

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- \* **The Spritual Man**
- \* **Truth From the Scriptures**
- \* **Lessons From Jeremiah**
- \* **Do Not Meddle**
- \* **The Editor to His Friends**

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## *THE SPIRITUAL MAN*

In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul uses the descriptive phrase "he that is spiritual". In the letter to the Galatians he uses a similar phrase "Ye which are spiritual." See I Cor. 2:15, Gal. 6:1. In the latter reference a definite task is assigned to the spiritual. Thus it is evident that all who read the Galatian letter would need to sit in judgment upon themselves to see if they qualified among that number.

If an epistle were sent by God today to all who profess faith in Christ, and if in this epistle a definite task was assigned to those who are spiritual, how many would be able to qualify for this rank and be able to undertake the task given? If we examined ourselves in the white light of God's word, how many would place themselves among the spiritual?

Of course there are some very carnal ideas as to the meaning of the word spiritual. Men often decide that a certain pattern of life is spiritual, then believe that they are spiritual when they have reached this goal. Even as some have modified the character of sin to such an extent that it has become in their minds something that they never do or desire to do. Thus they claim "sinless perfection." But sin is not what someone claims it to be: it is what God has revealed it to be. And spirituality is not what we may have decided it to be, but what God has declared it to be.

There is so much confusion in regard to this that I doubt if any two readers of this periodical have the same conception concerning that which constitutes "the spiritual man." Many people regard the spiritual man as being one who is extremely religious. This is so far from the truth that I shall not bother to deny it. Others believe it to be a life of active service, but service is not always essential to spirituality. If it be God's will, we are just as spiritual when we are resting or playing as when we are proclaiming the gospel. Then there is the prevalent idea that the spiritual life is one of suppression, consisting entirely in what one does NOT do. Those who hold this idea think that when the smile is

gone from the face; when all play, pleasure, diversion and helpful amusement have been abandoned: this is the spiritual life. I declare that this idea is a device of Satan for the purpose of making the life in Christ Jesus seem abhorrent to most people, especially to the young.

In defining spirituality, I would begin by saying that just as every piece of cloth has a certain quality or character, even so every life has a certain quality or character. We look for a certain quality when we buy a suit of clothes, and we must look for a certain quality of life in the child of God. When the quality or character of life in the child of God is of such nature that it satisfies, pleases and glorifies the Father, then that is a spiritual life - that is true spirituality. It is simply being what God wants us to be, living as God would have us to live.

In considering this definition, it must be remembered that it is no simple matter to know just what will please and glorify the Father in our lives. Many who know very little of God do not hesitate to decide what should please Him. They often try to force upon God a character that He does not care for. God alone has the right to say what pleases and satisfies Him. He has given us a revelation concerning this. It, therefore, becomes our duty to discover just what this is. It is evident that even the desire to know what pleases God is in itself an act well pleasing to *Him*.

In order to enjoy fellowship with God, there must be in our lives an overwhelming abundance of those things with which God can fellowship. Furthermore, there should be an absence of those things that grieve and displease Him. When this is true of our lives, then we are spiritual.

For example: to bring *up* a child in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord is an exhortation of God. Those who make any honest attempt to do this will have the fellowship of God in their task. This is something in their lives with which God can find fellowship. On the other hand God would find no fellowship or satisfaction in an attempt to build a "million dollar house of God" since He has declared that "He dwells not in temples made with hands."

As a result of dealing with the personal spiritual problems of men over a twenty-five year period, I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of those who are related to God by Jesus Christ deeply desire to be spiritual, to live God-honoring daily lives, to be what God desires them to be. I have watched them follow out many formulas by which they were supposed to attain their goal. Nevertheless, I have seen so much of failure and defeat that I have carefully considered their problems in order to see if I could find what was wrong and a means of helping them. Over and over again the fault has been with the foundation. There was no foundation upon which a spiritual life could be erected. In the next issue, the Lord willing, I shall deal with this matter under title of THE FOUNDATION IS CHRIST.

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## ***TRUTH FROM THE SCRIPTURES***

**(Continued from Vol. VIII , No. 3)**

### **THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST**

Concerning the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, God has spoken. This fact makes it the duty of all who believe to discover and know accurately what He has said. But since this requires time and thought, since it demands that the reproof and correction of Scripture shall be accepted, very few indeed will undertake the task of discovering what God has revealed. The majority is well satisfied to hold the confused ideas which they have picked up from the sensational messages

proclaimed on this subject.

In newspaper publishing plants, the largest headline type is, as a rule, irreverently referred to as "the second coming type." This type is used only when a sensational news story breaks, and it is probably called "second coming type" because there never will be a more spectacular and dramatic piece of news than for a paper to be able to state that Jesus Christ has come back to the earth again.

The spectacular and dramatic nature of the second coming of Christ is such that it lends itself readily to the sensational preaching that has been prevalent for so many years - a type of preaching in which men of the flesh find such great delight. Sober thinking and preaching in relationship to this theme has been rare indeed. Men seem to go wild when they attempt to deal with this truth. All restraints such as Scripture and logic are cast aside while men indulge in flights of fanciful reasoning about this great event and its accompaniments. This positive Scriptural truth has as a rule been linked up with some fanciful current event or passing personality, so that while one end of the bridge of truth rested upon the solid rock of God's word, the other end rested upon the shifting sand of events and personalities regarded as "signs of the times." This constant linking of passing human events with divine truth has brought the doctrine of the second coming of Christ into disrepute. It is quite evident that Satan had a purpose in this. And while it is evident that his purpose has been accomplished in the lives of some, we must determine that his purpose shall fail in our lives.

The exact and accurate truth concerning the second coming of Christ is sorely needed today. And in order to reclaim this doctrine from the mess that men have made of it, all of God's people should approach it anew with the determination to do the most sober and logical thinking that is possible upon this subject.

