

LEVITT



LETTER

*"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." (Romans 10:1)

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An Unholy Alliance

In my recent personal letter to you I alluded to some very surprising political developments involving Iran and Russia. Improving relations between these two unlikely allies are so important, I feel, that we are going to make a television program devoted primarily to that piece of news. It seems that the Iranians, the heart of modern Persia, have found some common ground with the Russians, and this curious development has always been expected by those familiar with prophecy about the coming Russian invasion of Israel.

When we set out to make the new program we reviewed our past version of the progress of this prophecy. The former program was several years old and mainly concerned Russian maneuvers throughout the world. It touched on Iran, Libya and Ethiopia as being allies of Russia in the upcoming invasion (Ezekiel 38:5). But it had little to offer in the way of observable alliances at that time. In the case of Iran, for example, I said on the program that the invasion "couldn't happen this week" because the Ayatullah's fanatically fundamentalistic Islam culture simply had nothing imaginable in common with the atheistic communists of Russia.

How times have changed.

In February, the Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister made a formal visit to the government of Iran and some links were established between the two formerly antagonistic neighbors. It's time,

therefore, that we update our program because what we said in 1980 no longer holds true. The Russian invasion actually could happen in the foreseeable future now — perhaps not this week but as soon as the Persian-Russian relationship improves enough to permit troop movements together. Since Ezekiel said the two would be allies in the invasion, those familiar with the prophecy have awaited this moment with some anticipation.

Concerning Libya, we also couldn't say very much in 1980 because Libya just wasn't that much of a power at that time. Today, however, no one needs to detail the antagonism of Libya toward Israel or the warmth of its relations with Russia. Libya is now fully in place as described by Ezekiel and very ready to participate.

Ethiopia has come to world attention in the ensuing time because of the famine and also because of its Marxist government and its good relations with Russia. It too is ready to add its contribution to the invasion.

It should be appreciated that these alliances have come into being in a few short years. They have brought into sharp focus a prophecy that is more than 25 centuries old!

Those who have been waiting for the appropriate alliances to be in place for the Russian invasion of Israel in the end times may not have long to wait.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?

"Look, George, I really sweated blood over that last deal of ours and I don't intend to be the scapegoat now that things have backfired. You should have seen the handwriting on the wall six months ago when, by the grace of God, I sold the biggest part of my ownership. Sure, I was a doubting Thomas in the beginning and felt like it was a case of the blind leading the blind. But when the last stumbling block disappeared I figured we had it made. Well, so it wasn't exactly like manna from heaven, but we did okay for a while. However, George, since you have had the responsibility for running the show lately, those new investors are really out to nail you to the cross. To tell them that you need some additional working capital will be like a voice crying in the wilderness. What they want is action — they really have had the patience of Job up until now, so unless you work something out, they're going to be a real thorn in the flesh for you from now on. Frankly, George, I've got to wash my hands of the matter. Sure I'd like to play the Good Samaritan and help you — maybe even turn the other cheek — but you know I've got more than I can say grace over, so it's your cross to bear. When you think about it, I guess the old saying "you reap what you sow" really fits the situation. So you better hit the straight and narrow, George — walk the extra mile with them if necessary and I'm sure you will get along just fine."

Are you aware that in the above, brief monologue there are **twenty direct biblical references**? Can it be that such seemingly everyday, commonplace language can provide an insight into our heritage heretofore overlooked?

It's easy for us to take a measure of pride in our manifold accomplishments, and rightly so. After all, don't we have the biggest and best of nearly everything?

How then did we get where we are? Was it because we are naturally more intelligent, more inventive and possess more initiative? Not really, because we're all basically descendants of European and English stock — like so many others. Was it because we had more natural resources with which to work? Not really.

How then did we get where we are? Our everyday language provides the answer. Our language clearly reflects our Christian heritage — a heritage that created a governmental and social environment which has encouraged each individual to make the greatest contribution possible, for the greatest reward possible. This basic philosophy is nowhere more clearly enunciated than in the Declaration of Independence — "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among them are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

If the Declaration was the manifestation of such a revolutionary and encouraging philosophy, we need to peer more deeply into our heritage for its true beginning.

