

The Word of Truth Ministry Presents
Special Full Length Studies
#SS28

THE THOUSAND YEAR REIGN OF
CHRIST

Otis Q. Sellers, Bible Teacher

"They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." This is the inspired statement found in the final book of the New Testament. Therefore, Christ will be reigning. It will be His reign even though others are granted the happy and holy privilege of: reigning with Him. The government shall be upon His shoulder (Isa. 9:6), and all responsibility for it will be entirely His. His judgments will be in the earth, and we can know for certain that when His judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness - Isa. 26:9. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. Jeremiah 3:17.

To *reign* is to govern, to rule, to exercise sovereign power or authority. This is clearly seen in Luke 1: 33 where in reference to Christ it is said, **"And He shall reign (*basileuo*) over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom (*basileia*) there shall be no end."** It is seen in Luke 19:14 where men said, **"We will not have this man to reign over us."**

In this thousand year period, Christ is the supreme governor. He governs the earth and all who are upon it. However, it must be carefully noted that this does not begin His reign, and that His reign is not over when this specific period comes to an end. This is only a portion of His reign. During this reign all enemies are under His feet. His foes have become His footstool. Even death is subject to Him and to Him alone. None will die unless He decrees it. But He must reign in order for this to become true. I Cor. 15:25. He will remain at the right hand of God until His enemies are made His footstool. Heb. 1: 13. **"He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth."** Isa. 42:4. He shall rise to reign over the Gentiles (nations) and in Him shall the Gentiles (nations) trust. Rom. 15: 12. His reign begins long before this specific thousand year period, and will continue without end even after it has closed.

The Millennium

Due to the fact that the Latin word *milla* means thousand, and *annus* means a year, this period is usually spoken of as the millennium. This term is quite expressive, and its meaning is well understood by Bible students. There is nothing wrong or misleading about this term and any who object to it are making much ado about nothing.

Of course, any period of a thousand years is a millennium. We can look back to the year 957 A.D. and speak of the millennium that has passed since then. There have been several millenniums since the dawn of human history, and as long as man reckons time there will be additional millenniums. The word means nothing more than a thousand years. Nevertheless, one specific thousand year period above all others is called by men "the millennium," and it is right and proper that this should be. We call one book above all others "the Book," and we call one day of Pentecost "the day of Pentecost." In view of such usages it is fitting and proper that we call the only thousand year period that is marked out by the Bible, the millennium.

It is quite true that many have been bewitched by the word *millennium*, allowing this word to represent all that is perfect, all that is good, and all that is pure. However, there is some justification for this, even though there is none for the little old lady who drew such comfort from "that blessed word Mesopotamia." In its figurative use the word *millennium* has come to mean a time of great happiness, good government, freedom from wickedness and the like.

The abuse and wrong use of the word *millennium* grows out of the fact that most people think they fully understand a thing if they know its name. This is to be expected in view of the superficial knowledge of Sacred Scripture that exists throughout Christendom today. But, in spite of all this, we do not need to abandon the word *millennium*. It is a useful word that will perform true service. What we need to do is go to the Word of God and discover every fact revealed in it concerning the thousand year reign of Christ.

It is readily admitted that any real investigation of this great subject of prophecy should begin with the key passage Revelation 20:1-10. However, we must do more than just quote this portion, then read into it ideas and opinions that are not really there. We must make a careful analysis of all that it says, and compare its statements with similar statements from other parts of the Bible. This passage being of major importance, it will be quoted in full.

Revelation 20:1-10

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, til the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. V / 1-3.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. V/ 4-6.

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. V/ 7-10.

It is a well known fact that this is the **only** place in Scripture where we can learn anything about the character of this period of time. If it is true that what takes place in 1958 is intimately connected with what was done and thought in 1957, then the things that happen immediately before the thousand year reign of Christ are intimately connected with it and have a bearing upon it. We must not shut ourselves up to these ten verses, but must carefully consider the things that usher in and introduce the thousand year reign. If we ignore these things, then our eyes are closed to facts of the utmost importance. We will consider these things later after we have examined the portion of Scripture which is before us.

The Binding of Satan

It is evident even to the casual reader that this period begins with the arrest and imprisonment of Satan, thus bringing to an end all his activities. It has always been Satan's business to deceive, to lead astray, and to create confusion of thought. When he is bound and can deceive the nations no longer, then the greatest hindrance *to the* true knowledge of God and His truth will be removed. The awful confusion of conflicting claims and beliefs will no longer erect a barrier between mankind and God.

False teachers and false teaching will both be absent. Truth will be apparent. There is no doubt but that a part of *the* character of this thousand year period will be brought about by the complete removal of Satan from *the* scene.

The Reign of Christ

The next great feature we see in *the* portion of Scripture we are considering is *the* reign of Christ. This feature needs *to* be carefully noted. We must not allow any preconception *to* lead us *to* belittle this description and make this *to* be "the reign of *the* overcomers" or "the reign of *the* saints." This is *not* the reign of *the* overcomers. This is *not the* reign of the saints. This is *the* reign of God in Christ, and certain faithful saints are permitted *the* honor of: reigning with Him. They suffered death for their loyalty *to* God during *the* revolt against His government which is described in Matthew 24 and II Thessalonians 2. Now they have *the* honor of reigning with Him as kings and priests. They will be blessed and holy indeed.

The Satanically Inspired Uprising

The third great feature we see in this portion is the uprising caused by Satanic deception which takes place at *the* close of the thousand years. We are told that Satan *must* be loosed for a little season and that he *shall* be loosed out of his prison. Once he is loosed he goes forth *to* deceive the nations which are in *the* four corners of *the* earth, Gog and Magog, *to* gather them together *to* battle: *the* number of whom is as *the* sand of the sea.

Of course, it pains us *to* read this. It seems so utterly impossible, and we do not see how it can be. Nevertheless, we accept *the* divine record without question. However, there are some major problems of interpretation here which cannot be settled by a mere wave of the hand.

It is quite easy *to* brand *those* who are deceived as "rebels," *to* speak of *them* as "an invading army," and *to* say that they go up "with anti-christian intent." But there is nothing in the *text* that suggests that *these* terms are true characterizations of these people and of their actions. In fact *the* very use of the word *deceived* here suggests something quite different as we shall see.

To safeguard our thinking it may be well to define the word *deceive*, lest we read into it ideas that are not there. To deceive is to lead astray; to lead into error; to cause to believe what is false or to disbelieve what is true; to mislead. The Greek word used in Revelation 20:8 is *planao*. It is used of sheep that have "gone astray" in Matthew 18:12. It occurs 39 times in the New Testament and is translated *deceive* 24 times; *err* 6; *go astray* 5; *seducer* 2; *wander* 1; *out of the way* 1.

The great fact that must be noted is that those who march up to Jerusalem at the close of the thousand year reign of Christ are men who have been deceived by Satan; they have been led astray. They are not rebels, they are not an invading army, they are not wicked men giving vent to the wickedness in them. They are good men who have been led astray. They are sheep who have followed a false shepherd. They have been deceived by Satan.