In the Old Testament the promise of a Messiah to rule over Israel (but whose beneficent reign is to encompass the whole world) is set forth in a multitude of promises and prophecies. These could be quoted by scores, but one will suffice for an example:

**And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity. for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins.**

**The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf and *the* young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play at the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Isaiah 11:1-9.**

This passage is an outstanding example of the Old Testament prophecies that predict the coming and rule of a glorious Messiah. However, in the Old Testament no distinction is made between the first and second comings of Christ. Some prophecies, as in Isaiah 53, predicted a rejected and suffering Messiah, while others, like Isaiah 11, predicted a glorious and ruling Messiah. That there would be two comings of Christ in order to fulfill both of these contradictory prophecies is not even hinted in the Old Testament. The two lines of truth related to His coming are intermingled. When the prophets wrote of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, their testimony seemed

contradictory and beyond comprehension, even to the men who wrote it, as I Peter 1:11 abundantly testifies. This apparently contradictory testimony caused many theories to arise in Israel. Some said there would be two Messiahs, one who would suffer and one who would reign. Others said there would be two comings of one Messiah. Those who held to the idea of two Messiahs, even though wrong, seem to have been in the majority. This apparently was the question John the Baptist desired to settle when he sent messengers to Christ asking, "**Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?" Luke 7:19.**

Early in the ministry of Christ the truth of a second advent began to come forth. The earliest hint of this far-reaching truth is found in **Matthew 10:23:**

**"But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you. Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."**

I will not attempt here to interpret this admittedly obscure verse. The context of this declaration sets forth scenes that are part of the time of Jacob's trouble or the great tribulation. It sets forth a company of sorely persecuted messengers, always moving on to the next city when their witness results in persecution in one place. They are told that they will not have gone over the cities of Israel "till the Son of man be come.

Inasmuch as the Lord was with His disciples when He spoke these words, it is plain that He would need to depart from them in order to come to them again. Thus in this statement and its setting we find the complete truth in germ form - His presence, His departure and His return. There is very little revealed in this declaration, and it appears that it was made for a twofold purpose. First, to break to them the bad news that He would be away from them for a time; second, in order to create interest and invite questions regarding His purposes. However, His disciples refused to consider any idea except that He was going to be king over Israel, and that in a very short space of time. And since men seldom investigate that which they do not wish to know or desire to be true, His disciples asked no questions and sought no further information about this statement. Nevertheless from this meager statement alone, when considered in the light of its context, we get a picture of the Lord away from Israel while she passes through sore tribulation and then "suddenly coming to their rescue before they are destroyed. Beyond all argument, the first hint of the second coming in the Bible points to an actual coming that takes place at the end of the great tribulation. .

The next reference to the second advent of Christ is found in **Matthew 17:27:**

**For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; then He shall reward every man according to His works.**

This passage emphatically sets forth a personal and visible return of the Lord in glory, and it relates the distribution of rewards to His second coming. .

The next reference to the second coming is one of the most revealing and complete statements to be found concerning this truth. **Matthew 24** is of such importance that it is necessary to examine it in detail. The revelations it contains came out of His statement concerning His disappearance and return in Matthew 23:39. Concerning certain dire consequences, the Lord had said, "All these things shall come upon this generation," then declared that Israel as a whole would see Him no more till that day when they would say "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." As He departed from the temple, His disciples apparently sought to impress Him with the majestic character of the buildings of the temple. It may have been that they sensed in His words some threat of judgment against their place of worship. But our Lord was not impressed. He told them without equivocation that the temple was to be utterly destroyed. Not one stone was to be left upon another. This declaration brought forth two pertinent questions from His disciples, as follows:

1. **"When shall these things be?"** This question referred to the judgments prophesied in the previous chapter and the destruction of the temple.

2. **"What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"**

As a help in understanding this portion and in tracing out the truth it should be carefully noted that the Greek word for *coming* here is *parousia*. This word means literally "personal presence" and it is translated by the word *presence* in several occurrences. The phrase "the end of the world" should be "the conclusion of the eon." The coming (parousia) of Christ and the ending of the present evil eon are so closely related that the signs that point to His coming also point to the end of this eon. The present evil eon will end when Christ comes for the second time. No eon of righteousness will precede His coming, as those of post-millennial school of thought would like to have us believe.

In answer to their question as to signs, our Lord uttered one of the most amazing prophecies in the Word of God. Not one feature of this prophecy has yet been fulfilled. Every detail of it remains to be fulfilled, and it will be to the very letter. Only by keeping the present out of mind and a future time *ever* before us can this prophecy be understood.

All who read this prophecy carefully will realize at once that it sets forth a great drama of events to be acted out in the theatre of this world when the present evil eon comes to its close. The stage is the land of Palestine, and the actors are portrayed playing their various parts. But before this great drama of events can be acted out, the stage must be set and the actors must be in existence and in their appointed places. Prophecy is history written before the events come to pass, so nothing can be left to chance.

The chapter before us does not reveal the setting of the stage or the preparation of the actors. But when the curtain rises and certain scenes are revealed, we know that those scenes must be ready in advance.

The setting of the stage for these great events demands (1) that the salvation of God shall have left the Gentiles and returned unto His people Israel; (2) there must be in existence a great multitude of "Jews that believe"; (3) Israel must be restored to her own land, have prospered there and be able to act as a sovereign power and autonomous state; (4) the temple must be rebuilt upon its ancient site.

There is no direct prophecy in the Word of God of the salvation of God returning to Israel, of them returning to the land in unbelief, or of the temple being rebuilt. However, when prophecy left off with Israel at the close of Acts, the salvation of God was among them, there was in existence a multitude of Jews that believed, the bulk of them were in the land with the balance scattered, and the temple was standing' and in use. Prophecies of their future takes up with them just where it left off - the salvation of God is among them and they are in their land with a rebuilt temple. How this all comes about and how long they have been there before prophecy takes up with them again, we are not told. Of course it is evident that the formation of a settled government and the rebuilding of the temple will require an appreciable length of time. But God has plenty of time and no man can force Him to hurry just so his predictions of the imminent return of the Lord will come true. But it must be kept in mind that the stage must be set and that God will set it before the events of the end are acted out. With these thoughts before us we are now ready to examine the answer of our Lord when His disciples asked Him what would be the indications or signs of His coming.

