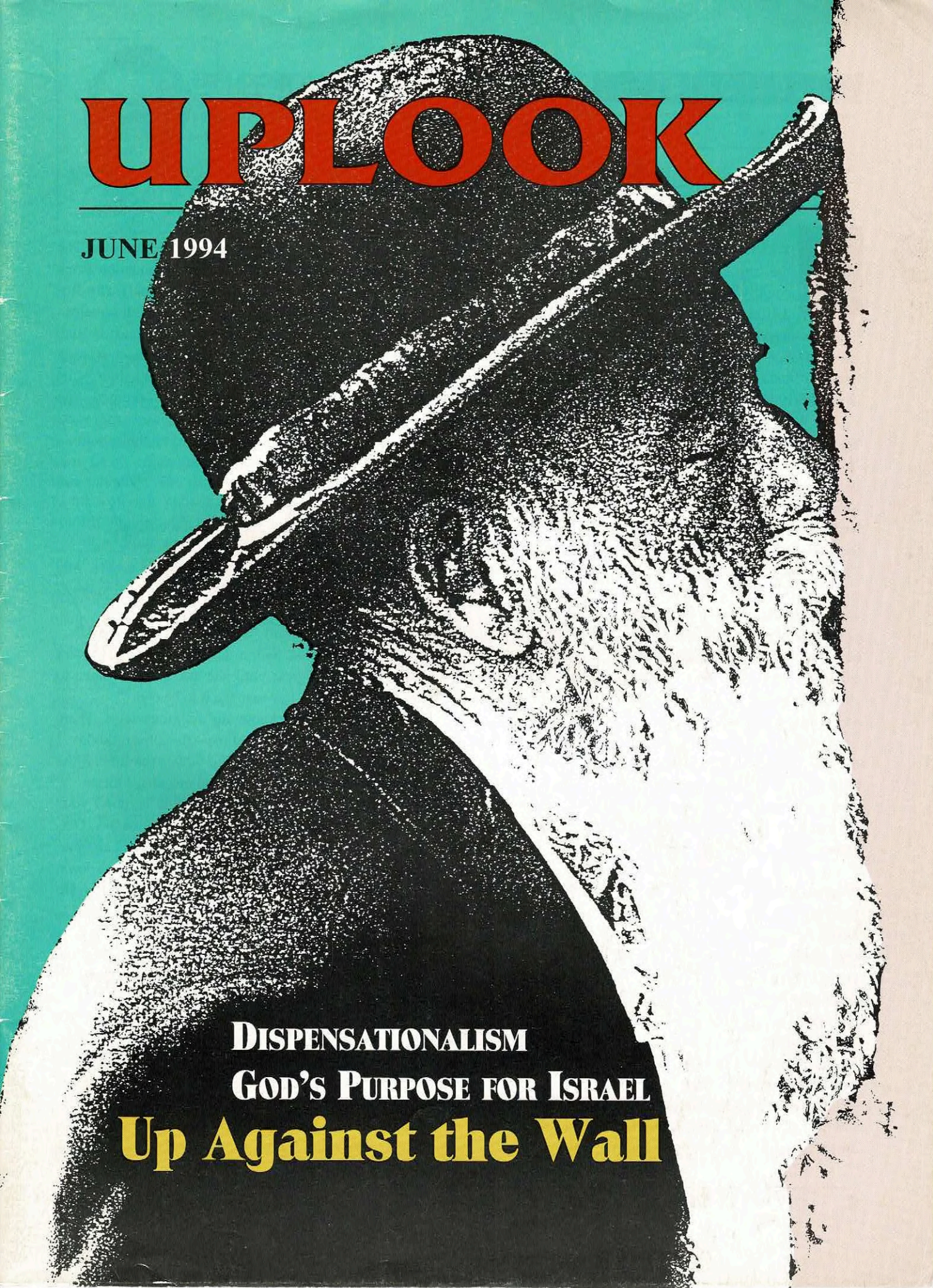
UPLOOK

JUNE 1994



DISPENSATIONALISM
GOD'S PURPOSE FOR ISRAEL
Up Against the Wall

J. B. NICHOLSON JR.



UP AGAINST THE WALL

IT IS AN IRONY that should not be missed: the true symbol of Judaism is a wall. The country's department of tourism uses a rendition of two spies carrying a cluster of Eschol's grapes; the Israeli flag is emblazoned with *magen David,* the six-pointed shield; the knesset (parliament) boasts a large seven-branched menorah. But world Jewry always finds its way to the Wall.

The Wall, or *ha-Kotel* (often called by Gentiles the Wailing Wall—never by the Jews; they call it *Kotel Ha'Maaravi* or the Western Wall), is really a portion of the Herodian retaining wall built to enlarge the Temple Mount area. Mount Moriah's southern peak was not large enough for Herod the Great's grandiose plans, so he had a large stone "table" built over the summit. The outer (eastern) wall of the city was extended to the south, and three other walls were built in a rough rectangle around the base of the mountain. Then, upheld by pillars, domes, and arches, a huge platform was built between the walls (approx. 1000ft. x 1500ft.). On this expansive "tabletop" were erected the temple precincts. Herod beautified the Second Temple, including the addition of a solid gold crown around its parapet.

Sitting on the commanding slope of Olivet east of the city, a knot of men gathered around a Prophet, in animated conversation. They were impressed with Herod's beautification program in the Eternal City. But their Master told them, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another" (Mt. 24:2). Could it be?

One full generation would pass. This last great Prophet, the Stone rejected by the builders, would be executed outside the city walls. The fledgling Church would be scattered by the threatenings and slaughter of one, Saul of Tarsus. Israel, chafing under the Roman yoke, in 66 A.D. rebelled against her masters, bringing down the fury of Titus and his legionnaires. After a bloody five-year siege, the city would be put to the torch. And the temple's golden crown, once her glory, would bring about her final shame. Running down between her mighty stones, its wealth, once cooled, was sought by the soldiers by breaking each stone apart.

All that was left was the Wall. The first few layers on the top were thrown over into the valley, but the work became more difficult with succeeding rows. The stones each weigh several tons (one foundation stone north of the plaza approximates 400 tons!) The Romans left off their destruction and so the Wall remains.

Almost half a world away, in Richmond, British Columbia, I was standing in a quick-print shop, waiting to have a chart photocopied. In through the door came a cheerful woman, dark haired, sallow skinned. She greeted the proprietor and then stood beside me, waiting to be served. She noticed my chart on the counter.

"Is that yours?" she asked.

"Yes, it is."

"What is it about?"

"These are the major teachings of the Bible."

"Would you explain it to me?"

The conversation lasted an hour-and-a-half. She kept coming back to the Jews. Why was she so interested in the Jews?

"I'm a Jew," she said. "I just arrived from Israel."

The conversation took a decided turn at that point and we made progress until she asked, "Do I have to become a religious Jew to make it to heaven?"

I told her I didn't know any religious Jews. There were many in Israel, she told me—the ultra-orthodox. I said I had never met a religious Jew, even among the ultra-orthodox. Puzzled, she asked me what I meant.

"You know what the Jewish religion is, don't you? The true God lives in the Holiness of Holinesses. Outside is man, the sinner. Between these two is an altar. And a priest. And a sacrifice. Your scripture says, 'Without the shedding of blood is no remission.' Do these religious Jews have an altar? A priest? A lamb?"

Her hopeless countenance gave me her answer.

"Your scriptures give the solution. Isaiah said that Messiah would be 'wounded for our transgressions.' Jehovah would lay on Him the iniquity of us all."

It was then that she came to the Wall. After a few more words to her about what Yeshua meant to me, and encouraging her to examine the New Testament, written entirely by Jews, she left the shop. My prayers followed her out the door. They follow her still. Because I know Someone who can take down walls more mighty than *Kotel Ha'Maaravi* (Eph. 2:14). **U**

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TRUE SERVICE FOR CHRIST

ALL TRUE SERVICE *for Christ* must spring from love *to Christ.* Martha and others, had been sorely bereaved, when Lazarus died. But their grief had turned into joy on seeing him raised from the dead. Their gratefulness to Christ caused them to love Him, and their love made them prepare the feast at which Martha was prominent in service. It would be well for us to examine the motive of our service to see if it is really out of love to Christ. No service, however menial, will be despised by Him, and no service, however prominent it may seem, will be esteemed by the Lord, if the motive is not to please Him. He searches the hearts, and knows all.

No service is too insignificant if He desires it done. Our aim should not be so much to do some great thing, as to do some little thing for our great and worthy Lord. Evidently it would matter little to Martha whether she was toiling in the kitchen to make the feast ready, or whether she waited on her Lord at the table. All was unto Him, and out of love to His person. The motive is what counts in all service to Christ.

Then she not only served Him at the table, but also those who were with Him. Do we realize that in serving the Lord's people, and others for His sake, we are serving Christ? In fact, because of His bodily absence we are unable to do for Him as Martha did; yet we can serve Him by doing His will in His absence. That may include giving His gospel, in some form, to the unconverted, or in ministering in some way to the saints. Did He not prophesy that in the coming Great Tribulation some who showed kindness to His Jewish brethren would hear Him say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Mt. 25:40)?

Nor should our service to Christ have for its object any selfish interest. Most of our daily toil has remuneration for its object, and that is legitimate in the affairs of this world. The Spirit, through Paul, says, "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" (Rom. 4:4). That is, the employer is indebted to pay his employee. But since we are indebted to Christ for saving us from a well-deserved hell by His agonies on the Cross, our service to Him cannot be a service of contract, but an expression of love. If what we profess to do for Christ has for its real object the praise of men, it will surely bring no pleasure to our Lord. If our activities are in order to obtain for ourselves a place of influence and authority among our brethren, we shall surely miss the mark. Let our service, whatever it be, stem from genuine love to Christ, and to this end shall we not continuously judge our motives?

Every truly born again soul should be able to do some service for His Lord. Few are fitted to preach His Word publicly. Some may be particularly fitted to teach Sunday School; mothers may find that their service for Him is in the home rearing their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But all should be able to find something to do to prove their love for Christ. True love is always active and must find some way of expressing itself. Nor will that one who truly loves consider the act a sacrifice, but a privilege, an honor. The one who has done most out of love to the Lord will feel he has done but very little indeed.

TRUE LOVE IS ALWAYS ACTIVE AND MUST FIND SOME WAY OF EXPRESSING ITSELF.



FRONT LINES

MID-SOUTH CONFERENCE

The Mid-South Conference for 1994 will be held at Horton Haven Conference Grounds in Chapel Hill, TN, on July 10-15, 1994. Tom Taylor (PA) is the expected speaker.

Mid-South Bible Conference
Horton Haven Christian Camp
Box 276
Chapel Hill, TN 37034

A TASTE OF HEAVEN

West Virginia Bible Conference is held each year in the scenic surroundings near the Bluestone Conference Center, WV. This year's Family Bible Conference will be



Mr. & Mrs. Liddon Sheridan

held August 7-13. Speakers (D.V.) will be J. B. Nicholson (MI) and Liddon Sheridan (AL). For a registration form, contact:

Gary Pavelko
W. Va. Bible Conference
30 Tyler Street
Westover, WV 26505

FALL CONFERENCE

The 35th Annual Midwest Women's Fall Conference will be held at Lake Geneva Youth Camp (WI). Conference dates are September 16-17 with registration beginning in July. This years theme is, *Finishing the Race—2 Timothy 4:7.* Speaker expected is Ruth Schwertfeger. For registration information, contact:

Dona Duckhorn
8029 W. Lorraine Place
Milwaukee, WI 53222
(414) 475-1730

CAMPING WITH GOD

Camp Li-Lo-Li (Randolph, NY) has had a full schedule of camps for many years. This year they have added a new Ropes Confidence Course to their already adventurous list of activities. A new camp in August called "Roundup" has also been introduced. If you would like more information concerning registration and a list of speakers for the different camps, contact:

Cathie Whitcomb
8811 Sunfish Run Road
Randolph, NY 14772
(716) 945-2747

SCOTTLEA FALL CONFERENCE

Annually, the Scottlea Assembly (St. Catharines, ON) enjoys a Bible Conference each Fall. For 1994, the Conference is to be held October 1 with Rob Linsted (KS). Contact:

Arnot McIntee
(905) 687-7459 or 641-4406

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

Front lines is intended to solicit prayer and inform the Lord's people concerning needs, special meetings, and praise for answered prayer. If the Lord has been working in your area, drop us a line so the saints may be able to thank and praise Him for His goodness. It just might be the encouragement a believer needs to keep them looking up! Please keep your comments brief. Send them to:

Uplook
c/o Managing Editor
P. O. Box 2041
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2041

GIVE US THE FACTS

The Bible Chapel (St. Louis, MO) has printed thousands of tracts to meet this year's needs. Children's picture tracts for Awana, DVBS, Sunday School, and general distribution are available. Write to:

Fact Tract
c/o Bible Chapel
10255 Musick Road
St. Louis, MO 63123

TAG TEAM STUDY

The Ramseur Gospel Chapel (Ramseur, NC) has been encouraged by a report several men from the assembly gave concerning Mission93, held last December in Cincinnati, OH. As a result, the 3 elders have each headed up a team made up of younger brethren and are studying Bible doctrines at their Sunday night Bible study. Each team is assigned a general doctrine to study ahead of time and each week a different team leads the Bible study. When was the last time

you heard a consistent study on Bible doctrine? May the title "men and women of the Book" not be a badge to wear, but a practice we encourage among the Lord's people.