Freedom from religious persecution and freedom to worship God as they pleased — these were the sole motivating factors which led to the founding of this great nation by a band of English settlers, part of a body of Protestants called Puritans. These God-fearing men, practicing believers who knew the teachings of the Bible and incorporated these teachings into their everyday language, were the real beginning of the freedom philosophy. What a wonderful inheritance we have in those rich, colorful, descriptive biblical excerpts which form such an integral part of our own everyday language.

Now, following that mini-lesson in history, let's re-examine the monologue:

References are to be found
in King James Version

Sweated blood

Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane, being in agony, prayed more earnestly just prior to his betrayal, arrest, trial and crucifixion.
Luke 22:44

Scapegoat

Part of purification rites to cleanse individual from sin — Day of Atonement — better known as Yom Kippur.
Leviticus 16; specifically Leviticus 16:10

Handwriting on the Wall

During Babylonian captivity, Daniel was summoned to interpret the message written by the "fingers of a man's hand."
Daniel 5:5

By the Grace of God

General recognition of prevailing Grace, oftentimes defined as "Everything for nothing to those who do not deserve anything."
John 1:17 and I Corinthians 1:3-5

Doubting Thomas

One of the disciples. He stated that unless he could see the nail prints and thrust his hand into the wound, he would not believe in Jesus' resurrection. When Jesus showed and offered, he said simply, "My Lord and My God."
John 20:25-31

Blind leading the Blind

Jesus, in confrontation with the Scribes and Pharisees, called for abandonment of the traditionalists as teachers of spiritual truth, for they were blind spiritually. "And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."
Matthew 15:14

Stumbling Block

The Lord, in speaking to Moses and elaborating further on the Ten Commandments, included the prohibition against placing stumbling blocks in the paths of the blind.
Leviticus 19:14

Manna from Heaven

The food miraculously supplied to the Israelites during their 40 years in the wilderness.
Exodus 16:15

Also used effectively by the Lord to demonstrate that "man does not live by bread alone."
Deuteronomy 8:3

Nail you to the Cross

A slang expression intended to indicate extreme pain and suffering followed by an agonizing death, which was Jesus' fate.
Mark 15

Voice crying in the Wilderness

John the Baptist was the fulfillment of earlier prophecy when he preached repentance and announced that the Kingdom of God was at hand. His mission, i.e., to pave the way for the coming of Jesus, was prophesied by Isaiah.
Matthew 3:2-3 and Isaiah 40:3

Patience of Job

Job, an upright and God-fearing man, was allowed by God to be challenged by Satan. He was visited with calamities of all sorts — all sons and daughters killed; possessions destroyed; and terrible physical infirmities inflicted. He stood firm — and patient — in his faith, saying, "I know that my redeemer liveth."
Job 19:25

Thorn in the Flesh

We do not know what the Apostle Paul's thorn in the flesh was, but we do know that Paul regarded it as having come from Satan. He further recognized that God had permitted it to come into his life and intended to use it for His own glory. When this affliction caused weakness, God's power manifested itself most conspicuously.
2 Corinthians 12:7

Wash my Hands of the Matter

Pontius Pilate, as governor of Judaea and representative of the Roman Empire, was directly responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus, whose innocence he admitted. He tried to express his exemption from personal responsibility by washing his hands of the whole affair.
Matthew 27:24

Good Samaritan

When Jesus said to love your neighbor as yourself, a lawyer asked, "and who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied with the well known parable of the Good Samaritan and concluded with the urging to "Go and do likewise."
Luke 10:25-37

Turn the other Cheek

One of the best known of Jesus' teachings. The Eye-for-Eye judicial principle simply made the punishment fit the crime, and was administered by Judges. Here, however, Jesus is not discussing government's obligation to maintain order, but rather teaching examples of how individuals should deal with other individuals.
Matthew 5:39

More than I can say Grace Over

An expression stemming from the practice of blessing the food at mealtime, or saying grace, but usually having a negative connotation. In other words, it has come to mean that one has too many problems to handle properly rather than too many blessings. It began, however, as a remembrance to Jesus at the Last Supper.
Luke 22:19.