Even so, it is hard for us to comprehend their actions, so interpreters as a rule have tried hard to explain them by looking for some deeper motive. It is claimed that "rebellion was incipient" during the thousand years, that they were living lives of deceit during this entire time, that they yielded only "feigned obedience" to the rule of Christ.

All such ideas are false. Eve did not need to be bad, wicked, or in a state of incipient rebellion in order to be deceived and led astray by Satan. We do not need to look within her to find some inbred cause for her sin. It is enough to say that she was deceived by Satan, and that is sufficient to say concerning those who are led astray by him at the end of the thousand years.

The Sand of the Sea

A major problem of interpretation is found in verse eight in regard to the statement "**the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.**" What does this statement have reference to? Does it refer to the number of the nations? Does it refer to the population of the nations? Does it refer to the number out of the nations that Satan is able to deceive? These are three possible interpretations, all of which need to be carefully considered.

1. There are definite indications in the Bible that under God's benevolent and beneficent government, mankind will become a multitude of nations, instead of a few great and small powers as we see today. If we consider the reasons why nations are big today and the conditions that demand that they be big, all these things will disappear when God governs the earth. Therefore, it may be that by the end of the thousand year reign of Christ the nations will have so multiplied in number that they can be correctly described as "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." I do not say that this is the correct interpretation. It is set forth only as a possible meaning of this passage, and as an interpretation that is worthy of careful consideration.

2. Since the words "to gather them together to battle" are in the nature of an explanatory parenthesis, the description "the number of whom is as the sand of: the sea" may refer to the population of the earth at that time. This will most certainly reach its highest peak in human history at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ.

3. Again, this descriptive phrase may refer to the individuals out of the nations who are led astray by Satan. This is the popular interpretation, generally received without question. However, there is nothing in the Greek or the English that makes "the ones deceived" to be the antecedent of the statement "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." If any take this position as being the correct one, it will have to be based solely upon their own decision or upon the say-so of others. In view of this, they should not become disturbed if others do not agree with them.

However, solely for the sake of the argument, let us assume that this position is the correct one - that the words "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" do refer to those who are deceived by Satan. How many would there need be in order for this description to be consistent with other usages in Scripture?

Without hesitation the answer is given - no more than the number of camels assembled by the Midianites and the Amalekites in their battle against Gideon's brave band of three hundred men.

And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. Judges 7:12.

One would hardly dare to say how many camels the enemies of Israel assembled since there is nothing in the record to indicate the size of the army. Nevertheless, a study of ancient wars and battles would indicate that a quarter million camels would have been an unbelievable number. The problem of grazing and watering this number would have been enough to defeat the Midianites if Gideon had chosen to wait it out. From this we can see that even if a quarter million is the number that will be led astray by Satan, they could be truly described as "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." A quarter million people is about the same as the population of a city like Fort Worth, Texas. If we compare this one city with the inhabitants of the earth now, it would make a very small percentage of the total.

However, there is yet another idea that demands consideration. A study of Judges 7: 12 along with other related passages will reveal that this phrase is used where the number of anything is indefinite or unknown. The camels of the Midianites and the Amalekites could have been counted. They were encamped in one long valley. However, the problem of counting animals such as these is so great that they were described by a hyperbolic statement as being "**without number, as the sand of the sea for multitude.**" If it were not for the census, then all great cities would have to be described as being without number, like the sand of the sea.

In the Bible we read of some companies that will play their part in the future, and their number has been made known in advance by God. The one hundred and forty-four thousand that will be sealed out of the twelve tribes of Israel is such a company. Their number is known. It is not like the sand of the sea, the number of which is unknown. The number who will be deceived by Satan is also an unknown number, therefore, it is like the sand of the sea. God has not declared in advance just how many will be led astray. The world will have to wait until that day to know whether the number is great or small. The facts seem to indicate that it will be small when compared to the population of the earth at that time. If any deem it to be otherwise, if any hold it to be "the overwhelming mass of mankind," they will need to furnish much stronger proof than the fact that this number is likened to the sand of the sea. If any care to pursue this matter further, let them consider I Sam. 13:5, I Kings 4:29, Psalm 78:27 and Jeremiah 15:8.

Gog and Magog

In this passage the nations in the four corners of the earth are called "Gog and Magog." These two words, along with the words "Armageddon," "mark of the beast," and "six-sixty-six" have long been standard equipment for those prophets of doom who believe their divine mission is to keep their hearers in a constant state of fear and trembling. These two words are supposed to indicate something quite terrible, but we are never told just how or why they mean this. It does not help here to refer us back to Ezekiel 38 where the same *terms* are found, as these *terms* are used there in connection with nations before the thousand year reign of Christ, and here they are in connection with nations at the close of that time.

Having read about everything available in written *form* as to the significance of the words "Gog and Magog" and having done quite a bit of personal research concerning them, the reader will understand that any ignorance I confess as to their meaning is an intelligent ignorance. However, I do know that there is nothing in these words that indicates "the antichristian character" of the nations at the end of the thousand years. These words here seem to be nothing *more* than a proverbial Hebrew expression which probably means either "high and low" or "near and far." Dr. Robert Young, in his Analytical Concordance, declares that the Hebrew word *gog* does mean "high." Other scholars see in the word *magog* an idiom that means "far." The Greek reads "the Gog and Magog" and stands in explanatory apposition to "the nations." My own judgment is that these words mean "near and far."

The true, conservative picture set forth in Revelation 20: 7-9, is one in which we see Satan, one of the cherubim, the greatest deceiver of all times, probably posing as an angel of light, going forth to the nations that are in the four corners of the earth to practice again his wiles upon men who have had no recent experience, if any at all,

with such a master of deception. If his dealings were with bad men who are waiting on a leader, then there is no deception and none are deceived. However, he is dealing with good men who are led astray because they fail to "try the spirits whether they are of God." There is no doubt that he does have success, but it must not be forgotten that those who act upon his advice are deceived by him. We do not know what devices he will use, what lies he will tell, what representations he will make, or what rewards he will offer. But we can rest assured that those who succumb to his wiles will think they are following God's messenger, and that when they march toward Jerusalem they will think they are performing God a service.

Their great mistake will be that they fail to put this professed "messenger of light" to the tests that were readily available to them, and this leads to their deception. The outcome of this deception is that they travel toward Jerusalem. They are not an army in any meaning of this word. They go toward Jerusalem unhindered and unopposed by God or man and circle this "beloved city." Up to this point they have harmed no one and they have not been harmed. But the moment they circle the camp of the saints, fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them. One flash, and nothing remains but a handful of ashes where each man stood.

This does not mark their end. All of these men will in time be raised from the dead to have their lives and acts adjudicated at the great white throne. Their punishment and final destiny rests with God, and it cannot be determined in advance. Their one great sin will be the thing they did when led astray by Satan. Their failure reveals nothing more about their nature or character than Eve's failure did about hers. However, much is revealed about the character of that great deceiver and liar called Satan.