GETTING SOME FRESH AIR

The Ezekiel Project is a ministry developed out of a burden to disciple men and women in the area of open-air evangelism. Two intensive



one-week seminars are planned for New York City this summer. The dates are July 25-29 and August 1-5. If you would like more information, contact:

The Ezekiel Project
P.O. Box 463123
Mt. Clemens, MI 48046-3123
(810) 954-9123

CAMPING IN ONTARIO

Aush-Bik-Koong is situated in beautiful Northern Ontario, two miles north of Walford, on Sugar Lake. The camp is ready to stretch this year's campers physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally in a variety of activities that are fun and encourage cooperation. The highlight of Camp Aush-Bik-Koong is that campers are stimulated spiritually. They are encouraged to read God's Word each day and many of the daily lessons center on what claim the Lord Jesus has on young lives. The camp season begins July 3-9 with a week of Junior Boys' Camp. More information about the rest of the summer schedule and pricing is available by contacting:

Marlene Allyn
General Delivery
Walford Station, ON P0P 2E0
(705) 844-2275

STILL SAVORING IT

The Marple Christian Assembly (Media, PA) recently held a conference which they are happy to report was well attended. Seventeen different assemblies were represented through the weekend and the ministry of Boyd Nicholson (ON) was much appreciated.

The saints at the Oak Ridge Bible Chapel (Milan, IL) have recently concluded their Spring Conference. The conference was well attended with a good number of guests. Saturday night, a special gospel outreach was held with a sacred concert by Jeff Erb and Paul Renes. Those who brought out unsaved friends were encouraged that their friends heard a clear presentation of the gospel by Arnot McIntee. Please pray for these. The seed is sown!

PRAYER AND PRAISE

Recently, we received word from one of our readers how the covers of *Uplook* are being used for blessing. A brother stationed at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, AL, made copies of the April cover with the Arabic Bible verse in calligraphy, and has posted them around the base for the many Muslim servicemen stationed there. One student mentioned to a friend how he would like to learn more of the "Christian religion" while stationed at Maxwell AFB. There are similar opportunities for you to communicate the gospel with those in your area. Continue to pray that the Lord will encourage us to "look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

A NEW LOCATION

The saints who meet in the Lord's Name at Hawaiian Gardens, CA, have informed *Uplook* of their recent move to a new location. The assembly formerly met in the Spanish Biblical Center Book Store until March of this year when the landlord cancelled their lease for economic reasons. The Book Store's inventory and furnishings have been placed in storage and a room has been rented for the saints to continue to meet together. For more information, contact:

James L. Taylor
Spanish Biblical Center, Inc.
11615 East 185th Street
Artesia, CA 90701
(310) 865-5657

IN THE MINNESOTA NORTHWOODS

Story Book Lodge Christian Camp has already begun its summer schedule for this year. In the remaining months there are still 3 Family Camps, and several Junior Camps and Teen Camps available. For a registration form and more information as to the dates and speakers, contact:

Story Book Lodge
5079 Vermilion Trail
Gilbert, MN 55741

CALVIN FRITCHEY

FLOATING BY

On April 23, 1994, the believers at Boulevard Bible Chapel participated in a birthday parade for the city of Pembroke Pines, Florida.

THE FLOAT THAT WAS entered by Boulevard Bible Chapel in our city's birthday parade was homemade, simple, and proclaimed Christ. A trucking firm, Miami Transfer, loaned the use of a low-boy trailer. It was approximately 40 feet in length and was used as the base for the float.

Three crosses were placed on the back level of the float. Prominently displayed on the middle cross, framed in red garland, was the verse, "Christ died for our sins." Acts 16:31 was also placed on the back of the trailer in easy-to-read lettering.

A sign informed the parade watchers that the Boulevard Bible Chapel building (built in 1954, purchased in 1957 by the Gospel Pioneers of Florida) was the first church building in Pembroke Pines.



The Boulevard float on its way through Pembroke Pines

As a side note, the city awarded first prize to the float made by the assembly.

Approximately 25 children and adults from the assembly rode on the float while another 10-12 adults handed out candy and gospel tracts. Some 1,600 *Justaminute* tracts were handed out to those along the parade route. Only two or three people refused the literature. One of those who refused was told, "True, you may not need the candy, but you *do* need this." The tract was offered again, and this time they took it! Pray with us that we may see some of these in glory as a result of the outreach. The saints were greatly encouraged by another opportunity to make Christ known in their community.

If the Lord has not come by then, next year the saints plan to have a booth at the parade. We hope to give out gospel tracts, books, Bible courses, and other free literature which Gospel Folio Press has agreed to assist us with. We also would like to erect a tent on the fairgrounds. Within the tent, believers from the assembly would be able to conduct puppet shows for the children that would have a gospel emphasis, special music, chalk talks and object lessons, brief testimonies to the grace of God in the lives of His people, messages from the Word, and perhaps a film.

Please pray along with us about this. An estimated 10,000 to 15,000 souls pass through the fairgrounds on this day, many of whom do not know the Lord Jesus and are headed for a lost eternity.

The city has also invited the assembly to the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony held each year in front of City Hall. We hope to be a witness for Christ, and provide singing for this event.

There are many opportunities such as this in your local community. There is nothing special about the saints at Boulevard Bible Chapel; they just care enough to get involved and to use these opportunities for the glory of the Lord and the salvation of souls. Call your city hall or township and ask them if they have similar events and what would be involved in attending the event as a group. It is an excellent way to demonstrate that you care because He cares!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

RETURNING TO THE FIELD

After four months of being in the U.S., Floyd and Helen Pierce returned to Brazil on May 16. After



needed recuperation for their physical problems, they have received the doctor's permission to travel. Brother Floyd has completed the translation work on the book *The Mass*, by Jim McCarthy, and it is scheduled to be published by Everyday Publications this summer. Please pray that the Lord may continue to use the Pierces for His glory in Brazil. If you are interested in using the Portugese edition of *The Mass* in North America, you can obtain copies by contacting:

DIME
c/o Pedro Dillon
10353 Imperial Avenue
Cupertino, CA 95014
(408) 253-9096

ON YOUR PLATE

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles refused to issue a license plate with the phrase "GODZGUD" to Daniel Pruitt, Jr.

However, on Jan. 20, 1994, U.S. District Judge Richard Williams ruled that the DMV "no deity" policy violated the First Amendment as a viewpoint-based regulation of free speech. The DMV subsequently dropped the policy and issued the license plate.

In Utah, the state tax commission issued license plates with the words "ALLAH," "KRISHNA," and "LUCIFER," but rejected Katherine Bebout's request for the words "THNXGOD."

A lawsuit was filed, and in late January 1994, the Utah state tax commission agreed to issue the license plate to Bebout. "If this decision stands for anything, it stands for the idea that expression of belief in God and adherence to His law are matters for public debate and public expression and need not be relegated solely to the churches and private homes," said Hilton.

A SOLUTION FOR GAS

An agreement to establish a natural gas pipeline to Israel from a Persian Gulf State is soon to be signed according to Israel's Energy Minister. The pipeline will run to an Israeli port on the Mediterranean and in addition to meeting the Israeli market will allow for 60 to 70 million tons of gas per year to be exported to Europe. The cost will be about 1.8 billion dollars. Egypt is also interested in extending a natural gas line to Israel or Gaza.

MAULED AT THE MALL

Two teenagers and their youth pastor are suing a shopping mall in Denver, CO, after guards ordered them to leave because they were sharing their faith with customers.

"The shopping mall is generally open to the public, and the public comes and goes, but for some reason these kids were told to leave when they were exercising their free speech rights in the common areas of the mall in a non-disruptive manner," said Jim Rouse, the Rutherford Institute attorney handling the case.

The teenagers asked persons in the Cherry Creek Shopping Center if they could speak with them. If the person said "no," the teens thanked them and moved on. If a person was interested in what the teenagers were saying, they spoke to them about Christ and occasionally handed out a tract.

"This is an extremely important case for free speech rights in Colorado. Here are some teenagers who want to make a positive impact on society as opposed to being involved with drugs and gangs, and this is how they are treated," said Rouse.

DO YOU LIKE TURKEY?

Friends of Turkey is an organization that will send addresses taken from Turkish phone books, and gospel tracts so that you can be a missionary without leaving the country. Those who are interested will be responsible for supplying the envelopes, postage, and addressing the envelopes. For more information, contact:

Friends of Turkey
P.O. Box 3098
Grand Junction, CO 81502

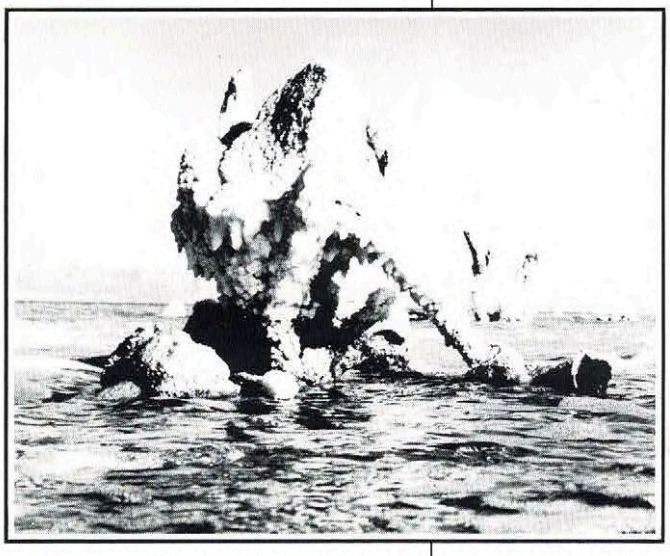
A FAR CRY FROM 144,000

Recent surveys have shown the

remaining Jewish population to be approximately 1,434,000 in 208 communities in the former USSR. The largest numbers are in Russia with 656,000 while the Ukraine is second with 474,000. Also the report speaks of 148,000 Jews living in Moslem republics. There are about four million Jews in Israel.

PROBING THE DEAD SEA

Israeli and German scientists are joining to examine the sediment at the bottom of the Dead Sea. This has been difficult in the past because of a deep layer of rock salt less than a meter below the sea floor. Special drills are bringing up 20-meter core samples. The researchers hope to gather data on environmental changes in the area over the past several thousand years. This may well give more knowledge of the migration of people in the region and enhance biblical history and archaeology.



EYEWITNESS VIDEO

Once again, the word is out that Egypt's government has gotten the upper hand against Muslim extremists. The rebels' ranks have been thinned through thousands of arrests, speedy executions, and the extensive use of extradition treaties with other countries. Parliament, meanwhile, just granted a three-year extension of emergency law.

The authoritarian regime in Cairo has also begun broadcasting confessions of Islamic militants on state television. (No word on how the *mea culpas* were obtained.) However, in Asyut, where many Christians have been killed, police have yet to restore order. —*Pulse*

FROM THE FAR EAST...

Don and Marie Norbie visited Korea and Taiwan last March. The following is an excerpt from a report he sent to *Uplook*.

"The gospel has made much progress in Korea, but there is still a great need. Assembly work really began to grow about 1960 and since then 150 assemblies have been established. The work is virile and healthy.

"Buddha is the god of many in Korea and even more so in Taiwan. We visited two of their temples—there is such spiritual darkness. Both lands are small but heavily populated. Korea has 40,000,000 and Taiwan has 20,000,000. Seoul itself has 13,000,000. The cities are filled with tall apartment buildings. The streets swarm with people, many of whom have never heard the gospel." Pray for our brethren in Taiwan and Korea as they seek to make Christ known there.

TO THE FLORIDA BEACHES

This past winter season, Joe Couture, Normand Gosselin, Lawrence Fortin, David Wilson, and Charles, Cyril, and Marjorie Shontoff spent their time in a very different way on the sunny Florida beaches. While others flock to this "southern mecca" to worship the sun, these workers went to introduce many to *the* Son.

There were generally 3 open-air meetings a week, with a morning and evening session, with the messages translated into French. Many tracts, New Testaments, and other forms of literature were distributed.

During one session, Cyril was introduced to a Roman Catholic "father." He complained about the lower economy the past year at the Little Flower Roman Catholic Church—numbers had declined from 1,000 in attendance at masses to about 300—largely due to the lack of Canadian visitors. Cyril asked him about the Roman Catholic view on theology, doctrine, and salvation.