Your Cross to Bear

When Pontius Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified, Scripture notes that "he bearing his cross went forth." The expression has come to mean that our particularly heavy problems in life must be borne by us, regardless of the pain, suffering or humiliation — just as Jesus was made to bear His own cross.
John 19:17

You Reap What You Sow

Sometimes referred to as the "law of the harvest." The words hardly need any clarification, for no one can successfully evade God's decree "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" — the immutable law of life.
Galatians 6:7

Straight and Narrow

The direct quotation of Jesus is by far the most meaningful explanation, "Enter ye in at the straight gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat. Because straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
Matthew 7:13-14

Walk the extra Mile

Depicts the then custom of the Roman *occupation forces* to compel the Jewish populace to be pressed into service whenever needed, by carrying packs, mail, etc. for at least one mile. The teaching by Jesus is obvious — do twice as much as you are asked to do.
Matthew 5:41

The above biblical references are but a few to be found in our daily conversation, e.g., old as Methuselah, skin of my teeth, salt of the earth, prodigal son, etc. But to recognize these references — and to know their true significance — requires at least some familiarity with the Bible, and, of course, the best way to gain such familiarity is through reading and studying.

So let's keep our language inheritance alive and well. Listen, learn the true significance and pass it on to the generations to follow. Let's know that our language reflects our biblical heritage. Let's **really** know what we're saying.

From Here To Eternity

When I try to gather my thoughts about the coming Russian invasion of Israel I hardly know where to begin. In a time of imminent prophecy fulfillment even faithful Bible readers can be confounded by events (as with the first coming of Messiah).

Since the publication of my book "The Coming Russian Invasion of Israel" in 1974, it seems that the Middle East has changed considerably. I sincerely feel that there would be no time for a new book and even this newsletter is a slow way to communicate in view of the cataclysmic events surrounding us today. Ironically, we'll have to forego our monthly end-times prophecy series once again because the prophecies appear to be happening almost before we can study them. Interestingly enough we had progressed right up to discussing the Russian invasion, and that would have been the article in this issue if it were not necessary to detail the approach of that invasion itself!

Below follows an addendum that Dr. McCall and I will be adding to future copies of the book. If you already have this book, write in for a printed copy of the notes below made to place in your book. Please send a self-addressed stamped envelope with your request. There is no charge. All future copies of "The Coming Russian Invasion" that we distribute, and those distributed by Moody Press, will include this addendum.

With the benefit of hindsight, those who have read "The Coming Russian Invasion of Israel" by Dr. Tom McCall and Zola Levitt can see that there is nothing to retract. Since the book followed the prophecy of Ezekiel 37-39 exactly, world events have only corroborated the prophecy and helped bring the fulfillment into focus. Nothing needs to be corrected in the original volume but much can be added at this point. Here is a brief overview of Ezekiel's picture of the invasion put in the form of the events transpiring with each participating nation.

LIBYA (PUT)

Here is a sparsely populated desert dictatorship which has come from a pre-feudal society to become one of the most menacing enemies of Israel in a short 15 years. It is foremost in the news today (1986) in view of Colonel Qaddafi's rabidly anti-Israeli, anti-American and pro-terroristic stance. Nothing would please this regime more than to cooperate in a massive international invasion of Israel.

To this end Qaddafi has been moving closer to Russia and it has even been said that he seeks a power-sharing arrangement with the Communists. He has boasted on international television about "aligning with Russia" and, Hitler-like, he has referred to Americans as "sub-human". He wants to vent a terrible anger and he can't really take on the United States. Israel is smaller and closer and, he thinks, weaker. A fomenter of terrorism he already has targeted Israel in the past.