This, I believe, is the true and undistorted picture presented in Revelation 20:7-9. However, there are some men who claim they are able to put their eye to the keyhole of this passage and see much more. Starting at this point and looking back through the thousand year reign of Christ, they see it as a time when the nations are "seething in rebellion," when "rebellion is incipient," that the peace of that time is "mainly superficial and unreal," and that in the end Christ's kingdom is "rent with sedition, shattered with rebellion, flooded with streams of fiery wrath." This is the picture of the course and end of the thousand year reign of Christ as some see it, and if we examine their teaching we can discover why they see it that way.

After the Thousand Years

Around about the year 1890, Mr. George F. Trench, a British writer (not to be confused with Archbishop Richard C. Trench), set forth a theory that there would be "a second millennium of perfection, after the first of imperfection." His ideas were published in a book titled *After the Thousand Years*. (Morgan and Scott, London,

1896.) Having read this book three times, I can claim some degree of familiarity with its teaching. In it Trench declares that the thousand year reign of Christ could not be "the kingdom described in the Epistles of Paul to the Ephesians, the Philippians, and the Colossians, in the epistle to the Hebrews and in many other passages." A careful examination of his teaching will reveal it to be in complete harmony with the *Darby-Scofield* system of prophetic interpretation with the exception of this additional period of time which he believed would follow the millennium. In order to build up his idea for a second millennium of perfection he labored overtime to paint a sad and dreary picture of the first millennium. He pushed this to such lengths that I for one will say that I would much prefer living upon the earth now under present conditions than to live upon the earth under those conditions which Trench says will prevail during the thousand year reign of Christ. Inasmuch as this book has long been out of print, liberal quotations will be made from it. He declares in the introduction: Prophetic study is saddening. Coming judgment is its burden to a large extent. *Page VI, Intro.*

There are two principal revelations upon which hang the greater part of the following conclusions. The first was given to John, and is found in the 20th of Revelation, and perhaps only there, where the closing period of the Millennium is foretold as one of general insurrection against Christ as King, thus revealing the true condition of the population of the world, taken as a whole, throughout the thousand years, as in sad correspondence with that of all ages preceding it viz., entire heart-subjection to Satanic rule, and entire, incorrigible hostility to God. *Page VII, Intro.*

In the first statement quoted above we see that Trench takes the customary gloomy view that when God intervenes it will mean little but sorrow and woe for the people of earth. In the second statement we see a clear example of the inverted pyramid type of reasoning. He admits that Revelation 20 is probably his only support for his proposition that the Millennium is an evil time, but from this point he builds up and out as the *next* quotation will show.

It will last a thousand years; and terminate, melancholy to discern, not in a glorious expansion to infinite and universal prosperity and blessing, but in a great and general revolt - a tremendous and worldwide upheaval in rebellion against the King, His chosen people, and His seat of government. *Page 12.* The moral character of the Millennium is given in several passages (Dan. 9:24, RV., *margin*, "to restrain transgression and seal up sins;" Zech. 14:18, 19), as one of sin and idolatry suppressed and life prolonged, while Satan remains imprisoned; and of sin revived in the most open and undisguised rebellion upon his release at the close of the thousand years, and of the most frightful destruction of human life ever recorded since the days of Noah. The end is a scene of war. Jerusalem, besieged already seventeener or eighteen

times is besieged again, this time by an innumerable host of all nations; who throughout that period of enforced truce have never forgotten their ancient hostility to the Jews and their Messiah. And, but for the divine interposition, the scenes of carnage so often enacted in the streets of the beloved city might be, and probably would be, repeated in a form many times more aggravated than ever before. *Page 14.*

(back to Sellers) Thus the pyramid grows, each layer of stones getting farther away from the point of truth where the construction started. The reader can easily see from the words and phrases used how far removed this is from the truth of Revelation 20 - "general insurrection," "great and general revolt," "a tremendous and worldwide upheaval," "most open and undisguised rebellion," "most frightful destruction of human life ever recorded," "a scene of war." These are the terms used, and no justification for them can be found in the sacred record. I do not hesitate to say that the end of the thousand year reign is not a scene of war. It takes two opponents to make a war, and these deceived ones meet no opposition until divine fire devours them. Jerusalem is not besieged. It takes weapons to make a siege, and no weapons will be available in that day.

In order to build up his theory, Trench even goes so far as to make "the little season" a long period of time, as the next quotation will show.

It should also be remembered that the great revolt, of which this siege is the terminus, will necessarily, from the account given, occupy a considerable time. To deceive the nations in the four quarters of the earth; to gather them together to battle in numbers "as the sand of the sea;" to mobilize such vast armies; to conduct them across "the breadth of the earth;" and finally to lay siege to Jerusalem, for what length of time we know not - all this proves that the "little season" of Rev. 20:3 must be understood in the light of other similar scriptural language. *Pages 14, 15.*

As he writes on, Trench adds word upon word as he seeks to blacken the whole millennial reign of Christ, and to impeach the moral character of all who are ruled in it.

We have already noticed the very remarkable indications given in Scripture as to the mixed character of the Millennium, in which Satan will be imprisoned, but not finally rendered powerless; in which rebellion will be driven beneath the surface, only to break out at the first opportunity with accumulated force; and in which multitudes will yield nothing more than a "feigned obedience" to the all-powerful Ruler, who, with His associates, the restored people of Israel,

will rule the nations with a rod of iron from His throne of power on God's holy hill of Zion (Psa. 2). *Page 25.*

In the words "feigned obedience", Trench, in order to build up his theory, makes use of a disputed and obscure marginal reading. found in the King James Version. This will be seen more clearly in the next quotation.

We are not, however, limited to Revelation 20 for our knowledge of the moral character of the Millennium. It is set forth fully in Old Testament prophecies, notably in the Psalms. That there will be then an atmosphere of tranquility, wholly foreign to our present experience, is undoubted. But what is taught us is, that peace will be mainly superficial and unreal.

Three times in the Psalms we find the submissiveness of the nations of the world to Christ's rule described as "feigned obedience."

Psa. 18 :44 - "Strangers shall submit (*margin*, lie, or yield feigned obedience) unto Me."

Psa. 66:3. - "Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit (*margin*, yield feigned obedience) unto Thee."

Psa. 81 :15. - "The haters of Jehovah should have submitted themselves (*margin*, lied, or yielded feigned obedience) unto Him."

This, then, is the condition of the world's masses morally. They are strangers to God, enemies to Christ, haters of Jehovah; and that external calm which has so captivated the imagination of Christians is the product of power, not of grace; is the result of fear, not love; and is maintained, as we shall see, by ever-repeated execution of judgment on offenders. *Pages 35, 36.*

It is evident from this that if Trench's theory as to the moral character of "the world's masses" during the thousand year reign of Christ is true - that they are strangers to God, enemies to Christ, and haters of Jehovah - then **the millennium is simply a thousand year demonstration of the greatest hypocrisy that the world has ever known.** Further quotations from this book are unnecessary. Every page in it gives evidence that Trench must make the moral character of the millennium as black as possible in order to build up his theory of a perfect kingdom that follows it, a time in which he says the principle of "rule by delegated authority will be abolished." He calls this perfect kingdom "the eighth day," making it plain that he holds the "seven day-seven millennium view" of earth's history - that is, that the thousand year reign of Christ will be the seventh millennium of earth's history and that the time to follow will be an eighth day or an eighth millennium.