At this he became furious and said, "No, no, we can never speak about that. We are friendly and must not speak about that subject."

Cyril pointed out that since he was concerned about the economy, the Lord Jesus said, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

At this he flew off the handle and said, "Go on home, you Canadians. Get back to Canada and leave this place!"

So much for wanting Canadian visitors in Florida.

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR ISRAEL

GOD MADE MAN in His own image and likeness, with the capacity for fellowship with the Creator. Sin disrupted that fellowship, marring the image of God. The eternal purpose of God involves the full revelation of Himself in grace through the Seed of the woman who is also the Seed of Abraham, and the Seed of David. Thus the eternal purpose of God is linked inextricably with the nation of Israel, of whom Christ came—the Son of David, the Son of Abraham (Matt. 1:1).

For centuries mankind was undivided. Then came Babel and the division of the people into nations. Immediately after, Abram was called to become the progenitor of Israel—the chosen nation. God established a covenant with Abram, outlining His program for centuries to come, culminating in earth-wide blessing.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT
(Gen. 12:1-3, 6-7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-14)

This covenant provides a key to the whole range of the Old Testament and finds its fulfillment in the New. Our view of this covenant will affect our view of the nation of Israel and of the Church. It is a pivotal point in the approach to the whole Bible.

1. The provisions of this covenant pertain to Abraham himself, to all nations, and to Israel: a) a *personal* promise that Abraham should have a great posterity; b) a *national* promise of greatness and of the land in perpetual possession; and c) a *universal* promise of blessing to all the families of the earth.

2. The immutability of this covenant is seen in its reiteration to Isaac and also to Jacob despite patriarchal behavior. It was based on God's promise and oath (Heb. 6:17-18). It was not conditioned on the faithfulness of Abraham or his posterity. God punished their sins but never abrogated or transferred His covenant. The defections of Abraham and of Jacob, the transgressions in the wilderness, the servitudes in the days of the judges, the Babylonian exile—all these left the covenant unaffected. So it is in the present dispersion of Israel.

3. The spiritual lessons of this covenant for today lie in its emphasis on the gracious purpose of God for Israel and the world. Human history is not meaningless. This covenant gives a skeleton outline of the eternal purpose of God as it affects Israel and indicates designs of grace toward all. Further, it gives assurance that what God has purposed He will perform. History is moving toward the fulfillment of God's unalterable purpose.

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COVENANT

There are two views regarding the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant:

1. *A spiritual fulfillment in the Church:* "Hath God cast away His people" (Rom. 11:1)? Paul does not leave us waiting for the answer. By no means! "God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew" (v. 2). The term, "spiritual Israel," used in referring to the Church is a non-biblical phrase. But is the Church "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16)? Of course not. The general description concerns "as many as walk according to this rule," i.e., those who boast alone in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. To this is added another class—"*and* upon the Israel of God." Would not the logical conclusion be that Paul is describing those of the nation of Israel who have embraced Jesus as Messiah and have recognized the principle that "no man is justified by the law in the sight of God" (Gal. 3:11).

The acute problem with this view is that every term must then be spiritualized. Jerusalem then does not mean Jerusalem; Israel does not mean Israel; the twelve tribes mentioned by name in Revelation do not mean the twelve tribes, etc. One then is left to his own imagination to construct a world of his own making.

2. *A literal future fulfillment in the nation of Israel:* Of course one should not confuse the present Israeli state with the biblical people of Israel (the present state includes scores of nationalities, including Israeli Arabs). However, having said that, both the Old and New Testaments require a literal fulfillment: Israel's tribulation has been literal; Israel's restoration is being literally fulfilled; Israel's regeneration shall also literally come to pass (Ps. 72:17-20). They have never held the land given to them (see Gen. 15:18-21); they shall yet possess all that has been promised. U

ALFRED B. LAU

TOUCHING THE APPLE OF GOD'S EYE

NOT MANY YEARS AGO thousands of boys and girls in Germany sang a song of pagan origin which expressed their deepest devotion. This led multitudes of them to sacrifice their lives with a zeal and fanaticism hardly paralleled in modern times. Yet the song I refer to had nothing in it that spoke either of man's frailty or of our Living God. It glorified the swastika and offered the only kind of eternity Hitler's god could offer. The refrain was:

Our banner leads us to eternity;
Yes, our banner is more than death.

This impersonal god, known and worshiped as nature, was a German god for German people only. This pagan deity who was brought out of the dust heaps of former Germanic pagan religions was offered to Hitler's followers in place of the God of the Bible, and the sequel to that idolatry is written in blood.

Just how quickly and deeply this awful system sent its roots into the hearts of German children is seen in the following incident. A 10-year-old lad was inducted into the youngest branch of the Hitler youth movement. In the glow of his enthusiasm at having reached this goal, to where he was now a dedicated member of that organization, the boy paid no heed to the almost freezing temperatures and heavy rain which he encountered on his return home. This brought on pneumonia, and his parents sent for a doctor. The medical man, after careful examination, told the anxious parents that the chances of saving the boy's life were slim, but he would do his best. On hearing this, the boy, what little energy was left him, raised himself on the bed and cried, "I don't want a doctor! I want to die for Hitler!"



This was the atmosphere in which I grew up. I could hardly wait for my tenth birthday to come when I could prove my faithfulness to Hitler, a hero in the eyes of most German boys.

What may dismay and shock you is that I held this ideal in spite of the fact that I had Christian parents who were deeply devoted to Christ and His cause. My father had preached the Word of God for 35 years, but his type of Christianity did not appeal to me.

The enthusiasm of the Hitler youth movement gripped and held me. I believed the lying propaganda that said that Christians were weaklings. The arrogance of military Nazism appealed to me. I looked down on those Christians who met together and read such passages from the Bible as "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us," and then—at least to my childish eyes—returned home in abject defeat. Little did I realize that these were the real heroes and heroines of Germany during those days. It took courage beyond the average to believe and act upon Paul's declaration: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

The claim was constantly made that in Germany the youth were bound together in a common fellowship, lived a high moral life, and were ready to die for their ideals. In spite of my pride in the supposed high moral standards of our movement, however, the Spirit of God began to convict me of my sinfulness and need of a Saviour. Incidents that I thought were forgotten were brought to mind and troubled me.

I could not get away from the things that my father had taught me from the Scriptures. Some of these truths were indelibly printed on my mind because of incidents surrounding them.

For example, on my way home late one evening, I came to a place where a mob was gathered. As I watched, wondering what was taking place, I saw a grand piano hurled from the fifth-story window of a house and smashed into a thousand pieces on the street. Two small boys near me started laughing and said, "They have lost their minds." But two men who were in SS uniforms overheard the boys and immediately took them aside and gave them a licking. It was then that I realized that there was a sinister design behind this incident. It was not something done for fun.

When I arrived home that night, my father showed me a dark red glow in the sky and told me that Hitler was burning down all the Jewish synagogues in Germany and had taken over all the property of God's chosen people, the Jews. It was then that he said something which haunted me through the years, even when Hitler seemed to be winning the war in Russia and in Africa and controlled a great part of Europe.

This is what my father said: "If Hitler ever starts a war, he will never win, because he has touched God's people." Then he opened the Bible, proving to me from it and also from history that no nation ever survived that lifted its hand against the Jews.

More and more, the convicting power of the Holy Spirit laid hold upon me. I began to read the Bible and found that I could not refute it. I was convinced in my own heart that it was the truth of God. But that was not sufficient to save me. We read in James that the devils believe and tremble. What I needed was a personal meeting with the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the first time I realized that a Christian needs more courage than a Hitler youth leader needs in a big battle. It suddenly dawned on me that I was a coward. I was concerned about what the boys would say at school and especially those in my Hitler youth unit. I could not be a secret believer, yet it was hard to count the cost.

A deafening explosion, a flash of light, and I was hurled into the ditch



One night, as I returned from Hitler youth duty, the air raid siren sounded. I well knew that some people would not live to hear the all-clear siren; they would have to face God that night to be judged for eternity. I was under conviction at the time and did not want to hear my parents' prayer in our own air-raid shelter. So in order to dull my conscience, I went to a school building nearby. People there did not believe in God and did not remind me of His judgment.

When I was close to the school, I saw flashed upon the horizon the thin fingers of searchlights reaching into the sky. A little later, the sky around me vibrated with the noise of several thousand airplane engines. The thought flashed through my mind, "Where will this load of death and despair descend this time?"

On my way to the shelter, I met a young woman, intelligent and kind, yet without Christ. She said casually with no regard for eternity, "I'm now going to all the places of pleasure—to movies, dances, to anything that is open yet. Who knows how long we have to live? I want to get something out of my life before I die."

I was shocked by her words, as I knew from my Christian background the inadequacy of such a viewpoint. And yet, I knew that we were in the same lost and sinful condition. If we were God-haters, we would go to the same place.

My thoughts were interrupted by a strange noise outside the schoolhouse. It paralyzed my legs. I realized then that the whole school yard was littered with napalm and incendiary bombs, and that the sweet-smelling and poisonous phosphorus was sprayed all over the place. It was then that I faced death in reality.

I had often said that once I faced death I would say to God, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." How foolish I was! Would God give me a chance to find Him in *my* convenient time? The Holy Spirit had not gotten me before; now He was silent and Satan blinded me. In some respects I am happy that I did not find Christ that moment. I might have become a selfish Christian, only concerned with being saved from hell and wanting only to walk on golden streets. That is the reason why so few Christians live a victorious life. They are concerned about the material benefits they might gain through knowing the Saviour.

The school started burning, and panic broke out among those who were sheltered in it. It seemed that a voice deep down in my heart was telling me to leave the school building as soon as I could. There was a tremendous urge which I could not resist. Ordinarily I would never have had the courage to run through the flames, but the urge became so strong that I closed my

eyes and darted through the burning street. People shouted to me not to run—that I was facing sure death—but I ran on.

There was a whistling noise which mingled with the voices and shouts of the people, then a deafening explosion, a flash of light, and I was hurled into the ditch while stones and rubble came flying through the air. It all seemed a nightmare. I wondered if it could be true.

Behind me, everything was still. No more voices screamed in fear. When I rose from the ditch and looked behind me, the school building was just a heap of ruins. All in it were dead, including the young woman who wanted to get something out of life.

I staggered home, climbed through the debris of our partly demolished house, and began extinguishing the sparks caused by the bomb explosions from igniting what had been left. The fight to save the house lasted all night, and the battle was won only as the sun came up from behind black clouds of smoke. But another battle was raging in my heart. I saw my neighborhood in ruins. Where once I had played with other boys I saw only craters and ruins. Why was I alive? I may never find the answer until I stand face to face with Him who loved me with an everlasting love.

He gave me that urge to leave the school building, and I became as a brand plucked from the burning. It was in this moment that the desperate fate of my spiritual condition laid hold on me, and now I did not care what the boys in the Hitler youth movement would say. It did not matter whether they would kill me or deliver me to a concentration camp. Only one thing mattered—I would find Christ now or never.

A few moments later, God brought assurance to a brokenhearted boy who, with hot tears running down his cheeks, pleaded for His forgiveness on the basis of the supreme sacrifice that was made at Calvary. While the world around me lay in ruins, a new song was put into my heart. That song has stayed there ever since:

Once I was lost in sin's degradation,
Jesus came forth to bring me salvation,
Lifted me up from sorrow and shame,
Now I belong to Him.
Now I belong to Jesus,
Jesus belongs to me,
Not for the years of time alone,
But for eternity.

Once I wanted to die for Hitler, but now...I want to live for Christ



It was easy after that to confess to my Hitler youth friends, because Jesus was more than life to me. I could say that Jesus paid it all, and all to Him I owe. Some of these boys were saved later, and my immediate superior was also saved and became the Youth for Christ director of my hometown. Christ made me free from fear and taught me to live a life which is full of joy—a life which is filled with His glory and grace.

I have not done as much for Him as I should, but one day I shall see Him face to face, and when He shows me His nail-pierced hands and says, "This I did for you; what did you do for Me?" I can show Him the steadily increasing group of poor outcast Indian and Mexican boys who until the Saviour sent me to minister among them had never heard of the Saviour's love. Now, by His grace alone, many of them are saved and are preparing themselves to serve Him till He comes.

God did not give me a work that would make me prominent among men. That I do not deserve in any case. But in His matchless grace He saw fit to place my wife and me in areas that have not been reached with the gospel. We have the greatest joy that anybody could have as we direct our Training Center for the Indian boys in Southern Mexico. What a delight it is to hear them say for the first time in the midst of their wicked and violent environment, "Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul!"

Once I wanted to die for Hitler, but now through God's grace I can say that I want to live for Christ. What about you? Won't you live for Him who alone can set men free? He alone can satisfy the heart.

The Lord has a job for you to do. Will you do it? Then you, like Paul, will be able to say, *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 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 Tim. 4:7).

