ultimate objective of preserving the light of Truth in these end times and convincing those who are teaching, supporting and tolerating these erroneous doctrines to return to the Way of Salvation. Let us always be strong in The Faith and strong for The Faith.

We have been accused of misrepresenting the teachings of bro. Tucker, and that he is only teaching that the believer has a present federal position “in Christ” as historically taught by Christadelphians (Shofar – March, 2007, p. 18). If this is what is intended, then why is there a need in today’s brotherhood to describe our historical beliefs in a new and confusing manner, using the same explanations and similar conclusions found in false Christianity of pertinent scriptural passages? Historically, Christadelphians have not taught or believed that we currently possess eternal life or that we are in a spiritual Kingdom when we arise from the waters of Baptism – in a “federal” sense or otherwise. The concepts of eternal life and God’s future Kingdom have always been presented as the HOPE of receiving the promised gift of eternal life and a place in God’s Kingdom when Christ returns. Let us put aside these new ideas and concepts and return to the “old paths” that have served the believers well for centuries.

“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.” – 2nd John 8

THE DAY OF THE LORD

As Seen by the Prophet Joel

One of the most powerful and important subjects that we find throughout God’s Holy Writ is the subject of “The Day of the LORD”. Many of the prophets were given visions and were inspired to write of this glorious subject. The apostolic writers continue the subject in the New Testament. Although we find the exact phrase – “The Day of the LORD” – only mentioned 20 times in the Old Testament, there are many scriptures that provide assistance in understanding the meaning of this phrase. Similar phrases that we may find and should gain an understanding of their meanings are “the great and terrible day of the LORD”, “the great day of the LORD”, “an appointed day”, “a morning without clouds”, and “a day of battle”.

A day of Yahweh is not a literal 24 hour one day period of time. It is an age where God is vindicated in judgment after a period of time. The term does not exclusively refer to a day future to us, as there were days of Yahweh in the past where His judgments were poured out on wicked and sinful nations. Using this definition, we ask – What periods of historical divine judgment and destruction can we identify as The Day of Yahweh? Although the Scriptures may not specifically represent these time periods as Days of the LORD, I think these time periods would qualify as Days of the LORD – 1) the Noahic Flood; 2) the Exodus from Egypt; 3) the Assyrian/Babylonian invasion of Israel; 4) the subsequent Medo-Persian and Greek conquests of the Holy Land; 4) the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and 5) the impending future invasion of the Holy Land from the Gogian confederacy; and finally the future destruction of the apocalyptic Babylonian harlot system and all of her supporters. As we proceed with our consideration of this subject, we should note that the Day of the LORD is not confined to God’s judgments poured out on the Gentile nations. This phrase with all of its applicable judgments is also applied to and used in regard to the favored nation of God – the Jewish nation. A key concept to remember, however, in regard to these predicted judgments poured out on the nation of Israel, is that the prophets always provide a glimmer of hope of that future day of national salvation when God will ultimately fulfill His promises made to the fathers of the Israelites – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was through this hope that the faithful Jewish remnant was able to survive in the Day of the LORD.

Let us look at a few Scriptures that describe the terrible judgments administered by the hand of Yahweh in the Day of the LORD.

- **Isaiah 2:12** – This day will be upon all that is proud, lofty and lifted up with the outcome of bringing him down low.