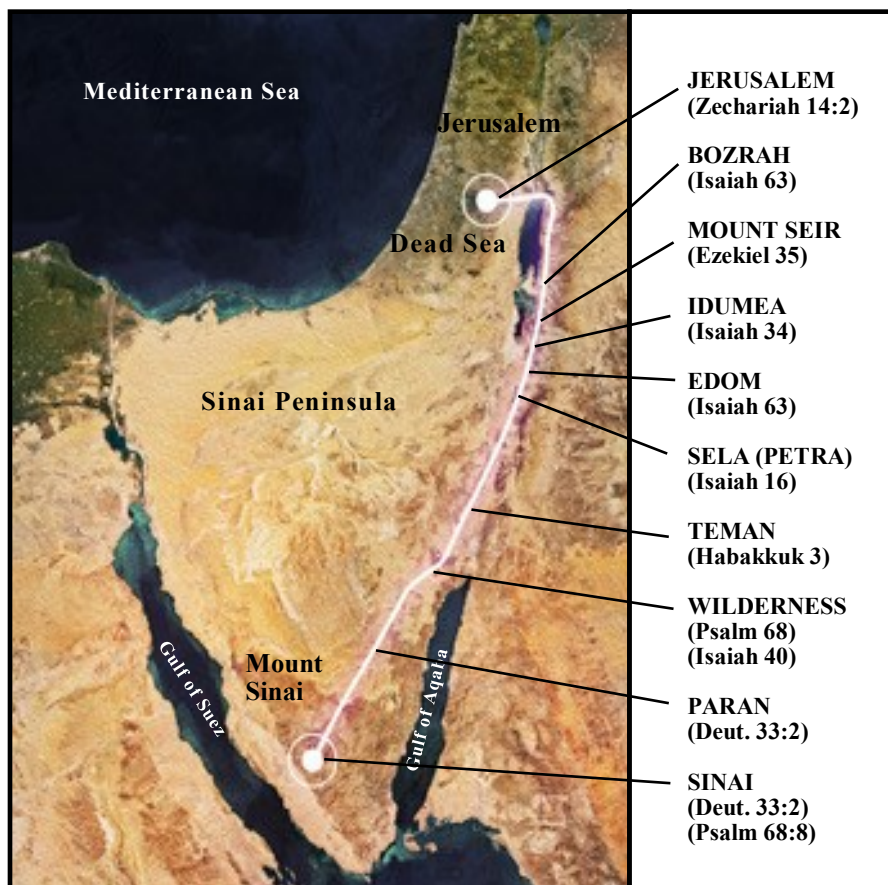


# CHRISTADELPHIAN Advocate

A monthly magazine in defense of the "Things Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ" as embraced in The Hope of Israel with a view to "Taking Out A People For Yahweh's Name"

## SPECIAL ISSUE

### The March of the Saints



**FEBRUARY 2021**



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# The March of the Saints

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*He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.*

Jeremiah 23:28

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## INTRODUCTION

The title chosen for this Special Issue – **The March of the Saints** – is taken from the lead article by our late Brother Edward W. Farrar, initially published in the *Advocate* in January 1997. As Brother Farrar observed, “The first inkling to the world that Christ has returned will be the ‘march’ of the multitudinous Christ from Sinai to Jerusalem.” Prior to this event, the living and the dead will have been raised and judged; and those found worthy will have been granted immortality and will have partaken of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Thus, the manifestation of the march of the saints is a sign intended for the unbelieving world.

We have the *sure word of prophecy* given to show us things which have been decreed to *come to pass*, and we are most blessed to be in that generation that witnesses these apocalyptic signs. Do we indeed *take heed*; are we truly moved by these signs to *seek first the kingdom of God*, or do our temporal possessions and activities monopolize our thoughts and our time? **Though we observe the world around us falling to pieces, in truth, things are falling into place!** Jesus chastised the Pharisees for not recognizing and responding to the signs of his first coming. Will we be found watching and praying in joyful anticipation?

**We have compiled articles both from our past and our present**, which focus on not only the prophetic events in the last days leading up to Christ’s return, but how his second Advent will be manifested in stages, and how it relates to his first Advent. The Scriptures address the phrase “the last days” from Genesis through 2 Peter, providing within their contexts countless details that define this period, serving to both inform and prepare Christ’s brethren for his return. These prophetic declarations are a most significant consideration as we prepare to meet our bridegroom.

We live in the last days of the *times of the Gentiles* (Luke 21:24; Romans 11:25), within which a *people for His name* was decreed to be taken out (Acts 15:14). We believe we are among those “called,” and hope to be among the “few” chosen (Matthew 22:14) as will be determined by our Lord at his return. Our probation period, like our life, is *of few days* (Job 10:20; 14:1), and upon our falling asleep or our Lord’s return, all opportunity to further work out our salvation ceases. Our Lord declares, *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be*



*holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me...* (Revelation 22:11-12).

**Ezekiel 38 is progressing before our eyes:** the nations are aligning just as the prophet foretold. We observe Russia aligning with Syria, Iran, Ethiopia, Libya, and Turkey, as well as those nations referenced in Ezekiel 38:13 – *Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof* (those nations prophesied to be joined together to question the advancing Gogian host – *hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey...to take a great spoil?*) Brethren, as we observe these things, should we not be manifesting a discernable zeal and expectation for the imminent return of our Lord?

**It is that expectation of the soon return of our Lord and the growing shortness of the time left to fill our lamps with the oil of salvation that prompts this Special Issue at this time.** In it readers will find expositions addressing 1) the signs of the times; 2) the urgency that should be apparent among Christ's brethren in these last days; 3) exposition on Christ's "first Advent," his second coming for the "Saints," for natural "Israel," and for the "World" (these last four articles are based on a series of classes given for the Mountain Grove Bible Forum this past summer). We pray that this Special Issue might contribute to our readers' motivation, hope, and joy; along with preparation for that coming "instant" when we will suddenly find ourselves called to give account: *that we may have boldness in the day of judgment* (1 John 4:17).

*The Christadelphian Advocate Publishing Committee*

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## THE MARCH OF THE SAINTS

The march of the immortalized saints from Sinai to Jerusalem is mentioned three times in the Bible. It seems evident that before the open manifestation of Jesus Christ to the world upon his Second Coming, the saints living and dead will be miraculously and secretly brought to Sinai where the Judgment Seat of Christ will be set up. Those who are worthy will be immortalized and will joyfully partake of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. At this point, the Kingdom of God will be restored in its embryonic form in preparation for smiting Nebuchadnezzar's image on the feet and gradually filling this planet with the glory of God.

**The first inkling to the world that Christ has returned will be the march of the Multitudinous Christ from Sinai to Jerusalem.** When Christ and the saints arrive at Jerusalem and Jesus stands upon the Mount of Olives, the mount *shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and*



toward the west (Zechariah 14:4). Probably it is at this point in time that the call to the nations goes forth: *Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come...* (Revelation 14:7).

**By piecing together various passages of Scripture, Bible students have been able to trace the route of the saintly march and identify the locality of the “stations” through which the marchers proceed.**

[**About the Front Cover image:** We copied the original image used in Brother Farrar’s article “The March of the Saints” as published in the January 1997 Advocate, which placed Mount Sinai in the traditional location west of the Gulf of Aqaba. However, that location is contested. Many now understand that Mount Sinai (alias Mount Horeb) is located on the east side of the Gulf of Aqaba, Moses having reached Mount Sinai after having crossed the “sea” (Exodus 14), which Solomon referred to as the Red Sea in 1 Kings 9:26.]



### Sinai: The Starting Station

Deuteronomy 33:2 is very explicit: *The Lord came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.* The blessings introduced by this description, which, however applicable in some particulars to the giving of the Law of Moses, was never verified in the past. Such a coming with myriads of saints is only predicated on the Second Advent. We have no account of any other.

The 68th Psalm warrants special attention in connection with the march. It is clearly stated in verses 6 and 7 that the march is immediately preceded by the resurrection (verse 6 reads in the LXX, *God settles the solitary in a house leading forth prisoners mightily... even them that dwell in tombs*). The context in verse 20 also refers to the resurrection, thus fixing the timing of the events predicted in the Psalm, *He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.*

The Psalmist continues in verse 17, which reads in the KJV, *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.* This verse has been microscopically examined by Hebraists over the centuries. The word angels (Hebrew *shinan*) is translated “rejoicing ones” by the LXX. Reineke renders it “changed ones” or “mighty ones.” Most are agreed that it has direct reference to the immortalized saints. The Hebrew word translated in the KJV as “holy



place” (Hebrew *qodesh*) carries the notion of sanctuary. The Living Bible freely translates verse 17, *Surrounded by unnumbered chariots, the Lord moves on from Mount Sinai and comes to his holy temple high upon Mount Zion*. Although this is a very free translation, it seems to reflect the general opinion of scholars. The NIV catches the same idea in its translation, “The Lord has come from Sinai into his sanctuary.” **The starting station of the march is Mount Sinai and the terminus of the march is the Lord’s sanctuary – Jerusalem, the city of the Great King.**

### Station #2: Mount Paran

Paran is a mountainous wilderness area northeast of Mount Sinai. The children of Israel *pitched in the wilderness of Paran* (Numbers 12:16). We are informed in Deuteronomy 33:2 that the multitudinous Christ will *shine forth from Mount Paran*, and Habakkuk prophesies, *God came from Teman and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise* (Habakkuk 3:3).