The Lamb with the Scroll

In the Mediterranean Sea there is a tall, rocky island called Patmos. Halfway up the side is a cave where tradition says John wrote the Book of the Revelation. There he saw the throne of God and the glories of another world before him; but he felt himself oppressed with sorrow. The tears ran down his cheeks because there was a book sealed with seven seals in heaven, and no one was found worthy to open it. Search had evidently been made, but none was found equal to the task.

Then one of the elders said, "Weep not; behold, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the Book." John wiped his eyes and raised them to see this lion; but he beheld a Lamb.

Then he saw Him take the book; and when He took the book, the roll—in a moment the idea might flash into John's mind! When did he last see Him take a roll in His hands? Oh, how memory flies back through time in an instant! Remember that scene in Nazareth. Did John recall it when the chazzan handed his Master the scroll of Isaiah? It all may have come before him in a moment, as he saw the carpenter's Son taking the roll again.

Do you know that when our Lord shut up that scroll, it was one of the most remarkable things He ever did?

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," He read, "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," and then comes a comma in our English Bible (the fact that there is no comma in the Hebrew makes what follows all the more remarkable). But the verse goes on: "and the day of vengeance of our God."

But at that comma in the middle of the verse, Christ closed the book, to the astonishment of all in the synagogue. They knew the passage well. He handed the roll back to the chazzan, who took it back to the ark, and the sentence was never finished. "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord"—nothing more. "I am He that shutteth and no man openeth." That was what He said in Nazareth; but in heaven He says: "I am He that openeth and no man shutteth."

The lives of men are depending on the value of a single comma.

And this is the miracle—that the Lamb in the midst of the throne in heaven is the carpenter of Nazareth; and the carpenter of Nazareth who shut the book in the middle of the verse at "the acceptable year of the Lord" will open it again before the throne of God and read on where He left off, "and the day of vengeance of our God." That is the subject of the Revelation. The seals are broken one by one, and what is read? "The day of vengeance of our God." In Nazareth He said, I will fulfill the Word of God as far as the middle of the verse, but the rest shall never be fulfilled till I reopen the book in heaven.

For these many centuries the roll of Isaiah has been shut in the middle of that verse and sealed by God with many seals. One comma alone divides mercy from judgment, the Saviour of the world from the Judge of all men—one single comma! This present age still continues by virtue of the long-drawn-out tenacity of that one comma. What is a comma? The shortest breath in reading. But here it is a majestic pause in the ways of God that all men might be saved, that all might come to a knowledge of the truth. The sole reason that the gospel is still preached is because the force and value of that comma—the grace of God—is not yet exhausted. But it will be when the Lamb takes the book from the right hand of Him who sits on the throne and begins to open it. The day of mercy will then be over, the door will be shut.

It is strange indeed to have the curtain drawn aside for a moment from these deep spiritual mysteries in the midst of our daily life. We seem to be in a world apart. The veil is lifted and we pass back into our ordinary life; but we cannot return without bearing some impression of the enormous issues which are working quietly behind the current course of this world.

We see its affairs moving onwards; the varied topics of the day are on our lips, but behind all these the lives of men are depending on the value of a single comma in the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah—long drawn out in the providence of God. U

DISPENSATIONALISM DEFINED

What is a dispensation? Definitions vary slightly, but here are some helpful ones:

OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY: Anglicized form of Latin *dispensatio,* to weigh out or dispense. 1) The action of dealing out or distributing; 2) the action of administering, ordering, or managing; the system by which things are administered; 3) the action of dispensing with some requirement; 4) a stage in a progressive revelation, expressly adapted to the needs of a particular nation or period of time...also, the age or period during which a system has prevailed.

NEW TESTAMENT GREEK: Various forms of *oikonomeo, -mos, -mia, also koinonia.* Steward, stewardship, dispensation, edifying, fellowship. Lk. 12:42;16:1, 2, 3, 4, 8; Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 4:1, 2; 9:17; Gal. 4:2; Eph. 1:10; 3:2, 9; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:10; also *koinonia* in ASV of Eph. 3:9.

SCOFIELD REFERENCE BIBLE: "A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect to obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God. Seven such dispensations are distinguished in Scripture."

C. C. RYRIE: A distinguishable economy in the outworking of God's purpose. The distinguishing characteristics of a different dispensation are: 1) a change in God's governmental relationship with man (though a dispensation does not have to be composed entirely of completely new features), 2) a resultant change in man's responsibility, and 3) corresponding revelation necessary to effect the change (which new revelation is a stage in the progress of revelation through the Bible).

G. SCROGGIE: The administration of the human race (or part of it) at different times in different ways, according to the necessity of the case, but throughout for one great end.

H. A. IRONSIDE: That particular order or condition of things prevailing in one special age which does not necessarily prevail in another.

W. E. VINE: *Oikonomia* primarily signifies the management of a household (*oikos,* a house; *nomos,* a law)...and so a stewardship. A dispensation is not a period or epoch (a common, but erroneous, use of the word), but a mode of dealing, an arrangement or administration of affairs.

HELP GIVEN BY DISPENSATIONALISM

Charles Ryrie suggests three ways that a dispensational view helps the Bible student:

It makes necessary biblical distinctions: e.g, Israel, the Church, and the Kingdom; God obviously deals differently with Adam in Eden, Israel under Law, the present day of grace, and the Millennium. Thus the need for "rightly dividing the Word of truth."

It provides a philosophy of history: in 3 areas:

i) The progress of revelation—covenant theology "by an artificial system of typology, and allegorizing interpretation, sought to read back practically the whole of the New Testament into the Old" (Jas. Orr).

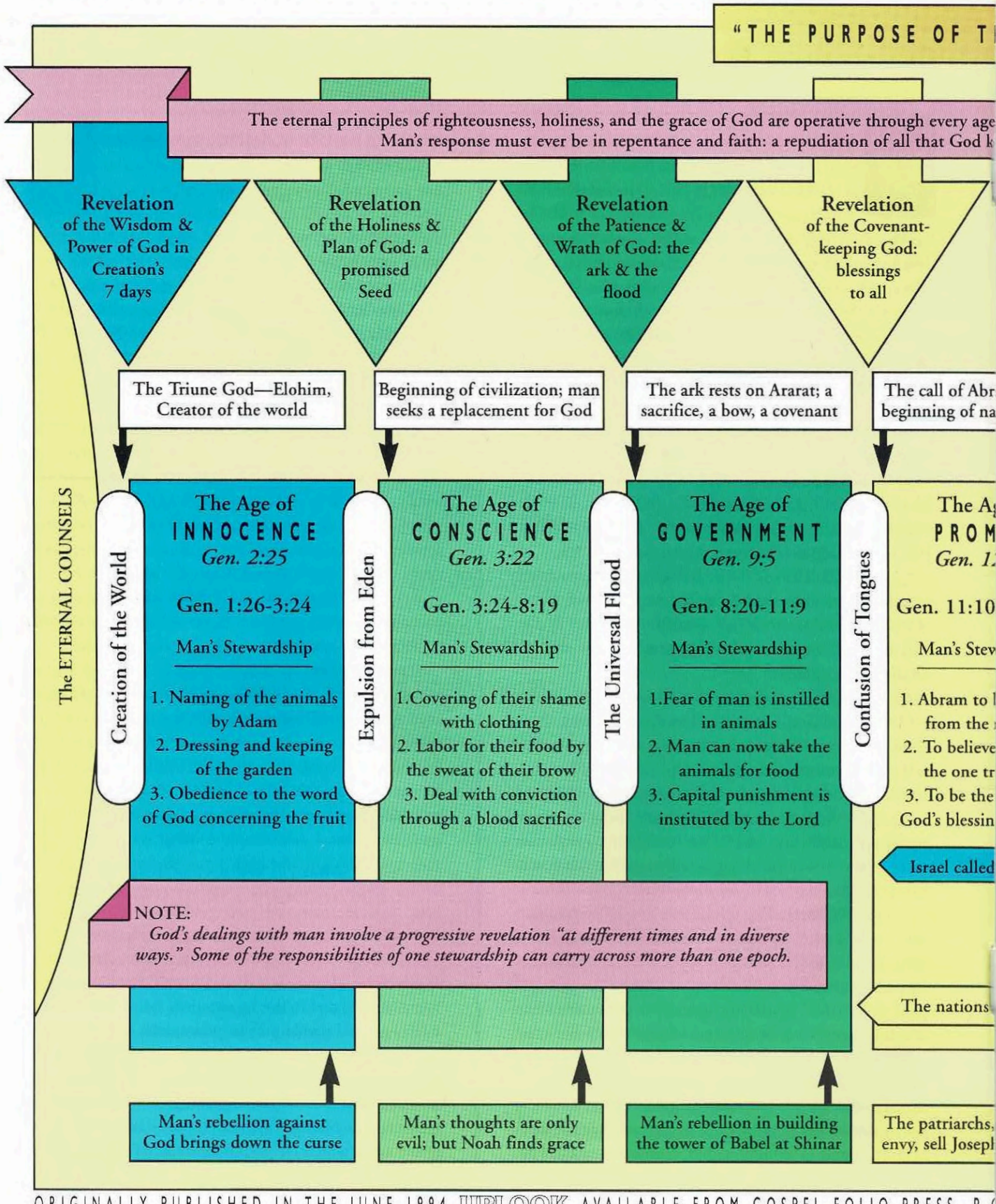
ii) A unifying principle: covenant teaching makes it soteriological—the covenant of grace; the dispensational view says it is theological—the glory of God.

iii) What is the ultimate goal of history? The covenant theologian says it is the millennial kingdom; dispensationalism sees it as the eternal state.

It provides consistent hermeneutics: It allows for the plain and literal interpretation of Scripture. There is no need for allegorizing, especially the prophetic Scriptures. Because the Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled by Christ were literally fulfilled, there is no reason to believe that those prophecies that have yet to be fulfilled will be fulfilled in any other way but literally.

WHY SHOULD WE EXPECT SUCH AN ORDERLY ARRANGEMENT OF HISTORY?

God's revelation is both general and special. God has revealed Himself generally in nature, conscience, and history. He has revealed Himself specially in the Word of God and in the Incarnation. Although Volume 1 (His general revelation) is incomplete, it nevertheless reveals planning, method, and purpose. It is consistent to then suppose that similar planning and purpose will be found in all God does, especially in the unfolding of the ages. This is the "eternal purpose (lit., the purpose of the ages) which He purposed in Christ" (Eph. 3:11).


"THE PURPOSE OF T
The eternal principles of righteousness, holiness, and the grace of God are operative through every age
Man's response must ever be in repentance and faith: a repudiation of all that God k
Revelation of the Wisdom & Power of God in Creation's 7 days
Revelation of the Holiness & Plan of God: a promised Seed
Revelation of the Patience & Wrath of God: the ark & the flood
Revelation of the Covenant-keeping God: blessings to all
The ETERNAL COUNSELS
The Triune God—Elohim, Creator of the world
Beginning of civilization; man seeks a replacement for God
The ark rests on Ararat; a sacrifice, a bow, a covenant
The call of Abr
beginning of na
Creation of the World
Expulsion from Eden
The Universal Flood
Confusion of Tongues
The Age of INNOCENCE
Gen. 2:25
Gen. 1:26-3:24
Man's Stewardship
1. Naming of the animals by Adam
2. Dressing and keeping of the garden
3. Obedience to the word of God concerning the fruit
The Age of CONSCIENCE
Gen. 3:22
Gen. 3:24-8:19
Man's Stewardship
1.Covering of their shame with clothing
2. Labor for their food by the sweat of their brow
3. Deal with conviction through a blood sacrifice
The Age of GOVERNMENT
Gen. 9:5
Gen. 8:20-11:9
Man's Stewardship
1.Fear of man is instilled in animals
2. Man can now take the animals for food
3. Capital punishment is instituted by the Lord
The Ag
PROM
Gen. 1
Gen. 11:10
Man's Stew
1. Abram to
from the
2. To believe
the one tr
3. To be the
God's blessin
Israel called
NOTE:
God's dealings with man involve a progressive revelation "at different times and in diverse ways." Some of the responsibilities of one stewardship can carry across more than one epoch.
The nations
Man's rebellion against God brings down the curse
Man's thoughts are only evil; but Noah finds grace
Man's rebellion in building the tower of Babel at Shinar
The patriarchs,
envy, sell Josep

HIS STORY . . . TO THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES

E AGES" (EPH. 3:11)

There is only one way of salvation: by the power of God made possible through the sacrifice of Christ.
ows man to be and an acceptance of God's provision for man: His perfect substitute.