A careful study of Trench's theories will show that he pressed to undue lengths certain facts, while at the same time he ignored other facts that would have balanced his

conclusions. He set forth as absolute truth some things that were matters of dispute, failing to establish the correctness of his declarations. This can be seen in his use of "feigned obedience" as a translation in the three passages from the Psalms, already mentioned. Thus, his massive inverted pyramid topples before the eyes of all who know there is much more truth in the Word of God about the character of the millennium than can be found in Revelation 20.

Trench, and those who follow him, readily admit, yet they stubbornly ignore, the fact that this thousand year reign of Christ begins with His second coming and is characterized by His personal presence throughout the entire period. This makes his theories about the millennium to be distorted and erroneous and a sorry caricature of the Biblical revelation concerning it. If Christ is personally present as King of all the earth, no such condition as Trench has set forth can possibly prevail.

By this time my readers may be wondering why I am devoting so much time and space to the theories of Trench. This is because similar ideas are now being presented as the answer to my teaching that there will be a premillennial period of divine government before the thousand year millennial reign of Christ.

It is my teaching that the day is surely coming when God will take the reigns of government into His hands and the kingdom of God will come upon the earth. There are millions who will agree to this, but almost to a man they will insist that this is to be achieved by the personal and visible return of Christ to the earth. I insist that this will be accomplished by divine intervention, wholly apart from, and long before the second coming of Christ, and that this period of divine government will prepare the world and prepare mankind for the thousand year personal presence of Christ.

As said before, theories similar to those of Trench concerning the moral character of the millennium are now being set forth as the answer to my teaching concerning the premillennial kingdom. The idea seems to be to lead people to think that if the millennial reign of Christ is characterized by so much sin, deceit, and hypocrisy, how then can there have been a long preparatory period of divine government before it.

From "The Berean Expositor"

In the September, 1956 issue (Vol. 38 - No. 11) of *The Berean Expositor*, Mr. Charles H. Welch devotes the entire issue to what he declares to be an answer to my teaching concerning the premillennial kingdom. His article is titled, "Zion, the Overcomer, and the Millennium." In it he brings in so many different matters that no attempt will be made to follow him into all the subjects he injects into his study.

He takes in the opening paragraphs the position that his understanding and interpretation of Daniel 2: 36-45 is the correct one, not subject to any review or discussion. He refers to this as "the Drawing Board" to which all ideas be brought for comparison and by which all theories must be measured. His bold challenge is, "We defy anyone to find a loophole for any such kingdom in verses 44, 45." Thus, he gives the idea that the interpretation of Daniel 2 is a settled matter. I do not think that it is, but regardless of interpretation I want it to be known that I have never tried to find room for the premillennial kingdom in Daniel 2: 44-45, nor have I ever tried to find a place for it in any part of the book of Revelation.

In his article Mr. Welch takes the same dim view of the moral character of the millennium as did Trench. There is similarity of idea, and the correspondence between them will be seen in the first quotation I will make from Mr. Welch's magazine.

No rhapsody, no poetic phrase, no private interpretation, no wishful thinking can alter *the* fact, that *the* "Millennial Reign" ends, as it began with a terrible rebellion. The Millennium is not *the* FIRST of a new series, but *the* LAST of an old one, in which man has been tested under different forms of government, and in every case been found wanting. This Millennial kingdom is *the* last of DELEGATED authority. David may have reigned on earth as vice-regent, *the* twelve apostles may have sat on twelve thrones judging *the* twelve tribes of Israel, *the* overcomers may have reigned as priests of God and of Christ, but all in vain. Christ must put down ALL authority, *whether good .or bad*) and reign alone and supreme if ever *the* goal of *the* ages is to be reached. Page 204.

Thus we see that Mr. Welch follows in the steps of Trench and declares that a thousand years of divine government will hardly produce any better results than if it had been a thousand years of corrupt human government.

Mr. Welch also makes much of the matter of "feigned obedience," and inasmuch as it is my purpose to deal with this, his material on it will be quoted in full.

PROOF OF FEIGNED OBEDIENCE

We gather from the marginal references in the A.V. that some of the nations will yield "feigned obedience." Is this translation justified? Let us see. The passages under review are Psalms 18:44; 66:3; and 81:15. The A.V. and the R.V. read "feigned obedience" in the margin, and the note "Hebrew *lied*." Is this marginal interpretation correct? We could refer to such expositors as Perowne, Hengstenberg, Young's Literal translation and Rotherham. Rotherham reads "**Come CRINGING unto me.**" Of course this unanimity among scholars *may be* but the blind leading the blind; on the other hand they *may* express the mind of God. There is only one authoritative test. The

consistent *usage* of a word and a frank exhibition of its occurrences. The Hebrew word ***Kachash*** occurs twenty-eight times, and *in no other passage* than the three Psalms quoted is it translated "submit" The remaining references are translated as follows:

Fail 1, be found liars 1, belie 1, deal falsely 1, deceive 1, deny 5, dissemble 1, fail 2, lie 5, lies 4, lying 1, and leanness 1.

In no passage is it possible to substitute "obedience" or "submit" in anyone of these twenty-four occurrences. If "usage" has any weight, then "feigned obedience" must stand. To *deny* it is to *defy* the testimony of Scripture. Deuteronomy 33 :29 which employs the Hebrew *kachash* reads:

"And thine enemies shall be *found liars unto thee.*" The scholarly lexicon of Brown, Driver and Briggs give the meaning of *kachash*:

"Be disappointing, deceive, fail, grown lean," and in reference to the Psalms in question, their note reads: "Cringe, come cringing, make a show of obedience."

THE HEBREW (WORD) KACHASH IS VERY RIGID

We cannot sweep aside this unanimous testimony without betraying that ulterior motives are prompting our decision. Further, although the LXX is not infallible, yet surely we must allow Hebrews of that early age to understand their own tongue, *at least as well as* the best of us today. The LXX uses *epseusanto* "they lied" in Psalm 18:44 and Psalm 81:15 *exactly* as they do in Deuteronomy 33:29. We believe the candid student will be convinced that the Hebrew *kachash* is very rigid in its meaning, and cannot be made to favor a period of universal peace and righteousness. To accept the rendering "to yield feigned obedience" shatters the unscriptural dream of The Millennium. That thousand year reign is not the perfect kingdom on earth. *The Berean Expositor* - pages 205, 206.

This may sound quite conclusive to those who may not be able to examine such suggestions for themselves, but I have made long and careful study of the Hebrew word ***kachash*** (pronounced kaw-KHASH) and do not agree with the teaching of Mr. Welch concerning it. I do not hesitate to deny that this word means "yield feigned obedience," and to declare further that it cannot mean "feigned obedience" in any other of the twenty-five occurrences. In doing this I am not *defying* the testimony of Scripture but following its truth to the letter. I *do* sweep aside what Mr. Welch calls "unanimous testimony," and at the same time reject his judgment that any "ulterior motive" prompts my decision.