### Station #3: The Wilderness

As the march proceeds north, the militancy of the redeemed becomes more evident. The Psalmist informs us that as the march through the wilderness proceeds, *the earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God... the God of Israel* (68:8). He continues, *The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it* (vs. 11). The word “company” (Hebrew *tsaba*) carries the connotation of a mass of persons organized for war (Strong #6635). Verse 12 in the LXX tells us, *The King of the forces of the beloved... divide the spoils*.

Isaiah 40 is usually connected with the work of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:3), but doubtless its greater fulfilment occurs with the voice of Christ, *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God* [Elohim –mighty ones] (vs. 3). It is then appropriate for the multitudinous Christ to be manifested to the world at large. *And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together...* (vs. 5).

### Station #4: Teman

The third chapter of Habakkuk is chock-full of information regarding the march of the saints. *Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger* (vs. 12). Verse 3 locates the geography, *God came from Teman and the Holy One from mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise*. Teman is an area just north and slightly west of present-day Elath, which is at the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba. Listen to the majesty of the language describing this triumphant march northwards, *His brightness was as the light; he had horns [power] coming out of his hand... Before him went the pestilence, and*



*burning coals went forth at his feet* (vss. 4-5). The work of the Lion of the tribe of Judah has begun!

While the march itself is localized, the range and extent of the Lord's work is global. *He stood and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow* (vs. 6). Here is depicted the bringing into subjection the powers that rule the political, economic and religious systems of this world. *The mountains saw thee and they trembled: ...the sun and the moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear* (vss. 10-11).

### Station #5: Sela (Petra)

Isaiah 16:1 describes the situation as the marchers enter the next five stations. All of these are presently in the territory of the Arab nations: Jordan and possibly Saudi Arabia, *I will send the Lamb, the ruler of the land from Sela of the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion* (GNH Peters translation). The "bottom line" of the march is stated in verse 5, *In mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness*.

### Station #6: Edom

There is no doubt about the identity of Edom. *Thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom. And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir* (Genesis 36:8-9). These are the modern-day Arab and Islamic nations of the Middle East.

It appears that the first military confrontation between the multitudinous Christ and the Gentile nations of the globe takes place in the very territory given by God to the descendants of Esau (Edom). It is they who contend with the immortal marchers whose garments become stained with the blood of the Edomites.

The time of the confrontation is stated: *...the year of my redeemed is come* (Isaiah 63:4). The purpose of the marchers is declared to be a *day of vengeance* (vs. 4). Chapter 63 of Isaiah starts off with a question, *Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah?* The media of the world will be dumbfounded at the sudden appearance on the world scene of an invincible immortal army.

### Station #7: Idumea

Any Bible dictionary will tell you that Idumea is the name used by the Greeks and Romans, in slightly different spelling, for the country of Edom. Isaiah 34 is an account of the great slaughter wrought upon Idumea by *the indignation of the Lord* (vs. 2). Again the timing is stated as being *the year*



*of recompenses for the controversy of Zion, and the purpose of the utter destruction is declared to be the day of the Lord's vengeance (vs. 8). Listen to the pronouncement, For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment (vs. 5).*

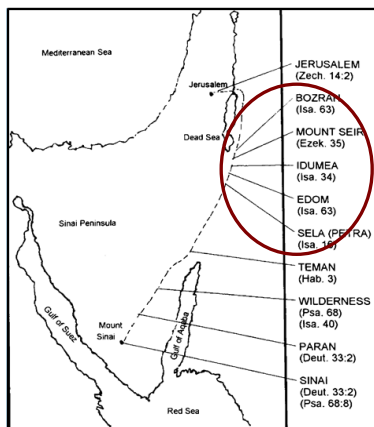
### Station #8: Mount Seir

Space will not permit cataloguing the judgments pronounced upon Mount Seir, the dwelling place of Edom in Ezekiel 35. The reasons for the terrible judgments are: 1) the perpetual hatred of the Arabs for Israel; 2) the shedding of the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity; 3) because Edom has said, *These two nations shall be mine and we will possess it* (Ezekiel 35:10); and 4) because Edom *has not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee* (vs. 6).

The judgment upon Mount Seir (Edom) is that the Edom mountains will be filled with slain men, and the cities and countryside will be a perpetual desolation. The timing of this confrontation is stated in verse 10, *Whereas the Lord was there*. This is indicative that the judgments upon the Arab nations are undertaken by the Lord himself.

### Station #9: Bozrah

You will notice on the adjacent map that the five Edomic stations are clustered together south and east of the Dead Sea. They are all synonyms for Arabic peoples. The reason that the question is asked, *Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah* is that the world knows that there is no military force in the Sinaitic Peninsula. For a massive army to appear from this region is a phenomenon that the nations of the world have never before expected or witnessed. The mighty forces of Islam, with all their tanks, mortars, missiles, and bombs, are powerless against this new threat. What will amaze the world is that this new army is pro-Israel, and that its objective is to save Israel from its enemies at a time when Israel stands alone, with apparently none to help.



### Station #10: Jerusalem

Having dealt a crushing blow to the Arabic-Islamic forces in the area of Mount Seir, the multitudinous Christ proceeds on their march to Jerusalem. Joel describes this march in terms of an immortal army: *They shall march*



*everyone on his ways, they shall not break their ranks... when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded... the earth shall quake before them: the heavens shall tremble... the Lord shall utter his voice before his army... for the day of the Lord is very terrible; and who can abide it? (2:7-8, 10-11).*

Since the immortal army enters Jerusalem from the east after crossing the Jordan river, they come to the Mount of Olives before they actually enter in through the gates of the City. When the feet of Jesus touch the Mount of Olives, then comes the fulfilment of Zechariah 14:4 – the splitting of the Mount takes place. The Lord Jesus Christ is not alone at this spectacular moment because Zechariah clearly states that, *all the saints are with him* (vs. 5). Then shall be brought to pass Psalm 24:7-9, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle* – the King of glory.

### Concluding Remarks

Brother John Thomas has written extensively on the above subject (*Eureka*, Vol. 2, pages 535-566; *Eureka* Vol. 2B, pages 162-190), and also G.N.H. Peters in his book *The Theocratic Kingdom*, Vol. 3, prop. 166. Neither of these 19th century writers foresaw the rise of Islam and the vital importance of oil in the economies of the nations which are energy-dependent on Middle Eastern Arab oil. Neither did they foresee the rise of Islamic Fundamentalism and its determination (as expressed in the Palestinian Covenant) to annihilate Israel and retrieve and liberate Palestine through armed struggle.

The march of the saints appears to take a similar route as that of the Children of Israel's march from Egyptian bondage to the Promised Land. The first military encounter appears to be with Islamic armies in the region southeast of the Dead Sea. Having destroyed Islamic opposition, and having been established in Jerusalem, it appears that the subsequent encounters with Gog and the Euro-Catholic Beast and Harlot occur after Christ and the saints are firmly in control of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

It would appear that the present-day Islamic threat to Israel, along with the abandonment of Israel by the international community, is setting the stage for the Second Coming of Christ and the resurrection of the sleeping saints.

*Edward W. Farrar*

(Brother Farrar was Associate Editor of the Advocate from 1983 to 1993, and sole Editor through January 2002. He fell asleep in Christ in August 2002.)



**IN WHAT WAY IS THE STUDY OF BIBLE PROPHECY  
LIKE WORKING ON A JIGSAW PUZZLE?**

Completing a jigsaw puzzle	Studying the end-time prophecies of the Bible
It is much easier to do the puzzle if we have the picture on the box in front of us. It shows us the final scene we are seeking to assemble from the pieces. Clues scattered in Scripture, here a little and there a little, are like the pieces of the puzzle for us to ponder and seek to fit together.	Daniel 2:44 is like the picture on the puzzle box: <i>And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.</i>
The four corner pieces, with two square edges, are the easiest ones to locate and position, and then, following them, the rest of the pieces with one straight edge side are sought out and connected to form the puzzle frame.	The succession of human dominion in the earth, as revealed by metallic body parts in Nebuchadnezzar’s image, serves as the framing pieces. They frame the big picture over the passage of time, until the stone smites the image and causes its collapse.
After the frame is completed and more and more inner pieces are assembled, the task of completing the puzzle tends to gain speed with less trial and error as the options are narrowed down.	From our perspective at this point in history, we have advantages over those who went before us, solely on our account of where we are positioned as observers on the Divine timeline. We are persuaded that we are hastening to the end.