Revelation of the Judgment & Redemption of God: the Lamb

Revelation of the Grace & Truth of God in the Lord Jesus Christ

Revelation of the Glory & the Triumph of God our Saviour

New Heavens New Jerusalem New Earth

Descent of the Lord to the air and Rapture of the Church

n from Ur; on of Israel

The Decalogue given at Sinai: do and thou shalt live

Ascent of Christ; waiting in Jerusalem; descent of the Spirit

Second Advent of Christ; remnant saved; Armageddon

e of SE 1-3

Ex. 19:7

rdship

separate ations nd serve e God ehicle of to others

Bondage in Egypt

The Age of THE LAW

Jn. 1:17; Gal. 3:17

Ex. 19:8-Mt. 27:56

Man's Stewardship

1. Responsible to do all the law (Jas. 2:10); both the letter and spirit of the 613 commandments covering all phases of life. They failed (Rom. 10:1-3)

The Crucifixion

The Age of THE CHURCH

Mt. 16:18

Acts 2:1-Rev. 3:22

Man's Stewardship

1. Accept the gift in Christ of righteousness from God
2. Submit to the Lordship and Headship of Christ in personal and corporate life by sacrifice and service

The Tribulation

The Age of THE KINGDOM

Dan. 2:44; Rev. 11:15

Rev. 20:4-6

Man's Stewardship

1. The Lord Jesus will personally handle the world's affairs; man will be expected to obey the King's commands; rebellion will be swiftly punished

Great White Throne

The ETERNAL REST

y God

The nation of Israel divided
10 tribes taken captive
Judah's 70-yr. exile
A remnant returns
Messiah cut off
Temple razed

Jew and Gentile put into one Body by faith alone in Christ (Eph. 3:6)

First Heaven & first Earth pass away

Israel is restored

vided

Times of the Gentiles (606 BC. to Second Advent)

Sheep & Goats Judgment

noved with nto slavery

Israel's idolatry takes them into captivity; Judah follows

General apostasy of Christendom; the wild olive

The final rebellion against God led by the great Deceiver is crushed

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PREPARED BY J. B. NICHOLSON, JR.

DISPENSATIONALISM DELINEATED

DISPENSATIONALISTS VARY on the specific number of dispensations. These differences are in part due to the overlap of some of them. For example, A. E. Booth links the first three as the Light of Creation, the Light of Conscience, and the Light of Promise. He then adds the Tribulation as the fifth dispensation (although it is Daniel's 70th Week, linking it with the end of Law).

Even covenant theologians must admit to two dispensations, although they then tell us that the Old & New Covenants are actually one, entirely missing the arguments of Romans 2-4 and Galatians 2-4.

1) INNOCENCE (Gen. 1:28-3:6). This is between Adam's creation and the Fall. His stewardship involved naming the other creatures (speaking of his authority over them), keeping the garden, and not eating the fruit of the tree. By implication, since he was held accountable, he was also responsible for Eve. This ended with the curse, Adam and Eve being thrust out of the garden. Nonetheless, God promised a Saviour, the "seed of the woman," who will bruise the serpent's head.

2) CONSCIENCE (Gen. 4:1-8:14; Rom. 2:15). Not that man had more or less conscience at other times, it was through the conscience that God chiefly worked during this stewardship. Man was responsible to deal with the conviction in his heart by bringing a blood sacrifice to God. Some of the few who responded were Abel, Enoch, and Noah. God's longsuffering ended (1 Pet. 3:20) and He sent the Flood, sparing only eight souls.

3) GOVERNMENT (Gen. 8:15-11:9). While some would include this with the period after the Fall, we must remember it is not epochs we are distinguishing, but stewardships. Three new responsibilities are added after the Flood (Gen. 9:1-17): fear of man is instilled in animals; man is allowed to take animals as food; and capital punishment is instituted, with man given the obligation to exercise it. God promises that He will never again destroy all living with a flood, and marks it with the sign of a bow in the clouds. But man, given responsibility to govern men and animals, cannot govern himself—seen not only in Noah's drunkenness, but in Babel. There again the judgment of God fell, confounding the languages and scattering the nations.

4) PROMISE (Gen. 11:10-Ex. 18:27; Heb. 6:15; 11:9). In Galatians 3:15-29, Paul distinguishes between promise and law. The family of Abram was specially selected out of the nations for a unique relationship. But His blessing was to flow through them to all the nations of the world. While some might include this era with the period of Mosaic Law, God's covenant to Abram, Isaac, and Jacob is absolutely nothing like the inflexible rule of the law. His promise to them included a promised land and a promised prosperity.

5) MOSAIC LAW (Ex. 19:8-Mt. 27:56). Given at Sinai, the law contained 613 prescriptions to obey. It was not good enough to keep part; the whole law must be followed or God's judgment would fall. Israel grew increasingly worse, and eventually they were carried into captivity. From there most of them were scattered throughout the nations. The promise of a glorious future is found everywhere, from the hope of Abraham (Gal. 3:3-25) at the beginning of the dispensation, to Malachi, the servant at the end of the Old Testament The purpose of law was not to save but to convict.

6) THE CHURCH (Acts 2:1-Rev. 3:22). Christ brought grace to this aching planet (Titus 2:11), but Paul expounded it—and he never got over it! During this dispensation, man is responsible ("God now commandeth all men everywhere") to accept the gift of God extended to us (Rom. 5:15-18). Two aspects of this grace are significant: the grace of God is for all, and such grace by definition is unmerited. The judgment of God is promised to all rejecters of the message at the hand of Him who once was nailed to a tree. But for the Church, the dispensation will end with the promised return of Christ. Then the Tribulation follows with judgment on the Christ-rejecting world.

7) THE KINGDOM (Rev. 11:15; 20:4-6; Eph. 1:10). Called in Ephesians "the dispensation of the fullness of times," this begins with the second coming to earth of the Son of God. He will personally take charge of world rule, having put down all His enemies. Men will be obliged to bow the knee to Him. Then the crucified One will be crowned with glory! This period links together all the other dispensations. U

DISPENSATIONALISM AND THE CHURCH

IF WE WERE to geometrically illustrate the difference between *God's methods of government* over man and His *means of salvation* for man, the first would be by a line broken into various lengths. One short length would represent the dispensation of Innocence, a longer length for that of Conscience, another length for that of Promise, etc. God's methods of administration differ with each dispensation.

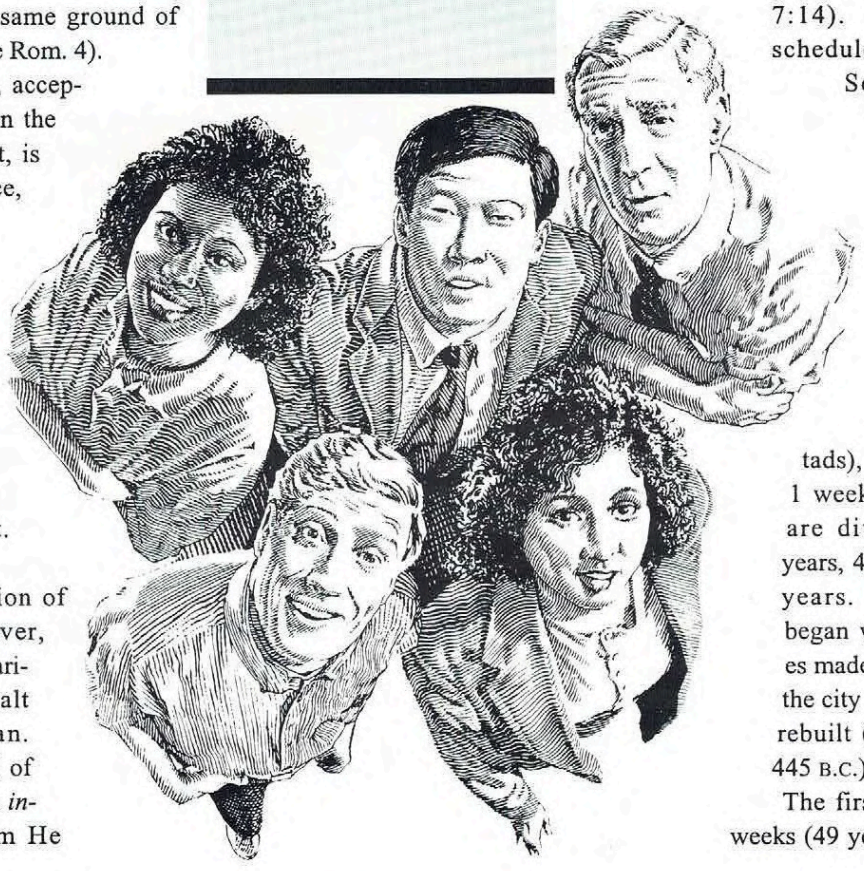
The second line, representing God's means of salvation, would be unbroken, stretching from Eden to the end of time, for God's means of salvation of the lost is always the same throughout all the dispensations.

The believer today is justified on the same principle of faith as was Abraham; he is forgiven on the same ground of grace as was David (see Rom. 4).

In all dispensations, acceptance with God rests on the atoning work of Christ, is preceded by repentance, and is characterized by justification (Rom. 4:2). All thus justified are sustained in life by divine grace for they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth (Heb. 11:8-10; 1 Pet. 2:11).

In His administration of human affairs, however, God, throughout the various dispensations, dealt differently with man. From Adam to the call of Abram, God dealt with *individuals* with whom He walked and talked. For examples, look at Enoch and Noah. From the call of Abram to Calvary, He dealt particularly with one nation, a nation developed from one *family.* Since Pentecost, God has been dealing with individuals from among all the *nations,* out of which He is building the Church.

Is the mystery of Ephesians 3:10 the Church, or is there something more there?



THE GREAT PARENTHESIS

In the various dispensations we have an almanac, a record of times and affairs in human history. Within this extensive almanac, the Lord has revealed a very interesting schedule of Israel's history from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem after the Babylonish captivity to a tribulation far worse, the Time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7), the Great Tribulation (Rev. 7:14). This divine schedule is called the Seventy Weeks of Daniel.

These weeks are divided in Daniel 9:25-26 into three periods of 7 weeks (or heptads), 62 weeks, and 1 week. That is, they are divided into 49 years, 434 years, and 7 years. These weeks began when Artaxerxes made the decree that the city of Jerusalem be rebuilt (see Neh. 2, in 445 B.C.).

The first division of 7 weeks (49 years) takes us to

the close of the ministry of the Old Testament prophets, the completion of the temple and the walls of Jerusalem. The second division of 62 weeks (434 years) takes us from that point to the presentation of Prince Messiah (Luke 19:28-48)—after which period Messiah was to be cut off.

Now the last week (7 years) opens with a prince who makes a covenant with Israel. He is the same power who destroyed the city at the close of the first two divisions of time on God's schedule (69 weeks). This was the Roman power which, through Titus, destroyed the city of Jerusalem and burned down the temple in A.D. 70.

Since the first 69 weeks are all history, and the last week is still prophecy, it is obvious that a gap, a parenthesis comes in between these. That gap is the Church era.

THE MYSTERY

There are those who consider the mystery of Ephesians 3:10 as the Church, but on closer examination it does not appear that the Church proper is the revealed mystery, but rather that the component parts and how they become parts of the Church is the mystery. The mystery is that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs with the Jews and of the same body, the Body of Christ. Let us notice the contrast in relationships between Israel and the Church.

1. *The relationship of Israel:* Israel was a nation separated from all other nations (Ex. 33:16). There was a wall of partition between God's ancient people, Israel, and all other peoples. Furthermore, Israel was composed of twelve separate tribes, each in his own position pitched under his own banner. In the Old Testament, Israel is pictured as a loving wife married to Jehovah (Jer. 2:2; 3:4; 31:32). Then she is seen as an adulterous wife worthy of being divorced (Isa. 50:1). And finally, she is viewed as an unfaithful wife fully restored to her lawful husband (Isa. 54:4-10).

2. *The relationship of the Church:* All members of the Church, believers from among all the nations, are related to one another. The middle wall between Jews and Gentiles has been removed in this dispensation (Eph. 2:14-16) and all have become an organism, the Body of Christ. This oneness stands in contrast to Israel and her twelve separate tribes.

Not only are the members of the Body of Christ related organically together but they also are related to Christ, the Head of the Body. God's people in no other dispensation are referred to as a spiritual body, and the phrase, "in Christ" is used exclusively and uniquely of believers in this dispensation. The Church, formed in this dispensation, is referred to as a virgin and an espoused bride (Eph. 5:23-27; 2 Cor. 11:2). When the Church is complete and glorified, she will become the Lamb's wife (Rev. 19:7-9).

THE CHURCH UNIQUE

In many respects, the Church stands unique in all dispensations. This is seen in her mode of worship and service and in her rule and hope.

1. *Her worship:* A discussion of the worship of the Church opens the whole matter of priesthood, temple, and sacrifice. Yet the Church, unlike Israel, is invited inside the veil because of the finished work of Christ.

