

THE SANCTUARY-KEEPER

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



Vol. 17

4th Quarter – 2007

No. 4

SEALED IN THEIR FOREHEADS

Revelation 7

also:

Immortality and Eternal Life
What We Once Were
The Power of Ephesians (Part II)
Is Jesus Christ Reigning As a King Now?
The Final Scattering of Israel (Part II)

The Sanctuary-Keeper is published on a quarterly basis. The doctrinal position of this magazine is founded exclusively on the principles of Bible Truth as outlined and defined in *The Christadelphian Unamended Statement of Faith*

Printing & Distribution:
Bobby Henderson
bobdehnd@aol.com

Compilation & Publishing:
Aaron Thomas
aaronthomas2@juno.com

Please mail
subscriptions to:

The Sanctuary-Keeper
P.O. Box 13045
Maumelle, AR 72113

SEALED IN THEIR FOREHEADS

CONTENTS – 4th Quarter 2007

- 1 Immortality and Eternal Life
- 7 Sealed In Their Foreheads
- 13 What We Once Were
- 14 The Power of Ephesians – Part II
- 20 Is Jesus Christ Reigning As King Now?
- 28 The Final Scattering of Israel – Part II
- 36 Putin and Power

Back Inside Cover
Fundamental Truths illustrated

Back Cover
Lecture series flyer (circa 1930's)

"THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION AND DELIVERANCE"

*All men are in Adam naturally – held in the bondage of corruption on account of descent from a condemned progenitor – and should they die in that condition they will be forever held in the power of the grave; death's dominion over them will be complete and unending. "They shall sleep a perpetual sleep and not awake." But should they **hear** the gospel of the kingdom of God and **learn** the things which tell about the Lord Jesus Christ and **thereupon be baptized** they pass from under Adam and from the condemnation of death into Christ and become new creatures. Being made free in this manner from the law of sin and death, they become the servants of righteousness, and as such, during the remainder of their life, they are bound to serve Christ. If they are obedient servants they will, **on Christ's coming again, receive eternal life**, become like He is, a glorious spirit man, incorruptible and powerful, full of knowledge and beauty. If disobedient servants they will at the same time as the obedient ones receive the reward, receive the fruit of their wickedness, which is the second death or everlasting destruction – complete obliteration from the universe of God.*

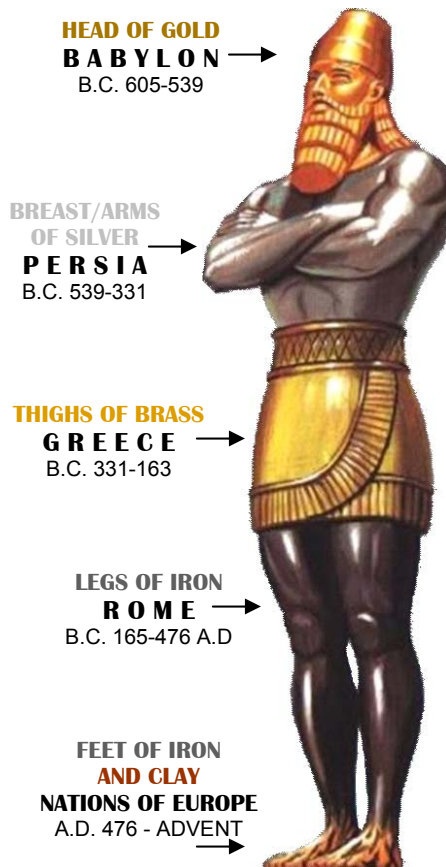
The Christadelphian Advocate, 1887 (emphasis added)



THE KINGDOM OF MEN

The visions of Daniel and John not only revealed the existence of the **FOUR GREAT EMPIRES** and other nations that should arise, but are also descriptive of their political career during the Seven Times of the Kingdom of Men; whereas the vision of the Image, seen by the King of Babylon, had **SPECIAL REFERENCE** to "what shall be in the latter days." In the interpretation of the dream, he was informed, however, that the metals composing the Image represented a succession of empires, each dynasty superseding and *absorbing the other*, but as the Image has never yet existed as a *whole* the constituents forming it must be *brought together*. The kingdoms found in the territory of these four successive empires will *exist contemporaneously*. This Image-Kingdom of men will then *stand upon its feet*, assuming an aggressive attitude when the Stone-Power (Christ) descends upon the feet of the Image of various metals, "then was the Iron, the Clay, the Silver, and the Gold broken to pieces **TOGETHER**...and the Stone that smote the Image became a great mountain" (or empire of nations). Dan. 2:34,35,45. Therefore, all that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream *has never yet been fulfilled*, but revealed to him "what shall come to pass hereafter"; and that the *destruction of the whole* Image would result in "the God of Heaven setting up a **KINGDOM**, which shall never be destroyed, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever...the dream is certain and the interpretation thereof sure." - Dan.2:44

INDEX RERUM



O. L. DUNAWAY

of Conway, Ark.

Will deliver a series of Bible Lectures, at the Christadelphian Meeting-House, Near Zion, Ky., Aug. 10-17, Sundays at 10:30 a.m., Week days 3:00 p. m.

The Public is Cordially invited to hear the following subjects discussed in the order which they appear:-

1. Immortality through Christ.
2. The Gospel Believed and Obeyed to the End, brings the Gift of God; Eternal Life thru Christ.
3. How the Promises made unto the the Fathers are Related to Life and Immortality in the Age to Come.
4. God's Covenant with David and its Relation to Immortality, in the Kingdom of God.
5. Scriptural Baptism insures Resurrection, but does it insure Immortality in the Kingdom of God?
6. Ye Are - - - That ye Should.
7. The Past, Present and Future of the Jew, in Relation to the Present Zionist Movement and the Balfore Declaration.
8. The Second Coming of Christ -- What are some of the Signs that Indicate that His coming is near?

We have included this flyer of public lectures delivered by our deceased brother to show the subjects that have always been important to God's servants. This brief outline also shows how our brother treated the subject of eternal life and immortality. His chosen topics teach us that the Gift of God is eternal life and immortality in the Age to Come, neither of which is a current possession. Let the Body of Christ in these last days before our Master's return continue to hope and pray for that future day when we may receive God's precious gift of eternal life/immortality. - S.K.

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.”

1 Peter 2:5

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

VOLUME 17

4th QUARTER, 2007

NUMBER 4

IMMORTALITY AND ETERNAL LIFE

From the writings of Thomas Williams

There is a theory advocated concerning immortality, similar to that we have referred to on the mortality of Adam ending with death in a thousand years. Its claim is that the terms “everlasting life” and “eternal life” mean the life of the *aeon*, or age, and that this age is the one thousand years reign of Christ over mortal nations. Based upon this is the claim that the terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” do not mean immortal life, and the promise they involve only extends to an assurance that those who are worthy shall live for the thousand years; and if they are ever immortalized it will be after the expiration of the “age.”

This is another of those traditions which make the word of God of none effect. It is a theory, like many others, which is a slave of a technicality of words. With this subject as well as with that of mortality, the general teachings of the Bible are the best dictionary to define the meaning and use of the words. Limit the word *aeon* to age, and the age to one thousand years, and let one tie himself to this technical meaning of the word, ignoring other explanatory parts of the Scriptures, and the promise of the glorious gospel is thereby limited to one thousand years lease of life, with no assurance of deliverance from our mortal nature. If a change of nature is not involved in the promise of “eternal life,” salvation is reduced to a small compass. It is “redemption of the body” we are “waiting for,” and if this is left an undecided question and the gospel only assures us that we shall live a thousand years,

postponing the “redemption of the body” indefinitely, disappointment makes hope hang her head muttering, “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.”

Now we need not here spend much time on the philology of the words “eternal life,” is it more satisfactory to study the doctrine of the terms. Presently we will give the original words and their meanings which stand for “immortal” and “incorruptible,” simply asserting here, that “**eternal life**” doctrinally means life manifested in and through incorruptible bodies. In Rom. ii. we are, in substance, told, “If you will seek for immortality, I will give you eternal life.” If “immortality” is superior to “eternal life,” and the latter only means duration of life for a thousand years, then we are asked to seek for a superior thing and only promised an inferior thing. Reason rejects this as absurd, and concludes that **since we are exhorted to seek for “immortality” and promised “eternal life,” the one must be involved in the other, or, in substance, both mean the same thing; and therefore to receive the “eternal life” promised is to receive the “immortality” sought for.**

The most instructive and satisfying way to find truth is to compare scripture with scripture. **We can be assured that to receive eternal life is to receive immortality** thus: Christ is immortal (this is admitted), when He appears “we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” In the resurrection we shall be made “equal to the angels” in that we shall “die no more.” **In the resurrection, this mortal shall put on immortality; and at the same time “eternal life” is received; therefore “immortality” and “eternal life,” doctrinally and in essence, mean the same.**

Rectification, pp. 12,13 (emphasis & underline added)



ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

We have provided the foregoing excerpt (originally written in 1909, and indicated in its subtitle as a “*Refutation of Subtle Errors...*”) in order to draw attention to a clear explanation of the terms “immortality” and “eternal life”. As of late these principles have been shrouded in a cloud of error and confusion. The reader is most likely aware that it is currently being falsely contended that once baptized the believer is in possession of eternal life in a “spiritual” or “legal” sense.

Along similar lines, it has also been recently suggested that “eternal life” (Gr. – *zoe aionios*), or “age lasting life” as the chosen phrase, represents the believer’s current status in Christ. It is thought that since “eternal” (Gr. “*aionios*” - adjective form of the noun *aeon*) does not always clearly refer to the concept of eternity that therefore the term “eternal life” does not always refer to the concept of immortality or living forever. It is this misconception (or “subtle error”) that bro. Williams initially addresses in the excerpt provided. Though the error he deals with applies this “life of the aeon” to the millennium period of the Kingdom as some kind of temporary status/condition before immortality is granted; the mistake made by those who fell into such error then is fundamentally the same as those currently who think we have

“eternal life” or “age lasting life” now - the belief that the meanings and applications of eternal life and immortality are some how different from one another, and that “eternal life” can be possessed by the believer ever before immortality is granted.