**Take heed that no man deceive you.** His first words in answer were an essential warning. There has been more deception practiced in connection with the second coming of Christ than any other doctrine in the Word of God. The worst deceivers have been that never-ending string of "date setters," and following close on their heels have been those who take every sensational current event

and make them to be a sign of the imminent return of the Lord. The date that is set comes and goes but the Lord does not return. The event that was proclaimed as a most positive sign is soon forgotten and some new event is brought forth in its place. But this is the character of things in this present evil eon. Men are deceivers and are themselves deceived (2 Tim. 3:13). The man of God must ever be watchful lest he become ensnared in this web of human opinion. The only safeguard is an accurate knowledge of all that God has revealed concerning this truth. Partial truth is no better than positive error. Texts separated from contexts can only result in confusion.

**For many shall come in My name, saying, I ,am Christ; and shall deceive many.** It does not seem quite reasonable that men would come in the name of Christ and claim to be Christ. Of course, they may do this, since the more illogical a deceiver is the more likely he is to be received. The Greek word for *Christ* and the word for *anointed* are the same word. It may be that our Lord meant here that many would come in His name claiming, "I am the anointed."

**And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.** Hundreds have pointed to the many false Messiahs who have appeared and also to the constant occurrences of wars and rumors of wars, declaring that these are signs pointing to the imminent advent of Christ. How blind must all be who do this! Did not the Lord say that these things must take place but the end is not yet? These things alone, no matter how numerous, are no indication of the second coming of Christ or the conclusion of this present evil eon. Such things have been the constantly recurring experience of the human race ever since these words were spoken. It is only when they appear in relationship to certain other prophesied events that they will have any significance. More about this later.

**For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places.** Inasmuch as the things listed here have been more manifest upon the earth during the past decade than ever before, it is little wonder that men have pointed to them as signs of the return of the Lord to this earth. But, as stated before, the signs have come and gone and the Lord has not come. This is such obvious proof that recent wars, famines and earthquakes were not signs of His return that only the willfully blind can claim otherwise. How enlightening it would be if men would clearly recognize that this dispensation in which we live is an unprophesied parenthesis of time inserted into God's prophetic program. And since all parentheses get their character from the sentence into which they are inserted, we can expect that the moral conditions that prevail throughout the present dispensation to be about the same as existed when God broke off His prophetic program and will exist when He resumes it again. Therefore, we have had almost 1900 years of false Messiahs, deceptions, wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes.

Nevertheless, even though these have not been "signs," yet these things are given by the Lord as signs of His return, therefore certain questions naturally arise. If all the past wars, famines and earthquakes were not signs, just when will they become signs? When will these things no longer be the oft-recurring experience of the human race? When will these things take on that special significance which indicates that the Lord's coming is near and that this present evil eon is drawing irrevocably to its end?

I believe that the answer to these questions is found in Isaiah 18. In the first three verses of this chapter there is a divine call that demands the attention of the whole earth. It is a double call, first to the eye - a banner high and lifted up on the mountain top within sight of all; then to the ear - a loud blast from the trumpet. These are not literal, since few eyes would see a banner even if it were placed upon a high mountain, and the ear is able to catch sound only if it has traveled a short distance. This banner and trumpet refer to some great event of such deep significance that it demands the attention of everyone on earth. What is this great event?

After the salvation of God returns to Israel and the Jews are again in their land forming an autonomous state, then the world should fix its eye upon that nation. This will be the banner lifted up - an event so significant that it will speak volumes. And when that nation makes a seven-year covenant or treaty with the dominant world power of that time, that will be the trumpet blast that every ear should hear. Of course, many, ignorant of the Word of God, will see no divine message in these events. They will take them as being nothing more than ordinary happenings in the lives of nations. They will regard them in about the same manner that Balaam regarded the event when the dumb ass began to speak to him with a man's voice. It impressed him so little that he carried on a conversation with it and failed to see in it anything unusual.

Even so it will be with the multitude of men in that day when the fulfillment of prophecy begins again. They will see nothing unusual in it. It may be that many will have become so stupefied by all these claims of "prophecy being fulfilled every day," that they will see no significance in the first literal fulfillment of prophecy since the close of the Acts period. But the wise shall know and understand that the signing of that seven-year covenant will mean that the long-broken thread of prophecy has been taken up again, that the great river of prophecy which has been frozen solid ever since the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28) has begun to thaw and flow again. From that day forth men can count every day, for they are numbered in Scripture. Every war and earthquake will be a sign; every act of every nation will be subject to interpretation in the light of the Word of God. The prophetic clock will no longer be stopped. It will be measuring the numbered days that must elapse before the beginning of the Kingdom eon.

All these are the beginning of sorrows. During the first half of Daniel's seventieth Week (the seven year covenant period) the nation of Israel will be hearing of wars and reports of wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes. Kingdom will clash with kingdom, and nation will clash with nation. It appears that these clashes have been brought about by unrest and dissatisfaction in the world state over the covenant made with Israel. This covenant seemed to be most favorable to Israel when it was made. In the rebuilt temple, the morning and evening sacrifices are smoking on Israel's altars; the whole mass of returned Jews go up to worship there. The situation is exceedingly promising for it appears that all of Israel's former glory is about to be restored. The only cloud to darken their sky is the report of conflicts among the nations because of them. These things are indicative to them, for they are told that these are only the beginning of sorrows. Suddenly everything is changed. The covenant is broken at the end of three and one-half years. This will begin the greatest anti-semitic outbreak of all time. There have been many of these before, but they have either died out or been suppressed, only to recur at some later time. But when "this time of sorrows" begins, it will neither die out nor be suppressed. It will come to its full fruition - a studied and deliberate attempt to exterminate every Israelite.

**Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.**

Step by step our Lord reveals the events that will take place when this evil eon draws to its close. All these things must precede His coming. They cannot follow it.

**But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.** In that brief period of time which is characterized by false Christs and false claims, wars, famines, earthquakes and persecutions, the love of many will turn cold. Nevertheless, a promise is made that those who endure to the end shall be delivered and blessed. This is what the word *saved* indicates here.

**And this gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world for a witness; and then shall the end come.** It has been ordained by God that just before the end of this present evil eon, that

is, just before the Kingdom eon begins that the good news of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world for a witness. This will bring all who hear it under responsibility to act accordingly. No preaching at the present time has anything to do with the fulfillment of this prophecy. Some have erroneously separated this verse from its context and declared that as soon as "missionaries" have reached the last possible field, then the Lord will come.

After making this statement which reaches to the very end, our Lord goes back as it were to add instructions to those who will pass through the time of the end.

**When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand).** The disciples to whom these words were spoken were all Jews that believed" and they were well versed in the Old Testament Scriptures. They were no doubt quite familiar with Daniel's prophecy which spoke of the abomination that makes desolate who would take his stand in the holy place. This happens in the middle of the seven-year covenant period, and it will be a most positive signal to the Israel of God in that day.

**Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.** When the ruler of the coming world empire, symbolized by the legs of iron, moves to exterminate the people of Israel, they have the most explicit instructions as to what course to follow. They are to flee to the mountain wilderness southeast of Judea. There they will be miraculously preserved for three and one-half years.

The value of these explicit instructions can be better realized if we call to mind certain events that took place during the war in Europe. When the low countries fell and the German army swept over France the people of Paris became quite panicky due to real and imagined dangers. They were agitated by numerous questions. What course should they take? Should they flee the city or remain in their homes? If they departed, what direction should they take?

There were no answers to these questions, therefore, every man had to do what he considered best. Newspapers were filled with pictures of these refugees streaming forth, traveling all directions, some carrying and others hauling their possessions, using every possible form of conveyance.

But in that day when it becomes necessary for Israel to flee from Judea, no troubling questions as to what to do or which direction to go will need to trouble the Israel of God. They will have the Word of God to direct them. The mountainous wilderness may look like the worst possible refuge, but all who flee there because God told them to will have taken Him at His word and acted accordingly. This is faith in its highest character, a faith demonstrated by works. All who take God at His word and flee to the mountains will be miraculously preserved for 1260 days in about the same place where God preserved Israel for forty years when they came out of Egypt.,

**Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house. Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.** These positive instructions settle the question as to what possessions these refugees are to carry. It might be stated in this manner: the very moment that the radio announcer on the world network of that time says, "Flash, important, the President of the supreme council of the united nations of the world has just announced that the seven year covenant entered into with the nation of Israel three and one-half years ago has been declared void and inoperative" - then they are to flee without changing their clothes or seeking to assemble any of their possessions. To do so will be an act of faith. they will be acting upon the advice of God. For the same God who caused the clothing of Israel to last for forty years (Deut. 29:5) can also make whatever clothes these Israelites happen to be wearing last for forty-two months.

**And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!** Our Lord warns that the heaviest burden of those days would fall upon the expectant and the nursing mother. With this warning to direct them, those who live in that day should know enough to take the proper

steps to avoid such conditions. It was confusion in regard to this that created certain major problems in Corinth about twenty-five years later. They wrote to Paul about it, and he answered by writing the truth set forth in the seventh chapter of 1 Corinthians. In it he declares that it was good for a man not to touch a woman, advised the unmarried not to seek wives, and exhorted those with wives to be as though they had none. If such advice as this were followed there would be no expectant or nursing mothers in just a few years. When Paul gave this advice to the Corinthians the coming of Christ had not been postponed by the sending of the salvation of God to the Gentiles. Daniel's seventieth week, the final week decreed upon the people of Israel, is of such character that it is no fit time for men to marry, establish homes or to begin a family. In a day that is yet future those who are God's people will come face-to-face with this situation. But if they heed the warning of the Lord and follow the advice of Paul, their women will be prepared for this flight.

**But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day.** This exhortation gives to the Israel of God in that day a basis of prayer. Winter is a condition as well as a season. If these people will take God at His word and pray accordingly the weather will not be bitterly cold on the days when their flight takes place. Neither will it be on the sabbath day. These being Jews that believe, and exceedingly anxious to keep every item of the covenant, they would be forced to break the covenant if they were forced to flee on the sabbath day. However, if they make request to God concerning this, He will arrange it so that they will be well hidden in the mountains before the sabbath day begins.

**For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.** The word *then* refers back to the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place. This marks the beginning of the great tribulation, an unparalleled period of suffering that continues for 1260 days.

**And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.** As to number, these days cannot be decreased, but as to the length of the days, they will be shortened. How? I do not know, but God has declared they will be shortened so we must think accordingly. It may be that since the sun rules the day and the moon the night, if a third part of the sun and moon were smitten, it would shorten each twenty-four hour period by one-third. What consternation this would cause upon the earth can easily be imagined. See Revelation 8:12. The elect referred to here are the believers in Israel during the time of the end.

**Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold I have told you before.** As the Israel of God in that day begin their flight to the mountainous wilderness, every conceivable Satanic attempt will be made to dissuade them from taking God at His word and acting upon it. Some will say that Christ has appeared in one city, while others will say He has appeared in another city. Some will think that they should run from city to city making investigation to see which claim is true. But they do not need to investigate claims. All they need to do is to take God at His word and act accordingly. They are warned that many false Christs and prophets will arise. In their attempt to turn God's people from their appointed refuge, these false Christs and prophets will demonstrate great signs and perform great miracles. These will be of such nature and so numerous that if it were possible the chosen of God would be deceived.

**Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not.** These things will be said in order to lure Israel from the place of safety that God appointed to them. If men claim that Christ has returned and is in the desert, they are not to come out. If they say He is in some secret room, they are not to believe it. No investigation is necessary. It is not to be believed.