2. *Her service:* Throughout all dispensations, devout men have served the Lord, and their service has been acknowledged by Him. In the Church, God does not usually call extraordinary men, nor a particular tribe or group of men, but all believers are called as His servants. In this the Church is unique; every member is called to serve, and each receives a special spiritual endowment.

3. *Her rule:* Several of the precious titles of the Lord Jesus emphasize His sovereignty in different aspects. The title, "the Son of Man," implies far more than merely His humanity. According to Daniel (7:13-14) in a day yet to come, as Son of Man, Christ shall reign over the entire world. Another such title, "Messiah," like still another, "The Son of David," implies that Christ will be received by the Jewish people and accepted as their King, the Lord's Anointed. A third title that expresses His sovereignty is that of "Head," "the Head of the Church." To Christ as Head, the Church is to be in subjection (Eph. 5:22-23), for from Him as Head she receives her life, vitality, and direction (Col. 2:19).

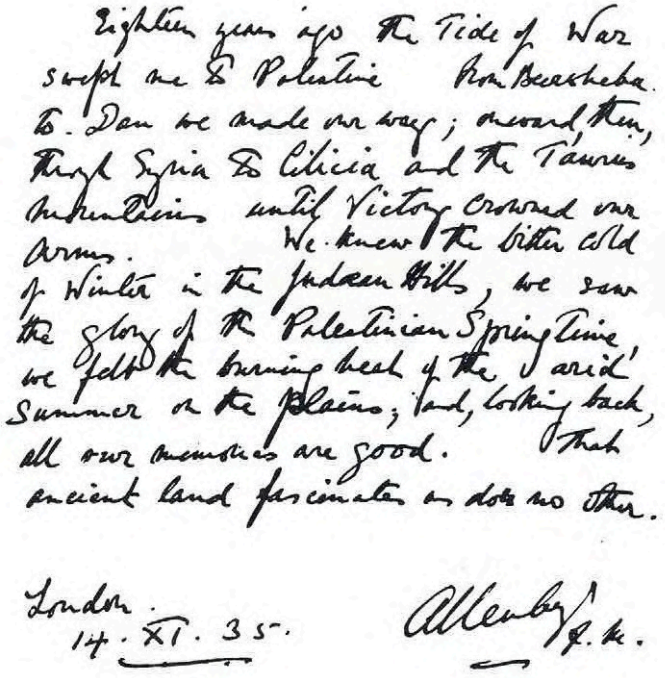
4. *Her hope:* In the purposes of God, the origin of the Church was heavenly (John 3:3, 7; Acts 10:9-19), her citizenship is heavenly (Phil. 3:20-21), her aspirations are heavenly (Col. 3:1-4), and so are her hope and calling (Phil. 3:14; John 14:1-4; 1 John 3:1-3, etc.).

Maintaining the clear distinctions between Israel and the Church is essential to a right understanding of God's purposes throughout time—"rightly dividing the word of truth."

MY PEOPLE

Israel today is an agricultural wonder, a social wonder, a linguistic wonder, and a political wonder. But it is not God's purpose simply to restore them to Judea and to Jerusalem but to Jehovah. And He shall do it yet.

An English lord once rudely asked his valet if he knew
One solitary act or fact that proved the Bible true;
The art of disputation he had not learned to use,
But, pointing to a passerby, he said, "My lord, the Jews."



Eighteen years ago the Tide of War swept me to Palestine. From Beersheba to Dan we made our way; onward, then, through Syria to Cilicia and the Taurus Mountains until Victory crowned our arms. We knew the bitter cold of Winter in the Judean Hills, we saw the glory of the Palestinian Spring Time, we felt the burning heat of the arid Summer on the plains; and, looking back, all our memories are good. That ancient land fascinates as does no other.

London.
14. XI. 35.

Allenby F. M.

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"...Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles...Now if the fall of [Israel] be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?
(Romans 11:11-12)

"Not grieved for Israel!" canst thou stand
Rejoicing in the light;
And nothing care for those who stray
In darkest shades of night?

"Not grieved for Israel!" having lost
Thy load of sin and shame,
Should'st thou not their salvation seek
Through whom thy Saviour came?

"Not grieved for Israel!" thou wast healed,
When broken, sick and sore,
How deep their wounds! Hast thou no balm
On their sad hearts to pour?

"Not grieved for Israel!" When thy cup
With mercy overflows,
Wilt thou not give from thy full store
Some comfort for their woes?

Lo, Jesus grieves His flock to see
All ruined, lost, undone,
And bids thee in the desert go
To seek them one by one.

Oh, holy task, His Name to bear
In all its healing power,
To "these His brethren," thus to haste
Their glad redemption hour.

—Jesse F. Webb

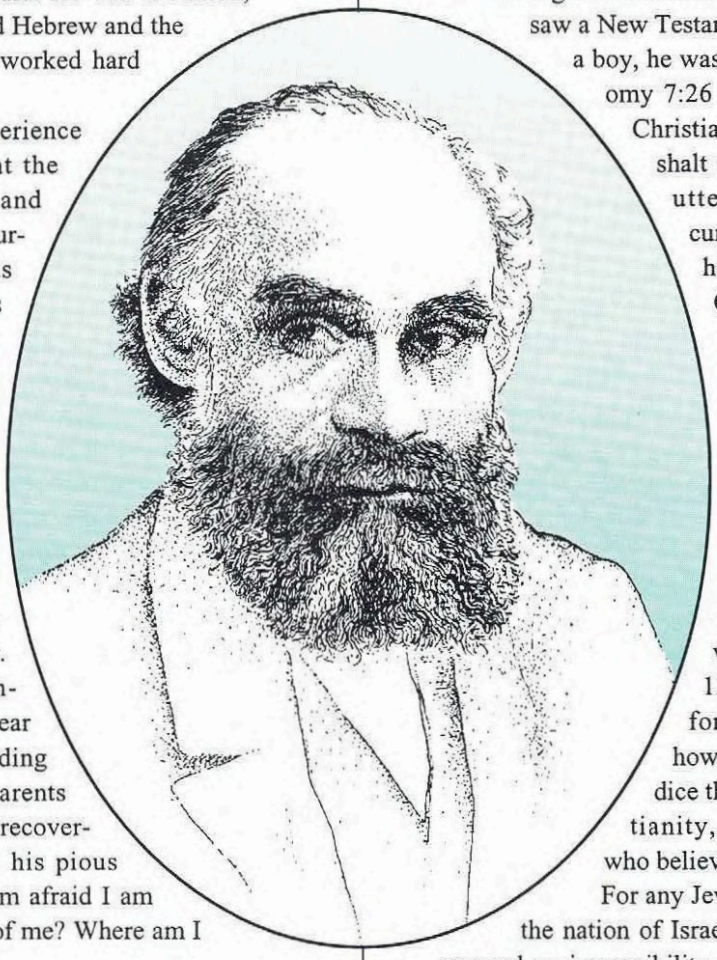
"And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbor, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this great city? Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God, and worshiped other gods, and served them." (Jeremiah 22:8-9)

JOHN BJORLIE



DAVID BARON

To tell the story of David Baron (1855-1926) we should first take a journey to a farm in Russia owned by an orthodox Jew. The youngest of seven children was one of those rare, unspoiled young men. The boy's parents and companions thought that if anyone qualified for Abraham's bosom, that boy would. He was not mean, he loved his family, studied Hebrew and the Talmud, said prayers and worked hard for his father.



Then a near death experience made him stare closely at the issue of life, and death, and what comes after death. During vacation time, he was out in the field helping his father's farm laborers when he fell in front of some unmanageable horses and a wheel of the cart they were pulling passed over him. His pummeled, inert body was carried home to his despairing parents, who called in a medical doctor. The boy regained consciousness just in time to hear the doctor, who was standing by his bedside, tell the parents that he had little hope of recovering. That night he asked his pious mother, "Dear mother, I am afraid I am dying. What will become of me? Where am I going?"

As her hand touched his worried forehead, she wept. "My dear child, you have been such a good boy, and should you die, you will go to heaven."

That boy knew differently. The question, "How can a man be just with God?" haunted him. He knew his Bible too well. Psalm 51:5, Genesis 6:5 and 8:21, and Jeremiah 17:9 showed him only the "blackness of darkness" in his own heart. "Oh! no, mother, I have not been good, and if my getting to heaven depends on my own goodness I shall never get there." The boy survived the night, in fact he eventually passed his threescore and ten allotment. He survived, but his self-righteousness did not recover.

David Baron had seen himself as he was.

Though he had met Christians, he never even saw a New Testament until in adulthood. As a boy, he was taught to recite Deuteronomy 7:26 whenever he passed by a Christian church building, "Thou shalt utterly abhor it, thou shalt utterly detest it; for it is a cursed thing." The only name he knew for the Lord Jesus Christ was the name Tooleh (crucified), a person who taught his followers to serve idols and persecute the Jews, whom the Talmudists styled as "the greatest sinner in Israel" and the epitome of the false prophet that Moses warned of in Deuteronomy 13. It is almost impossible for a Gentile to understand how deeply stained with prejudice the Jews were toward Christianity, and especially any Jew who believed in Jesus Christ.

For any Jew to believe in the One that the nation of Israel had branded an imposter seemed an impossibility. Then he met a Jew and a Gentile, who were both true followers of Jesus of Nazareth. Unlike many of his fellows, David did not openly ridicule and curse them when they spoke to him about Someone they called their "Saviour" and spoke as though they knew God in a personal way, calling Him their Father. As they debated Bible passages, the description they gave David was quite different from what he had heard about Tooleh. The exchanges con-

tinued until one night the Christian ended a conversation with David by saying, "As for me, I tell you honestly, as in the sight of God, that I never knew what true happiness was until I found it in Christ."

Strange! Happiness in Christ? However cleverly David argued to block the Christian's proof that Jesus is the Messiah, he could not overcome the fact that the Christian had something which made him happy.

Through some difficult reversals, David migrated from his father's farm in Russia to Hull, England, where he was given a New Testament. There he discovered the answer to his longing for a Temple, a Priest, and a Lamb—all those things of which Judaism was bankrupt. In his apartment, with his New Testament, he got down on his knees and prayed, "O, my God, if Thou canst not save me in any other condition but faith in Jesus, be pleased to give me that faith, and help me to love that most precious Name which I have so long hated and despised."

Fanny Kingsford was born in 1849 near Dover, England. As an adolescent, she was fascinated with the Jews, perhaps through her personal study of the Bible. She went on to study Hebrew under a rabbi at Dover.

Anxious that the Jews of the town should have the gospel put before them by one of their own brethren, converted to Christ, she wrote the Mildmay Mission to the Jews asking if they could send a suitable man. Andrew Bonar and Adolf Saphir were both strong supporters of the Mildmay Mission. As a young convert, David Baron was then involved with the mission and therefore was sent to Dover. David, then 28 years old, stayed in the Kingsford home while he conducted evangelistic meetings in the area and also ministered the Word in Christian congregations on Sundays. David was busy, but not too busy to notice his kind, intelligent and zealous hostess. God had prepared for him a true helpmeet.

Fanny was an enthusiast, sharing David's burden for the Jews. She shared his intellectual interests and his intellectual attitude. She was the trusted co-worker, secretary, and confidant who edited and prepared for press David's many books and pamphlets. Of this skilled linguist and writer, David said, "Without her I would not have done it—for she is the crown of my earthly life." Though not exactly robust herself, she was the one who tended to David's delicate health. He was frequently ill. None of this hindered her ministry of hospitality out of their London home, or from going with David on annual missionary trips into Eastern Europe and the countries of the Middle East. These excursions took them into the squalor of the ghettos of Budapest, Prague, Kronstadt, and Cracow.

A second co-laborer of David's was Adolph Saphir's brother-in-law, C. A. Schönberger. While Baron was the calm, deliberate, cautious Bible teacher, brother Schönberger was the flaming torch that would ignite his hearers' hearts. When these two Jews knit together in their work in 1893, their friends all wondered, "How long can this last?"

It lasted. Baron assembled a band of co-laborers, working out of a building in London where they did their editorial work, as well as maintaining contact with missionaries abroad who worked among the Jews. They also conducted regular open-air meetings, standing outside the front door. On occasion more than a hundred gathered—but not always in the most polite mood. A favorite prank of the hecklers was to throw a bag of flour in the preacher's face. James Hirsch Lewis, would stand there, preaching on, with his face and beard smothered in white powder.

Herman Newmark testified, "As I used to stroll along the Whitechapel Road on an evening in my childhood, I would pass a group of Jews listening to Mr. Lewis as he preached the gospel, but in the ignorance of unbelief I would say to whoever was my companion, "Look at that traitor! He's doing it for money! I suppose he used to earn thirty shillings a week as a tailor, and now they are paying him £10 a week to be a Christian—let us walk past!"

After coming to Christ, Newmark found Mr. Lewis at a prayer meeting. Holding out his hand, he said, "How are you, brother?"

Lewis answered, "I do not know you."