Libya is given as an ally of Russia in the invasion in Ezekiel 38:5.

was badly damaged. Wheat will be needed because of the poisoned soil in the area of the disaster and cattle are being slaughtered because they are diseased. The agricultural production of the territory surrounding the accident may be spoiled forever! Ezekiel lays stress on the fact that Israel is a land of great herds of cattle (38:12, 14, etc.). It is far and away the best food producer of the Middle East and, in fact, achieves better food yield per acre than any nation in the world, including the U.S. In addition to its food problems Russia needs warm water ports, improved air fields and control of brains and technology of the level Israel possesses to continue its expansionist political policies.

The Russians may well be thinking right now that the precedent of a superpower invasion of a small Middle-Eastern nation was established by the American bombing run on Libya in April, 1986. Russia needs a distraction, right now, to change the headlines away from the nuclear tragedy and the political mishandling of that disaster.

Magog (Russia) is given as the leader of the invasion in Ezekiel 38:2.

PERSIA (IRAN)

An ally of the United States and of Israel at the time of the copyrighting of the book, Iran has descended into a backward society of fanatical Moslem reactionaries. Under Khomeini, Iran is viciously anti-Israeli and anti-American and suffers from an exhausting 5-year war with its Moslem neighbor, Iraq. Presently Iran is cultivating relations with the Soviet Union and it is very clear that its ultimate purposes would be best served by overrunning Israel and capturing Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock. The Russians would welcome the participation of this Eastern flank power in an invasion of Israel.

Persia is given as an ally of Russia in the invasion in Ezekiel 38:5.

MAGOG (RUSSIA)

The book details the identification of modern Russia with the biblical power of Magog. Russia is the superpower that has backed the Moslem nations with armaments for the purpose of annihilating Israel over the past 30 years. The atheistic USSR came perilously close to direct intervention near the close of the Yom-Kippur war (1973) when the Egyptian army was surrounded in the Sinai.

In Russia they may be concluding at this point that the Arab nations are simply not going to get the job done. Israel has become a real power relative to its neighbors and may require superpower intervention, in the Russian thinking. Russia supports Libya eagerly and deeply resents the democracy of Israel in the Middle East.

The Russians have their hands full at this point with the Chernobyl disaster and its aftermath. On the Chicago commodities market wheat prices shot up the day after the reactor explosion. Russia's food-belt

ETHIOPIA

Here is another case of a nation radically changing its alliances and its philosophy since the writing of the book. Formerly a monarchy under the Emperor Haile Selassie, Ethiopia was definitely pro-Israel. The Emperor called himself "the lion of the tribe of Judah" and imagined that he was the descendant of a liaison between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Ethiopia contained large numbers of Jewish people, who have since emigrated to the Promised Land. The government turned Marxist shortly after the publication of the book and has since deteriorated catastrophically. Stunned by famine the Ethiopians can only take direction from their masters to the north in Moscow. Ethiopia has actually become a most vocal critic of Israel in the meanwhile. Russia could well use a southern flank attacker of Israel. This would create a diversion from the primarily northern invasion forces, and compel the Israelis to divide their strength.

Ethiopia is given as an ally of Russia in the invasion in Ezekiel 38:5

GOMER, TOGARMAH

The tribal names, Gomar and Togarmah, appear to include the nations from Turkey up through the Warsaw Pact countries of Eastern Europe, as the book details. These territories take their orders from the Kremlin now and will certainly do so in the time of the invasion. The original names appear in Genesis 10:1 and the appearance of hostile nations to Israel in these very geographical areas most effectively corroborates the prophecy.

Gomer and Togarmah are given as allies of Russia in the invasion in Ezekiel 38:6.

SHEBA, DEDAN

When the Russian invasion occurs, these nations of the Arabian peninsula will raise objections. They probably include the oil rich kingdom of Saudi Arabia, whose airline building was targeted by Qaddafi in a terrorist attack in April, 1986. They are observers of the invasion and not participants.

Their objections are detailed in Ezekiel 38:13, where they supply a reason for Russia's aggression—"to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil."