These erroneous views of eternal life/immortality seem to directly stem from this mistaken contention that the terms “eternal life” and “immortality” can represent two different principles and time periods → i.e. that “eternal life” can refer to the spiritual condition or status of the believer now, and that “immortality” is the physical state still belonging to the future. But, the fact and indisputable truth of the matter is that, as emphatically stated by bro. Williams, they “*doctrinally and in essence, mean the same.*” Bro. Williams also supplies the observation in The World’s Redemption (pp. 323,324): “*for eternal life implies immortality, the distinction being only in that the former has to do with the duration of life, while the latter relates to the nature that is capable of enduring forever and of sustaining endless life.*”

“Eternal Life” and “Immortality” – synonymous terms

In **Romans 2:6, 7** we have these two terms directly correlated in relation to the reward rendered after the Judgment - “*Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.*” Along with seeing here the terms immortality/eternal life equated as the same thing, we also find confirmation that both terms represent a reward that belongs to the future, and not one word representing a present possession and the other yet belonging to the future. This is demonstrated even more clearly by the grammatical rendering in the Emphatic Diaglott, “*Who will reward to each according to his works; Aionion Life [Gr. zoe aionios], indeed, to those who, by perseverance in good works, are seeking glory and honor and incorruptibility.*”

But based upon the reasoning of some, surely the Apostle Paul is mistaken here – How can “eternal life”/ “age lasting life” be a future reward if we already possess it? **The Spirit Word through the Apostle is not mistaken.** Everlasting life (Aionion life) is still something that belongs to the future and represents, and can only represent, the promise of living forever – i.e. immortality, possession of the spirit nature.

Eternal life a matter of hope and promise - not a present possession.

What is stated in the previous heading is a principle that is clearly affirmed throughout the Scriptures. A few examples are as follows:

- **Galatians 6:8** – “*He that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting (zoe aionios).*” Has such reaping taken place yet?
- **Col. 3:3,4** – “*For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God, and when Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*” Do we have this “life” in us yet? No, it is in Christ still awaiting the dispersal of the reward.
- **1st Tim. 6:12** – “*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.*” Here in the 12th verse we have allusion to the Grecian games, and a working

towards the prize or reward. The concept of “seizure” (Strong’s), or “attaining to” (Thayer’s) the hoped for recompense.

- **2nd Tim. 1:1** – “*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.*”
- **Titus 1:2** – “*In hope of eternal life (zoe aionios), which God that cannot lie promised before the world began.*”
- **Titus 3:7** – “*That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (zoe aionios).*”
- **1st John 2:25** – “*And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life (zoe aionios), through Jesus Christ.*”

This vital principle cannot be articulated in clearer terms – the believer is currently an “**heir**” of eternal life, it is a matter of “**hope**”, it is a “**promise**” to those who remain faithful; such a reward is currently “**hid in Christ**”. Though the believer, once baptized, passes into the law or sentence of the spirit of life (Rom. 8:2), this constitutional/legal change puts one in the position of being an “heir” of eternal life – but again, not of present possession. Let this be clearly understood.

The question may be asked – “*So what if we believe that eternal life is a present possession in a ‘legal’ or ‘spiritual’ sense, as long as it is understood that immortality is still a matter of future reward and that we are not immortal now? Where is the harm?*” The most simple and direct answer is that such a view opposes clear Scriptural teaching, compromising and confusing the whole Scriptural concept and application of the term eternal life (*zoe aionios*). And, such mistaken views on “eternal life” as being a present possession in a “spiritual” sense is only a hair breadth removed from the complete error of the Apostasy and is basically explained and defended the very same way as apostate Christianity’s belief that we literally possess eternal life. The fact of the matter is that eternal life and immortality are synonymous terms, and that eternal life/immortality (the principle of living for ever) is a matter of hope and promise. Since the two terms are in fact inseparable, if we think we have “eternal life” now in some kind of “legal” or “spiritual” sense, are we to believe that we have “immortality” in some kind of “legal” or “spiritual” sense now as well? Where does this faulty logic end? - As a brother used to say, “*if you stumble over your premise you will fall flat on your conclusion.*”

Unfortunate stumbling blocks

There are passages that some are faltering at that are believed to support the present possession of “eternal” or “age lasting” life. Passages such as:

- John 3:36 – “*he that believeth on the son hath everlasting life (zoe aionios)*”
- John 6:54 – “*Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh by blood, hath eternal life (zoe aionios)*”
- 1st John 5:13 – “*He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life (zoe aionios).*”

It should be noted that these, among others, are the same line of passages that the churches of the world stumble over. They have a difficulty getting past the word “hath” (present 3rd person singular of “have”) that is found in these various verses in relation to *zoe aionios*. So how do we explain some of these “questionable” verses? If we correctly understand that eternal life and immortality are equivalent terms, and knowing that we most certainly do not have immortality now (in any sense – spiritual or literal) what conclusions can we come to? If we choose to believe that we possess “eternal life” or “age lasting life” now, we then make scripture contradict scripture.

Like many other subjects in the Scriptures we allow the clear and unmistakable passages help us to understand those passages which may seem more elusive or out of sink with the rest. We know that we interpret the Scriptures “line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little there a little”. In regard to those passages that state that the believer “hath eternal life” (interestingly exclusive to the writings of John), the only clear explanation that the Scriptures provide us is that it is a matter of promise. Using the principle laid out for us in Romans 4:17 that God “*calleth those things which be not, as though they were*”, we understand that eternal life/immortality is a **sure reward** to the faithful. Regarding the difficulty that some have getting past the word “hath”, Bro. Williams provides a very clear explanation:

“Now the words “hath life” are clearly explained by the apostle Paul when he says: “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” It is yours so long as you believe in and are faithful to Christ; but you must hold fast to Christ in order to have the life, for the life is *in him now*, not in you... And now, as the Son hath life in himself, so will he, at his appearing, give to the righteous man to have life in himself. The difference between now and then is that now the faithful man hath life in Christ, while then Christ will give him that life and he will have it in himself.” The World’s Redemption, p. 320

Brethren, the Truth is not complicated. Let the matter be understood in these terms, and we can then return to the simple and clear expressions of the Truth that has distinguished us from the mire and darkness of the apostasy around us for over 150 years.

Along with one of the questionable interpretations that has recently been put forward, it has been suggested that due to the “*evasive*” nature of the term “everlasting life” that it may be better to not use the term in relation to our future reward, but rather just the terms “immortality” or “incorruption”. This is a rather surprising suggestion since the term *zoe aionios* (“everlasting life” or “life eternal”) appears at least some 30 times in the New Testament, as opposed to *athanasia* (rendered “immortality”) used three times, and *aphtharsia* (rendered “immortality” or “incorruption”) six times. “Everlasting life” is by far the dominant phrase used in the Scriptures to describe the hope of living forever. It is argued, based upon the misunderstanding of the “hath eternal life” passages, that *zoe aionios* is better rendered “*age lasting life*”, and that it can (as mentioned earlier) better describe the believer’s current position in Christ as well as to the future reward. We have to

answer that by merely substituting an alternative phrase for “eternal life” changes nothing, and does not alter the fact that *zoe aionios* is still a direct reference to immortality and a matter of reward and promise. **It is that “hope of eternal life” that was promised since the “world began”** (Titus 1:2) – symbolized by the Tree of Life, indicated by the promise of the bruising of the serpent’s head, and implied by the eternal inheritance assured to Abraham and his seed. Therefore, “eternal life” (Aionion Life) is a most appropriate and clear phrase to use in regard to our future reward of immortality. The Scriptures provide no distinction in which to have a present application of “*zoe aionios*”, as opposed to its only appropriate application as the future reward. And, the Scriptures clearly reveal the appropriate phrases to use in regard to the believer’s current status - e.g. “in Christ”, “heirs”, “citizens”, “constituted righteous”, “sons of God”, “free”, etc. There is no justification to misapply the term “eternal life” to the believer’s present position in Christ.

Summary

1. Eternal life and immortality are synonymous terms.
2. Eternal life/immortality is indicative of only one thing - the condition of living forever in incorruptible bodies.
3. It is not Scriptural for us to use the term “eternal life” in reference to current possession “legally”, “spiritually” or literally.
4. Eternal life is an acceptable and clear way of referring to our future reward.
5. Eternal or “age lasting” life is not a description of our current position or status in Christ.
6. We are “heirs” of eternal life, and though it is promised it is a matter of hope not possession.
7. The eternal life/immortality we hope for, and is promised to us if we are faithful, is currently “hid with Christ” and to be rewarded to us upon acceptance at the Judgment Seat.

Brothers and Sisters, may eternal life/immortality be granted to each and every one of us. Let not the experimentation and over intellectualization being placed upon this supreme element of our hope sway us from the simple truths before us. This subject of eternal life is not to be delegated to the “iron sharpeneth iron” category, as if it is an area where no solid conclusions can be reached, or as if we are still searching for the Truth of the matter. Among true believers, there has never been room for debate on the subject. May the reader comprehend this matter as a vital and fundamental truth without allowance for variation - being at the very core of “*the faith delivered once unto the saints*.” Remember, “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Prov. 23:23).

A. Thomas

“Numbers are no mark, that you will right be found;
A few were saved in the Ark, for many millions drown’d.”

SEALED IN THEIR FOREHEADS

Revelation 7:1-5,9,13

The despicable practices of mankind seem to virtually persist forever in this wicked world. This wickedness and its allure have taken its toll among those who claim to hold to the Truth. Some have forsaken their beliefs claiming to have found more appealing or less demanding forms of religion. Some have found satisfaction in materialism, overcome by godless pleasures with their transitory fulfillment of fleshly desires. Some have wrested Scripture to conform to misguided perceptions of fundamental truths. All these have succumbed to influences from within and without the ecclesia. John reminds us that all these things are of the world and are to pass away no matter how we attempt to rationalize our fleshly based convictions and motives. *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever”* (1st John 2:15-17).

Also we must remind ourselves *“... when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death”* (Romans 7:5). As a covenanted people we are to have moved beyond these lusts into the light that should bring forth only the fruit of the spirit in us. These are characteristics of Christ that are to be manifested through us to the world around us and our brethren. We cannot neglect one of the most straightforward admonitions in the Spirit Word that apply to those who have put off Adam and become members of the body of Christ: *“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God* (1st Cor. 6:9-11).

Sadly, these days, iniquitous influences from within almost equal those from without the body of Christ. As members of the body of Christ, we have to ask ourselves daily if we are building on that form of faithfulness that defines the life of those who have been called out of this world of darkness or, are we lukewarm spiritually, neither hot nor cold; a condition repugnant to Christ. This examining is more urgent than ever because the return of Christ is about to take place. He stands at the very threshold of the heavens and will soon *“rend the heavens, ... (and) come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence.”* (Isaiah 64:1).

It has been said before and it is worth repeating that if we are waiting for some particular sign that will point to the return of Christ, or that will alert us to prepare ourselves for his coming, all we need do is pick up a newspaper or take a good look at the Sodomite world that surrounds us. The time is now! We live in Babylon; an atrocious Babylon so perverse that iniquity surely has overrun the cup and is flowing down onto all peoples of the earth. Time, as we conceive it, is about to end and we do not have to wait for further developments before Christ comes, unseen by the world, to judge his Household.