If the word *study* means original research, critical investigation, and minute inquiry, then I am able to say that I have made an honest study of this Hebrew word over a period that now covers four years. (See *The Word of Truth*, Vol. XIII - No.3, for my

first writing on this.) A cursory examination of the list of occurrences of *kachash* in the *Englishman's Hebrew Concordance* may do no more than lead to the erroneous judgment that this word usually signifies some wicked or deceitful act, but that is not an accurate conclusion. Furthermore, one may look at what the Septuagint (LXX) translators have done in rendering *kachash* by a word that usually means to lie or to deceive, but this will not provide any real clue to its true meaning. The claim that this word is "very rigid in its meaning" displays insufficient attention being paid to the facts in the case. This is a very flexible word which in every occurrence yields to the demands of its context, as will be demonstrated later in this study.

Before me, as this is written, is a chart I have prepared containing twenty-eight lines and eleven columns. The first column gives the reference where *kachash* is found and the second gives the Hebrew form. The remaining eight columns give the King James Version, Rotherham Version, American Standard Version, Moffatt's Version, the Septuagint equivalent, Ferrar Fenton's Version, J. N. Darby's Version, Young's Critical Version, and the Companion Bible notes on this word where a note appears. All marginal notes have been recorded from all these Versions, also material from a number of expositors. When one makes up a list such as this and sees the great variety of words the various translators have used in the hope of expressing the meaning of this word, he realizes the struggle through which all translators have passed, and he knows that it is utterly impossible for this word to have one rigid or fixed meaning. Many translators, once they give this word a rendering in their Versions, immediately hedged upon it and gave it another meaning in the margin.

There can be no doubt but that which Mr. Welch calls "unanimity among scholars" is nothing more than the blind leading the blind, for most of the translators reveal that they were confused and led astray by the renderings in the Septuagint Version. and it can be demonstrated that the Septuagint translators rendered this word according to their prejudices, for they were as subject to prejudice and tradition as any translator since their time. It is easy to discern their prejudices that influenced them in the handling of this word - they honored and revered Sarah, the wife of Abraham and the mother of their nation; and they loathed the nations among whom they were scattered and to whom they were in bondage.

In the first occurrence of the word *kachash* in Genesis 18: 15 the Septuagint translators used the Greek word *arneomai* (deny) to render it. In almost all other occurrences they used the word *pseudomai* (deal falsely or deceive), but they did not use it here as they did not want to lay this charge against Sarah. However, when they came to the three occurrences in the Psalms (18:44, 66:3, 81:15) they used *pseudomai* even though it did not fit the context. Then they backed down on the fourth occurrence in the Psalms (109:24) and used another word which means *change*. These passages reveal their prejudices and show why we cannot receive their work as competent

testimony in regard to the meaning of *kachash*. The Septuagint is not infallible. It is of great value in getting the meaning of Greek words, but as a rule it is of very little value in getting the meaning of questionable Hebrew words.

As another has said: In estimating the general character of the version, it must be remembered that the translators were Jews, full of traditional thoughts of their own as to the meaning of Scripture; and thus nothing short of a miracle could have prevented them from infusing into their version the thoughts that were current in their own minds. They could only translate passages as they themselves understood them. This is evidently the case when their work is examined. *Quoted from the Introduction of the S. Bagster and Sons edition of The Septuagint Version.*

The struggle of scholars with the word *kachash* reveals their indecision - wanting to follow the Septuagint and yet fearing to do so. Take as an example the notes in *The Companion Bible*. In Deuteronomy 33:29 the King James Version translates *kachash* by the phrase "shall be found liars." In a note on this Dr. Bullinger says this equals "shall submit themselves." Then in II Samuel 22:45 where the K. J. V. translates *kachash* by "shall submit themselves" he suggests it should be read "give a feigned or unwilling obedience." He then changes Psalm 18:44 to "come cringing," but offers no note on Psalm 66: 3 or 81 :15, allowing the translation "shall submit themselves" to stand. This is an example of the confusion that is found in the efforts of almost every translator. Even Rotherham, whose work shows the best efforts of all, uses eleven different terms to translate the twenty-five occurrences of this verb, and twenty-four different terms and phrases are used by the various translators mentioned above in the hope of expressing the meaning of this word. In view of this, Mr. Welch's contention that *kachash* is a very rigid word is a complete error.

Mr. Welch is right in saying "there is only one authoritative test" in regard to the meaning of this word. This is, as he says "the consistent usage of the word and a frank exhibition of its occurrences." However, the *usage* of a word does not mean how the translators have rendered it. There are words of limited occurrence which they have translated wrong every time. The meaning of a word must be determined from the usage made of it by the Holy Spirit as holy men of old were inspired to write it. But before taking up usage, let us have a frank exhibition of this word in all its occurrences.

Concordance to Kachash

Gen. 18:15 - Then Sarah denied, saying

Lev. 6:2 - *and lie* unto his neighbor

Lev. 6:3 - *and lieth* concerning it.

Lev. 19:11- shall not steal, neither *deal falsely*

Deu. 33:29 - *and thine enemies shall be found liars*
 Josh. 7:11 - have also stolen, and *dissembled*
 Josh 24:27- lest *ye deny* your God
 II Sam. 22 :45 - Strangers *shall submit themselves*
 I Kings. 13:18 - But *he lied* unto him
 Job 8:18 - *then it shall deny* him
 Job 16:8 - *my leanness* rising up in me (noun)
 Job 31:28 - *I should have denied* the God that
 Psa. 18:44 - strangers *shall submit themselves* unto me
 Psa. 59:12 - and for cursing *and lying* (noun)
 Psa. 66:3 - *shall* thine enemies *submit themselves* unto thee
 Psa. 81 :15- haters of the Lord *should have submitted themselves*
 Psa. 109:24 - my flesh *faileth* of fatness
 Pro. 30:9 - be full, *and deny* thee
 Isa. 59:13 - transgressing *and lying* against the Lord,
 Jer. 5 :12 - *They have belied* the Lord
 Hos. 4:2 - By swearing, *and lying*, and killing
 Hos. 7:3- *and the princes with their lies* (noun)
 Hos. 9:2- the new wine *shall fail*
 Hos. 10:13 - ye have eaten the fruit of *lies* (noun)
 Hos. 11: 12 - compasseth me about *with lies* (noun)
 Nah. 3: 1- the bloody city it is all full of *lies* (noun)
 Hab. 3: 17- labor of the olive *shall fail*
 Zec. 13:4- wear a rough garment *to deceive*

In this concordance we have before us an exhibition of the word *kachash* so far as the King James translators have rendered it. A superficial review of this list could easily result in the erroneous conclusion that this word is indicative of something bad, something wicked, but this would be only a part of the truth. This word is somewhat like our English word *covet* which as a rule indicates a wicked act, and yet it takes on a different meaning., for example, if one should say he covets our prayers or our fellowship, or where Paul says, "Covet earnestly the best gifts." The basic meaning of *covet* is not one that indicates wickedness. This meaning must come from the context in which it is found.