"THE YOUNG LIONS"

Also raising objections to the invasion are those identified as "the young lions". Some have speculated that these might represent the nation of Great Britain, with its lion symbol, and its political offspring, the United States. If so, it is one of the few, if any, passages of Scripture where these modern Church Age nations are referenced. In any case, there is no clear participation of Western nations in the invasion itself, primarily because their help seems not to be needed. The God of Israel will settle the fray literally

before they can attend to the battlefield. The United States, at any rate, has already helped arm Israel to fend off just such an invasion.

The objections of the young lions to the invasion are detailed in Ezekiel 38:13.

EGYPT, LEBANON, SYRIA, JORDAN

In modern politics we are used to thinking of these close neighbors of Israel as being her most dangerous enemies. But none of these bordering powers are mentioned in Ezekiel's description. They have all been active in the various wars against Israel since 1948, but in the example of Egypt we can see a remarkable peace process. For the first time in 4,000 years Pharaoh came to Jerusalem in peace. The Camp David treaty of 1977 has taken hold and is being observed scrupulously, at least insofar as bearing arms is concerned. Similar peace treaties are signed in Beirut year-in and year-out with no such effect. Will the Almighty pacify these other enemies of Israel as well before the invasion takes place, or will Russia overestimate its position so drastically as to omit asking for their help?

Considering all of the above no Bible reader should be surprised if the Russian invasion of Israel doesn't happen very soon. And of course, the Rapture of the Church would most probably come ahead of it. (The Rapture is not attached to any prophetic event but is a free-floating and imminent issue. It can happen at any time but it is clear that if the world is to go into a divinely interrupted catastrophe like an attempted full-scale invasion of Israel, then the Church-Age is at an end. People would then not "believe in things not seen" but rather they would believe by sight. This is more characteristic of the Tribulation period than the Age of Grace and therefore the Rapture should precede the invasion. The Antichrist's covenant would logically immediately follow it since Israel, having been surprised and then delivered, would be very much in a posture to accept terms of peace).

We'll keep you posted in upcoming issues of this letter as events progress.

Or, if this is the last newsletter in this life then we will rejoice together in heaven!

Last Battle

In dealing with Armageddon we approach a subject that has been discussed since at least the days of the biblical prophets. Men have always felt that life on earth might end with a bang. Since the Genesis flood the wages of sin have been well understood.

We have been surveying end-times prophecy in the past few letters and we have now progressed to the difficult subject of the final battle, Armageddon. For further reference please obtain a copy of "The Coming Russian Invasion of Israel" from our ministry and sit down with an open Bible. You'll read an entire chapter, "Satan on the Battlefield", devoted to this important subject from a scriptural standpoint.

In the space we have here, suffice it to say that Armageddon will be the end of virtually all evil on the earth. It will be the climax of the Antichrist's bloody work in the seven year Tribulation Period to come, and it will involve the armies of the great powers of the world at that time. Basically, the powers called the King of the North and the King of the South will assault Israel from their respective directions; they seem to represent nations close to Israel and very hostile to her. If Armageddon were to happen immediately we would easily specify Syria and Libya, for example, to satisfy this prophecy. But conditions that obtain at the time of the battle will dictate exactly who the antagonists are.

The King of the East, however, is very easy to identify. He will march a 200,000,000-man army against the tiny nation of Israel with its population of 4,000,000 souls (Rev. 9:16)! China is of course the only nation now which could fill such a horde of assault troops, and it will be the only one in that position in the foreseeable future. Perhaps an uneasy alliance of nations from the Orient is involved. But in any case, the attack is directed against the Antichrist, who by this time will have set up a headquarters in Jerusalem (II Thess. 2:3,4).

It is very difficult to sum up a topic this size in a small space. But we might observe that Armageddon seems to be the ultimate result of the Antichrist's blasphemy. From the moment he declares himself to be God, causing Israel to revolt, he reveals a certain vulnerability to the rest of the world. He may appear to some to be less than Almighty God in his conceit. And the opposition of the Jewish people to this dictator of dictators will impress the world. The Antichrist may have feet of clay after all, they will surmise, and, in the way of the world in all times, some still more tyrannical tyrants will covet the throne.