James Farrar, Grimsby, ON



## END-TIMES PROPHECY

*When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power (Acts 1:6-7). But of that day and hour knoweth no [man], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only (Matthew 24:36).*



Christadelphians have concerned themselves with prophecy since Brother John Thomas began his journey to discover the Truth in God's Scriptures. Anyone who has followed Christadelphian writings since the time of Brother Thomas has noticed one notable principle of prophecy: it is easier to discern the fulfillment of prophecy in the past than it is to discern its fulfillment in the future. Is it a fool's errand to interpret when Messiah will return and the events that will bring it about? Given the Lord's own words quoted above, it might seem fruitless or even pointless to some to pursue prophecy concerning the end-times.

**Some interpretations of prophecies regarding the return of Christ have had to be reassessed as history unfolded since the time of Brother Thomas.** The prophecies did not change, but our understanding of what they were to reveal did. Over the years, some of our brethren have taken a disparaging position regarding the study and interpretation of as yet unfulfilled prophecy. One criticism is that brother so-and-so sees current events progressing in such a manner that fulfillment of a pertinent prophecy is likely by a given date. Then, when time passes and the Lord has not returned, brother so-and-so is accused of fostering false hope and demoralizing brethren from seeking after and addressing end-times prophecy.

Another criticism suggests that it is not possible to know what God has not revealed, so why concern oneself with the pursuit of this study? When Christ returns, we will be called to the judgment. If judged worthy, we will join Christ and participate in the final prophecies pertaining to his second Advent!



**In spite of these justifications / excuses, we cannot deny that end-time prophecies exist for a purpose**, and not only end-time prophecies, but also prophecies regarding the kingdom, the temple, the reign of Christ, etc. Are they not supplied by God for our understanding and encouragement? Are prophecies that extend to the time of the resurrection and beyond of little importance? Consider: a “Christian” who believes in the immortality of the soul may say his hope is to be judged worthy to enter the gates of heaven. Have you ever asked a “Christian” what he will do during eternity in heaven? He might say he will be united with loved ones, or perhaps play a harp, etc.; but eternity is a long time, and catching up with relatives in heaven would not take long. Playing harps...?

**Christadelphians, on the other hand, have confidence that Christ will return to the earth to judge the living and the dead in covenant with him.** He will then establish his throne and kingdom in the political realms of the earth, insuring righteous judgment throughout the earth during his thousand-year reign. Finally, sin and death are destroyed and God is glorified when *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea* (Isaiah 11:9).

**End-time prophecies give us a vision of the future that we can anticipate and prepare for.**

During that one-thousand-year reign the saints will have work to do. We may be instructed to battle Christ’s enemies (Psalm 149:5-9); preach and teach the Gospel (Isaiah 2:3); judge and administer kingdom resources (Matthew 19:28); perhaps conduct worship services, etc. **Bible prophecies help us put our hope in a living and working context.** The righteous saints in the Kingdom will be busy with the affairs of the Kingdom for a thousand years. What lies in wait for us beyond the Kingdom we do not yet know, but we have been assured that, *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* (1 Corinthians 2:9).

End-time prophecies give us a vision of the future that we can anticipate and prepare for. Like the five wise virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), we are to make ourselves ready to greet the coming bridegroom. A knowledge of what God has in store for us and the world at Christ’s coming is most inspiring and strengthening. Understanding prophecies of the end-times is not to blindly follow brother so-and-so for his efforts therewith, or to dismiss an interpretation as a waste of time. We are anticipating Christ’s return, and end-time prophecy has been given to strengthen us, knowing that *he that shall come will come* (Hebrews 10:37). Frankly, we should all do our due diligence that we might be found knowledgeable; watching for his coming.



**There are end-time prophecies scattered throughout the Bible.** Navigating your way through these prophecies requires patience, study, and analysis. What does the context tell you about a prophecy in terms of participants? Can you compare prophecies to determine the order in which they occur? Are similar events by different prophets the same event or not? As you do your readings and study, try to place the prophecies in general categories such as Christ's return, the judgment, Christ's enemies, Christ's rule, etc.

Once you have an overview of the subject, you may want to consult the writings of other brethren, both past and present, to help clarify *your* understanding. There are many Christadelphian sources of information and exhortation, as well as contemporary brethren who write, speak, and record their interpretations of prophecy. In these last days, an end-time prophecy study group should not be too difficult to set up.

### End-Times Battles

**One of the categories of end-times prophecy that brethren hold varying opinions on is that of the battle campaigns that precede/announce the appearance of our Lord's return.** These battle campaigns involve distinct categories of Israel's enemies as listed below:

- The proximal Islamic nations surrounding Israel (Obadiah 18-19; Zechariah 12:6).
- The Gogian Host (Ezekiel 38 and 39)
- The European Beast (the *ten kings* that *give their power and strength unto the beast* and *make war with the Lamb* following Jesus' assertion of his authority over all the earth (Revelation 17:13-14; 19:11-21).

Though the timing between these battles is not specified, they are all yet to occur. Whether or not one agrees or disagrees with individual interpretations, we believe this is a most significant and timely subject that is certainly worthy of our attention and study (particularly for our young people who may not be very familiar with it).

Some believe there will be an **initial battle** in which Israel defeats its enemies *round about them, that despised them* (Obadiah 18-19; Ezekiel 28:24): i.e., those enemies within the land (Palestinians), and those enemy nations bordering Israel. Others believe that these "proximal" nations will be among those defeated by the multitudinous Christ as expounded in the feature article, "The March of the Saints." Secondly, the **Gogian host** incorporates Russia, *Gomer, Togarmah* [eastern Turkey], *Persia* [Iran], *Libya and Ethiopia* (Ezekiel 38:5-6). These nations are completely destroyed by a Divine *overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone* (38:22). Finally, the Kingdom of Israel under Christ's rule overcomes the Western **European Beast** nations that "give their power and



strength unto the beast” (Revelation 17:12-13) in this third attack against Judah and Jerusalem (Joel 3; Zechariah 12). Thus, the “false prophet” of Rome, “Babylon the Great,” and the “*great image*” of Daniel chapter 2 will all be broken to pieces. A principle to note regarding the interpretation of these prophecies is that today nations are identified by the geography at the time the prophecy was written, not necessarily reflecting all current blood lines of the present inhabitants. For example, the Edomites of prophecy are today not all the literal descendants of Esau, but are rather the mixed population that lives today where the Edomites lived, i.e. southern Jordan.

We would do well to neither neglect nor ignore any part of the *sure word of prophecy* (2 Peter 1:19). Prophecy is God’s spirit-infused Word given to *shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass* (Revelation 1:1). As Paul reminded Timothy: *All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Brethren: the days are quickly flying; *now is the day of salvation* (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Jay Johnson, Roselle, IL

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## CHRIST’S COMING — NOT AS EXPECTED

When, without human fanfare, Jesus was born in a humble stable outside Bethlehem some two thousand years ago, only a few faithful watchers were in anticipation of his coming. Matthew’s and Luke’s Gospels inform us of this greatest of all births. The work of the angel Gabriel informs us of the birth of John the Baptist as forerunner and preparer for Jesus’ ministry (Luke 1:11-19). Gabriel also brings the Divine message of God’s selection of the virgin Mary to become the mother of God’s son (vss. 26-35). In this great prophecy-fulfilling plan, two superbly qualified royal descendants of King David, Mary and Joseph, were selected to ensure a secure and stable family environment in which Jesus would grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Testimonies by several “worthies of old” at Jesus’ birth and his circumcision confirm Jesus’ prophecy-fulfilling status and his future work as the promised Messiah and the Lamb of God.

### By the Hand of God

It is by the hand of God that Joseph and Mary are forced to leave Nazareth of Galilee and travel to Bethlehem to fulfill their obligation to Caesar Augustus’ census. It is by the hand of God that Jesus, as the seed of David



**The Sadducees, Pharisees, Scribes, Lawyers and Levites saw Jesus as their enemy and sought to oppose and eliminate him. Jesus of Nazareth was clearly NOT the Messiah they envisaged!**

and Abraham, is born there in a humble and quiet setting. It is by the hand of God that nearby shepherds are the only ones to see and hear the angelic choir announcing the birth of Jesus, and then be charged to go and see the babe and to tell others of God's message of hope and joy. It is by the hand of God that some months later, when the young family is back in Nazareth, that the three Magi from the East are led to the child born King of the Jews, for Matthew 2:11 tells us, *And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshiped him...* It is by the hand of God that these men are warned in a dream not to return to Herod or to reveal Jesus' safe haven in Galilee. It is by the hand of God that Herod sought help

from the chief priests and scribes to find out about this child in order to destroy him. It is by the hand of God that through Herod's actions, the religious rulers in Jerusalem learn of the birth of Jesus at a time consistent with Daniel's seventy-week prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27). Suffice it to say, they never forgot this! How else can they explain their dreadful accusation while debating with Jesus a full thirty years later, *We be not born of fornication!* (John 8:41). It is by the hand of God that Joseph, Mary and the young Jesus flee into the safety of Egypt until Herod dies a few years later. It is by the hand of God that this royal family is brought safely back to the quietude of Nazareth in Galilee for most of the next three decades.