The twenty-eight occurrences of the Hebrew word *kachash* listed in the concordance above gives us all the information that is available to anyone as to the meaning of this word as used by the Spirit of God. There is no scholar past or present that has any information concerning this word that is not available to every one of us. When each occurrence is studied in the passage where it is found, and each passage is considered in its wider context, the following information is revealed.

The usage of this word in the Hebrew Old Testament shows that its primitive and basic meaning is *to shrink*. This is the meaning seen in Habakkuk 3: 17 where the word is used of the olive trees producing a very small yield; in Hosea 9:2 where the yearly yield of wine has fallen far short of normal expectations; in Psalm 109:24 wherein the flesh of a man shrinks from lack of oil (to anoint one's body with olive oil is in hot countries almost necessary to life); and in Job 16:8 where Job's body has shrunk from loss of weight due to his affliction. This may also be the meaning in Job 8: 18 where a man's place (that is, his former associates) shrinks from him.

Out of this basic meaning comes the derived meaning of *to cringe*. To cringe means to draw in or to contract one's muscles involuntary, to shrink, or to cower. This is where we get the ideas of nations that come cringing through the greatness of God's power. This should be the translation in Deuteronomy 33:29, II Samuel 22:45, Psalm 18:44, 66:3 and 81:15. Rotherham has used "come cringing" in all five of these occurrences. For a clear example of one who came cringing before God, read the record of the publican who went into the temple to pray as recorded in Luke 18: 13. The King James translators were not incorrect in using "submit" in four of the five references mentioned above, for to come cringing is indicative of submission.

Out of this idea of shrinking comes another use of *kachash* that signifies shrinking the truth. This is what led Rotherham to translate Leviticus 6: 2 and 3 by the very expressive phrase "withhold something of the truth." This is what Sarah did in the incident recorded in Genesis 18: 15. She had laughed inwardly, but said she had not laughed. Thus, she withheld something of the truth. Since no one word in English will express this, *kachash* in Genesis 18:15, Leviticus 6:2 and 3 should be translated by the phrase "**withhold something of the truth.**"

Out of this idea comes the related idea of dealing falsely or deceiving, inasmuch as all false dealing and deception is based upon shrinking or withholding something of the truth. There are occurrences of this word where dealing falsely or deceiving makes the best rendering, such as Lev. 19:11, Joshua 7:11, 24:27, I Kings 13:18, Job 31:28, Psa. 59:12, Provo 30:9, Isa. 59:13, Jer. 5:12, Hosea 4:2, 7:3, 10:13, 11:12, Nahum 3:1, Zech 13:4.

There is nothing in this Hebrew word in any occurrence that suggests the idea of yielding false or feigned obedience. No translator has ever followed the suggestion in the King James Version marginal notes. Neither has any translator found that this is a "very rigid" word. There are nuances in this word that are difficult, almost impossible, to express in English. In view of this, the translator is forced to do the best he can with each occurrence and let the context give the actual meaning. This can be seen in Psalm 66: 1-4.

Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honor of His name: make his praise glorious. Say unto God, How terrible (awe inspiring) art thou in thy works! through the greatness of Thy power shall thine enemies -----unto Thee. All the earth shall worship Thee, and shall sing unto Thee; they shall sing unto Thy name.

In the passage quoted above, the blank space represents the Hebrew word *kachash*. In the light of what precedes it and what follows it, how would the reader translate *kachash* and fill in the blank space so that it will harmonize with the context.

He could follow the King James Version and read it "submit themselves." This would not contradict the basic meaning of *kachash* and it would fit in well with what is said before and after.

Or he could be more literal and say "come shrinking," or as Rotherham puts it "come cringing." Either of these would express the basic meaning of *kachash* and would be renderings in keeping with the requirements of the context.

Or he could follow the prejudices of the Septuagint translators and use "they lied" as a translation. This would stultify the whole passage and contradict what is said in the context.

Or he could follow the marginal suggestion of the King James translators and render it "yield feigned obedience" as Trench and Mr. Welch does. If he does, he will have a translation which is foreign to the context, and which has no relation to the basic or derived meanings of the word *kachash*.

As a result of my own studies in connection with this word, I will use the words "**come shrinking**" or "**come cringing**" in Psalm 18:44, 66:3, and 81:15, and I will understand these terms to indicate the same attitude that the shrinking publican manifested when he entered into the temple to pray. I cannot go along with those who insist upon a bad translation that contradicts the context. The rendering "feigned obedience" lends support to the idea that the thousand year reign of Christ is an evil time in which rebellion is incipient, but it is a bad translation that does not harmonize with the context.

In reference to the Satanically inspired rebellion at the close of the millennium, Mr. Welch says: Satan is only loosed *for* "a little season" yet the response to his deception is immediate: "they went up." The objection that this is beyond the Millennium, is invalid. What takes place in 1958 is intimately connected with what was done and thought in 1957. **Page 203.**

If this is true, then the same rule certainly applies, and the things that precede and introduce the thousand year reign of Christ will be intimately connected with it and have a bearing on the moral character of that time. A study of these events will show that it is impossible for the millennium to be a time of "feigned obedience" on the part of the nations. In one place Mr. Welch says: We realize that inasmuch as the Millennium is the immediate outcome of the Second Coming of Christ to the earth, all other prophetic features associated *with that phase of the coming* must find a place here. Page 212.

This is good, but Mr. Welch only refers to these "prophetic features" then drops the matter. I am convinced that due consideration of these features would show the error of his theories concerning the moral character of the nations in the millennium. This will be demonstrated as we consider these things.

The Judgment of All Nations

In Matthew 25:31-46 we have pictured a scene which all must agree takes place at the second coming of Christ, and that this scene is introductory to His millennial reign. When He comes, all nations (in their representatives) will be gathered before Him and He will separate them one from another as a shepherd divides His sheep from the goats. The King then says to those nations on His right hand:

Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Matthew 25 :34.

But to those nations on His left hand He says:

Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and His angels. Matthew 25 :41.

This whole passage is a prophecy. After reading it we should be able to decide upon one of two things. The thousand year reign of Christ opens (1) with the Lord sitting in judgment upon all nations, or (2) that it does not. If it does, then the millennium cannot be a period of time in which all nations but Israel are "yielding a feigned obedience," and wherein "rebellion is incipient" for the thousand years. Yet we are being asked to believe that the righteous nations that enter into the millennial earth are in a state of deceit, unrest, and rebellion, and that they climax this long state of foment with the "greatest and bloodiest" revolt the world has ever known. Since the great assize set forth in Matthew 25:31-46 deals with "all nations," and with a purging of such magnitude taking place, how can it be that the "righteous" nations which "inherit the kingdom" are in a condition of yielding feigned obedience? The fact is that these nations yielded a true obedience and were submissive to Christ even when they did not realize they were serving Him. See Matt. 25:37-39. The truth of this judgment

alone is sufficient to show the error of the theories of Trench and Mr. Welch as to the moral character of the nations during the thousand year reign of Christ.

The Earth Purged of Wickedness

The statement of Christ found in **Matthew 13: 41** is interpretation, not parable.