In this wilderness of lapsed truth and amorality, doctrine and traditional Christadelphian belief are routinely compromised simply for the sake of a Babylonish garment. Scripture testifies: *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears”* (2nd Timothy 4:3). Mankind’s proneness to evil and tendency towards folly rather than the truth has been the characteristic of all generations since Adam. The spirit of Jezebel, the Balaamites and Nicolaitanes is alive and thriving in these last days.

When we consider these things we must by all means be careful to NOT judge others to condemnation or lose our objectivity that must be based on our Scriptural training. This is a difficult task when we behold outrageous activities of the world even among the members of our Body, the Body of Christ. We know, *“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity”* (2nd Timothy 2:19). These were Paul’s words spoken against certain errorists creeping in to destroy the Truth and its Divine principles. In the Laodicean age two separate communities of “Christians” arose. True Christianity strove against the Christianity of Constantine and the “Christianizing” of the Roman Empire, the dominant power of the world.

Resisting Apostasy

Brother Thomas in *Eureka* speaks of the early days of the ecclesia. His words reflect the lack of spiritual patience evident through the ages:

“In the beginning, the members of this body were brethren, the sons of the Deity; and consequently, the brethren of Jesus Christ. There were no sects, nor any Catholic or Protestant churches. But all the brethren were of one mind and disposition; or, in the words of Luke, “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul;” an original unity to which the Brethren of the Ecclesia in all ages and generations, are earnestly exhorted, both by their Elder Brother and Lord, and his apostles. “Holy Father,” said he, “keep through thine own name those (the apostles) whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are, sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. I pray for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us ... that they may be made perfect in one” (John 17).

He makes these statements in his discussion on the seventh chapter of the Apocalypse. It is very appropriate that these events he mentioned naturally follow closely the events of the sixth seal of the previous chapter, which saw the taking away of the Power which hindered the revelation of the Man of Sin. It was important in that the “Christianity” as exhibited in power established by Constantine was not the true Christianity, rather, **true believers were constituted ‘sealed in the forehead’**. They separated themselves not only from the false Christians but from the governmental functions and authorities as well. We will later discuss in a little more detail the sealing of the 144,000 as related to these believers and ourselves as latter day Christadelphians. But, we should realize, that as members of the anointed one’s ecclesia, true believers, we have been sealed in the forehead with the Truth of Yahweh. The ultimate truth of the universe and of all creation and more knowledge is to come with glorification; knowledge of the deepest secrets of creation. Think on these things.

These trying times come as no mystery to true students of Scripture but some among us must have forgotten that vital points of doctrinal truth and morality are not open to alteration because *“In Him (God) is no variableness or shadow of turning”* (James 1:17). In words reminiscent of the times in which we live, brother Thomas refers to this as “the work of superseding the real, literal and true by the fictitious and imaginary, which they call the “spiritual” or “allegorical” until at length...everything is resolved into feeling and impressions, and the testimony of the Deity...is practically ignored.” His description of the evils of the apostasy in the first and second century, in some instances, read like a description of modern day Christadelphia.

Unbelievably some Christadelphians are not even familiar with the titles of some of our most valued expositions. Do these same folks read their Bible and know what is comprehended in God’s Truth? Does this all relate to a common problem? If not, why are so many perverting the Truth and some actually leaving the body of Christ? We can safely assume that some who are leaving or altering established Scriptural principles, simply do not have a solid foundation in the Bible; or some fall into what is actually the ancient pointless quest of searching for something new. Some are satisfied with the limited depth of knowledge they possess and consider that level of belief sufficient to know God in the way He requires. Some would actually try Deity and attempt to live lives balanced between His Word and the allurements and satisfactions of the flesh. In trying to keep objectivity in all our attempts to understand these trying times, the parable of the faithful and evil servants comes to mind:

Even though actually directed to the Jews before the destruction of Jerusalem, I believe we can also apply some of the principle to our times. Jesus reminds us earlier in the chapter that *“no one knows about that day or hour not even the angels in heaven nor the Son but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah so it will be so shall also the coming of the Son of man be...Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall*

say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 24:44-51. English Revised Version. Cambridge Press, 1884).

Now all these things we’ve mentioned are not in themselves necessarily evil but we must be careful in dealing with the tendencies of human nature. We all have a natural inclination to glory in personal achievement in the Truth (speaking, writing, etc.) relishing the praise that goes along with it. True scriptural humility is a difficult concept to understand and to actualize in our lives. However, speakers and writers must do their utmost to master this Christ-like trait, knowing that they hold the greater responsibility and possible condemnation. True humility is rare. James’ advise is sound and should always be foremost in our minds as speakers, writers or any prominent member of an ecclesia: *“Finally my brethren, be not many masters (teachers - NIV), knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation”* (James 3:1).

The Laodicean Epoch

As we consider these things, the cautionary exhortations of Scripture must be our guide. If we follow the line of thinking that each ecclesial epoch in the Apocalypse corresponds historically and contemporarily with the ecclesia in general, these significations can impart real meaning to us and exhort us to a stronger dedication to the Spirit Word, and the responsibilities required to be fulfilled in this probation by Servants of Deity - the Ecclesia. In the Apocalypse the ecclesia is symbolized as a persecuted woman; by the 144,000, by the Temple of Deity, the Holy City, and by the Lamb’s Wife made ready. In the Apocalypse the seventh chapter is intimately connected to those who are truly faithful to the Word of God. This seventh chapter sees the continuation of the word and looks prophetically at the return of Christ with the ultimate result of sealing the 144,000 in their foreheads. Afterwards is seen a great multitude of the Redeemed celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles.

Brother Thomas says, “The Laodicean Stage is parallel with the Seventh Seal from its opening to the fall of Babylon to the appearing of the “Ancient of Days.” (Eureka, Vol. 2, p. 294.). The time period is A.D. 324 to A.D. 1864-8, or thereabout. In this opening period of the Seventh Seal, judgment was restrained, not for the sake of the Laodiceans, but on account of the sealing angel’s work among believers.

Beginning in the seventh chapter, four angels stand at the four corners of the earth, restraining the four winds of the earth, *“that a wind blow not against the earth, nor against the sea, nor against any tree.”* Wind signifies trouble in the earth in the form of war. This verse points to the period of peace after the storm of Constantine’s ascension to power, which allowed for the establishment and growth of the politically ambitious and apostate Roman Catholic Church. So, the restraining of the winds from the four corners of the earth represent a restraint of human unrest typically manifest in wars and political turbulence. This, of course, is a divine restraint, causing peace, that the situation on the earth may be favorable for the performance of the work of the

sealing of the servants of God. The Truth is the seal of the living God (Job 33:16; 2nd Cor. 1:21-22).

In the signification of this chapter John saw a fifth angel besides the four angel-powers standing at the four corners of the earth restraining the four winds. “Of this angel, he says, *anabanta apo anatoles anatoles heliou, having ascended from sun’s rising*. He did not see him, as the AV would lead us to suppose, *in the act of ascending* from sun’s rising; but having ascended at some previous epoch not indicated in this scene, he sees him at the expiration of the sixth seal, in possession of a *certain seal*, and about to make use of it in all the period the winds are restrained from blowing upon the arena of his operations” (Eureka, vol. 2, Logos ed., pp. 296, 297).

In Deity’s address to the four angels he commands them not to injure anything, “...*hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, while we may have sealed the servants of our Deity in their foreheads*” (Apoc.7:3). Here the pronouns indicate a plurality (according to bro. Thomas) associated in the sealing operation upon the foreheads of men. The agency divinely appointed to execute this work after the inspired apostles and their inspired brothers of the first century were long removed from the scene, was the same agency described by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:1-2: “...*be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*” We may wonder, as brother Thomas did, if there were competent men able to spread the true gospel in this Laodicean epoch. In fact there were a class of true believers, Brethren of Christ, Christadelphians, who refused affiliation with the “Fellowservants and the Holy Apostolic Church.” They were the little strength, the few names, and the loved, and convinced and the instructed in righteousness.”

The Divinely impressed seal

A seal is an implement for making an official mark of identification or authentication on a prepared surface. Wherever a particular seal is impressed, it makes the same mark. If the substance with which it is brought into contact is not suitable then no impression is made. The seal mark is the state of mind caused by the knowledge of the gospel. The forehead is the symbol of understanding and so to be sealed in the forehead is to come to an understanding of the gospel. The literal example helps us to comprehend the spiritual. Paul says, “*In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory*” (Ephesians 1:13-14).

The Deity has His own device which He himself engraved upon His own seal, the counterpart or mark of which is transferred to the foreheads of those who are impressible (good and honest hearts), and they therefore become his servants; sealed in the heart with the truth of Deity. What a blessing to be counted among the sealed! “*The Deity openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction*” (Job 33:16). Brother Thomas says: “From this we learn that *sealing* has to do with *teaching*, and

consequently, as the seal of the Deity is applied to a surface capable of thinking, his seal is *that which impresses his ideas, or “thoughts and ways,”* upon the brains of his creatures.” (Eureka, Vol. 2, p. 304).

So, we can say that all true servants of Deity are “sealed in their foreheads,” which symbolically identifies with their intellects and affections; with their integrity and with their love for Yeshua, the Christ. He himself was sealed and this future sealing was revealed to the prophet Daniel by the Spirit in chapter 9:24. Yeshua was impressed with the work he had to do by the sealing he received directly of the Deity.

To quote brother Thomas once more: “...all the true servants of Deity are sealed in their foreheads, which hieroglyphically are symbolical of their intellects and affections. Christ himself was sealed (Acts 10:38)...Now as Jesus himself was sealed he was not only able to do works of power but... was able to speak words...of spirit and life that only the sealed can do. From this we know that sealing has to do with teaching and instruction...consequently as the seal of the Deity is applied to a surface capable of thinking, his seal is that which impressed his ideas, or thought and ways, upon the brains of his creatures” (Eureka. Vol.2, Logos ed. p. 306).

We have to know that in the case of Jesus and the Apostles, there were no writings from which they could learn mysteries hidden for ages. They were sealed directly by Deity. When men and women are sealed they are sanctified, “*Sanctify them by thy truth: thy word is truth.*” John says: “*The Eternal Spirit is the Truth.*” “To be sealed then, by the truth is to be sealed by the Eternal Spirit; and to be sealed by the Spirit is to be sealed by the truth; and he that is ignorant of the teaching of Jesus and the apostles, which was in strict harmony with the prophets, is not sealed at all, however pious or religious he may be” (Eureka. Vol. 2, p. 307).

The 144,000

How do these facts of sealing relate to our earlier comments? There are several elements we could discuss but consider this: We are recipients of a gift. This gift is not given to everyone who lives, but only to ones who meet certain “specifications.” “*Ye trusted in Christ after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of his glory.*” When we search our individual conscious as one who has been sealed by knowledge imparted by the Eternal Spirit, how do we measure up to the standard set by our Lord Jesus Christ because we know that his feet are literally soon to stand upon this earth.