It's difficult to imagine a battle the size of Armageddon, even to those who understand modern warfare. The forces that join this battle will take 3½ years to merely mobilize! Virtually all the armies of the whole earth will meet — those named above and the 10 nation confederacy of Europe under the Antichrist — in that quiet green valley in Galilee. They will have some 40 miles of flat plain in which to do their bloody work but they will spill over into other parts of Israel, most notably Jerusalem, which will be almost annihilated. Half the population of the Holy City will be lost and only the coming of the Lord, who said "and unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved," will spare the city of God (Matt. 24:22).

Modern news commentators know the term "Armageddon" and they use it rather carelessly. Small localized armed disturbances are referred to as Armageddons. And America was supposed to have seen its "Armageddon" in Vietnam. If they were impressed by those battles, they'll really be shocked by the actual Armageddon.

Commentators in the past have also provided various philosophies about Armageddon, and the destruction of the world in general. A very interesting body of Jewish literature assembled during the silent years between the Old and New Testaments shows some intriguing and very scriptural estimations of the final battle. Known as the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, these writings show us believing minds at work on the other side of Calvary. Without benefit of the New Testament, they drew their conclusions from Zechariah and the other prophets as to the end of the world and God's judgments. Their writings are a kind of Bible-based folklore. The writers might be thought of as the Scofield and Ryries of their day. They commented freely on the Word of God and gave themselves fanciful pen names. Some of the thoughts are impressive in their accuracy:

- 1) 1st Enoch - On the Day of great judgment the fallen angels will fall into the abyss. After the final judgment all wrong will be destroyed from the earth. The head of Days will sit at glory and the books will be opened.
- 2) The Psalms of Solomon - This book, in part, describes how the king of Israel, son of David, will shatter the unrighteous. He will also rule with a rod of iron. He'll purge the Godless nations.
- 3) Baruch - Speaks of a terrible tribulation on earth which is followed by the Messianic Kingdom. Nations will be judged, those who treated Israel wrongly will be utterly destroyed. Those who were kind will be spared.
- 4) The Sibylline Oracles - God's wrath is a fire. Before Messiah comes there will be a judgment of war, sword, and fire. Then will come the Kingdom on earth.

One might hear similar thoughts from teachers today, and certainly the Book of Revelation justifies much of what seems to be revealed to students of the Scriptures long before the first advent of Messiah.

This is not a pleasant subject. The best news is, of course, that believers won't attend this battle other than as the heavenly army of the Messiah in His second coming (Rev. 19:11-16). If we see the terrible Armageddon at all, it will be from a safe vantage point behind the white horse of the King of Kings.

"What a friend we have in Jesus!"

WAR AND PEACE

These are tough times in the Middle East, but several years ago I realized that this area in particular will see a thousand years of peace when the King returns.

The following is quoted from my book, The Cairo Connection, copyright 1978:

VISIT ISRAEL AND SEE THE PYRAMIDS

When all the peace proposals and all the wars have come and gone, Israel and Egypt will be friends. In the Kingdom to come, these two perennial combatants will be like one nation, and even Syria, so hostile to Israel at the moment, will be part of the friendship.

Today, if one wishes to visit both Israel and Egypt, or Israel and Syria, there is a serious passport problem. As matters now stand, one is required to go to a neutral point first when passing across these unfriendly borders. But in the great age of peace to come, the antagonists of the Middle East will be true brothers in peace. The tourists will have no problems at the borders, for as God Himself exalts:

“In that day there shall be a highway out of Egypt (through Israel) to Assyria, and the Assyrians shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptian shall serve with the Assyrians” (Isaiah 19:23).

ISAIAH SPEAKS

There are broad sections of prophecy concerning Egypt in the Old Testament, but they are all consummated in the magnificent and beautiful chapter, Isaiah 19. Jeremiah 46, Zechariah 14, and the lengthy analysis of Ezekiel, chapters 29-32, give a great many details about Egypt in prophecy. But Isaiah's beneficent remarks tie all the predictions together in one of the truly satisfying prophecies of peace.