The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity.

This is another event that takes place at the time of the second coming and which introduces the thousand year reign of Christ. The earth will be purged of all cause of offence and those who are doers of lawlessness. This leaves no room for the entrance into the thousand year reign of Christ for a great host of deceivers who will reap the benefits and return nothing but a "feigned obedience."

A More Drastic Purging

In this connection **II Thess. 1 :7-9** gives such strong testimony that it is not surprising to find some trying to limit this to Israel.

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

The time referred to in this passage is most certainly the second coming of Christ. When He comes He will take vengeance on those who know not God and who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ. The punishment of these will be everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. Since this takes place at His coming, and before the millennium begins, there will not be a human being left to enter into the millennial earth except those who know God and who obey the gospel of Jesus Christ. A feigned obedience will not permit anyone to escape this purge. These words mean what they say. All who lack the knowledge of God and who lack a record of obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ will be purged before the thousand years begin. How then can the millennium begin with all nations except Israel yielding feigned obedience to Jesus Christ?

This drastic action upon the part of God is most certainly justified. I am indeed thankful that I have learned from the Word of God that this purging takes place after men have lived long under God's government, that premillennial kingdom that precedes the second coming of Christ. Thus the vengeance will come upon a minority that have refused the blazing light and truth that will have been manifested when God governs the earth. This is before the millennium.

The teachings of Trench, and Mr. Welch, cannot be accepted by those who take into account the divine record of **the events that precede the millennium**. These are shown in Scripture to be:

1. The second coming and the personal presence of: the Lord *Jesus* Christ upon the earth. Rev. 19:11-16.
2. The removal from His kingdom of all the causes of sin and all who do lawlessness. Matthew 13:41.
3. The severance of the wicked from the just with the wicked being destroyed. Matthew 13:41-43.
4. All nations gathered before the Lord and judged. Those who emerge from this assize as "righteous" nations will have a place in the millennial kingdom. Those who do not measure up to this standard will be eliminated. Matthew 25:31-46.
5. All who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of *Jesus* Christ will be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." II Thess. 1:8-9.
6. The beast and false prophet are destroyed. Rev. 19:20.
7. The man of sin is destroyed. II Thess. 2:8.
8. Satan is bound, cast into the abyss, and rendered inoperative for a thousand years. Rev. 20: 1-8.

These are the works of God that introduce the millennium, the thousand year reign of Christ. If we believe this record then we cannot believe that that kingdom will be "rent with sedition, shattered with rebellion, a state of unbelief, of inward rebellion against the sovereignty of Christ" as Trench so dogmatically asserts. I too see David reigning on earth as the vice-regent, the twelve apostles sitting on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and the overcomers reigning as priests of God and of Christ, but I cannot agree with Mr. Welch that this is "all in vain."

The Witness of Scripture

When one makes a study of the prophetic message of the Bible and finds its message concerning things to come, it then becomes imperative to believe what it says and to think accordingly. Having made such a study over many years, I see an entirely different picture of the nations and of mankind in general in the future than that

presented by Trench and concurred in by Mr. Welch. This picture can be set forth by means of a half-dozen passages from the Bible. And it makes little difference whether the passages quoted pertain to the premillennial kingdom or to the millennial kingdom, the truth still holds.

In Genesis 18: 18 God declares that all nations of the earth will be blessed in Abraham. When is this to be? I say it will be in the kingdom of God before the millennium. Others say it will be in the millennium. But no matter what position we may take as to the time of the fulfillment of this promise, all must agree that this blessing will not be one in which the nations will be brought into a deceitful and deceiving position of "yielding false obedience" to the reigning Christ. Such a condition would in the end be no blessing at all, inasmuch as it would lead to greater condemnation.

In **Psalm 22:27, 28** the Psalmist declares:

All the ends of the world (earth) shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations.

What is this remembering and turning? What is this worship? Is it simply the deceitful acts of deceitful hearts that outwardly turn and worship but inwardly are seething with revolt? What picture does the reader see in this passage? We will learn more about this in the next passage quoted.

In **Psalm 46:8-10** the Psalmist again cries out:

Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations (astonishing things) He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen (nations), I will be exalted in the earth.

Is this exaltation of Jehovah among the nations nothing more than a false front, a facade of feigned obedience, brought about by the exercise of Almighty power, and yet unable to accomplish any real or lasting good in the hearts of men? Let the reader meditate upon Psalm 72:11 and 17; 82:8; 86:9; 96:10; 98: 2-3; 102: 15; and 11 7: 1 and see if he can reconcile the glorious truth revealed there with the idea that the nations yield only a false obedience to God

How shall we understand the actions of the nations described in **Isaiah 2: 2-4**.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many peoples: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Here we read of all nations streaming to the mountain of the Lord's house, of many peoples conferring together and agreeing to go up to the house of the God of Jacob to be taught in His ways, expressing their determination to walk in His paths. What will be the motive behind all this? Is this nothing more than false obedience? Is there no real intention of walking in His paths? Do they only profess to beat their swords into plowshares? Are they putting on an act of not learning war while they study it secretly? Perish all such thoughts! Let God be true! Give honor to whom honor is due. These nations are acting honestly in every move they make. This passage alone is enough to show how completely false is the theory that the nations yield only feigned obedience.

Jeremiah 3: 17 repudiates by a direct statement the idea that the nations act deceitfully and yield false obedience.

At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.

This passage should settle it for all who allow matters to be settled by the Word of God. The subject is "all nations" and the direct statement is that they shall no longer walk after the stubbornness of their wicked heart. This excludes all possibility of the nations yielding feigned obedience to the Lord.

Consider also a passage from the New Testament.

Go ye therefore and teach (disciple) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Matthew 28:19.

It is my understanding that this is a commission that will be fulfilled by a redeemed and restored Israel in a future day. Will their efforts do nothing more than produce false disciples among the nations? Will they succeed only in producing a new generation of baptized infidels? The answers are obvious.

As a final witness in this matter, let us hear from Paul, God's great Apostle to the nations. Quoting from the Old Testament he says:

There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles (nations); in Him shall the Gentiles (nations) trust. Romans 15 :12.

Jeremiah says that the nations shall no longer walk in deceit. Isaiah and Paul say that the nations will trust in Christ. Yet we are asked to believe that the nations will yield nothing more than "feigned obedience." The reader should have no trouble in making up his mind what to believe. The theories set forth by Trench and by Mr. Welch do not fit in with the master plan of the Word of God. We have taken their ideas to the blue-print of God's revelation and have seen that they do not harmonize with God's predictions as to the future of the nations

The Rule of the Rod of Iron

The fact that when He reigns, Christ shall rule with a rod of iron has been brought forth by both Trench and Mr. Welch as positive proof of the bad moral character of men during the millennium. I quote again from Trench:

By means, therefore, of this terrible glimpse of the little season at the Millennium's end, a flood of light is cast back upon the moral character of the world during the whole of the thousand years preceding. It is a condition of outward and seeming peace, calm, and contentment; but inwardly the heart of man is what it always has been - enmity against God and against His Christ. Discontent is forced underneath the surface by the rod of iron (Psa. 2 :8,9.) The nations will be in Christ's possession, and the uttermost parts of the earth his inheritance, not by conversion, but by coercion, to be "broken in pieces like a potter's vessel," at their first resistance; held down as the "footstool of His feet" throughout that age; and at its end, when in irrepressible and incorrigible hostility they dare once more to lift the rebel hand against Him, to be utterly and finally destroyed by fire from heaven. (*After the Thousand Years, pages 31, 32.*)

This is a sad picture, but it is not the true one. A single statement from the Word of God will show that it is nothing more than an erroneous theological fabrication. In **Isaiah 26:9** the prophet declares: **When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.**

Paul, on Mar's Hill, declared that God has "**appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained.**" Acts 17:31.