In regards to the 144,000 sealed, this number represents the entire number of the redeemed (Apoc. 14:3). The number, as is typical of the Apocalypse, is symbolic. It represents more not less than the actual number. It represents those acquired by the Lamb by a ransom. We are recipients of the benefits of that ransom. The real number we are told in Apocalypse 7:9 is “*a great multitude which no man can number.*” The 144,000 is a representative number of a much larger multitude, not less, but more, which Deity alone can define. In the counting of the number saved, He will, therefore,

remember exactly how many he has created after the likeness of His Son Jesus. There is a mystery of Deity concealed in this number. A fascinating and enlightening study awaits those who desire to pursue this in more detail.

Conclusion

As sealed servants of Deity we have an opportunity to be part of that system in which there will be no death, no pain, no sorrow, no hypocrites or liars. Our benevolent Creator has offered ‘*glory, honor, incorruptibility, and eternal life*’ with an ‘*inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled and that shall never fade away.*’ Yahweh invites us all and desires that all His servants prove by their conduct and dedication to His Spirit Word that the impression sealed on our foreheads is valid. He desires that by our conduct we prove ourselves worthy to inherit a nature that is incorruptible, blessed with an understanding of all the mysteries of Deity and the universe.

“Would you not be arrayed in splendor which will excel the glory of the Sun? Would you not be exalted to the dignity of associate kings with the glorious monarch of the Future Age? Would you not be invested with an incorruptible life that you may eternally enjoy ‘inheritance in the light’ which is to be revealed at the appearing ‘of the bright and morning star’? Let then the dispositions of the ancient Christians (brethren in Christ) be revived in us, their descendants; and let us forsake our disobedience, and return to the wisdom of just persons; and thus the Truth will make of us a people prepared for the Lord” (Faith in the Last Days. John Thomas, p. 314).

Ronnie Sanders

What We Once Were

“Christadelphians used to get together, socialize and talk on things of common interest, particularly the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ – the gospel that had separated them from the ways and doctrines of the church. They did not have nor did they need any headquarters, organization, any banking system in which to entrust their contributory funds, any seminars with “trained” pastors, any requests for bequests, any massive traveling to and fro with expenses paid from the treasury, and foreign “missionaries,” any booths at county fairs, any recruiting and brainwashing of the young people into elite groups, any bumper stickers or “smile” buttons to wear. They were simple, unsophisticated, sincere people who looked for the coming of the Master and were concerned about holding fast to the form of sound doctrine which included a walk worthy of such a high calling. Occasionally they reported of a new baptism of one who had been a work associate or neighbor of one of the believers. Although there was no utopia, they rejoiced in the Truth and leaned on each other for moral and spiritual strength. On this side of the Atlantic, Brother Thomas Williams was held in high esteem as a brother who loved the Truth and did his best to defend it by spoken and written word against all would-be seducers. How they loved Brother Williams. And how we miss his kind today.” (Bro. James Stanton, in regard to the growing, negative influences of WCF. Sanctuary-Keeper, Feb. 1989, pp.138,139.)

THE POWER OF EPHESIANS

A Summary of Doctrinal Principles

In our last installment we covered Ephesians 2, verses 1–10 on the subjects of the natural state of man, grace and works.

In the balance of this chapter (verses 11–22) Paul presents the relationship of a man to God in a manner that can be fully appreciated only by one who has a sound grasp of Deity’s plan of salvation. These verses blend the concepts regarding Jew and Gentile, circumcision and uncircumcision, alienation and citizenship, and strangers and friends (and others) all together in a few simple sentences. Yet, the principles involved in this short chapter encompass the entire scope of God’s plan of salvation for mankind. Following is a list to consider:

1. Jew and Gentile
2. Circumcision and uncircumcision
3. In Christ and out of Christ
4. Covenants of promise
5. Aliens and citizens
6. Strangers and friends
7. With God and without God

A person not acquainted with God’s plan of salvation must find verses 11-22 perplexing. But, even for those of us well acquainted with what Paul is driving at, the manner in which some phrases are combined requires close study. Paul does not deal with each of the points listed above in chronological order. If we put them in chronological order as introduced in Scripture we end up with the following:

1. Covenants of promise (Abraham, Genesis 14)
2. Circumcision and uncircumcision (Abraham, Genesis 17)
3. Jew and Gentile (Post Jacob)
4. Aliens and Citizens (Concept existed under Mosaic Law; continues in Christ)
5. Strangers and friends (Concept existed under Mosaic Law; continues in Christ)
6. Hope and no hope (Concept existed under Mosaic Law; continues in Christ)
7. In Christ and out-of-Christ (Principle of covenant relationship existed under Mosaic Law; continues in Christ)

As Bible students, we can appreciate the harmony that exists between each of the items and the words “in Christ.” All deal with a slightly different perspective of the same thing - the wonderful hope and promises God has provided for those that love Him. As we pursue these issues, we also want to keep in mind the words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman in John 4:22, for each issue has its base in the Hope of Israel.

*“You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship,
for salvation is of the Jews.”*

We will next take a look at each of the seven points in our list as it relates to the words “in Christ.”

IN CHRIST AND WITHOUT CHRIST

The words “in Christ” appears together 77 times in the New Testament. The words “without Christ” appear once. As we know, the phrase “in Christ” incorporates a number of very important doctrinal positions. We also realize most of Christianity is completely astray on these doctrines. There are a number of relationships between the “in Christ” position and the other six points, all involving access to the hope of salvation.

1. Covenants of Promise

All those who have ever lived on earth have either been “in” or “out” of a relationship with the covenants of promise. In patriarchal times, Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God, is a good example of an individual who was in such a relationship even though we do not have all the details of his situation. For us, being baptized into Christ has generated the relationship with our Creator that links us to the Covenants of Promise.

The Patriarchs were brought into relationship with God through faith and sacrifice. Later, under the Mosaic Law, this relationship was created through circumcision, faith, and sacrifice. The only way Gentiles ever had the opportunity to be gathered into the “in” position before Christ was to become an adopted Jew. Interestingly, we also have been the subjects of an adoption process as Paul points out in Galatians 4: 1-7:

“Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

2. Circumcision and Uncircumcision

Circumcision and uncircumcision relates to God’s relations with mankind on an individual level. Although the rite of circumcision is no longer mandated for entry into relationship with God, the practice represents a change of position still applicable. The Israelite was prohibited from membership in the congregation of Israel if he had not been circumcised. Circumcision was the beginning point and without it no relationship with God could ever be established. This rite had to be later followed by the offering of sacrifices with understanding for an Israelite’s relationship with God to be fully consummated.

Our initial entry point of baptism occurs at a much older age and blends the two stages of the ancient practice together in one step. The act is baptism, a step that has to be accompanied by understanding and followed by a life of sacrificial offerings in the form of obedience to the commands of God. The relationship between the practices God ordained of old for entry into Covenant Relationship and those existing today for our passage “into Christ” result in the same wonderful, blessed position of being related to the Covenants of Promise.

3. Jew and Gentile

The terms Jew and Gentile relate to God’s relations with mankind on a racial or national level. Many peoples and races are referred to in the Scriptures. Examples are the Assyrians, Hittites, Edomites, Moabites, Greeks, Romans and others. The sons of Jacob were called Israelites in early Bible history. The term Jew came into being gradually and is found in the book of Esther as well as 2 Kings 16:6 - *“At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.”*

One source we reviewed provides the following information regarding the word “Jew”: *“The term ‘Jew’ originally described an inhabitant of Judah (II Kings 16:6) and as such was employed in contemporary Assyrian texts (Laudaia) dating at least from the eighth century B.C. The New Bible Dictionary indicates that “the term ‘Jew’ was commonly used by non-Jews to refer to the Hebrews, or descendants of Abraham in general.” By New Testament times the plural “Jews” had become a familiar term for all Israelites.”*

Bible students realize that the terms Israelite, Hebrew and Jew are, for all practical purposes, interchangeable, and when Paul sets up the Jew/Gentile contrast the reason is to draw attention to the fact that only the Jews originally had access to the Covenants of Promise. Acceptance into the Household of God for the ancient Jew and ourselves is a process of adoption, for we are not natural sons of God as was Christ. Paul deals with this in Romans 8:23, where he says: *“Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.”*

There was no entrance into God’s household outside of Israel “to whom pertaineth the adoption” before the appearance of our Lord and Master Jesus the Christ. Dealing with the situation after Christ, Paul refers to our own situation and makes the point about our adoption as being sons of God in Galatians 4:5, where he says, *“Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath*

sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

In all these things we see the connecting thread of being "in" or "out" of relationship with God. The Jews (or Israelites), as the descendants of those to whom the promises were made, held an exclusive position as the only nation or people with access to God. All other nations and peoples could only come to God by going through Israel. This was never a very popular option as so dramatically evidenced by Naaman the Syrian in 2 Kings 5: 1-12.

4. Aliens and Citizens

Here again, the position concept of alienage and citizenship revolves around the "in" and "out" position in relationship to God. The word alien in the Greek used in Ephesians 2:12 is *apollatrioo*, and it means "separated away from, belonging to another, foreign." This is a very accurate description of the Gentile position in relation to the Covenants of Promise, as God had made it clear the Gentile was a foreigner and had no association with those promises.

In the 12th verse, speaking in a somewhat poetic manner, Paul equates being without Christ as being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. We realize he is blending together in this statement the old and the new, as the historic "Hope of Israel" is to be realized through the work of Christ in the building up of "Spiritual Israel." Both can be symbolically combined in this manner as the end result of both is the same thing – fulfillment of the covenant promises.

An alien becomes a citizen by being adopted by his new country. Once adopted, he is a citizen of the new commonwealth in which he resides, and is a potential recipient of the favors of his new government. Note the use of the word potential, for if the citizen does not follow the rules of his new country he will not receive the favors. This is an important point to think about when considering our own conduct and position in "Spiritual Israel."

The newly adopted citizen's "in" relationship with his adoptive country is similar to the situation where those baptized into Christ become citizens of the "Spiritual Commonwealth of Israel." As a result of this adoption process they are no longer separated from the Covenant Promises and are in a position to receive the benefits their new body politic can bestow on them – immortality (also called eternal life, one and the same thing) and a role in God's Kingdom.

5. Strangers and Friends

The word "stranger" is used 82 times in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. In almost every case it refers to a person who was not an Israelite, and whose position, as defined by God, was outside of covenant relationship. (Deut. 23:7 is an example of one exception.) The position of strangers residing in the land of Israel as related to God was definitively dealt with in Exodus 12:43. Theirs was undecidedly an "out" position unless they followed the process for adoption.