Isaiah's chapter is not easy to understand, but Wilbur Smith, whom we credited earlier, and other theologians, have analyzed it very completely. “The Burden of Egypt,” as the chapter is “titled,” reviews in 25 verses the thousands of years of Egypt's important biblical career.

The first sixteen verses of the chapter are devoted to judgments on Egypt by God, which have been fulfilled through the ages. God predicted the idolatry of Egypt:

“And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards” (Isaiah 19:3).

God was not impressed with the worldly wisdom of the Egyptians:

“Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?

Where are they? Where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the Lord of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt” (Isaiah 19:11-12).

And God was not impressed with the strength of Egypt, predicting that the Israelis would overcome it:

“In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of hosts, which He shaketh over it.

And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the Lord of hosts, which he hath determined against it” (Isaiah 19:16-17).

But when all these judgments and troubles are over with, there follows some of the most hopeful and serene promises in all of prophecy. We should appreciate these thoughts in their full context:

“And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it.

And the Lord shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the Lord, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.

In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come

into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.

In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land:

Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance” (Isaiah 19:21-25).

What a glorious future Egypt has, and what a remarkable time of peace in the Middle East!

“AND JEHOVAH SHALL BE KNOWN TO EGYPT”

In the distant past, Egypt knew Jehovah and they learned to fear Him. Going all the way back to Abraham, it is obvious that Pharaoh appreciated the God of heaven and His immense powers.

Joseph frankly told Pharaoh that his own skill at dream interpretation was entirely dependent on the God of Israel. Moses threatened his Pharaoh with plagues from the Almighty, and He delivered in no uncertain terms. That Pharaoh, staggered by the ten brutal plagues and the loss of his entire army in pursuit of the Exodus, cannot have said that he didn't know Jehovah. He may not have liked Jehovah, but he very well knew Him.

But, of course, knowing the Lord and worshipping Him are two different things. Egypt continued in a dark age of paganism, unrelieved even today. It is remarkable to think that the land of the sun god of the age of pyramids, which then progressed through ages of wizards and magicians, various pagan deities, and thirteen centuries of the Islam faith, will someday return to the true God. But the breathtakingly accurate forecasts of Isaiah (such as the invasion of Israel by Babylon, the coming of the Messiah, the restoration of the Jews to Israel in the latter days) must always be taken seriously.

Now, of course, all the nations in the Kingdom will worship the Lord with no exceptions. As Zechariah prophesied:

“And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one” (Zech. 14:9).

But Egypt is particularly singled out as a nation that will be, indeed *must* be, faithful to the King of Jerusalem. Zechariah goes on:

“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.

And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles” (Zech. 14:16-19).

It almost seems as though Zechariah, in emphasizing the importance of appropriate worship at Jerusalem for all nations, singles out Egypt for an example. After all, if we today were to predict just which nation would be the most resistant to pilgrimages to the Jewish Temple, we would certainly come up with Israel's most dependable enemy from across the Sinai. So Zechariah is saying, in effect, “All of you have to do this, even *Egypt*.” If Egypt has to do this, then certainly every other nation will be expected to, the prophet assures us.

But getting back to Isaiah's broader view (which comments on the whole of the Kingdom and not just its outset), we can see that Egypt will be glad to worship the Lord. “They shall vow a vow unto the Lord and *perform* it,” Isaiah is happy to report. And the Lord will certainly recognize the worship of Egypt; “And He shall be entreated of them and shall heal them.”

Further reviewing Isaiah's wonderful verses, we see Syria enter the picture (Assyria, in Isaiah's reckoning, which may take in more of the northern and eastern Middle East than just Syria). Again, the very brutality toward Israel of ancient Assyria will melt away into peaceful alliance and common worship in the Kingdom. It should be appreciated that in Isaiah's time, the Assyrians were regarded as the most vicious of foreign conquerors, a warring people who terrorized all surrounding nations, took massive groups of captives and unfairly mistreated their spoils. It was Assyria which carried off the ten northern tribes of Israel and moved pagan peoples into the land, who were later called “Samaritans.” Assyria dictated life and death to the Middle Eastern world in her days of triumph and pillage.