David sets forth the same truth in **Psalm 9: 8:**

And He shall judge the world in righteousness, He shall minister judgment to the peoples (plural in Hebrew) in uprightness.

When this becomes a reality, Jesus Christ will be ruling the inhabited earth, God's judgments will be in the earth, and His rule will have the strength of iron. He will rule the nations with a rod of iron. The outcome of this will be just as God has declared it - the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

In regard to the rod of iron, Mr. Welch says:

Another revealing feature is the use of a rod of IRON. It is beside the point to dwell on the meaning of the Greek word *rhabdos* or its Hebrew equivalent, the word that clamors for consideration is the word IRON. No tender shepherd uses a rod of IRON for the shepherding of his flock, he uses *that* as a weapon of defence against their enemies, the robber, the lion and the wolf. Psalm 2:9, Revelation 2:27; 12:5 and 19:15 speak of "breaking" or "ruling" with a rod of IRON, and it is this quality of IRON that demands *attention*, and if ignored leads to untruth and bondage. Page 207.

The above statement could be misleading. The facts in the case are that Psalm 2:9 in the *King James Version* speaks of "breaking" but the other three references speak of "ruling." These words are not synonymous or interchangeable. The word translated "rule" in the three Revelation passages is the Greek verb *poimaino*. The noun related to it is *poimeen*. This noun is always translated "shepherd" in the New Testament with one exception (Eph. 4:11, pastors). The verb is translated "rule" in Matthew 2:6 and "feed" in Luke 17:7, John 21:16, Acts 20:28, I Cor. 9:7, I Peter 5:2, Jude 12, and Revelation 7:17.

This word also clamors for attention, for it shows that when Christ rules or shepherds the nations it will be as a shepherd feeding his flock, it shows that Christ as a tender shepherd does use a rod of iron for shepherding his flock, and it shows that there is nothing frightful in ruling with a rod of iron. It may be contrary to custom among shepherds to use an iron staff in controlling, guiding, and helping the sheep, but the Word says that Christ will do this.

Mr. Welch goes on to give occurrences of the word *iron* in the Old Testament in the hope that he can show that it means something terrible and is related to frightfulness. This he fails to do, for the word iron is always used symbolically of *strength*, whether it deals with the strength of wrath, the strength of guidance, the strength of government, or the strength of pride.

In dealing with the rule of the rod of iron, Mr. Welch makes no applications and comes to no conclusions. He seems to suggest that the millennium is a time of such great wickedness that the government of Christ must spend its time cracking skulls with a rod of iron.

Mr. Welch cites three occurrences of the Hebrew word *raa* in order to demonstrate that it does mean "break," but it seems that each one of the eighty-three occurrences of this word (as listed in *Englishman's Hebrew Concordance*) would need to be carefully considered before this meaning can be fixed upon it. He does not call for a "frank exhibition" of the occurrences of this word as he did in the case of the word *kachash*. He must know that Psalm 2:9 presents expositional problems that have baffled men of God for Centuries.

The picture one gets from reading the *King James Version* is that the Son asks for and receives the nations as His inheritance. Having received them, He responds by breaking them with a rod of iron, by dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel. The careful student feels that this cannot be the true picture, that something may be wrong either with text, translation, or interpretation.

If a friend should ask me for my watch, saying that he urgently needed it to tell the time, I would, on the basis of friendship, his need, and the use he would make of it, give it to him. But if he wanted it to break it to pieces, I would refuse because of the senselessness of such waste and destruction.

If the Son, therefore, asks for the nations with the idea in view of breaking them with an iron rod, of dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel, then it seems it would be wise for the Father to refuse His request.

After much study, I believe the difficulty here is a textual one. In view of the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate evidence, considered with the New Testament evidence where this passage is quoted three times, it seems that there is a manuscript discrepancy here and the text should be restored by means of the Septuagint. The discrepancy amounts to just one Hebrew letter. The evidence is too technical to be set forth here, but I am willing to follow Young and read it "**rule**", or the Companion Bible that says "**rule or govern them**," or better still, Rotherham who has "**shepherd**." In regard to his use of "shepherd," **Rotherham has a note** which says: **So it should be (with Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate) - Ginsburg's notes in his Massoretico-Critical Hebrew Bible. "Rule as a shepherd king over them," is more suited to the context of the sceptre, even if it be of iron. *Studies in the Psalms, by Joseph Bryant Rotherham, page 49.***

This is not "special pleading" as Mr. Welch intimates, but an honest looking at all the facts and problems in the matter. When God gives the nations to Christ as His inheritance, He will not respond by breaking them with a rod of iron. He will shepherd them with an iron sceptre.

A final quotation from Mr. Welch's article will conclude this examination of his article. He says:

We are conscious that much that we have written in this article is rather disconcerting, but we ask only one thing of our readers. Have we built squarely upon the revealed Word of God? Have we introduced any private interpretations of our own? We earnestly desire to be corrected if we have unconsciously done the latter, but we make no apology for any of our teaching that is in harmony with the Scriptures (Page 219).

In direct answer to this, as one of Mr. Welch's readers, probably the most interested one, let me say that I do not believe that he has built squarely upon the revealed Word of God? His views are disconcerting to me because I believe they dishonor and misrepresent the government that Christ will bring upon the earth during His thousand year reign. They stamp upon the nations of that time a deceitful character which they must produce if they conform to what the Word of God is supposed to prophesy concerning them. They make His government to be no better in the end than the fallible governments of men. This is a serious mistake, and I would suggest that if Mr. Welch has any friends who are in a position to give him wise counsel that they point out to him wherein he has erred in regard to the moral character of mankind under the thousand year reign of Christ.

In Conclusion

In making this review of Mr. Welch's article, no personal criticism of him is intended. I trust that my review has been kept on a high level of courtesy toward him. If anything said in these pages seems to fall below this standard, the reader will know that great pains have been taken to eliminate everything that may savor of rancor or bitterness. In handling controversial matters I like to keep in mind the words of my former teacher, **Dr. James M. Gray**:

There are timid souls who are afraid of controversy on questions of the faith, but their timidity is sometimes cowardice. Controversy has always had, and always must have, a large and important place in the defense of the truth, but much depends on the spirit in which it is conducted. Out of our own experience we can say that Christian Controversy and Christian Charity need not be divorced. *Moody Monthly, December 1929.*

The End SS28