### **The Expectations of Joseph and Mary**

During those many years, Jesus learned his surrogate father's trade of carpentry and assumed the role of the firstborn's responsibility to his siblings and elders. Luke tells us that, *The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him* (Luke 2:40). He also tells us that Joseph and Mary went up to Jerusalem every year for the Feast of the Passover, and at age 12, Jesus was with them. Luke goes on to tell us how Jesus deliberately remained behind in Jerusalem after his parents and relatives had left for home because he was so invested in discussions with the doctors of the law in the temple (vss. 42-52). After three long days, Mary and Joseph finally find him in the temple and are *amazed!* Mary reproaches her son with these words, *Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing* (vs. 48). **Clearly, Jesus' reply was not what they expected**, for he said, *How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*



But *they understood not the saying which he spake unto them* (vss. 49-50). Significantly, notwithstanding this wide communication gap between them, *Jesus went down with them to Nazareth, and was subject unto them*, while Mary kept all her son's words *in her heart* (vs. 51). Luke sums up this story with these cogent words, *And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man* (vs. 52).

### The Expectations of the Jewish Leaders

Eighteen years would pass before Jesus would leave life in Nazareth to begin his brief three-and-a-half-year ministry that would culminate in the end of his mortal life. It seems highly likely that some of the doctors of the law (e.g., Gamaliel) would realize this new preacher out of Galilee was one and the same as the 12-year-old boy who had so amazed them with his phenomenal Scriptural knowledge and insights years earlier. If this were so, for many (if not most of them) this Galilean teacher would have been seen as an existential threat to their status and influence as the religious leaders of the Jews. So it was, before very long, most of the Sadducees, Pharisees, Scribes, Lawyers and Levites saw Jesus as their enemy and sought to oppose and eliminate him. **Jesus of Nazareth was clearly NOT the Messiah they envisaged!** What follows is a small sample of the many *contradictions of sinners against himself* that Jesus endured (Hebrews 12:3), because of the warped expectations of the Jewish leaders regarding righteousness and the coming of the Messiah:

- At the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem, after Jesus heals a man crippled for thirty-eight years, they seek to slay him because he did it on the Sabbath day! They then redouble their efforts because Jesus tells them God is his father (John 5:4-18).
- After healing a man with a withered hand in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, the Pharisees immediately *took counsel with the Herodians how they might destroy him* (Mark 3:1-6).
- In the face of ongoing plots against him, Jesus preaches in Galilee because the leaders in Jewry *sought to kill him* (John 7:1).
- At the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, the Pharisees actively seek to kill Jesus (John chapter 7:1). Jesus, knowing this, says to them, *Moses gave you the law, and yet none of you keep the law. Why go ye about to kill me?* (vs. 19).
- After stating his place in God's plan was established long before Abraham, the Pharisees take up stones to kill him. By the hand of God he passes through the midst of them unharmed (John 8:56-59).



## The Expectations of the Common People

At the time of the feeding of the five thousand, Passover was at hand (Matthew 14:13-23; John 6:1-5). **The reaction of the common people to this stupendous miracle was to take Jesus “by force” to Jerusalem to make him King!** Jesus rejected this mob action and immediately sent his disciples away so they would not get caught up in this highly-charged inappropriate action. The temptation of doing social good, as appealing as that might have been, could never be allowed to subvert the true purpose of his coming, namely, to fulfill Genesis 3:15. Nevertheless, the populous sentiments that surfaced here were to come full force again at Jerusalem when they would shout, *Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord* (Matthew 21:9). A leader who could work miracles for them was their choice.

**We should be careful not to be dogmatic about specific details concerning the return of Christ. For us, as for those who witnessed Jesus’ birth, life and ministry, all is by the hand of God!**

## The Expectations of Jesus’ Disciples and Companions

On their last fateful trip up to Jerusalem, we are given a glimpse into the thinking of the disciples at that time. Despite Jesus’ repeated words that he was going to have to die at the hands of sinful men in Jerusalem, they never seemed to really grasp that fact. Having witnessed his great powers, it seemed impossible! How else are we to understand the appeals of the sons of Zebedee and their mother for places of prominence and status in Jesus’ Kingdom? Clearly, they were expecting that possibility soon, for they certainly were not expecting Jesus’ crucifixion (Mark 10:32-41). After the shock of Jesus’ death, the two disciples on the way to Emmaus made it clear just how invested the disciples were in expecting Jesus to set up the Kingdom of God in their lifetime. ***We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel*** (Luke 24:21). One is almost overwhelmed by the pathos and disappointment in their words. All was lost, until the breaking of bread! (Luke 24:13-35) Following on the relief and joy that came from seeing their risen Lord several times over the next fifty-plus days, they once again asked the burning question, ***Lord, wilt thou at this time [finally] restore again the kingdom to Israel?*** (Acts 1:6) The preposition is important. It reveals a national-centric perspective and expectation. Such were his disciples’ hopes and desire. To their great credit they accepted the disappointing answer their Lord gave them, and they rolled up their sleeves to carry out his bidding as testified in the Acts of the



Apostles. Certainly, none of them would have ever dreamed that over 2000 years later their Lord would still be at his Father's right hand.

### A “Cautionary Tale” for Today's Disciples

Perhaps there is a lesson here for us today as we look upon this earth in great travail under the impact of the most widespread pandemic ever to occur on this planet (other than the persistent mortality that continues to afflict all of Adam's race). As students of God's Word, we feel we have solid grounds on which to believe the return of Christ is truly nigh at hand. It is good we have such a lively hope! With good Bible-based reasons, we believe we are on the very threshold of our Master's return. Other articles on this theme are to follow this one as a series. If, however, there is a lesson for us in this article, this writer believes it is that we should be careful not to be closed-minded and dogmatic about our own personal perspectives on the certainty of specific details concerning the return of Christ. For us, as for those who witnessed Jesus' birth, life and ministry, **all is by the hand of God!**

*Jim Horton, Grimsby, Ontario*

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## CHRIST'S COMING FOR THE SAINTS

The times we are living in are exciting on one hand, with all signs pointing to the nearness of our Lord's return, but they can be troubling as well. Indeed, this is one of the signs prophesied by the Apostle Paul, *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come* (2 Timothy 3:1). There is no question that these are perilous times for those in the world, who are without hope. Yet despite being both troubling and perilous, it is ‘exciting’ for us as believers, for it demonstrates that we are living *in the last days*, and *our redemption draweth nigh* (Luke 21:28). Every aspect of what we are witnessing is precisely what was prophesied that would be in the world just prior to Christ's return. Should not we then be figuratively “on the edge of our seats” anticipating his appearing at any time?

### Parallels to Christ's Ascension

What does the Bible say about Christ's return and to whom he will first appear? Acts 1:11 tells us that *he shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*. To begin to understand the circumstances of Christ's second coming, we first need to know the circumstances of his ascension, and answer the question: Who was with him when he ascended? We know there were two angels – the two *in white apparel* (Acts 1:10). One of them addressed those present as *Ye men of Galilee*. Luke identifies these men simply as *the eleven* (24:33).



We see this as a very important parallel. **Only his disciples witnessed his ascension.** Will it not be the same when Christ returns: when he comes to raise those who are asleep in him and gather the elect? Just as he blessed his disciples before his ascension, what a blessing it will be for his bride when he comes to gather his saints in like manner. Will they not be the only ones aware of his return at this point? Of course, it will be different when his feet touch the Mount of Olives again, and it shall *cleave in the midst thereof*, and *the Lord* and *all the saints* shall come (Zechariah 14:4-5).

**We, who know well the prophecies, the prophetic time periods, and the signs, have no excuse not to be “awake” as the end approaches.**

**The passage in Scripture that will shed the most light on our subject is found at the end of Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians.** We would like to examine a few key terms and phrases that appear at the end of chapter 4 and the beginning of chapter 5 that will help in our understanding, and more importantly, in our vision of the coming of Christ for the saints.

### **The Resurrection of the Dead in Christ**

It seems that the Thessalonians had some misunderstanding about the resurrection that needed to be clarified, *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* (4:13). Paul’s address to the ecclesia here is then primarily one of reassurance, comfort, and hope for the future: that the dead in Christ will be raised upon his second coming, just as assuredly as Yahweh raised His Son from the dead (vs. 14).

**The order of events was as important to the understanding of the brethren in Thessalonica as it is to us:**

- Resurrection of the dead will be coincident with the Messiah’s return, for God will “bring” the resurrected ones with the Lord as they are “gathered to him” upon his return.
- Gathering of the resurrected saints will occur before those who are still alive at his coming (vs. 15). The word translated “prevent” in the AV is better rendered “precede” – *those that are alive and remain shall not precede those who are asleep* (ESV).

### **The Shout and Voice of the Archangel**

*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a **shout**, with the voice of the archangel...* What is this “shout” in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and who hears it? The original Greek word translated “shout” is *keleusma*. It signifies



“a call, a summons of authority or a command,” which seems appropriate for this application of the word. The following passages shed light on the “shout” and the “voice” with an echo to Christ’s coming for the saints and the resurrection of the dead:

1. *And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him* (Matthew 25:6).
2. *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which **all that are in the graves shall hear his voice**, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation* (John 5:28-29).
3. *And when he thus had spoken, he **cried with a loud voice**, Lazarus, come forth* (John 11:43).
4. *And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but **they heard not the voice of him that spake to me*** (Acts 22:9).