"And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof: But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you."

In contrast to the stranger, Scripture refers to Abraham, chief heir of the promises, as a friend of God.

- 2 Chron. 20:7 - *"Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?"*
- Isaiah 41:8 - *"But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away."*
- James 2:23 - *"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."*

Regarding our own position, we have the very comforting words of the Lord found in John 15:13-15: *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."*

By entering "into" Him, we have joined that group of people he calls His friends. And the reward that is laid up for his friends, those that love Him, is described in 1 Cor. 2:9: *"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."*

6. Hope and No Hope

The word "hope" appears 59 times starting in the book of Acts through Revelation. The word is used only once in the gospels and does not refer to the Hope of Israel in that case.

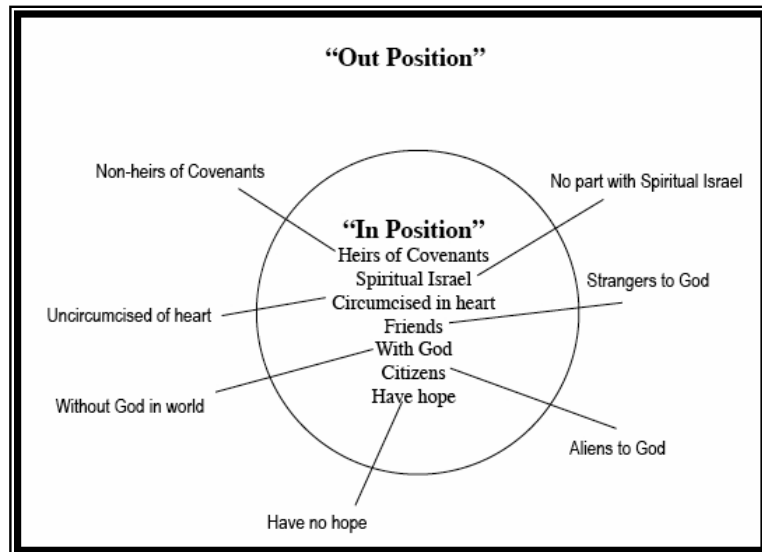
Those "in Christ" have "hope" as Paul teaches in the following verses. The "hope" is clearly belief and confidence in a resurrection from the dead and the hope of participating in the benefits of the Covenant Promises.

- Acts 28:20 - "For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain".
- Acts 23:6 - "But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question."
- Acts 26:6 - "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"

In contrast, those "outside" Christ have no part in this hope, a point scripture clearly defines in the following verses:

- 1Thess. 4:13 - "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."
- Ephesians 2:13 - "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

As scripture tells us in 1 Corinthians 2:9, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."



Summary

The second chapter of Ephesians is so powerful because it encompasses all of the fundamental issues related to our hope of salvation. If we look at the Covenants of Promise as being at the center of a large circle, we can see all the "in" items we have considered appear within the circle where they are part-and-parcel with the concept of "in Christ." All those we considered as being "out" are placed without the circle and therefore outside Christ. As covenanted individuals we are "in Christ," part of Spiritual Israel, citizens of the household of God, friends of the Master and hold a vibrant hope—a hope that does not exist in the natural order of things upon this planet.

The accompanying illustration (previous page) represents the comparisons we have been making in graphic form. All the items inside the circle can be readily seen to represent the same thing – a relationship to the Covenants of Promise and their fulfillment in the Kingdom of God. Items outside the circle show those items cut off from any association with hope.

We should soberly reflect on our position "in Christ" and what it entails. Are we living up to our duties as citizens and friends of the Master? "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" Rev. 2:7.

Joe Garvey

IS JESUS CHRIST REIGNING AS KING NOW?

The Truth in Contrast to Erroneous Views

Should I be asked at the present time if Jesus Christ is now a king, I would have the same difficulty saying "no" that I would have if asked if Abraham was a "father of many nations" at the time that God spoke to him as recorded in Genesis 17: 5. That was said at a time when Abraham had only Ishmael for his son, and certainly not "many nations". That is because of the fact that God, once He has planned an event and has foretold it, speaks of it in advance as though it was already a literal, physical fact. God planned and foretold the fact that Jesus would one day reign over the entire earth as King (Zech. 14: 9), just as certainly as He planned and foretold "many nations" descending from the loins of Abraham. In such cases, God speaks of "things that be not, as though they already were" (Romans 4: 17). Therefore, finding a reference that speaks of Jesus as a king does not prove that he is reigning as a king as yet any more than knowing that Abraham was "a father of many nation" as soon as God promised that to him proves that any one of those nations were at that time, physically dwelling in the land which they would one day inhabit.

Did Jesus set up a kingdom during his first advent on the earth? It is quite easy to say that he did. Yet, it is impossible to present one passage in the New Testament that says he did. Not one Biblical writer defines a kingdom in existence now, while many passages of Scripture define and describes the kingdom that Jesus will establish upon his return to the earth. The Greek term βασιλευο (*basileuo*) occurs 23 times in the New Testament where it is translated “reign” as in a king reigning. Yet in not one instance is Christ said to be reigning over a kingdom at the present time. All references to a reign of Jesus are in the future tense. If that is not true, we ask our brethren to present even one such passage for our consideration that teaches otherwise. That responsibility rests upon anyone who claims that Jesus is reigning as king now, and Paul exhorts us to “prove all things”. I might claim that Jesus reigns as king now, but I confess there is not one passage that I can present that would prove my claim.

The doctrine is spreading rapidly in Christadelphia that Jesus set up a kingdom during his first advent and is presently reigning over that phantom kingdom. Various passages are presented that assume that he said that he was about to set up such a kingdom two thousand years ago. Yet not one disciple or apostle ever made reference to a kingdom that Jesus had already set up. Neither did one of the Biblical writers ever declare that Jesus is now reigning. Again, every mention of the reign of Jesus over a kingdom pertains to the future.

God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream the course of the kingdoms of men relative to the plan and purpose of God (Daniel 2nd chapter), and several other chapters also address that matter. God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar that only one, particular kingdom of God was in God’s purpose to stand against the kingdoms of men, and that kingdom was to be set up “in the days of these kings”. Revelation 17: 12-14 addresses the same kings and their intention as well as the destruction that was predicted. The passage also draws our attention to the stone that was to smite the image. The prophesy does not even intimate that over the course of time God would propose and establish more than one kingdom of God than the one that will cause all kingdoms to become the kingdom of God and Christ (Revelation 11: 15). It is a truth that, that one kingdom is the kingdom of Israel restored that will grow to fill the whole earth (Daniel 2: 35). It is an irrefutable truth that, that kingdom had not been restored at the time Jesus ascended to his Father’s right hand, for as he was about to ascend he told his anxious apostles that the time of the restoration was completely in his Father’s hands, and was unknown even to Jesus himself. Apply the truth of Amos 3: 7 to these facts and realize how true it is that we would find a second kingdom prophesied, only if it actually had been in God’s plan and purpose, which it so apparently was not.

God showed Nebuchadnezzar a great image that represented the kingdoms of men over the balance of history of man. From the head of gold that represented Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian kingdom in 600 B.C., to the ten toes of iron and clay representing the end time of the fourth kingdom - transpiring over 2600 years. If

Jesus had set up a kingdom during his first advent, Daniel should have described two “kingdoms of God” having shown up over the course of time, one in the area of the abdomen area and another at the end time. However, he described only one kingdom of God in the toe period of the image, the very time in which we all are living, and more than 2600 years from the time of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. It is an absolute error that two kingdoms of God were to be seen over that 2600 year period of time.

Matthew 3: 2 –John came saying, “The kingdom is at hand.”

By rightly dividing words of truth, we will surely arrive at the truth that has been known in Christadelphia by many, that John here was speaking of the person of the Messiah whose way he was preparing. The Emphatic Diaglott renders verse two **“Reform! Because the Royal Majesty of the heavens has approached.”** This rendering is totally consistent with John’s defined purpose to prepare the way before Christ. John expands on the theme of the approaching of Jesus in verses 11-12, showing the importance of adherence to the term “reform”. It was because the person of whom he spoke was so worthy that John said that he himself was not worthy to bear; and that the Majestic one’s fan was in his hand to purge his floor and gather his wheat. This same pattern is consistently repeated in Luke 3: 2-17. Luke 3: 15 clearly shows that the people were very concerned as to whether John was the Christ, the anointed one, and so it was proper that John should speak of the person of one coming after him. The matter of the kingdom is not shown to be relevant in any of the accounts. In not one of the other accounts did John speak of the setting up of the kingdom itself at that epoch of time. The person of the anointed one was the focus of the entire passage.

Even should we accept the unlikely hypothesis that John spoke of the kingdom itself “being at hand” or that it was the time for the setting up of the kingdom, that conclusion is shown to without warrant when we consider that Peter said in I Peter 4: 7, “The end of all things is at hand”. Of course the phrase “all things” is qualified by Acts 3: 21 which shows that “all things” sometimes refers only to that which was foretold to be scheduled for attention. Therefore, Peter said that the time for all things that are planned to end is at hand. Did Peter mean that the ending of “all things” was about to happen at the very time he was writing? Certainly not, for that was two thousand years ago and many things are still in existence that God has from the beginning of the history of man planned to end. However, let us show ourselves a workman that needeth not to be ashamed (II Tim. 2: 15), and confess the apparent truth that John clearly was speaking of the king and not the kingdom in Matthew 3: 2.

With all the claims regarding Jesus having set up a kingdom at his first advent, no proponent of such a theory has ever defined for us such a kingdom. It is very easy to define the kingdom that God set up at the beginning of Israel’s history; and the kingdom that Jesus will set up at the time he returns to the earth. However, no one seems to be able to define a kingdom that Jesus is supposed to have “set up” two thousand years ago with a definition that would coincide with the Biblical concept of a kingdom.

Also, if Jesus did “set up” a kingdom two thousand years ago, it is logical that Jesus must have been for the last two thousand years, reigning over that “kingdom”. Can anyone define for us, any entity over which Jesus has been “reigning” for two thousand years other than the ecclesia? If anyone ventures to describe the ecclesia for us, saying that the ecclesia is the kingdom that Jesus “set up two thousand years ago”, let everyone take notice of the fact of the error of the church/kingdom theory that exists in our midst. As for the term, “reign”, shall we understand the “reign” regarding any activity in which Jesus has been occupied over these two thousand years, to be in any way similar to the meaning of the term in Luke 1: 33 where Jesus is foretold to “reign over the house of Jacob forever”? Again, it is easy to define the term “reign” relative to the promise of Gabriel in Luke 1: 33. Let us see a definition of the term relative to the reign of Jesus over any entity for the last two thousand years.

Matthew 2: 2: “Where is he that is born King of the Jews?”