**For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall the coming (parousia) of the Son of man be.** The second coming of Christ is not a secret, invisible event. All who say that it is must be classed with those prophets who say He has come and is secreted in the desert or some other place. Mark it well, His coming will be with the greatest possible publicity, even as the flash of lightning starts in the east and streaks through to the west. No one on earth can be unaware of His presence when He comes the second time. Our Lord's illustration, wherein He likened, His coming to the coming of the thief has been used by many to make Him contradict His own words. The case of the thief is used only to illustrate the fact that the time of His coming was not known. Our Lord does not "come as a thief" except in regard to the fact that there will be no announcement of His coming. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." John 10:10. Does our Lord come for this purpose? Perish the thought. Furthermore, let all who say that He is coming secretly as a thief to steal His own out of the world, remember that Paul has declared, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." 1 Thess. 5:4. It is only to those in darkness that the coming of the Lord can be likened to the visit of a thief.

**For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.** This declaration gives a view of the character of the scene in Palestine when the Lord comes. The armed forces of the nations of the world have gathered together for the extermination of Israel. They are enraged because an apparently helpless band of people have held out against them for more than three years. They have lost face and their prestige must be regained. All possible power is amassed for the final drive upon these helpless people. But Israel will not be destroyed. What happens is revealed in our Lord's next statement. Notice carefully the order signified by the word *immediately*.

**Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven.** The reader will note seven separate events here, one following another in a divinely prophesied order culminating with the second coming of Jesus Christ in power and great glory. And none but the willfully blind will fail to see that this coming takes place after the great tribulation and before the millennial Kingdom is established. The coming set forth here is post-tribulation and pre-millennial. No matter how much men may desire it to be so, these events cannot be altered so that the second advent takes place first and all these events follow after it. It will be an act of faith if the reader will believe and think accordingly that the second coming (parousia) of *Jesus* Christ takes place only after the great tribulation has run its course to the very last of those terrible 1260 days. **If this is true, then the second coming of *Jesus* Christ cannot possibly take place at "any moment."**

Let no one think that I am unfamiliar with the ideas about "two stages of the second coming" or "a coming for His church and a later coming with His church." However, I am not dealing with these ideas just now. My task is to expound Matthew 24 and the coming that is revealed here.

**And He shall send His angels (messengers) with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.** This is the complete regathering and restoration of Israel to her land. It is a result of the coming of the Lord and not a sign of it.

**Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When its branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it (He) is near, even at the doors.** Numerous safeguards have been erected by our Lord to keep any of His people from being deceived. Note His words, "When ye shall see ALL these things, know that

He is near." Many claim to know that His coming is near even though they have seen none of these things. Who has seen the abomination that makes desolate standing in the holy place, the great tribulation, the sun darkened, the moon ceasing to give light, the stars falling, the powers of the heavens shaken, the sign of the Son of man in heaven, the tribes of the earth mourning? Who has seen these things, one following another in their divinely prophesied order? Since no one has, then how can anyone dogmatically assert that the coming of the Lord is near? Men have been asserting this for over a century, if not longer. But no matter how much we may desire His coming, it cannot be known that it is near until "all these things" are seen.

On my shelves are volumes covering the past hundred years of prophetic writings. Many of these contain articles on the signs of the times, most of them claiming that certain spectacular events that have taken place were positive signs of the Lord's return. Some of these approach the ludicrous as they point to such things as the automobile, a meteor shower, or to some strange cloud formation as being the sign of the Son of man. But apart from those that are ludicrous, even the most sober articles on the signs appear quite ridiculous when considered in the light of later history. Articles and books on the significance of Mussolini and his attempts to build an empire are now quite humorous. As this is being written the idea of Mussolini being significant has been dropped like a hot potato, but I have positive knowledge that there is a scurrying about among the "prophetic racketeers" to see who can be the first to discover some great prophetic significance in the atomic bomb. They are attempting to find some link by which they can relate this to some isolated or obscure text of Scripture, then parade this discovery as a positive sign that the Lord is coming back very soon. He who sits in the heavens must laugh at all such attempts. There are signs of the times, but this is not the time of the signs. .

In our next study we shall give further consideration to God's revelations concerning the second advent of Jesus Christ.

**(To Be Continued, Vol. VIII, No. 5)**

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***LESSONS FROM JEREMIAH***  
THE FIRST MESSAGE

**Jeremiah Sent 2:1-2**

**Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord.**

To "cry in the ears of Jerusalem" indicates that a loud proclamation in the open in the busy public places was the means Jeremiah was to use to bring his message to those for whom God intended it. It should be remembered that throughout this book all these proclamations are inspired messages, spoken to the people first and later written. See Jer. 36:1-2.

**Israel Reminded 2:2-3**

**I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown, Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the firstfruits of His increase: I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine**

**espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them saith the Lord.**

Jehovah declares that He remembers, in order that Israel may be reminded, the early history of Israel when she followed Him, even as a bride follows her husband, into a land that was barren, fully trusting- Him and devoted to Him. The early history of Israel (as told in Exodus) was well pleasing to God and it remained a happy memory to Him.

#### **Call to Hear 2:4**

**Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel.**

The nation as a whole and then each family is called to give attention to the words of Jehovah.

#### **Jehovah's Remonstrance 2:5-8**

**Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in Me, that they are gone far from Me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain? Neither said they, Where is the Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt. And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled My land, and made mine heritage an abomination. The priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handle the law knew Me not: the pastors also transgressed against Me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.**

The very fact that a nation of people had followed the leading of the Lord into a land that was wild, barren, treacherous, dry, dangerous, unexplored, untraveled and unoccupied was an act of faith and trust, which is usually overlooked by Bible students. This is what the Lord referred to when he declared that the early history of Israel remained an affecting remembrance. He had brought them through the dangers of the desert into the blessings of the land. But they defiled the land and forgot the Lord. The Lord asks if it was because of some iniquity they found in Him that they had abandoned Him and walked after vanity. The people did not ask "Where is the Lord?" The priests did not ask "Where is the Lord?" Those who professed to handle His word did not know Him, the pastors (kings) sinned against Him and they prophesied by Baal.