To help answer the second part of our question – who will hear the shout and the voice, we ask who heard the Lord’s voice and who did not in the above passages? Was it not the virgins, those who are in the graves, and Paul on the road to Damascus? **Might we then conclude that only the saints will hear the shout of the Lord and the voice of the archangel at his coming?**

As far as the archangel is concerned, we know of only one who is named in Scripture – Michael, the one that shall stand up at *a time of trouble such as never was*, which is also the time of the resurrection. *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt* (Daniel 12:1-2).

## The Trump of God



What is the significance of the trumpet, or the *trump of God* that accompanies the Lord’s return and his coming to the saints? (1 Thessalonians 4:16) Trumpets play a prominent role throughout Scripture and many of the passages that speak of trumpets have a direct bearing on their significance:



1. Trumpets were used to assemble God's people before Him (Numbers 10:1-10; Matthew 24:30-31; Isaiah 27:13).
2. The Feast of Trumpets called Israel together on the first day of the seventh month to prepare them for the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:24; 25:9; Numbers 29:1) and as a call to repentance and forgiveness of sins (Psalms 81:3; Isaiah 58:1; Joel 2:15).
3. The trumpet of the Jubilee proclaimed freedom to the captives, the year of release and restoration of their inheritance (Leviticus 25:9-13, 39-42, 47-55).
4. Trumpets are elsewhere connected with resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Revelation 11:15, 18).
5. Trumpets signaled the coronation or approach of a king (1 Kings 1:34, 39; 2 Kings 9:13; 11:14; Psalms 98:6).

These passages paint a very clear picture when put together, of just how appropriate the sound of a trumpet blowing is in terms of its connection to the return of Christ, to the Day of Atonement, and the Year of Jubilee; and what they represent in terms of forgiveness, release of "captives," assembling of the saints, and in particular, the resurrection. It is true that the sound of the trumpet blast conveys above all else a sense of urgency, of excitement, of immediacy. It does the opposite of lulling one to sleep, for it awakens and brings one out of slumber – to sit upright, to be ready and alert. How appropriate then is the sound attending the return of our Lord and the resurrection. Are we expecting and listening for it? Are we ready? The King is coming!

### Caught up in the Clouds

What does it mean to *be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air* (1 Thessalonians 4:17)? The Greek word for "caught up" (*harpazo*) actually means to be "snatched or plucked away," not literally "up." The idea is one of being conveyed quickly from one place to another as when *the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more...* (Acts 8:39). In this case, **it describes the saints that are to be miraculously and instantaneously transported to the judgment seat.** In our modern vernacular, we might use the word "teleported" to describe it.

**What then are the "clouds"?** One possibility is that it is referring to the "cloud of witnesses" or faithful ones as in Hebrews 12:1. We also see that meaning of "clouds" in Revelation 1:7, *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.* However, in these passages, it is referring to the time when he is manifest to the nation of Israel, and to all the world, and accompanied by the already glorified saints. But it is a different word in the Greek in 1 Thessalonians. We believe that here it is "clouds of glory," just as when he was received up into a cloud of glory, so shall he descend. This is



the most dominant theme in Scripture in regard to clouds, that is, the Shekinah Glory of God. The Almighty consistently manifested Himself to Israel *in the cloud and in the fire* (Exodus 13:21). The same cloud of glory filled the temple of Solomon. Elijah and Ezekiel witnessed it, and it was visible at the transfiguration with Christ. Will it be any different with Christ's appearing to the saints? He will surely be shining forth with the brightness of great glory as will be the case in his later manifestation to Israel and then to the whole world.

Finally, how do we understand *to meet the Lord in the air*? It goes along with the idea of being snatched away – not into heaven, but to meet our Lord. We will go to meet him in the literal fulfillment of the parable of the *ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom*...when they heard the cry that *the bridegroom cometh* (Matthew 25:1-6). There is nothing wrong with our understanding that the saints will be briefly transported through the “air” or atmosphere as they are gathered unto the Messiah and taken to Sinai and judgment.

### Times and Seasons

Christ tells us that we do not know *that day and hour* (Matthew 24:36), but we should know the times and seasons of our Lord's return, and we should know them well. *But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you* (1 Thessalonians 5:1). The original Greek word for **times** here is *kronos*, from which we get the English word “chronology.” In this case, it is speaking of the duration or **quantity** of time before the second coming. On the other hand, **seasons** (*kairos* in the Greek) has to do with the **quality** of that particular time and its accompanying signs at the end of the period.

We, who know well the prophecies, the prophetic time periods and the signs, have no excuse not to be “awake” as the end approaches. Any who may have dozed off have surely been awakened by the circumstances of the current pandemic along with recent world events. Unfortunately, most people of the world have no clue about what they are now witnessing in these last days, and what is coming upon the earth. Is this not the sense in which Christ will come as a thief in the night; that is, to the unexpectant unbeliever?

### Thief in the Night

It is true that our Messiah will come silently and stealthily as far as the world is concerned. The fact is, his first appearance will only be made manifest to the saints. **Christ, then, is coming as a thief in the sense that unbelievers will not even know that he has returned until after the judgment of the saints is complete.** What then is the exhortation for us? *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a*



*thief.* Paul goes on to exhort that we must be as *children of the light and children of the day* – that we, as Christ’s brethren, must be ever watchful, vigilant, sober in mind and in spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:4-6). Our Lord should not come to us unexpectedly!

This is the message in every Scriptural passage where the figure of the thief is found (Matthew 24:43; 2 Peter 3:9-10; Revelation 3:3; 16:15). It is a very pointed exhortation against casual indifference and distraction to the impending return of our Savior. It is the same with the parable of the householder at the end of the Olivet prophecy. The heedless householder persuades himself that he is at peace and his goods are secure. How unwelcome will be his Master’s appearance when he returns. For him it will be as a thief in the night. *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come...if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore, be ye also ready...* (Matthew 24:42-44).

### Role of the Angels

Finally, we know that the Elohim will have an important role to play at Christ’s second Advent, just as they did in his first. We are familiar with what occurred when the Messiah was born unto Mary: when the angels appeared to the shepherds keeping their flock by night. Yahweh’s Shekinah glory shone around them, and they were fearful. The angels reassured the shepherds, saying, *Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy*, announcing that their Savior was born. After the angels departed, they went to Bethlehem to witness for themselves what had been made known to them (Luke 2:8-15).

Will it not be much the same with his second Advent? At midnight comes the cry – “the bridegroom cometh.” *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other* (Matthew 24:31); for he will *come in the glory of his Father with his angels...* (Matthew 16:27). These verses tell us that the angels will have an essential role in assisting Christ at his return, i.e., the gathering of the elect. It is a good supposition to believe that an angel, perhaps our angel will come to inform us of the Messiah’s return and collect us to be taken to the judgment.

*But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do* (1 Thessalonians 5:8-11).

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## CHRIST'S COMING FOR ISRAEL



*Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates (Genesis 15:18).*

It is often only in hindsight that we're able to understand how the different pieces of God's prophetic Word fit together. Bible prophecy is given to reassure us that when we see these things come to pass; we have further evidence that God is working to bring His plan to fruition. But though we can recognize the individual pieces of the puzzle, sometimes it can be a challenge to integrate them into a comprehensive whole.

### **Differing Views on the Order of Events**

**There are two schools of thought concerning Christ's coming for Israel.** One view anticipates a single conflict between Israel and the nations culminating in the return of Christ and the deliverance of Israel. The second view anticipates two conflicts – one with the nations round about, followed by Christ's return which sets in motion the northern invasion. Following Gog's defeat, Christ then undertakes to establish the Kingdom.

**Irrespective of your view, Daniel wrote of a coming time of trouble (Daniel 12:1-2), and this trouble will coalesce around Israel.** In many respects today, Israel is a bifurcated nation. These contrasts are seen most strikingly when one compares Tel Aviv, a worldly, urban center in contrast to Jerusalem – the spiritual heart of the nation steeped in the traditions of Judaism. Out of this diverse people, God is going to establish a new order. *On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the*



*inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness (Zechariah 13:1). This regeneration will be comprehensive, for they shall all know me... for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more (Jeremiah 31:34). The day is coming when natural Israel will be constrained by an appreciation of what Jesus did for them, in the same way that the love of Christ constrains us today. When God writes his laws on their hearts and minds it will bring about the nation's moral regeneration.*

**Although Bible students might differ on the order of events, God's purpose remains the same.** Our hope is bound to the Hope of Israel. Salvation is of the Jews, and we need to become spiritual offspring of Abraham if we are to participate in that hope. When we speak of the new covenant – we see it rooted in the nation of Israel. *This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds (Jeremiah 31:33).* In God's overarching plan, we see *all Israel*, both natural and spiritual, being saved (Romans 11:26).