This passage is no help to the proponent of the present kingdom theory. Anyone who believes that Jesus was a reigning as a king when he was born, needs to remember that they themselves admit that Jesus had no kingdom when he was born when they claim regarding Matthew 3: 2, that the kingdom was “at hand” just before Jesus was baptized at about the age of 30 years. That, being 30 years after his birth, testifies to the fact that he had no kingdom when he was born, yet was referred to as a king. Let it be remembered also that the father of the theory says in his book “The Judaizers” that his first choice for a date for the kingdom being set up, was when Jesus rose from the dead. His second choice, he said, was at his baptism. Therefore, Jesus was referred to as “The King of the Jews” thirty years or more before the author believed that he had a kingdom. This proves the point of Romans 4:17 that verifies that future things are spoken about as though they are already a fact.

Luke 22: 28-30

A very well read and studious brother recently called me and referred me to this passage and asked if I thought that some “kingdom now” believers perhaps viewed this passage to be discussing a kingdom that Jesus had just recently set up, a kingdom which had just been appointed to Jesus. I answered that I had never witnessed such a meaning being placed on the passage. He and I discussed the reasons why this passage could not refer to a different kingdom than the one over which Jesus was to reign subsequent to his return to the earth, and when Jesus sits on the throne of David over the restored kingdom of Israel. Let us ask this question, “why cannot the kingdom to which Jesus refers in this passage be a different kingdom than the one referred to in Matt. 25: 31 and Matt. 19: 27-29?”

First of all, it must be realized and admitted that Luke 22:30 speaks of the apostles judging the 12 tribes of Israel just as certainly as does Matt. 19: 27-28. It is also a truth that Matt. 19: 28 declares that when the apostles sit on 12 thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel is “**in the regeneration**”, when also the Son of man will then sit on “**the throne of his glory**”. It so happens that Matthew 25: 31 also declares

that the time in which the Son of man sits on the throne of his glory is also the time when he comes in his glory with all the holy angels. That is, without question, still in the future and did not refer to a kingdom recently set up by Jesus at his first advent. Jesus was, therefore, referring to a future kingdom with which he shall return, and at which time he will build again the throne of David (Acts 15: 13-18).

Psalms 110:1

Is the earth the footstool of Jesus yet? In Isaiah 66: 1 God declared that the earth was His own footstool. In Psalms 110:1 we are told that Jesus was invited to sit at God’s right hand until the earth is made Christ’s footstool. Upon reading that entire chapter, we are made aware that Jesus returns to the earth and smites the nations prior to the earth becoming his footstool.

2nd Timothy 4:1

Christ’s only kingdom is future, not present. Notice 2nd Timothy 4: 1, Jesus will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and **his** (Christ’s) kingdom. All must admit that this is future. Is there one passage to which anyone can direct us that speaks of any kingdom at present that is Christ’s kingdom? No! There is not one such passage.

1st Corinthians 15:25

Christ must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet (1st Corinthians. 15: 25). However, verse 24 informs us that the time in which that becomes a fact is described as “the end”, and that end was shown by Paul to be yet future from 50 AD, which was the era in which that epistle was written.

Amos 3:7

In Amos 3: 7 we are informed that God will do nothing unless He first shows it to the prophets. We see an abundance of Biblical references of the future kingdom that the prophets describe and guarantee. Yet not one prophet ever indicated some phantom kingdom that the Messiah would establish at his first advent, or that Jesus would reign over before the kingdoms of men are destroyed (Revelation 11: 15). Neither did any Bible writer refer back to a kingdom that Jesus established while on earth.

Isaiah 9:6,7

Isaiah 9: 6-7 speaks of a kingdom over which the son that was to be born (Christ), would rule. It even mentions that it would be ruled from the throne of David which is now fallen down. Acts 15: 13-18 says that Jesus will rebuild that throne of David when he returns to the earth. Therefore, Jesus is not yet ruling over that kingdom. Do the Scriptures ever make reference to a different Kingdom of God, or Kingdom of Christ? No! Such a kingdom is only in the minds of some men.

Luke 1: 32

The angel Gabriel told Mary: “The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Jesus was never promised any other kingdom.

Again, in Acts 15: 16, Jesus speaks of returning, and building again David's throne and says, "**I will set it up**". He did not say this of any other kingdom.

Isaiah 11:1-10

In Isaiah 11: 1-10, the future kingdom of God is described in beautiful detail. Verse 2 says that he (Jesus) will sit and reign in the fear of the Lord. Then beautiful conditions for the earth are clearly described. However, verse 9 declares that this is in a time when they will not hurt nor destroy in his holy mountain or kingdom, and at a time when the earth is as full of the knowledge of the Lord as the sea is full of water. Those conditions do not exist yet, so the time is not now. Again, where is any other kingdom described and foretold?

Zechariah 6:13-14

In Zechariah 6: 13-14 we are told when Jesus will sit on his throne. It is when he builds the Temple of the Lord. It is said in that passage that he will sit and rule upon his throne, and shall be a priest upon his throne. This is all yet future. Again, no kingdom or ruler ship is in view other than what shall be at the return of our savior.

Matthew 25:31

In Matthew 25: 31 we are informed, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, **then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.**" This is yet future since Jesus has not yet come in his glory with all the holy angels.

Luke 19: 12

"A certain nobleman (Christ) went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and return." Jesus did not come in a kingdom when he came the first time. Therefore, his second appearance shall be the fulfillment of this verse.

Daniel 7:13, 14

Daniel 7: 13-14 shows the arrival of Jesus in heaven where a kingdom is given to him in order for him to return to the earth where all dominions will serve and obey him forever. He did not set up this kingdom during his first advent. Where is such a kingdom today? Who obeys him of all people on the earth? Did he establish a civil government, or a Theocratic government?

All Jesus set up while he was here was an ecclesia of which he is the head. Who is subject to Jesus as he supposedly rules now? Who obeys him now other than his true saints? If the ecclesia is the kingdom that some say was established while he was here the first time, then we are being asked to accept the Campbellite doctrine of the Church/Kingdom theory against which Christadelphia have fought for a century and a half.

Matthew 6: 10

According to the prayer Jesus taught his disciples, when God's kingdom comes, it will be done in earth as it is in heaven now. If another kingdom has come in the meantime, is that not one of God's kingdoms also? Why did Jesus refer to a future

kingdom that has not come yet, if a different kingdom was to come long before the one included in his sample prayer?

Mark 15: 43

Subsequent to the death of Jesus on the cross, Joseph of Arimathaea was still waiting for the "kingdom of God". So, Jesus was dead and the kingdom had not been set up yet. Was he not happy with the kingdom some say Jesus had already set up? Are we not also still waiting for the "kingdom of God" as was Joseph?

The "kingdom of heaven" vs. the "kingdom of God"

Does the phrase "kingdom of heaven" refer to a different entity than does the phrase, "kingdom of God? It is important to realize that throughout the four gospels, Matthew most often uses the phrase "kingdom of heaven" while all three of the other Gospel writers consistently use the phrase "kingdom of God" in the same narratives to which Matthew is referring.

For instance Matthew wrote in Matthew 25: 14 that "the kingdom of heaven" is like a man traveling to a far country..." However, in Luke 19: 11 in the same, parallel passage Luke uses the phrase "kingdom of God. Likewise, Matthew 8: 11 says that, "many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, **in the kingdom of heaven**". However, Luke 13: 29 records, "And many shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down **in the kingdom of God**. Both writers refer to the same kingdom, each using different terminology, but meaning the same entity. It was the same kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven for which Joseph of Arimathaea waited, just as we are waiting for the same kingdom of which they both spoke.

1st Corinthians 15:50

"**Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**". What kingdom did Jesus set up 2000 years ago? If that was the kingdom of God, no one has yet inherited it, for we are all flesh and blood. Verses 53-54 show that we must be immortal in order to inherit God's kingdom. If Jesus set up a kingdom 2000 years ago, what was the purpose of it? Who has gotten into such a kingdom as yet, and what reference refers to that particular kingdom?

My brethren, we like Joseph of Arimathaea, are still waiting for that same kingdom that has not come yet. If we have in our midst persons who, like the Campbellites, feel that the ecclesia is the kingdom that Jesus set up two thousand years ago, that is going back into the world doctrinally to the church-kingdom doctrine. Thankfully, some of us still await the arrival of that Kingdom that seems to be about to be set up.

Revelation 2: 26

"**To him that overcometh will I give power over the nations**". Question: What would God's purpose be in initiating any endeavor on the earth such as a past, present or future kingdom on the earth? Is it not true that God's plan to replace The

Kingdom of men with His own righteous Kingdom is for the purpose of accomplishing His original plan of having the earth in subjection to His heavenly rule? Revelation 2: 26 certainly shows that nothing existed in 96 A.D. (70 years after Christ's ascension) that had any effect on the righteousness of kingdoms of men. The truth also went into oblivion shortly after that passage was written. The servants of Jesus were under severe persecution at that time. What, therefore, did the kingdom accomplish that Jesus is supposed by some to have set up? It gave neither Jesus nor his saints "power over the nations" sufficient to make the nations subject to any kingdom of God; or to make them righteous. The promise of power over the nations was clearly to be fulfilled in the future from 96 A. D. What, we ask, did the kingdom that Jesus was thought to have set up accomplish, and over which he is thought to be presently ruling?

Revelation 3: 21:

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne." This passage plainly declared that the throne on which Jesus sat and still sits was his Father's throne, and that Christ's throne was in the future. Therefore, he had not yet his own throne. Yet, if Jesus had established a kingdom prior to his crucifixion, he should have already been on at least one of his thrones when the Apocalypse was written, if he had more than one kingdom. Where in the Scriptures was Jesus ever promised more than one kingdom, or more than one throne?

Again, we ask, if Jesus established a kingdom on earth during his first advent, who was to benefit from such a kingdom? It certainly was not for the benefit of the servants of Christ, because Jesus had assured them that the truth they believed was to go into apostasy, and they themselves into persecution, even unto death (Matthew 10: 16-23; John 16: 33; II Timothy 3: 12; II Timothy 4: 2-4; II Peter 2: 1-3).

A contradictory and unacceptable position

Those who believe and teach the doctrine of the present reign of Christ; as well as those who support and defend them, justify it with the fact that such brethren also believe in the future, glorious kingdom of God on the earth at Christ's return. In confessing such a position, they join hands with millions of Baptists who also believe in a future 1000 years of the glorious reign of Jesus on the earth; but who also believe that Jesus did in fact set up a different kingdom at his first appearance. The Christadelphian body has always fought such a doctrine because it was believed to be a false doctrine that was subversive of the Truth.