In these people was fulfilled the declaration, "There is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11). Priests, pastors and prophets did not inquire after Him. No one asked, "Where is the Lord?"

A similar situation exists in Christendom today. There is no conviction that God must be sought, found and laid hold of by the individual. Even though He is not far from anyone of us, yet our God has so ordered things between Himself and mankind that He must be sought and found. Acts 17:26-27. But no one is asking, "Where is the Lord?" The ignorant people believe that all they need to do is to enter a building called a church and there He will be found. The unfaithful ministers of today are guilty of creating and sustaining this delusion. They constantly refer to their buildings as "the house of God," even though it is emphatically declared in the Word that He does not dwell in temples made with hands. The superficial evangelist invites men to "come to God" and makes them feel that they have done this when they come to the front of the auditorium -- as if by moving fifty or a hundred feet they can be where God is.

From the beginning of the Christian life to its earthly end we must ever keep alive in our minds the question "Where is the Lord?" Where He is, that is where we should be. He is not to be found in this building or that building. He is not worshipped in this place or that place. . God is found and possessed only in Christ, and is worshipped only in spirit and in truth. Since God has declared it, it is an act of faith for us to believe that He does not dwell in any building made with hands, that He cannot be worshipped by any ritual, and that He cannot be seen except in His image and likeness which is Jesus Christ.

### **Jehovah Pleading 2:9**

**Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your children's children will I plead.**

The Lord had not forgotten Israel even though they had forgotten Him. Nevertheless, He pleads with them, His plea is specially emphasized to the young men in Israel and to the children. His plea will continue throughout their lives and if the judgment falls it will come upon those who have rejected .an offer of mercy that was before them for forty years.

### **Changing Gods 2:10-11**

**For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit.**

If they traversed all countries from the remote east to the remote west they would find no record of any idolatrous nation ever having changed their gods, even though these gods were only idols. There is no record even up to this date of a nation as a whole forsaking its idols. There is no record of a nation ever being turned to God. But God indicts Israel for having abandoned Him for idols.

### **Heaven Called as Witness 2:12-13**

**Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.**

A cistern holds only what it receives. Many have turned God's word into a cistern, They read their beliefs, opinions and ideas into the Bible and then draw them out again and claim they are the pure water from God's life-giving well. Texts are separated from contexts and used as pretexts in order to support their own teachings. For example: there is no such service as those commonly called "the Lord's supper" that can be found in the Word of God. No matter how much men may quote "This do in remembrance of Me" in support of what they are doing, the honest student knows that the words "This do" has a context and this context proves they were observing Israel's ancient feast, the Passover. And even though the Lord changed the significance of two elements in that feast, it still remained the Passover. Let all who claim to be holding forth the pure water of His word make sure that they have been to the fountain itself rather than to some cistern that men have filled with their creeds, dogmas and traditions.

### **Needless Bondage 2:14-17**

**Is Israel a servant? Is he a homeborn slave? why is he spoiled? The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his land waste: his cities are burned without inhabitant.**

**Also the children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the crown of thy head. Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when He led thee by the way?**

In some countries the caste system dooms some men to a lifetime of virtual slavery. In other countries men are born slaves. Just before the words quoted above were spoken, Israel was being treated as a slave by Assyria, and later by Egypt. But the helplessness of Judah against Egypt was not due to any right that Egypt had to enslave Israel. She was not born into slavery, for she had been brought forth into liberty by God. Nevertheless, the captains of Egypt had spoiled her land, the armies from Memphis (Noph), the capital, had crossed the frontier at Tahapanes and stripped the country bare as a bald, shaven head. All this came about because Judah had forsaken the Lord her God at the very time He was leading them in the true way.

### **Judah's Confusion 2:18-19**

**And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that My fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts.**

Since their troubles had arisen from forsaking the fountain of living waters, they would find no deliverance from turning first to the Nile and then to the Euphrates for water to drink. The way back to safety was to retrace the steps they had taken when they abandoned God.

### **Judah Reminded 2:20**

**For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou said I Will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot.**

He reminds them of their past deliverance from the land of Egypt, and the promise that they made to Him in Exodus 19:8: "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." But they did not keep their part of the covenant, and every green tree and, high hill witnessed to their unfaithfulness. These were the places where the Asherah was worshipped.

### **The Parable of the Vine 2:21**

**Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into a degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me?**

The choice or precious vine that the Lord had planted had degenerated. This planting refers to Israel being placed in the land of Palestine. The original seed and plant was good, but the development showed degeneration.

### **Jehovah to Judah 2:22**

**For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before Me, saith the Lord God.**

The Lord God would impress upon them that their iniquity is no small thing. They regarded it lightly, but He declares that it is a deep stain that no human method of cleansing can remove.

### **Judah's Denial of Sin 2:23**

**How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim?**

The conscience of Judah was so seared that she was blind to evident facts. She tried to convince herself that her acts had not brought pollution, that they were not equivalent to going after Baalim. She judged herself favorably and declared there was nothing wrong. The Lord reverses this judgment.

### **Judah's Sin Manifested 2:23-25**

**See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done: thou art a swift dromedary traversing her ways; a wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her. pleasure; in her occasion who can turn her away? all they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her mouth they shall find her. Withhold thy foot from being unshod and thy throat from thirst.**

The Lord points to the abominations, committed by Israel in the valley of Gehenna (Tophet), and insists that she recognize her sin. Her path has been that of a swift young camel, running in all directions, entangled in her own ways. She is likened to the wild ass of the wilderness, uncontrollable in her desire. Those who sought these animals did not weary themselves. They waited for a proper time when they were easily found and captured. God would not weary Himself in seeking for Israel. In the time of trouble she would come to Him. He pleads with them not to run the shoes off their feet or continue in their ways till their throats were parched with thirst. He well knew how diligently and intensely men follow the paths of sin.