### **The Key Role of Elijah**

Malachi writes of the coming of Elijah that will occur before the great and terrible day of the Lord – before Christ's public manifestation in power and glory (Malachi 4:5-6). Elijah, and those who come in that same spirit, will be tasked with converting the heart of the nation back to the faith of the patriarchs to whom the promises were originally made. No one is better suited to do that, in addition to Elijah, than the patriarchs themselves, who, at this point, will have been immortalized. God knew Abraham and his commitment to teach his children God's ways (Genesis 18:19). Jesus too referred to the future role of Elijah, saying that he *will come and restore all things (Matthew 17:11) before the great and the terrible day of the LORD (Joel 2:31).* This work will serve to prepare the way of the Lord.

The resurrection of the dead will have taken place without the world's knowledge, and when Jesus does reveal himself to the world, together with his saints, it will be unexpected. These resurrected and immortalized saints are going to comprise the *hidden ones* (Psalms 83:3 LXX) who begin the process of turning the hearts of the children to the ways of the fathers. Currently, Israel remains reliant on its own strength, and the nation remains in darkness about the role of Jesus as the Messiah.

**Elijah and the rest of the redeemed are, in some fashion, going to instruct and guide the nation of Israel behind the scenes.** We do not know how overt this influence will be – whether comparable to the work of the angels in our lives today, or perhaps more concretely. In some respect, the Jews are awaiting the return of Elijah, and many orthodox families leave an empty chair at their table in anticipation of his arrival. To all



appearances, I believe everything will seem quite natural and the world will be unaware that there are supernatural forces at work.

### The March of the Rainbowed Angel

Sinai is seen as the starting point for Christ and his immortalized brethren as they embark on their way to Israel, in what is often termed the March of the Rainbowed Angel (Revelation 10). Moses, quoting from Enoch's prophecy said, *The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them* (Deuteronomy 33:2). Though based on past events of the Exodus, these words are also prophetic of the future. Similarly, the Psalmist (68:17) and Habakkuk (3:3-4) portray a vision of Christ and the saints in great power and glory. This will not go unnoticed, although it appears Christ and his immortalized brethren may not be recognized for who they are.

Israeli observers are left to wonder, "Who is this who comes from Edom?" and has rid these southern lands of their enemies. This judgment that will occur in Edom and Bozrah will be executed by Christ and his saints alone. Then, having vanquished their enemies, this immortalized throng will move northward to Jerusalem. **Perhaps the eleven-day "faithful" journey from Sinai to Kadesh Barnea described by Moses in Deuteronomy 1:2 suggests a march of similar duration.** Several suggestions have been made as to who is defeated. Some believe the Edomites are today's Arab peoples; others see Edom as representative of the Gentiles since Edom was made a perpetual desolation, and yet others suggest that the northern invader at this juncture has moved south and is occupying Bozrah.

Psalms 24 speaks of the triumphal procession when the ark was brought to Zion, and as they reached the gates of the city, the gate keepers cried out, *Who is this king of glory?* (vs. 8) Though it was doubtless a rhetorical question in David's day, it points forward to the day when the antitypical Ark of the Covenant – Christ in his glorified majesty – will come to the gates of Zion, and the question will again be asked. The answer to the third question, *What are these wounds in your hands?* (Zechariah 13:6), will leave the Jews in no doubt.

### Christ Revealed to Israel

The account of Joseph revealing his identity to his brothers may provide us some insight into the manner in which Jesus will reveal himself to Israel. Judah, who served as spokesman, may be representative of those in the land at the time of Christ's appearing. At the end of this revelation, Joseph's brothers finally "talked with him" – a dramatic change from earlier when they couldn't speak peaceably unto him. Then, after all had been laid bare, they were without excuse and could only ask, Joseph, please forgive us!



(Genesis 50:17). Similarly, in this manner all Israel will be saved, as it is written, *The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob* (Romans 11:26).

In Matthew 24, after the nation of Israel is re-established in its own land, Christ appears in glory, not to the household, for that has already occurred, but now to the tribes of the land of Israel. We would understand the clouds accompanying Christ as the great cloud of witnesses of Hebrews 12.

In Zechariah 13, the mourning is limited to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, whereas Matthew's record would suggest the Jewish mourning will be more widespread. If we understand the Greek word "ge" to mean not only the land of Israel, but the whole earth, then we can anticipate the millions of Jews outside of Israel still scattered abroad will also rejoice in the Messiah's great deliverance and join in the mourning for what their fathers did to their Messiah long ago. Like the realization that dawned on Joseph's brothers, the veil will finally be lifted.

**How would it be possible for God to uphold His righteousness, and restore a people who had rejected His Son and profaned His Name among the Gentiles?** Only through their heartfelt repentance and confession could God justly forgive and restore Israel. Their confession of faith will not only form the basis of their restitution, but will provide a template for other nations to follow.

Reading Matthew 24 from a Jewish perspective, we learn of the judgment upon the nation that later occurred in AD 70, and the subsequent upheaval in the Jewish heavens as the curses of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 befell the Jews. But this prophecy ultimately culminates in the re-appearance of Christ in power and glory. At this point, Israel will be overwhelmed by the forces of invading armies, but will ultimately be saved by Jesus when he comes to fight for his people and establish his throne in Jerusalem.

### **The Recognition of Their Messiah**

In Ezekiel 38, Israel is described as a quiet people dwelling securely, without walls, bars or gates (vss. 8, 11). Some have suggested that at this juncture, Christ is already in the land, and their sense of security is based on their faith in him. Although Israel is dwelling "securely" ("safely" KJV), we

**Only through their heartfelt repentance and confession could God justly forgive and restore Israel. And their confession of faith will not only form the basis of their restitution, but will provide a template for other nations to follow.**



are not told the cause of the security. Some have suggested an Arab-Israeli treaty, or the prior defeat of the inner ring of Arab nations. It may be an angelically-induced fear that affords Israel peace, akin to the days of Jehoshaphat when the fear of the Lord fell on the surrounding nations (2 Chronicles 17:10). Although Israel will not dwell in true security until they recognize Christ as their king, is this the security spoken of in Ezekiel 38? At this juncture, is Israel a repentant people who have now placed their faith in Messiah?

Daniel informs us that their “time of trouble” will reach its zenith when the northern invader comes down and *plants the tents of his palace between the sea and the holy mountain* (11:45 NKJV). It is not until the decisive victory over this northern invader (as described in Ezekiel 39) that there is a change in Israel’s heart, suggesting that the earlier description of them “living securely in unwalled villages” was not because of faith in their Redeemer, but rather confidence in their own prowess. God says, *AFTER the destruction of the northern host: then shall they know that I am the Lord their God* (Ezekiel 39:22). **Indeed, it may require the defeat of the northern invader for the remnant of Israel to accept that Jesus was, and is, the true Messiah.**

### The Messiah’s Entry into Jerusalem

Just as Ezekiel saw a vision of the departing of the glory from the temple to the east gate (10:18-19), we see a similar route taken by Jesus when he left the temple after his last discourse and journeyed east to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 21:1). Both the departure of the Shekinah glory and its return unto the house of Yahweh (Ezekiel 43:4-5) were prophesied to be through the Eastern or Golden Gate (literally, “the gate of the sun’s rising”). Malachi fittingly reminds us of *the Sun of Righteousness who will arise with healing in his beams* (4:2). The preparatory work of Elijah will have generated an air of expectancy, so when Jerusalem is suffering the atrocities of war they will say, *Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord* (Matthew 23:39).

**The Ottoman – Suleiman the Magnificent – rebuilt the Golden Gate and walled it in.** It may have been for purely defensive reasons, but tradition holds that it was because this is the gate through which the Lord will enter Jerusalem. *On that day, his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east,*





*and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two* (Zechariah 14:4 ESV). It is unlikely that Suleiman's masonry is going to withstand such a cataclysmic upheaval. In fact, we are told *every wall shall tumble to the ground* (Ezekiel 38:20 ESV).

When the invading armies come to attack Jerusalem and "the LORD goes forth to fight against them;" and before the great earthquake changes the landscape, an escape route will be provided for faithful Jews to the region to the south (Zechariah 14:5). This faithful remnant will undergo a transformation of their hearts and minds and be redeemed, just as Hosea's wife, Gomer was (Hosea 2:14-15). There is a beautiful symmetry here with the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, when the faithful were given an opportunity to escape the city when the Romans providentially withdrew. Similarly, the Jews will have another test of faith when the command is given to retreat from Jerusalem and trust in the Lord's deliverance. The *valley of Achor* becomes a *door of hope* leading down into the wilderness of Moab (Hosea 2:15). And as evidence of God's willingness to redeem His people, He redeems the land. It will serve as a natural testimony of His power to regenerate.

### **The Regathering and Final Restitution**

**Those whom the Lord has rescued will return.** *They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away* (Isaiah 35:10 NIV). This prophecy is repeated in Isaiah 51:9-11, in the context of Egyptian deliverance, when Rahab is *broken in pieces* (Psalm 89:10) and God's people are brought into His land. The millions of Jews still inhabiting the Gentile nations will return, as Israel now becomes the "elect," returning to God's favor and recognized as the chosen in the eyes of all the world. Under Christ's command, the nation of Israel will bring the nations of the world into subjection with the intent of achieving reconciliation and preservation of life. Israel will at last become the nation of priests that God intended.