One of Brother Thomas William's major debates was with a Mr. Hall of Baptism persuasion. (The Hall/Williams debate is still available on CD from Brother Aaron Thomas.) The debate had been arranged for by a Baptist assembly and a Christadelphian ecclesia. Mr. Hall and Brother Williams showed up for the debate, but as the debate began, a problem became evident when it was discovered that even though Mr. Hall believed that Jesus had already set up a kingdom; he also believed that Jesus was also to set up a glorious 1000 year-long kingdom at his return. That

position was and still is the position of many Baptists, but was not the belief of the ones for whom Mr. Hall was debating. The debate was continued and Brother Williams fought the doctrine of a two kingdom theory as a fundamental error for the rest of the debate. But, now as the times of the Gentiles are about to come to an end, those who are supposed to defend and nourish the Truth, have joined the ranks of the enemies of the truth against whom faithful brethren have contended for over one hundred and fifty years.

We urge faithful brothers to obtain that debate and carefully consider the Christadelphian position against such subversive doctrines and cleave firmly to the doctrines of Christ who now stands even at the door.

W. R. Tanner

THE FINAL SCATTERING OF ISRAEL

PART II - When is the Peace and Safety?

Introduction

We need to remind the reader that the progress of Zionism (beginning with the First Zionist Congress in 1897) and the political and economic pursuits of the nation of Israel today do not represent Israel relying on the Spirit of Yahweh for guidance. Though Yahweh is working through the nation and directing events to a final objective, via the Elohim, the Jews today largely do not rely upon Yahweh and certainly do not recognize Jesus as their Messiah. Therefore, future events are needed to bring Israel to a full realization of Yahweh's existence and their relationship to Him, His purpose, and their Messiah. The 1,900 year Diaspora of the Jews did not accomplish this, neither did the Holocaust, nor were they meant to – though the latter did drive many Jews back to the Land.

Israel must be changed, and the un-moldable portions of its society cut off. The process of change has never been easy, and the coming transformation will be no exception. Gog is the instrument of Judgment chosen for this final chastening/scattering/cleansing (Zech. 13:8,9; Ezek. 20:37-38; Hos. 5:14 – 6:3). *"Thus saith the Lord God; Art thou he (Gog) of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days [after] many years that I would bring thee against them (Israel)?"*-Ezek. 38:17.

To understand this prophetic reality from the word of Yahweh in no way makes one against Israel or the Jews. If such is the case then we must equally label the prophets of old and the Divine Author Himself as guilty of the same

(especially when one reflects upon the pattern of the Judges, the Assyrian invasion, the Babylonian invasion, the Roman invasion and the almost 2,000 year scattering of Israel under European-Roman-Catholic oppression). We do not relish the idea of Jews being persecuted yet again, but we read the Scriptures and take from it the very words of Yahweh and are compelled to rightly divide it, not as some false prophets of Israel did in times past who spoke only “smooth things” because that is what their audience demanded. The consistent, historic manner with which Yahweh has dealt with His people Israel should resonate with us and help us to understand what is yet to come.

Finally, we feel it appropriate to reiterate one critical point as regards the modern return of Israel to the Land (quoting from a May 1987 Advocate editorial): “There is no question that the establishment of the State of Israel is the most significant prophetic event that has occurred on this planet since the resurrection of our Lord. It is the great sign of the Son of Man from heaven.” (*Edward W. Farrar*). With this we whole-heartedly agree. We would only add two key verses that speak specifically of the return of the Jews to the Land, with the assistance (all via divine direction) of a Tarshish/British power; Isa. 60:9 and Jer. 31:10. Second to the “Return” in order of significance, we would make mention of the re-capturing of Jerusalem out of the hands of the Gentiles in 1967. Never has a generation of believers been so blessed (as is ours) having witnessed such dramatic prophetic events. Having such evident witness of Yahweh’s hand - may we be found ready for the return of the Master.

A Need for tried Exposition of Prophecy

The teaching that comes from Ezek. 38:11-12 (Israel’s “unwalled” condition) has for some time been a point of controversy in our community. Part of the confusion arises over the view held by some that the latter chapters of Ezekiel are entirely sequential. Several perspectives combined incorrectly together can then lead one to believe that Christ is the cause for Israel’s peace and safety, their dwelling confidently, “*all of them dwelling without walls and having neither bars nor gates.*” But Ezek. 39:25-26 demonstrates conclusively that this “peace and safety” is considered as a state of trespass against Yahweh, in that they secured it in the pride of their own hand: “*Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name; After that they have borne their shame [the chastening of the Gogian invasion] and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid.*”

Considering what Ezekiel has to say here, we must understand that Ezekiel, and specifically chapters 36-39, are not entirely sequential chapters and much confusion is wrought by suggesting otherwise. The books of Daniel and the Apocalypse, for example, are understood as being both telescopic and then microscopic in their explanation of events to occur and are therefore not

specifically chronological; repeating certain times and events from a different vantage point to fill in details not possible with one vision alone. With this as our foundation we must treat Ezekiel’s prophecy in the same fashion, there is simply no basis to consider the latter chapters of Ezekiel as completely chronological in their order of presentation. Let us examine this divergence of thought a little more closely.

If, as modern writers argue, Ezekiel 37 has been entirely fulfilled in the 20th century revival of the State of Israel, and that chapters 38 and 39 then follow chronologically, a sequence must be developed as an unbroken chain of events which are not supported by the whole of Scripture. One of the views that has been generated by this basis of thought is summarized thusly:

1. That view holds that an Arab confederacy threatens to overrun/scatter Israel (Psalm 83; Obad., Zech. 12; 2-6; and 14:1-3 cited as evidence).
2. Christ is believed initially to return (in dramatic appearance to the world) with his angels to Jerusalem to redeem Israel and establish the Kingdom (a misapplication of Matt. 24:27-30).
3. Judgment of the Saints then follows after Christ and literal Angels defeat the Arabs “round about” being whisked to Sinai and then in some form marched back to Jerusalem.
4. The unwalled villages and the peace and safety of Ezekiel’s prophecy is then believed to have been established as a result of Christ and the saints present in the Land.
5. Gog is then enticed down to Zion because of the peace and safety, and is opposed and defeated by Christ and the Saints/Israel on the northern mountains of Israel in the battle of Armageddon. Additionally, Gog never enters into Jerusalem and as a result the Jews are never scattered.

There may be several renditions of this line of thought, but none being in accordance with the prophetic record. Many problems are evident with this “phased approach” or Arab/Muslim confederacy. First, if you read carefully the prophecy of Psalm 83, the enemies (which geographically do not cover all the nations in conflict with Israel over the last century – where is Egypt for example?) never succeed in their desire to “cut off” Israel. Thus, applying this Psalm to a future Israel/Muslim conflict resulting in a Muslim victory (or impending victory) over Israel does not fit the pattern and completely evades the very symbolic language of the Psalm such as Yahweh’s “hidden ones” (vs. 3 a reference to Yahweh’s immortalized Saints – the cherubim-storm of vs. 15).

Some have suggested a shadow of fulfillment of this prophesy in those conflicts that have already past between Israel and her surrounding enemies, and while this may indeed be the case, we believe that the complete fulfillment of the prophecy, or Yahweh’s wrath poured out upon the nations by Yahweh’s

Hidden Ones, or Cherubim Saints, has yet to occur. Moreover, Christ cannot return to Jerusalem first with literal angels as this discounts the entire Rainbow Angle/multitudinous Christ march from the south (Deut. 33, Psa. 68, Isa. 63 and Hab. 3) and the Judgment of those Saints which must have already taken place in Sinai. For what purpose would there be for the Saints to march forth from Sinai, conquering Teman, Paran, Midian, Cushan, Edom and Bozra, if these lands have already been conquered by Christ and the Elohim appearing directly from heaven? Or if it is assumed that this march from Sinai is for the total destruction of an “Arab confederacy”, then how is it that the Prophets speak not of complete destruction but of conquering and conversion of these peoples? Note the following scriptures:

- *“And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors [Gogian confederacy], and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them [Multitudinous Christ]. And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it. And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the LORD, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them. In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance” (Isa. 19:20-25).*
- *“Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit [descendant’s of Ishmael – Gen. 25;13]: let the inhabitants of the rock sing [this is Petra in Jordan], let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands” (Isa. 42:11-12).*
- *“All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth [again, descendant’s of Ishmael – Gen. 25;13] shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory” (Isa. 60:7).*

How can we possibly have a complete destruction of a “Pan-Arab confederacy” if the prophets instead speak of the subjection, submission, and conversion of the Egyptians, Arabs, and Assyrians from the false Allah to the True Yahweh, upon whose altar their sacrifices will be accepted? This simply can not be given the contemporary view which places the “Arabs”, instead of the Roman Harlot and her Gogian companions, at the center of Bible prophecy.

This is not to say that there will be no blood shed or resistance by the local population as such would ignore - Psalm 137:7; Isa. 11:14; Isa. 63:1, etc.

The Truth is that Christ returns as a thief to the world (Rev 16:15); subdues the local populace whose *“Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased”* (Exod. 14:16); and not until his campaign and victory over the Gogian confederacy does he enter into Jerusalem (correct application of Matt 24) where he is afterward witnessed to the entire world through the proclamation of the Mid-heaven Gospel (Rev. 14:6). Therefore it is Gog (not the Moslem world) who is responsible for the scattering and humbling of Israel. This is the whole purpose for Yahweh in allowing the invasion of Gog to occur; to prepare a remnant of natural Israel to serve Him in faith, *“So the house of Israel shall know that I am Yahweh Elohim from that day and forward”* (Ezek. 39:22). Gog will be defeated and Israel (“the tents of Judah” first Zech. 12:7) redeemed and restored once and for all (Dan. 11:45; Rev. 16:12-16).

The players at Armageddon

The composition of Gog’s army in relation to the broad prophetic picture is critical to understand in order to decipher events in their correct order, and players in their appointed roles. The Gogian confederacy consists of Rosh (Chief Prince), Magog, Meshech and Tubal, *“Persia, Ethiopia (Cush), and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands”* (Ezek. 38:5-6). First of all what is the ethnicity of Iranians, one of Gog’s allies? They are primarily Persian. What is the ethnic origin of the Iraqis (Cush/Ethiopia)? They are a mix of Arabians, and Kurd, but primarily and historically Assyrian and Babylonian (Chaldean). What is the ethnic origin of Togarmah? They are Armenian, Georgian, Saracen and Turk. Unfortunately however, thanks to today’s vernacular and modern “media blitz” news reporting, when we think of the Middle East we are (media) trained to think only in terms of “Arabs”. This is an easy mistake for any Bible student to make and so there is a great need for more care when treating with prophetic exposition in this regard. The Bible however being our basis, has never identified the nations of the Gogian confederacy under one generalized ethnic term, and certainly not by the term “Arab”. Now lets dig down a bit further and trace the composition of Gog’s confederacy to its ethnic origins.