"Ah, but I know you! I often used to pass you when you were preaching at this doorway, and I hated you like poison, but now we are brothers in Christ."

The elderly Lewis replied, "You are not the first one who has borne similar testimony to me."

When the Zionist Congress began in a rented casino in Basle, Switzerland, David attended. Timing his continental tours to include the annual conference in his itinerary each year, as a reporter David obtained a permit to sit in with the delegates. He personally knew Theodor Herzl, the visionary and chairman of the

congress. At one conference, a delegate stood and began to vent his spleen on Christian Jewish missionaries. Herzl's response was to quietly leave the rostrum and come down and seat himself by the side of Mr. Baron and a few of his fellow missionaries.

Such a stronghold of Judaism naturally seemed impervious to the gospel of Christ. But the eyes of faith read a different story. Years before, in Budapest, Hungary, Scottish missionaries working through the Free Church of Scotland Jewish Mission met for prayer meetings in the Hotel Frohner. They prayed and God worked. Adolph Saphir's parents and Dr. Alfred Edersheim were saved. Other notable Christian Jews in Europe were Professor Franz Delitsch, who translated the New Testament into Hebrew (this was a must have for evangelizing the orthodox). Joseph Rabinovich was another Christian Jew who spoke and wrote powerfully in the south of Russia. But few conversions shook Judaism like that of Rabbi Lichtenstein of Tapio-Szele, Hungary, who had been a district rabbi for forty years. Schönberger and Baron published Lichtenstein's writings widely, and did all they could to encourage the aged man. The greatest encouragement was the visit they made to Lichtenstein's oldest son, a brilliant physician, who was on his deathbed. Holding the dying man's hands, they had the joy of leading him to the same Jesus that the aged rabbi had found.

Brother Baron was strictly non-sectarian, so much so that he took precautions not to start some new division in the Church. For instance, when asked about baptizing converts, Baron sighted the saying of Paul in 1 Corinthians, that Christ sent him not to baptize. Baron thought it was wise to send new believers to existing scriptural congregations where they would be baptized. He feared the danger of starting up a new denomination that catered to believing Jews.

In 1910, Baron wrote, "In these seventeen years, though we have no church, or sect, or party at our back, though no one in the world has been personally asked by us for one pound, nor has a penny been spent in advertising for funds...a sum of about £50,000 (including £9,000 for the building of the Mission House) has been sent in absolutely spontaneous gifts by those whose hearts God Himself has touched in answer to prayer all over the world.

"From the first, and all along, we have depended only and entirely for the supply of all the temporal as well as for the spiritual needs of the Mission, upon the living God. We have no 'auxiliaries,' or 'associations,' or collections, or any visible resources whatever to rely upon—we have never spent a penny in advertising for funds. We send about no appeals, nor have we sought to press ourselves, or the important work which God has committed into our hands, on the attention of the Christian public.

"I record this to the glory of God, and as a testimony to those who read, that God always justifies and honors the trust we put in Him; and that if it is He who entrusts us with any task for the glory of Christ and the extension of His Kingdom, He will assuredly in His own way supply the means for its accomplishment.

"I need not repeat that the path of faith is not free from trial. There are times of testing and heart searchings; seasons when we are permitted to be brought down to the very dust in the sense of need and the failure of all human help; yet if our hearts be fixed on God, if we are only certain that it is He who has called us to this service—if we are ready, if need be, to suffer want, and to be misjudged rather than go down to Egypt for help, or fly to the 'chariots and horses' of worldly ways and methods—He will assuredly show us in the end that we have still to do with the Living God of Abraham and of Israel—the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who never withholds any good thing from them that walk uprightly."

From London, David sent gifts to workers in Northern Africa, Germany, Poland, Romania, Austria, Russia, and Israel. Many of these labored among the poverty stricken. He would drily say, "There are two miracles in the work of God: one is, how the money comes, and the other is how it goes!"

David Baron came down with pneumonia and died in 1926. Fanny continued the work until three months before her death in 1931.

Stuart Holden said that David Baron was the most Christlike man he had ever met. As he said goodbye he was apt to add, "You can never be too great an imitator of Jesus."

David Baron's books include:

The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah
The Shepherd of Israel
The Servant of Jehovah
Anglo-Israelism Examined
The History of Israel

JIM McKENDRICK



REVIVE US AGAIN!

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN in the last fifteen years or so on the subject of "renewal" and "church growth." This has resulted in much division and discouragement because it has tended to turn our attention away from biblical principles. Instead it has turned our eyes to Madison Avenue hype, business management techniques, and pop-psychology. No one can deny the necessity of real revival and a resurgence of good gospel preaching.

It should be noted that revival and gospel preaching are two different things. Revival is the bringing back to vitality that which once had life. Gospel preaching is the proclamation of the good news of salvation to sinners who are dead in trespasses and sins. We preach the gospel to those dead to God—separated from Him forever unless born again from above by the operation of the Spirit and Word of God. Revival is a necessity of the church, resulting from personal restoration.



Mr. David Long has written a book on the subject of revival, entitled *Revival—A Study in Biblical Patterns*. He argues that true revival must be based on principles which are stated in the Scriptures. These principles are demonstrated in each revival of Israel, thus providing a pattern for revival. The three basic principles found in these passages are 1) revival is the sovereign work of God; 2) it begins with the acknowledgement and confession of that sin; and 3) it will be furthered by complete obedience to the Scriptures. Tracing these principles through the Old Testament in the life of Israel, Mr. Long has done careful research and brings to bear on our hearts and minds the plain teaching of the Scriptures. One of the things that impressed me about this book was the many Scripture references and Mr. Longs' assumption that you were reading the Scriptures along with him. To get the drift of his argument, you must read the Scriptures as you are reading the book. He seems to say, "To the law and to the testimony:" (Isa. 8:20). In this way he is not asking you to believe him but to follow the Scriptures. And that's the way it should be. This has been our problem of late—we are prone to follow a man or his ideas which can lead us astray from the Word of God. The Bereans were complimented on searching the Scriptures to see if the things spoken by Paul were right.

One of the marks of an assembly of Christians who are following the Word of God is a vigorous gospel outreach. If the Christians are happy and enjoying the Lord, they will want others to experience this same joy. Thus each one will be wanting to reach out to others, and bring others under the sound preaching of the gospel. In this day of "church growth," the gospel is being watered down and the sinner is made to feel comfortable in his sins. That may make for large crowds, but the broad way that leads to destruction is crowded, too.

If we will do the sinner good, we will bring to bear upon his mind the claims of Christ as presented in the gospel. It is the Word of God that the Spirit of God uses to bring conviction of sin and the enlightenment of the gospel. To present the gospel clearly, we need to have a good understanding of its message and doctrine. A book written a number of years ago is *The Gospel and Its Ministry* by Sir Robert Anderson. Originally written to answer the "Textual Criticism" of the late nineteenth century, this book is vital today when the cry for tolerance and acceptance clouds the clear presentation of the gospel. The truth concerning faith, grace, the cross, election, reconciliation, justification and other doctrines surrounding the gospel are found in the Scriptures, not in some man-made system; this needs to be understood in order to present the gospel in its clarity. This is a passionate call to preach the gospel and to do so in accordance with the teachings of Scripture.

We need soul revival and we need a revival of the clear preaching of the gospel. May these two books stir us to a scriptural answer to both needs.

Both books available from Gospel Folio Press U

EVERYDAY READING PLAN

Section 43: James - Jude

July 1	James 1:1-12	The trial of faith—its purpose and prospect
July 2	James 1:13-27	The Word of God and the believer's obedience
July 3	James 2:1-13	Faith without works manifests partiality and judgment
July 4	James 2:14-26	Faith independent of works is lifeless—Abraham & Rahab
July 5	James 3:1-18	Why do you suppose God gave us two gates, and only one tongue?
July 6	James 4:1-17	Living faith vs. the world, the flesh, and the devil
July 7	James 5:1-11	Have patience—the Lord is coming!
July 8	James 5:12-20	Encouragement to, exhortation in, and an example of prayer
July 9	1 Peter 1:1-12	Suffering and salvation
July 10	1 Peter 1:13-25	Called to be holy, and regenerated obedience
July 11	1 Peter 2:1-10	The believer as babes, living stones, and a holy and royal priest
July 12	1 Peter 2:11-25	Believers have been called to suffer—Christ our exemplar
July 13	1 Peter 3:1-12	Instructions for husbands and wives; called to be a blessing
July 14	1 Peter 3:13-22	Suffering and maintaining a good conscience before an evil world
July 15	1 Peter 4:1-19	Living and suffering as a Christian; watch and rejoice
July 16	1 Peter 5:1-14	Exhortations for the spiritually mature and spiritually immature
July 17	2 Peter 1:1-11	The believer's growth—adding to your faith
July 18	2 Peter 1:12-21	The authority of apostolic testimony & the written Word of God
July 19	2 Peter 2:1-9	The activity of false teachers and the certainty of their judgment
July 20	2 Peter 2:10-22	The mark of false teachers—following the way of Balaam
July 21	2 Peter 3:1-9	Be mindful of the Word; be not ignorant of His coming
July 22	2 Peter 3:10-18	Be diligent in the things of God, and beware of error
July 23	1 John 1:1-10	The basis and conditions of fellowship
July 24	1 John 2:1-17	Holiness of life, obedience to the Word, & conformity to His walk
July 25	1 John 2:18-29	Little children—the Lord's return and coming apostasy
July 26	1 John 3:1-24	The secret of abiding—believe on Christ and love one another
July 27	1 John 4:1-21	The discernment of error; love displayed and defined
July 28	1 John 5:1-21	What believers are to know
July 29	2 John 1:1-13	The believer walking in truth and love
July 30	3 John 1:1-14	Lovable Gaius, abominable Diotrephes, and faithful Demetrius
July 31	Jude 1:1-25	Contending for the faith and building up the faith

THE GENERAL EPISTLES: JAMES-JUDE

James: There are several individuals in the New Testament named James, but it is commonly held that the writer of this book was the brother of the Lord Jesus. An unbeliever during the Lord's life (Jn. 7:5), he became a believer through the ministry of the resurrected Lord (1 Cor. 15:7) and proved to be an effective and influential leader in the early church (Gal. 1:19). James was called "Camel Knees" by the early church, an affectionate testimony to the countless hours he spent in prayer. Only such a man could write such a strongly worded and forthright challenge as we find in James.

In powerful words, James expounds on what it means to live as a child of God. Faith without works is dead, he declares. The whole book might well be an expansion of Paul's call to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. There is a desperate need for this truth to be applied to God's people today. He touches on enduring trials, impartial treatment of others, the tongue and its dangers, overcoming the world, handling riches, and enduring in light of the Lord's return. For many that are pleading for practical teaching, a study of James would benefit for a lifetime.

1 Peter: Jewish Christians were passing through tremendous persecution. They were turned away from the temple and its ministries, socially ostracized, physically persecuted, and often forced to flee their homes with only what they could carry. In light of these great sufferings, Peter provides a healing balm direct from the heart of God to these battered believers. Don't give up, he says. You may have lost much physically, but it is nothing in comparison to what is yours spiritually, and what shall be yours eternally. It is also essential to realize that suffering is a vital prerequisite to glory. The One who has proven it by His own suffering and consequent glory beckons us to follow His footsteps.

2 Peter: Peter's second epistle has often been denoted as a treatise on the last days, but Peter himself does not say so. He states twice that his purpose is to stir up the memory of God's people (1:12; 3:1), to cause them to obey the Word of God and to carry on in what they know to be true. Chapter 1 outlines the secret of a vital Christian life crowned by glory, virtue, and fruitfulness. Chapter 2 warns against false prophets and teachers, and chapter 3 outlines in marvelous précis God's workings in the past, His hand in the present, and His plans for the future, all neatly tied together in a series of figurative "days." There are several references to "the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ" for this, Peter says, is the secret to it all.

1 John: The writings of the beloved disciple could well be described as complex simplicity. John's themes shine forth in diamond-like clarity for the simplest reader to grasp, but his structure in presenting these jewels often defies even the most devoted Bible student. John takes his subjects and moves from one to the other and then back again with a fluid grace that is almost poetic. His themes give us some clue as to why he takes this approach. He speaks of spiritual light, fellowship, love, truth, and righteousness. If these concepts are to have a practical impact on our life, they cannot be applied independently. They are all deeply intertwined and related. One cannot function appropriately without the others, so John weaves them together, letting us see their relationship to one another. It is a glorious tapestry of simple elegance, given to us that: we might have fellowship (1:3); that our joy might be full (1:4); that we might not sin (2:1); and that we might know that we have eternal life (5:13).

2 John: John's second epistle extols the truth and our responsibility to walk in it. Emphasis is given to maintaining and defending the "doctrine of Christ," the wonder of God coming in the flesh.