Though Bible students may differ in their understanding of the sequence of events, we all agree on the ultimate objective – to bring to fruition the new covenant – the everlasting covenant made unto the fathers.

*Alan Ghent, Mississauga, ON*

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## CHRIST'S COMING FOR THE WORLD

Unprecedented challenges to the leadership and resources of governments are occurring throughout the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought on global circumstances that remind us of our Lord's message in the Olivet prophecy of conditions immediately before his second coming:

- *And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Luke 21:24).*
- *And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth (Luke 21:25-26).*
- *for the powers of heaven shall be shaken (Luke 21:26).*
- *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:27-28).*

**Our Lord did not teach us to pray that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass... unless those things from which he offers escape were going to be grievous for the world.**

These Scriptures span the interval of time from the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 to the point where Jerusalem ceases to be trodden down of the Gentiles and the Lord comes again to the earth.

### Conditions Related to Jerusalem

**The release of Jerusalem from the power of the Gentiles to tread it down has been occurring in stages.** Its capture by the British Army from the Ottoman Turks in December 1917 was a major turning point in its liberation. Its division into two sectors, one under Jordanian control and one under Israeli control in 1948 during the War of Independence, ended on June 7, 1967 when Israeli forces captured the eastern sector of the city from the Jordanians and reunited the city under Israeli sovereignty. Temple Mount in the Old City was in the section of the reunited city that Israel came to control for the first time. While the world has not recognized



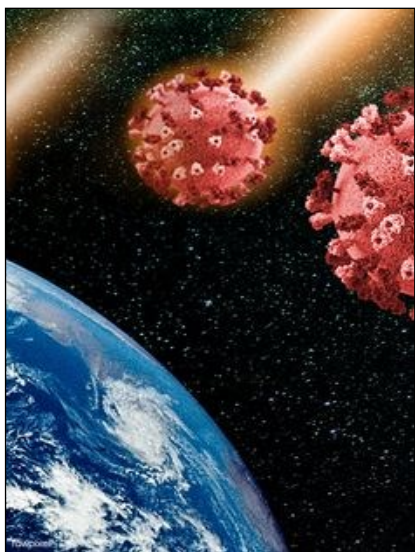
Israel's sovereignty over the whole city, the United States took a major step in 2017 by officially recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and followed by moving the US embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv. In October 2020, for the first time, the US State Department permitted "Jerusalem, Israel" to be listed on US passports as the place of birth for those US citizens born there. Previously the passports only listed "Jerusalem" without specifying a country, in order to leave its sovereign status undefined. Most other nations, especially in Europe, are not aligned with these US moves and have condemned them.

From these words of our Lord, spoken in response to admiration for the buildings of the Temple (Luke 21:5), we infer that the influence of Gentile nations over Jerusalem will be reduced preceding his coming. As a practical outcome of COVID-19, tourism to Jerusalem and other parts of the holy land has fallen off sharply, and so far, fewer Gentiles are presently visiting the city.

### Conditions Prevailing in the Earth and Nations

Concurrently there will be universal distress among the nations of the earth, to such a severe degree that "the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Bible students have long understood this reference to be symbolic of the human system of governments in the earth. Their shaking, while not indicating their complete fall, indicates their instability and their reeling from crisis to crisis, without any solution; while the peoples of the earth, represented by the sea and waves, are increasingly in an uproar and state of turmoil.

**The COVID-19 pandemic has brought these conditions to the fore across the world.** Leaders of the world are on the horns of a dilemma: if



they open up their economies and allow a return to normality, the number of COVID-19 infections sharply spikes; and if they lock down their citizenry to reduce the social interactions which enable the virus to spread, their economies falter disastrously. There has never been an ongoing global crisis, unrelated to war, that has perplexed and burdened the governments of the world more than this pandemic. The social and economic consequences will remain long after many in the world have been vaccinated and the mass spread of the virus has been curtailed (depending on the vaccine's effectiveness). It is when these kinds of conditions are prevailing



in the earth – when they **begin** to come to pass – that our Lord taught us to expect his coming and the bringing of redemption. There are two distinct factors given, independent of each other, although occurring simultaneously: (i) the cessation of the treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles, implying that the Jewish people of Israel gain fuller jurisdiction over its affairs, and (ii) the increasing instability of human governments on a global scale with great restiveness among the peoples of the world.

### Signs of His Presence to the World

How will it be known to the world when our Lord descends from heaven? When will the world come to realize his presence in the earth? There has been a longstanding inference among many Bible students that our Lord's coming for the saints will bring about an immediate, personal connection to him, when both the dead ones are raised and the living ones are gathered by angelic agency (Note: more details on this can be found in the article – Christ's Coming for the Saints). How much of this experience will be known to and understood by the world at his coming?

Answers to these kinds of questions are healthy for us to ponder because they enable the coming of Christ to be made real to us as a most dramatic single event to change the course of our world. However, they cannot be answered with certainty. The only approach any of us can take when considering these questions is to cite the Scriptures from which the inferences have been drawn. In that way, each Bible student can assess the strength of the case and form an independent conclusion.

- 1. One Scripture that indicates that the whole world will be impacted by the second coming of our Lord is Luke 21:35, *For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.*** There is no specific elaboration of this Scripture and therefore none of us knows how the second coming of our Lord will be sprung, as it were, like a trap on an unsuspecting prey. However, one thing that this prophecy emphasizes is the universality of the impact: on *all* them...the *whole* earth. In Matthew's account of the Olivet prophecy, our Lord's return is compared to the days of Noah: *For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be* (Matthew 24:38-39). In making reference to the "days of Noah," the writer to the Hebrews states that Noah was warned of *things not seen as yet* (Hebrews 11:7). Whatever the circumstances were that unleashed the opening of the heavens and the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep in Noah's time (Genesis 7:11), they represented a catastrophe unprecedented in human experience and completely unexpected by those living on the earth. From what is



written, does it not appear that Christ's coming will also have a catastrophic impact on the world and its ways?

- 2. A number of Scriptures associate the Lord's return from heaven with the release of energy – sound and light, glory and power.** In 1 Thessalonians 4:16 it is written, *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God...* In the accounts of Paul's meeting with the Lord when he was travelling to Damascus, it is written that *the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man* (Acts 9:7). Also, in Acts 22, when Paul was recalling this intervention by the Lord, he declared, *And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid: but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me* (vs. 9). One way of reconciling these Scriptures is to conclude that the group of men with Paul were aware of noise but they were not able to make out what was said by the Lord to Paul. A similar experience could be in store for the world in the day of Christ's coming: the shout of the Lord and the voice of the archangel may be heard and understood by those who believe but perceived only as a loud noise by the world. There are indications in Matthew's gospel and Paul's writing that the Lord's coming will also be accompanied by visible brightness, as Paul experienced on the road to Damascus. *For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be...whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming* (Matthew 24:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

### Putting the Pieces of the Puzzle Together

**Let's attempt to put the two "puzzle pieces" in #1 and in #2 together and suggest the impact of a possible world-changing event that may lie ahead.**

While it is not possible for us to know what the great release of energy that occurs at the time of his coming will accomplish, beyond the instantaneous reconstruction of dead women and men from the dust to stand again as living beings, it may have a catastrophic impact on the communications system of this world. In September 1859, the last major coronal mass ejection event occurred when a stream of highly charged particles was ejected from the sun.<sup>1</sup> The Aurora Borealis (the "northern lights") was observed in tropical latitudes, and cities in the northern hemisphere had sufficient luminescent glow at night that residents were able to read newspapers. Although communications reliant on electricity were then in their infancy, the geomagnetic solar storm proved very disruptive to sending messages by telegraph.



A coronal mass ejection event of equal or greater intensity could potentially be catastrophic to satellites in orbit and to ground-based communications such as cellphone towers as well as power grids. Is it possible on the day of the Lord's return that the global Internet will be disabled and mass confusion will be sown all over the earth as communication systems fail? Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Amazon, Google – they could all instantaneously be taken offline. In such circumstances, the fact that some citizens are missing, as a result of the living believers having been taken by Lord's angelic messengers, will be a very low priority for the authorities to investigate. The purpose in citing the coronal mass ejection event is not to speculate that there will be a recurrence on a more intense scale on the day of the Lord's coming. It is simply to point out that there is a known kind of event by which the world can be brought to its knees in an instant of time.

### Proclamation to the World

There will be a universal proclamation made from Jerusalem to all peoples of the earth by Christ's new government. *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters* (Revelation 14:6-7). The Scriptures do not state how much time elapses from the day of his coming until his authority in the earth is proclaimed and obedience is demanded. **At the time of this proclamation, however, all peoples of the earth will be aware that there is a king in Jerusalem who is seeking to reorder the world that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**There is still time,  
but there may not  
be much time, for  
those who are not  
committed to  
Christ to make  
their decision...**

The reaction of the nations to this proclamation appears to be mixed. When the seventh angel sounds, and great voices proclaim, *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever* (Revelation 11:15), the response of the nations is summarily described as, *the nations were angry* (Revelation 11:18). While there will be intense opposition to Christ at the beginning of his reign, he will prevail over all his enemies: *They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.* (Psalm



72:9-11). Whether the recent peace moves between Israel and nation-states in the Persian Gulf mean that some nations of the world might be more favorably disposed to recognize the reign of Christ and come first to honour him in Jerusalem, we do not know.