Historically and Biblically speaking Rosh, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, Togarmah and Persia are all descendants of Japheth. Ethiopia (Cush) and Libya are descendants of Ham. There are no descendants of Shem or Semitic nations listed in Gog’s confederacy. Therefore the composition is not “Arab” centric by nature. There are no “Arab” nations “round-about” that displace or supercede Gog in his divinely appointed task, with his confederacy to attack and scatter

Israel. It goes without saying that some surrounding Moslem enemies will “pile-on” just as they did behind Nebuchadnezzar when he invaded and took Jerusalem, and said “*raze it, raze it*” and clapped the hands (Psalm 137:7), but they were not the primary aggressors.

Composition of Gog's Army		
JAPETH	HAM	SHEM
Rosh, Meshech & Tubal	Ethiopia, Libya	
Gomer, Togarmah, Persia		

Again, just as Psalm 83 never allows for the success of Edom, Moab and Ammon, etc. over Israel historically (but only their desire and attempt), we have seen this pattern again played out in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973, and continuing today with the Palestinians as a “pricking briar.” In stark contrast to the utter failure of the surrounding neighbors to oust Israel, the Northern invader, the Spoiler, the Extortioner, the King of the North, the latter-day Assyrian, Gog of the land of Magog does have great, albeit temporary success in scattering Israel (Zech. 14:2, Joel 2:1-10, Joel 3, Ezek. 38:15-16, Hab. 3:14-16, Isa. 10:5-6, Isa. 16:3-5, Isa. 19, Dan. 11:45). This is what precipitates Christ’s return. This is when the “*fury shall come up in my face*” saith the Lord God. The scattered Jews are then re-gathered as part of the Rainbow Angel march from Egypt, Midian, Saudi Arabia, Teman, Bozrah, Moab-Jordan, Cushan, and are part of that company that is returned and restored to Israel (Exod. 19:4-6) when Christ plants his feet upon the Mount of Olives. Christ and the Saints in complete victory now complete the gathering of the whole house of Israel from the land of Assyria, Egypt and the four winds (Zech 10:6-10 & Jer. 31:8-9). The tents of Judah are to be saved first, the Jews living in the land today and specifically that 1/3rd that will be redeemed and restored by Christ after the scattering by Gog, (Isa. 10:5-6 & 20-22, Zech. 12:1-9 specifically vs. 7).

Conditions Required Prior to Gog's Descent

Ezek 38 requires three conditions in this area prior to Gog’s invasion of the land:

1. The people that are gathered out of the nations (the Jews) are to be dwelling “in the midst of the land” (the navel of the land is the translation from Ezek. 38:12 “midst of the land”, this is the West bank, the Mountains of Judea & Samaria), and upon the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 38:8, 12). This location is also described as being “the

land of Israel” (vs. 18). It is the West Bank. *So the land identified corresponds to the West Bank., the area taken back by Israel in 1967!*

2. They are to be there “dwelling safely” or securely or confidently (vs. 8, 11 and 14). Their condition is to be one of a “land of unwallled villages...at rest, that dwell safely (or carelessly)...without walls, and having neither bars nor gates (vs. 11)”.
3. They are a “wealthy nation”, a “hypocritical nation” (Isa. 10:6), having gotten cattle and goods (economic prosperity, self-dependence/reliance). Yet this “peace and safety” is considered a trespass against the Almighty and is to their shame (Ezek. 39:26).

One of the strongest points of divergence in our community has been this specific issue: the peace and safety of Israel which entices Gog (via an evil thought) to come up against her. The divergence or confusion relates to when this peace and safety occurs (pre-Second Advent or post-Second Advent) and how or rather by whom (by Christ or Israel herself) is it secured. Let us consider this matter clearly and concisely.

“Peace and Safety” – Historical Precedence

The verses we are addressing are Ezek. 38:8 & 11. The question is posed: “How can Israel be dwelling in peace and safety without the protection and presence of Christ?” In answering this one must first attempt to reconcile Ezek 39:26 already discussed. But just as significant if not more, is the context of Jer. 49:28-33. Here Babylon and King Nebuchadrezzar is prophesied to “smite” the kingdoms of Hazor in the land of Kedar. They are to be spoiled at the hands of Nebuchadrezzar (vs. 29). The inhabitants are instructed to flee because the King of Babylon has “*taken counsel against you, and hath conceived a purpose against you*” (vs. 30). The nation of Hazor is said to be a “*wealthy nation*” that “*dwelleth without care*”.

“Care” here is Strong’s word 983, *betach*, the same word in Ezek. 38:11 & 38:14 where it is rendered “safely”. It is also the same word used in Ezek. 39:6 rendered “carelessly”, referring to Magog and those who dwell “carelessly” in the “isles”. In Judges 18:7 we read “Then the five men departed, and came to Laish and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure;...”. The word careless is again *betach*, Strong’s #983. (See also Isa. 32:9-11; “*ye careless daughters*”, Ezek. 30:9 “careless” Ethiopians, Isa. 47:8 & Zeph. 2:15, & Mic. 2:8 “securely” in specific relation to Israel). This can also be read as dwelling carelessly, confidently or securely just as it is rendered in Ezek. 38:8 and 11. Therefore the notion that *betach* only applies to Israel dwelling “safely or securely” under Yahweh’s protection is false.

Back to Jeremiah: They have neither “*bars nor gates*” and “*dwelt alone*” (Jer. 49:31). As a result of this confident, careless, wealthy existence they are vulnerable, they are exposed and without Yahweh’s protection (without bars

and gates). Their prideful, careless, wealthy dwelling is to their shame as they are without walls (from Ezek. 38:11 meaning wall of protection) and exposed to the Babylonian invader. In the next verse they are spoiled and scattered in language almost identical to that of Ezek 38:12. Their camels “*shall be a booty and the multitude of their cattle a spoil: and I will scatter into all winds them that are in the utmost corners; and will bring their calamity from all sides thereof, saith the Lord*” (Jer. 49: 32). The context here demands that dwelling safely, resting confidently and carelessly upon their own “man-made-security” is to their downfall or shame just as it is to Israel’s shame today (considered a trespass in Ezek. 39:26). As a result of Israel’s prideful-false sense of security, they are likewise said to dwell without bars and gates or a “wall of protection”. Israel is increasingly vulnerable, and will be exposed and ripe for the taking in the mind of the Gogian invader in the day of Harvest. As a result they will be spoiled. Their “wealth”, their “cattle and goods” “silver and gold” are taken by the spoiler “a great spoil”. Additionally, they are scattered, “*our bones are dried, our hope is lost*” (Ezek. 37:11). The 2/3rds are purged and the 1/3rd comes through “the fire” and a remnant is saved (Isa. 10:20-22, Zech. 13:7-9, Mic. 5:7-8). Here and only here do they cry to Yahweh for deliverance. We must note here that this was not the outcome of the Holocaust hence the establishment of the secular, not religious, State of Israel

We have additional evidence of this pattern found in Jeremiah from Judges 18:7-10. Here the people of Laish dwelt “*carelessly (betach #983), after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure...*” (vs 7). As a result the five men sent to spy out this land (5 men of the children of Dan) returned and reported “*...ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth*” (vs 10). The end result concerning the inhabitants of Laish is found in verse 27; and they (the children of Dan) “*came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire.*” Vs. 28 “*And there was no deliverer...*”

The situation is once again identical to that of Hazor in Jeremiah 49 and Israel in Ezekiel 38, as we find a people that is wealthy and in need of nothing, dwelling carelessly, safely, confidently (in their own man-made security/peace), without bars or gates, or “walls of protection”, exposed, vulnerable, without Yahweh’s protection and thus ripe for conquering. As a result the people (Hazor and specifically Israel) are scattered. **But in Israel’s case this scattering is temporary.** Shortly thereafter she experiences her final redemption, restitution and regeneration by her Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Never again will they profane the name of the Lord. For ever after this event will they exude God’s spirit, and never again will they be without a King or a sacrifice, for the Lord will sit upon David’s throne until he himself turns it over to Yahweh at the end of the millennium.

Brethren, the message becomes very clear. We are witnessing this state of affairs in Israel at this very moment. As such, it would be spiritually dangerous for us to put off our expectation of the Master’s call to judgment until a greater “peace and safety” comes to fruition, or a situation in Israel where they have neither “bars nor gates” or armed check-points and a security fence, because this is not the true context of the verses. Israel dwells like a “silly dove” and a “hypocritical nation” attempting to broker peace and secure her people through the strength of her own hand. The giving away of Gaza and soon the West Bank and even part of Jerusalem (if Olmert and Kadima have their way), and seeking a “man-made” peace (with Hamas!!!) will only escalate their vulnerable state as dwelling without walls, bars or gates (without Yahweh’s protection). They will continue to dwell carelessly, confidently (safely), in pride, all the while being exposed. They will rest in their wealth, their “silver and gold” and their “cattle and goods” when “none made them afraid”. This is a great trespass in the mind of Yahweh, as it has always been when Israel forgot her sovereign LORD. ***The Land is Yahweh’s not Israel’s to give***, it is not to be sold or given to the heathen (Lev 25:23). There is ample precedent for punishment when Israel wallowed in this state and unfortunately she is again in this state. As a result Gog will be drawn out (hooks in the jaws) for a special purpose as the “rod of mine anger” for the punishment of Israel. Israel is scattered and purged, and the 1/3rd is then prepared for her redemption by Messiah. Gog’s destruction at the hand of Christ and the Saints is mighty, dramatic and final. The destruction will be a witness to the world that the power that wrought this victory is Divine in manifestation. It is for the sanctification of Yahweh to be witnessed by His people Israel and all the heathen nations of the earth (Ezek 38:23).

Tom Northey

“Putin’s victory leads to talk of permanent rule”

The Week, Vol. 7, December 4, 2007 (excerpts)

Russian President, Vladimir Putin dramatically tightened his grip on power last week, when the party he heads won a landslide victory in parliamentary elections that outside observers called deeply flawed. Putin, who had cast the elections as a referendum on his rule, said the results gave him “moral authority” to wield power even after his presidency ends next year... “Measured by our standards,” said a German official, “this wasn’t a free, fair, or democratic election.” Putin shrugged off the criticism as foreign meddling. Outsiders should stop “poking their snotty noses” in Russian affairs, Putin said. “Russia’s experiment with democracy is officially over”, said the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Since United Russia now controls enough votes to amend the constitution, it could change the law forbidding Putin to run for a third term. Or, it could transfer power from the president to the prime minister and give that job to Putin. However it plays out, it’s now obvious that Russia has fallen sway to a brand of authoritarianism akin to a “Stalin era personality cult.”