### **Judah's Reply 2:25**

**But thou saidst, There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.**

Judah's wanderings away from God had continued over such a long period that a pattern of life had been established. Godlessness had become the established order, and this was difficult to change. This caused them to determine to maintain the established order.

A like situation exists today in the world. None but the blindest of fools would deny that Christendom has become increasingly corrupt. To correct as many as a hundred major faults would not make any change as thousands more would remain. Men desire a revival when nothing will help but a total revolution. However, since a pattern of life is established and change is so difficult, men refuse to consider and they resist all changes. "What's the use?" is their laconic reply corresponding to Judah's "There is no hope." The social, economic and religious associations of men are such that any change will upset these. Therefore in sheer desperation men go along with the crowd, hopelessly looking for a little peace in conformity, asking only that they be not required to engage in the never ending war that must characterize the lives of all who determine to live for God. Rare indeed is the individual who has answered the call of God to refuse to be conformed to this world. Like Judah

they say, "This is what we are doing and we intend to continue."

### **Jehovah to the House of Israel 2:26**

**As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets.**

Jeremiah's message, being the Word of Jehovah, was a ministry of exposure. It brought to light the hidden things of darkness and made manifest the thoughts of the heart. Just as the embezzler is ashamed when he is discovered, so was the house of Israel ashamed. Their unfaithfulness was not limited to anyone class. It was characteristic of the king on the throne and extended to the peasant in his humble cottage.

### **Jehovah States Israel's Sin 2:27**

**Saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned their back unto me and not their face.**

It is seldom that those who are unfaithful to God will put their sin into words, that is, actually portray it. Here God called Israel's practices by their right names. The imposing, impressive and mysterious ritual used in the worship of idols had blinded them to the nature of their sin. God declares that they were saying to a block of wood, "Thou art my father" and to a stone, "Thou hast brought me forth." They had forgotten their Creator.

### **Jehovah Anticipates Judah's Appeal 2:27**

**But in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us.**

The conception commonly held that God is to be called upon only in the hour of trouble is abhorrent to God. Those who do not seek Him when skies are fair have no guarantee that they will find him when the storms of life begin to break. God declares that He will be a helper in the time of trouble, but if this is all that men desire Him to be, they want little of Him.

### **Jehovah Replies 2:31**

**But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, 0 Judah. Wherefore will ye plead with Me? ye all have transgressed against Me, saith the Lord. In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion. 0 generation, see ye the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?**

Jehovah declares that in the day when they call upon Him to save them, He will reply by asking where the gods are that they made for themselves; let these gods arise and save them, if they can, in their hour of trouble. Every city had manufactured its own God. Therefore, why should they find fault with Him when He fails to hear their cry, since all had transgressed against Him. They have been smitten, but the correction was ignored. He sent them prophets, but they killed them, acting toward them as wild insensate beasts. They did not reverence, neither did they listen to the word of

the Lord. They forgot that it was the Lord that led them through the wilderness by the pillar and cloud of fire.

### **Judah's Actions Delineated 2:31**

**Wherefore, say My people, We are lords; we will come no more unto Thee? .**

Once again Jehovah takes Judah's attitude and practice and puts them into words. They say "We are our own masters, we will do as we please, never again will we come to the Lord." They may not have uttered these words, but God read their acts.

### **Jehovah Replies 2:32-34**

**Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet My people have forgotten Me days without number. Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways. Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these.**

A normal girl would not be careless about her jewels, neither would a bride be careless about her dress. Nevertheless, Judah had forgotten Jehovah's days without number. The nation had carefully cut her path so as to gain the favor of other nations. In Judah's hands was found the blood of innocent people - - not people who had been found breaking into houses, but those who opposed all such things. Men had paid with their lives for opposing the apostasy of Israel.

### **Judah Professes Innocence 2:35**

**Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely His anger will turn from me.**

That the storm of God's wrath was approaching Judah was evident to all. But in spite of all the open wickedness of Judah, she hoped to escape the wrath of God by a plea of innocence.

### **Jehovah Condemns Judah 2:35-37**

**Behold I will plead with thee, because thou say est, I have not sinned. Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shall be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria. Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hand upon thy head: for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.**

"I will plead with thee" means literally, "I will condemn you." God must always condemn a hypocritical lie. He asks why they change their course with so light a heart, turning first to Assyria and then to Egypt. He declares that they will be put to shame through Egypt as they were through Assyria, and that they shall go forth with their hands upon their heads (the oriental symbol of grief), because the Lord has rejected the nations in whom Judah trusts, and they will find no profit in their alliances with them.

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***DO NOT MEDDLE***

An important divine principle is revealed in the second chapter of Deuteronomy - a principle, which will guide us in handling the Word of God. The children of Israel were to pass through Seir where their relatives, the descendants of Esau, lived. The Lord told them that the children of Esau would be afraid of them. It would therefore be an easy matter for Israel to conquer and spoil them, but they were explicitly warned by God to be careful not to meddle with them. God declared that He was not going to give to Israel a foot of their land for He had already given mount Seir to Esau for a possession. See Deuteronomy 2:4-5. The same principle is repeated in verses 9 and 19.

From these instructions we learn that no matter how valuable, desirable or attractive a thing may be, God never gives to others that which has been already promised to someone else. The gifts and the callings of God are without repentance. Since that which God gave to the descendants of Esau and Lot could not be laid hold of by Israel, then just as certainly that which God gave to Israel can never become the possession of others.

In Romans 9:4-5 we read of eight things that belong to Israel. As a nation they possessed the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the legislation, the divine service, the promises, the fathers; and Christ in the days of His flesh. These eight things belong exclusively to Israel and no other nation or people can lay claim to them.

Sonship as a nation was true and will again be true of only the nation of Israel. God has never spoken of any other nation as He did of Israel when they were in bondage in Egypt, "Let my son go that he may serve Me."