### A New World Order Coming Soon

There is still time, but there may not be much time, for those who are not committed to Christ to make their decision, to enter into the ark and be spared from the storms that will rock this world. Our Lord did not teach us to pray *that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man* (Luke 21:36), unless those things from which he offers escape were going to be grievous for the world. On the day of his manifestation to the world there will be an irreversible new world order set in motion. The *stone [that] was cut out [of the mountain] without hands* will surely come and break in pieces together *the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold*, and they will become *like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors...and the stone that smote the image* will become *a great mountain, and fill the whole earth* (Daniel 2:34-35). May we be blessed to be among *the people of the saints of the Most High* to whom that Kingdom is given (Daniel 7:27).

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<sup>1</sup>A coronal mass ejection event does not travel at the speed of light. It takes one or more days to reach earth from the time it is ejected from the surface of the sun. The word “coronal” is derived from the corona, the name given to the aura plasma making up the outer layers of the sun. Corona is the Latin word for “crown.” The 1859 event is called the “Carrington event” after amateur British astronomer Richard Carrington who studied it.

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**Editor's Note:** The following article "From Our Past – The Sign of His Presence" – can be seen as an elaboration on the preceding article – “Christ's Coming for the World.” It also exemplifies a point that has been touched upon several times in this issue: that there is not complete unanimity of understanding in terms of how end-time events will unfold. For example, Brother Gibson in the following article indicates that Christ will alone strike the first blow in the march of the saints, whereas in the other articles there is intimation that the saints will be involved in the overtaking of this Arab territory along the entire route from Sinai to Jerusalem. There are of course other minor differences in how the appearing and march of Christ and the saints will unfold, but none of these differences in understanding or interpretation of end-time prophecies should be seen as divisive or argumentative, but as opportunities for consideration and discussion as “iron sharpeneth iron.”



## THE SIGN OF HIS PRESENCE

*Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (Matthew 24:3)*

The answer to the above questions will be of great interest to all who are blessed with the realization that “the hope of Israel” is the hope of the world... It would be very

**Mathew 24:27... teaches us that his presence will be heralded by a startling event visible to all; that he comes openly and suddenly.**

difficult to find words more expressive of the present state of affairs than those used by our Lord in Luke 21:25-26, *Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity: the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.* These

signs are so obvious as to require no comment, but in addition to the general signs of the “end of the world,” there is to be a special sign indicating that Christ is present in the earth as expressly stated in Matthew 24:30, ***Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven.*** In view of the apparent imminence of his coming, it would be very interesting to discover just what the nature of this sign shall be. I offer the following suggestion in relation to this sign, which by no means will exhaust the subject, but may throw some light upon it.

In Matthew 24:27 we read, *As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.* This teaches us that his presence will be heralded by a startling event visible to all: that he comes openly and suddenly. He says, *I come as a thief* (Revelation 16:15), but this can mean nothing more than unexpectedly, and not that he shall steal quietly into the world. As expressed in another place, *Therefore be ye also ready: (unless you do watch) for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh* (Matthew 24:44). He cannot come unexpectedly to the faithful of his household, for they live in constant expectation of that event. But to the world that neither expects nor desires him, he comes as a thief suddenly, yet as openly as a flash of lightning. For further evidence of this we turn to 1 Thessalonians 4:16, *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout.* Also, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8, *when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven... in flaming fire; and again in Psalm 50:3, Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.*



These passages indicate that his revelation or descent from heaven will be accompanied by some great spectacular event. Now as to the nature of this event, let us turn to Isaiah 63:1, *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.* Before proceeding further with Isaiah, let us reference Revelation 19:13-14, for here we see this same personage *clothed with a vesture dipped in blood*, while the armies which followed him are arrayed *in fine linen, white and clean*. Now let us return to the question asked in Isaiah 63, *Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?* (vs. 2) The answer is, *I have trodden the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with me* (vs. 3).

**His object will be to destroy all existing governments and to establish not merely an autocracy, but an autocratic theocracy – a system of things alike distasteful to all branches of modern society...**

Let us now ask a question concerning his followers: **Why are your garments white and clean, instead of being stained like those of your leader?** The answer would probably be, we have not yet taken part in the execution of the judgments written. From this we are led to the conclusion that the Lord Jesus alone strikes the first blow. He appears in red apparel, or in a garment stained with blood before the destruction of Gog or the Beast, and this appearance evidently takes place in Edom.

Isaiah 34:4-6 appears to bear this out, for we read, *And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down... for my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold it shall come down upon Idumea* [Greek name for Edom]... *for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.* In Amos 1:12 we read, *I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall destroy the palaces of Bozrah;* and again in Obadiah 8-9, *Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? And thy mighty men O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.* Finally, in Habakkuk 3:3-5, *God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran... before him went the pestilence and burning coals went forth at his feet.* Teman, Edom, and Paran, as we are aware, are in the south of Palestine, while the place called Armageddon where the Beast is destroyed is in the north. Consequently, we must conclude that the passages noted above must refer to an event separate from,



and previous to, the great destruction of Gog and Armageddon. Furthermore, it is evidently an event in which the Lord participates, for He says, *I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was no man with me. Will this great crisis in Edom [one of, or perhaps representative of, the proximal “prickling brier” countries “round about” Israel?] be the sign of his presence?*

The question may arise, If the Lord makes his appearance in such a spectacular manner, will not the world at large recognize him; thus precluding the likelihood of their offering resistance to his authority? To this we may reply in the words of the angel to Daniel, ...*none of the wicked shall understand* (Daniel 12:10). The star that appeared in the east at Jesus’ birth was doubtless visible to all the world, yet only the wise men understood its significance. He shall appear again as a star in the political heavens of the Near East, and again the wise men shall see, understand and rejoice, while the world at large may look upon him at first merely as another personage in the political arena of the East. They may look upon him as some obscure presumptuous Jew, and

**The Arabs are doubtless the descendants of Esau and Ishmael; and Edom, Bozrah, Teman, and Paran serve as an index to their geographical location...**

consider his doctrine dangerous propaganda, and his political platform worse: for he will come as the implacable foe of the existing order of things, and the most radical revolutionist the world had ever seen. His object will be to destroy all existing governments and to establish in their stead not merely an autocracy, but an autocratic theocracy – a system of things alike distasteful to all branches of modern society, and that at a time when the tendency is to abolish all political and religious authority.

It behooves us to watch developments in the Near East and the activities of the Arabs. The Arabs are doubtless the descendants of Esau and Ishmael; and Edom, Bozrah, Teman, and Paran serve as an index to their geographical location... At any rate, the prophecy in Isaiah 63:1 indicates there is to be a great crisis in Palestine at which time the country will be helpless, and is saved by Divine intervention. This is indicated in verses 4-5, *For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of mv redeemed is come. I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation... and my fury, it upheld me.*

*Robert Gibson, January, 1921, The Christadelphian Advocate and Fellow-Laborer, pp. 6-9, “The Sign of His Presence” (abridged)*



## AS YE SEE THE DAY APPROACHING

In former days, the following verse was quoted and cited more frequently than it is now, *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing* (2 Timothy 4:8). Is there a reason for this?

One would never suspect that the disciples of Jesus Christ were chosen to be a people *poor of this world rich in faith* (James 2:5). Generally speaking, the Christadelphians of North America enjoy the good life. We are abundantly blessed with not only the necessities of life, but with many of the luxuries as well. Most of us have plenty of food, clothing, and shelter. In addition, we have much leisure time – a commodity totally unknown to many of our forebears who were mainly farmers or labourers. The stark necessity to earn a living required hard labour for ten to twelve hours a day, six days a week. Sunday was the one day of the week when a respite was tolerated. The sisters worked side-by-side with their husbands. Unknown were the modern labour-saving devices...



Yet, despite these hardships, brethren and sisters found time to faithfully attend to daily readings, preach and teach the Truth to their children, friends, neighbors, and attend ecclesial functions.

There was no unemployment insurance, Social Security, or pensions; medical knowledge was scant – no painkillers, antibiotics... Under these conditions there was a yearning for the second coming of our Lord. No matter how perilous the present, the future contained the oath-given promise of a time when tears would be wiped from all eyes, when pain, sorrow, and crying would flee away, when every man would enjoy the fruits of his own labour and none would make him afraid. There was a strong recognition that the things that are seen are temporal, but the things promised to those that love Him and obey His commandments are eternal. The second coming of our Lord, his Advent, was loved.

What of the brotherhood today? Are we so comfortable and so increased with goods that we no longer need the Advent, having abandoned an honest and yearning love for his appearance? The signs of the promised Advent never looked brighter nor nearer. This is no time to fail, falter or give up the fight as a good soldier of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Edward W. Farrar, *Christadelphian Advocate*, January 1987,  
Editorial (abridged), pp. 1-2



*To him that overcometh  
will I give to eat of the  
tree of life,*

*which is in the midst  
of the paradise of God.*