3 John: This epistle follows the theme of living out the truth and intertwines it with love. Three men are mentioned, two worthy of emulation and one whose conduct is reprehensible. Gaius challenges us to love God's people, particularly in the area of hospitality. Demetrius challenges us to love the truth and to live it out. Diotrephes is a warning to us of the dangers and destructiveness of self-love.

Jude: Jude is the Nehemiah of the New Testament. In the strongest of terms, Jude calls God's people to lift up the Sword against those who would corrupt and destroy the Church. He also entreats them to take the trowel and build themselves up in their most holy faith. He closes by glorifying Him who will never fail. U

THE DEPTH OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

THE LIFE OF KING MANASSEH is recorded in the Scriptures in two places: 2 Kings 21 and a more complete account in 2 Chronicles 33. Of all the kings of Judah, there was perhaps none more evil than Manasseh. Tradition tells us that He was most likely the one who gave the gruesome order to have Isaiah the prophet sawn in two (Heb. 11:37). Apart from the fact that Hezekiah was his father, there is very little evidence to indicate that he was even linked with God's people. And yet he was.

Raised in royalty, Manasseh had the benefit of a godly parent in Hezekiah, king of Judah. It was Hezekiah who had accomplished great things for God during his prosperous reign. Under his leadership, Hezekiah rebuffed Assyrian attempts to subjugate Judah. He successfully fended off two sieges by another Assyrian king named Sennacherib, who was defeated in a glorious victory in the latter campaign through the intercession of Isaiah. Domestically, he instituted spiritual reform in government, which led to a sweeping revival across the land under his righteous rule. So great was the reverence for this godly king Hezekiah that "all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem honored him at his death" (2 Chron. 32:33), a rare instance in the history of Judah. This was Manasseh's heritage as he ascended to the throne at the age of twelve.

But rather than following in the ways of his father as might have been expected, a different type of ruler came to power. We read that Manasseh "did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel" (2 Chron. 33:2). Further, he rebuilt the idolatrous altars that his father had so diligently worked to eradicate from the land. He worshiped the host of heaven (v. 3), brazenly setting carved images in Solomon's temple which should have remained wholly dedicated to God's glory. So evil was Manasseh that he even practiced child sacrifice, witchcraft, and sorcery, which further provoked the anger of the Lord. Under his wicked reign, the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem were enticed to sin greatly, even more than the vile and godless nations that surrounded them.

What caused Manasseh to so flagrantly disregard the ways of his father? Modern psychologists would tell us that a bad child is usually the result of a bad childhood, or insufficient education. But that was not the case with Manasseh. From an economic standpoint, he had the best education and childhood upbringing a person could want. And it is doubtful that his father, Hezekiah, who evidenced such spiritual acumen throughout his entire reign, would neglect to purge the royal household of items that would contribute to the spiritual ruin of his son. And yet we see Manasseh spiralling downward in his life, testimony to the fact that he chose to go his own way.

The Bible teaches that "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child," and regardless of his privileged upbringing, Manasseh was no exception to this truth. We should take note of these clear lessons: spirituality is never inherited. God desires a personal, vital relationship with Him and holds everyone individually accountable for his actions, regardless of the excuses that are often compiled to appease conscience. No doubt Manasseh gave ear to the alluring voices of the world around him as he came into power at such an early age. With an open field before him, he ran recklessly into the snare of sin and became its servant.

More than a dozen times in the first seven verses we read of Manasseh's deliberate, godless actions: "he did evil..." (v. 2); "he rebuilt the high places..." (v. 3); "he built altars..." (v. 5); "he used witchcraft..." (v. 6); "he set a carved image..." (v. 7); the summary effect being noted in verse 9—"So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do worse than the heathen." Romans 6:16 states, "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" Manasseh had made a deliberate choice to disregard the ways of his father and it became evident in his life as he became a slave to sin. This is the downhill course. What begins perhaps with small choices, soon leads to blatant compromise, and ultimately to full-fledged servitude. Tragically, his slavery to sin filtered down to the common people.

But God was not silent during this time of spiritual declension. God's voice can be heard unless His people are repeatedly resistant to His Word. "And the Lord

spoke by His servants the prophets" (2 Ki. 21:10), but they were so anesthetized by their sin that they would not listen. Disobedience and self-deception of that magnitude can only be corrected by the hand of God.

As a judgment for sin, the Lord brought the nation of Assyria upon Judah. Now Assyria had their opportunity to penetrate the sin-distracted nation and avenge previous defeats. The prize capture naturally was Manasseh, who was led away in humiliation with hooks through his nose, bound with fetters as he was carried off to Babylon. What a striking picture of the ultimate consequence and destructiveness of sin! Here is the king of the most powerful nation on earth at the time, being led about like a barnyard animal. How deceptive sin can be! Little did Manasseh realize when he started out in his wayward life, that he would come to this.

But such are the ways of God. Sin is allowed to have its way so that we might clearly see our actions for what they really are—selfish rebellion against God. It is the necessary avenue for some to see the horror of the situation and recognize our utter dependence on Almighty God. Just as the prodigal son had "bottomed out," wishing to eat the very food that the swine ate, so Manasseh came to his senses, "being in much affliction" (v. 12). At the nadir of his pitiful condition, he humbled himself greatly, praying and beseeching God for mercy and grace. It was his point of conversion. "Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God" (v. 13).

Up to this point, all that he had heard regarding God and His Word fell to the ground without any personal interest and application. He had no relationship with the Living God. But when his eyes were opened and he was aware of his need, God heard his prayer and forgave him all his sin. Just how deep is God's forgiveness? Deep enough to forgive the worst. The corridors of history are filled with those whose testimonies speak of the love and forgiveness of God. Charles Wesley said it well, "His blood can make the foulest clean, His blood availed for me!" I wonder if the words of martyred Isaiah echoed even more clearly to the heart of Manasseh: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear..." (Isa. 59:1). How true it was in his life, and how true it has proven to be in the lives of a countless multitude who have been redeemed by God.

A forgiven and cleansed life like this does not forget the debt it owes. With the same intensity of his former life, but in a whole new direction, Manasseh set out to make good for all the evil He had previously committed. First, he built the wall outside the City of David (v. 14), then "he took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the Lord" (v. 15). "He also repaired the altar of the Lord...and commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel" (v. 16). Though the record indicates that there were residual remains from his former actions, he made every attempt possible to undo his wicked past. For the most part he was successful, though he was buried "in his own house" (v. 20) and not with the same honors as his father. Yet to the glory of God, he died a forgiven man.

King Manasseh will go down in biblical history as a shining example of the power of God to forgive. His is a life that gives encouragement to the worst of sinners as well as to those who are praying for them. It shows just how far God will reach to save someone. There is no one that is unimportant to Him. The same willingness and power to forgive that evidenced itself in the life of Manasseh is available to anyone who comes humbly in the same manner through faith in Christ and His mighty work on the cross.



THE SHRINE OF THE BOOK

I WAS STANDING IN FRONT of a beautiful white building—well, actually it was just the roof of the building that was hidden underground. The roof was somewhat conical in shape, rising to a central point. We were told it was made in the shape of a lid for a clay pot. Not just any pot, but the clay pots that had been used to house the Dead Sea scrolls. Underneath the ground, hidden and well protected, lay the most valuable treasure of Israel—the entire book of Isaiah found among other writings of the Essene scribes.

The Essenes were a sect of Judaism who separated themselves from the evil society in which they lived to prepare themselves for the coming of Messiah. They wanted to be clean and ready for His coming. While waiting, they copied the Scriptures laboriously and with great care. At the time of the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, they disappeared from sight along with all their works. Sadly, these who were looking for the Messiah didn't recognize Him when He came and disappeared without a trace.

In 1947, a goat fell through the roof of an ancient cave. In getting the animal out, some old clay jars were found. To everyone's surprise, these old jars contained ancient writings dating from before the common era (C. E. is used by the Israelis as an alternative to B.C.). Found among the writings was a scroll of the entire book of Isaiah. The excitement caused by this find went around the world and Israel has embraced it as her greatest treasure.

All this was told us by our guide with great pride and obvious delight. As he was talking, I was standing in front of a high wall which cast its shadow on me, keeping me from the sun's hot rays. I paid no attention to the wall until the guide pointed out that the wall was black and was to underscore the difference between the white of the roof in front of me. The guide told us that in the great final battle, the good (the white) would win over the evil (the black) and Israel would enter its great era as prophesied in the book of Isaiah, the book hidden away for preservation in Israel's national archives.

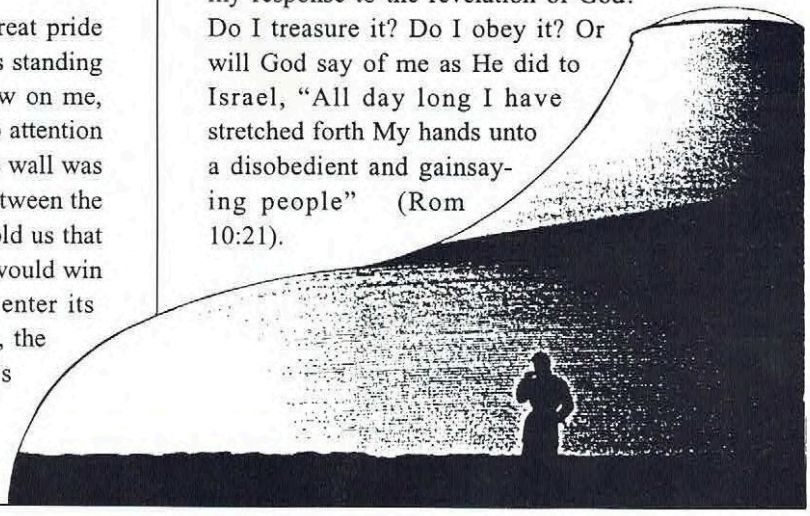
I had been reading that morning in Isaiah 6 about the prophet himself who had seen a vision of a throne in the heavens, a throne undisturbed by the sins and collapsing empires of this earth. In that chapter, he declares the verdict of a God whose judgment was going to fall on the nation of Israel because she had rejected the claims of God upon her. She would hear and not understand, would see and not perceive. The future revelation of God would do her no good for she had rejected the revelation of the past. But in the midst of this nation would be some, a remnant, like the prophet himself, who would repent at the sight of a holy God, declaring himself to be undone in His sight, and would know the touch of the coals from the altar cleansing him from his sins and fitting him for God's service.

God has given to modern Israel this wonderful book—the book of Isaiah—which so graphically points to the Messiah, who not only will reign, but who once came to suffer for the sins of His people.

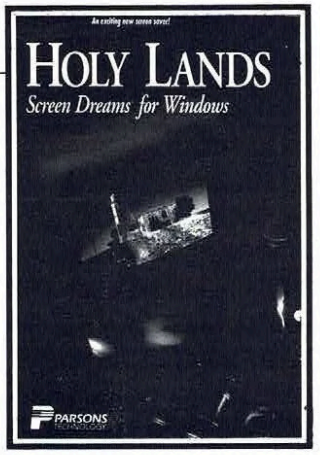
As I stood there in front of the white roof containing the light of the revelation of God, I was vividly reminded of the darkness of the minds of His people, much like the blackness of the wall behind me.

Our guide's name was Phillip. It was another Philip in Acts 9 who used the book of Isaiah to point an Ethiopian to Christ. May this national treasure, the book of Isaiah, be used by God to point many Phillips and Miriams and Moshes in the land of Israel to Himself in these final moments of this age.

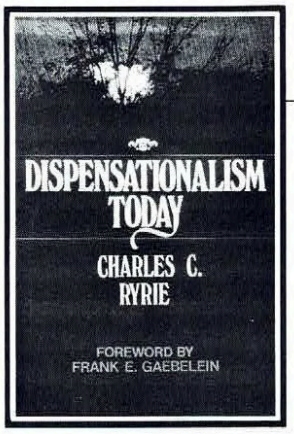
But then let's not only think of Israel. What about my response to the revelation of God? Do I treasure it? Do I obey it? Or will God say of me as He did to Israel, "All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom 10:21).



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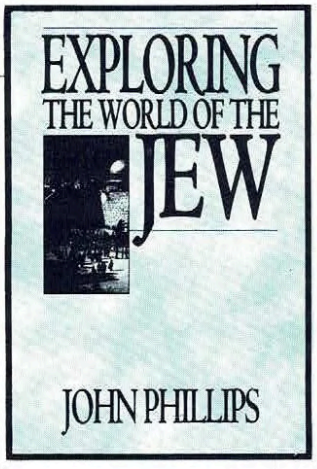
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Raymond Lull, martyred for his faith in the thirteenth century, wrote, "*It is my belief, O Christ, that the conquest of the Holy Land should be attempted in no other way than Thou and Thy apostles undertook to accomplish it: by love, by prayer, by tears, and by the offering of our own lives.*" It is still the only way.

—from *That the World May Know*, Volume 1, by Fredrick A. Tatford