No other nation but Israel ever possessed the shekinah glory. This was a cloud by day and a fire by night. It told Israel when to move and when to rest. Such leadership has never been given to any other people.

The covenants in the Word of God belong to Israel. This was made plain when they were given and it is confirmed throughout the Word of God. Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made to the fathers. Romans 15:8.

If the law was given to all people as so many affirm, then a statement such as found in Deuteronomy 4:8 does not make sense. "And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" There can be only one answer to this question. No other nation had the law. The legislation belonged to Israel.

Thousands of rituals have been devised by men, but only Israel had a divine service. This is seen in their tabernacle, priesthood and offerings.

That "the promises" belong to Israel is a bitter pill for the majority. Nevertheless, it is the truth and it is an act of faith to think in harmony with this declaration. How many times I have wished that I had a promise from God that no weapon that is formed against me would prosper and that every tongue that spoke against me in judgment, I could condemn. There is such a promise in the Word of God, but the promises of God belong to Israel. Knowing this as I do, it would be an act of unbelief for me to try to claim this promise as my own.

Only Israel could claim to have standing before God because of their ancestors. Only Israel had "the fathers." Nevertheless, the professing Christian church has not hesitated to set forth a band of

men commonly referred to as "the church fathers." To these they appeal when they want support for some tradition or error. When they cannot find support for some error in the Word they bring forth some or all of the "church fathers." Of these so-called "church fathers" Sir Robert Anderson has well said:

"The most honored of the Fathers were men whose minds were impregnated by the superstitions of Pagan religion, or the subtleties of Pagan philosophy are we to assume that nineteen centuries of Christian religion have so enfeebled or depraved the intellect of Christendom that we are less capable of understanding the Scripture than they were? They were near the fountain of Christianity, forsooth; yes, but they were nearer still to the cesspool of Paganism. And inquiry will show that -it is to the cesspool that we should attribute every perversion of truth which today defaces what is called the Christian religion."

The ministry of Christ in the days of His flesh, that is His sojourn upon this earth, belongs exclusively to Israel. His own declaration settles this. To the Syrophenician woman He said "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

As stated before, these eight things are the exclusive property of the nation of Israel and no other nation or people can rightfully lay claim to a one of them. To attempt to do so is to violate the divine principle set forth in Deuteronomy 2. All who do so brand themselves as "meddlers." Nevertheless, most theological systems seem to be little more than methods by which Israel can be robbed of the blessings that are exclusively hers. Stated realistically, the method is simply one of taking all blessings for "the church" and leaving all curses for Israel. .

All who have the Word of God must renounce the hidden things of dishonesty and refuse to handle the Word deceitfully. When an honest man comes into possession of a check that is not made out to him, he seeks by every means to restore it to its rightful owner. When a dishonest man comes into possession of a check made out to another, he begins to devise ways and means by which he can cash the check. As a rule he cashes it by representing himself to be the person to whom the check was made.

Probably the most flagrant attempt ever made to steal the blessings that belong to Israel is the varied claims of those who say that the British people are Israel, or that the Anglo-Saxons are "the ten lost tribes," or the ridiculous assertion that the United States is "the thirteenth tribe" of Israel. Running a close second are those who claim that Israel means the "the church," then clinch their claim by declaring that they are the church. Coming in last are those who claim that the blessings we enjoy today come to us because of "the new covenant." All such are meddlers. They seek in vain to get hold of the good things God promised to Israel. From all such meddling may the Lord deliver us.

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## ***THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS***

\*\*\*\*\* After forty-four months of frightful conflict, the greatest war in all history has come to an end. It has ended in victory for the Allied Nations for which we must all be thankful. It did not end in Armageddon as some ignorantly claimed and believed, neither did it end in the second coming of Christ as others asserted it would. Throughout the entire war period, the ministry of teaching the Word of God has been carried on with great difficulty. No student can learn when he is

distracted. The distractions related to the war have been so numerous and of such nature that advance in knowledge has been almost impossible. Minds have been occupied with such matters as rationing, shortages, news of the conflict, loved ones in the service. Ears have been fixed upon the radio, eyes upon the newspaper, and hearts upon those engaged in the conflict.

During the past four years an astonishingly great number have shown a genuine interest in the Word of God, but too often it has been an interest accompanied by distractions. Often when they discovered that the Word could be possessed only by patient meditation, consideration and study, their interest soon faded.

Among the promises God made to Israel is one wherein He says He will restore to them the years that the locust have eaten. This is no promise to us, but it does reveal the methods by which He deals with His people. The past four years have brought a frightful spiritual loss in the lives of many. Some have experienced no progress: Others have gone backward. This places the duty upon everyone of God's saints to seek from His hand restoration of that which the war has eaten.

\*\*\*\*\* Pearl Brookman and Mary Morgan continue their difficult ministry of the Word of God in Arkansas, accepting both the encouragements and discouragements as being the Lord's will for them. It is a pleasure to be able to help these faithful workers. At the present time they are in need of extra help in order to replenish their wardrobes. I extend an invitation to all the friends of this ministry to have a share in filling their needs. Send your gifts to me and I will see, that they are forwarded to them. You will receive a receipt from the treasurer of their funds, Mr. Joe Vanden Berg.

\*\*\*\*\* Numerous misunderstandings have occurred due to my inability to find time to correspond with friends of the ministry concerning doctrinal matters. The preparation of the magazine is just about all the writing I can do. This has been explained many times, but some do not seem to understand and appreciate the situation under which I labor. Every month I receive numerous manuscripts, books, pamphlets and articles. Some of these are extremely helpful, but others are not worth reading. Those who send these desire me to read them and then write my reactions to them. I am always glad to get anything that any reader believes will be a help to me. As I find opportunity I will read these and profit by them if there is profit in them. However, to enter into correspondence about them is utterly impossible. When I write, it must be articles for the magazine or pamphlets for publication.

**End, Vol. VIII, No. 4**