But unquestionably Assyria is to become part of the family of God, along with Israel and Egypt, according to Isaiah. Each of the three nations receives a special title in the prophet's concluding verse of this chapter: Egypt, “My People;” Assyria, “The Work of My Hands;” and Israel, “Mine Inheritance.” The titles seem almost equal in this final, special benediction from the Lord, especially when compared to the long ages when Israel was strictly the “Chosen People,” and Egypt and Assyria were just so many countless pagans.

The Middle East will still be in the news every day; undoubtedly, in the Kingdom to come. But the news will all be good.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE KING

As we have shown in connection with the coming Russian invasion of Israel, a peace agreement between Egypt and the Holy Land is somewhat to be expected before the end. Leading up to the Tribulation Period, when the Russians will invade, something unusual must have happened to Egypt because she is not listed as one of Russia's allies.

But, just as clearly, there won't be *unbroken* peace between Egypt and Israel until the Kingdom itself. Armageddon knows of no peace alliances and the biblical “King of the South” is taken by most analysts to represent Egypt, or Egypt plus some additional territory in her area. The king of the South will attack at Armageddon.

The best and most cautious scenario might suggest that there will be a temporary peace arrangement between Egypt and Israel before the Russian invasion. After the invasion, peace will continue under the Antichrist's arrangement until the blasphemy in the Temple (II Thess. 2:3-4). Then, all Hell will literally break loose as all nations, certainly including Egypt, will converge against Israel.

In the last battle of Egypt and Israel at Armageddon, when Pharaoh-nechoh met King Josiah, the king of the Jews was slain. In the next battle at Armageddon, the King of the Jews will return in glory and put a stop to all war-making activities of unbelieving men.

“Glory!”

I've been looking forward to this moment in our end-times prophecy study. The believers always seem to dwell on the disasters of the Tribulation Period and Armageddon. Our study this time, however, deals with the delightful destiny of the Church in heaven, after the Rapture.

The material that follows is from our study booklet, Glory: the Future of the Believers. Read carefully: these things may come to pass in the next seven years.

IN HEAVEN

Once the believers arrive in heaven with the Lord, we have important matters to transact. We are not issued wings and harps, but instead we have a serious conference with the Lord, aimed at preparing us for our wedding. We are, at this time, the Bride of Christ; in heaven, we shall become the wife of the Lord.

The first event is a kind of review of our life of service for the Lord while on earth:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (II Cor. 5:10).

It would appear that each of us meets individually and privately with the Lord at this “judgment seat” in order to evaluate with Him our lives on earth. The emphasis is not on our sins, of course, which were forgiven long ago at the cross, but on our works. The believer is saved “unto good works” and of course has a responsibility as a disciple of Christ. If it were not that we were appointed to certain tasks on earth — as workers in a field, soldiers in the spiritual battle, and so on — we could all have gone to heaven the moment we were saved. As it is, we have accomplished, or failed to accomplish, certain assignments given us according to our gifts.

Paul expounds quite specifically on the standards in the judgment seat of Christ, and how our works are to be reckoned:

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. (I Cor. 3:11-13).

Paul first establishes that no foundation for this life can be laid outside of that in Jesus Christ. Good works done outside of Christ — those done by unbelievers — do not come into this Scripture, because, of course, the unbelievers will not be going to heaven. What good works, and sins, the unbelievers accumulate in this life will be presented at the Great White Throne of Judgment after the Kingdom.

After Paul establishes that the believer has laid his foundation in Christ, he now divides the work into two categories, calling them “gold, silver, and precious stones,” on the one hand, and “wood, hay and stubble.” Obviously, those are two very different rankings of quality. The Lord will try all of our works with fire.

The image is very clear, since fire will certainly show the difference between the gold, silver, and precious stones works and those of wood, hay and stubble. The precious metals and stones would not be harmed by fire, but the wood, hay and stubble will all be burned away, and that is the purpose of the judgment seat.

Obviously, each believer has a life of great variety to present to the Lord, and we cannot always be sure ourselves just which works of ours are considered of high value in heaven, and which are worth not more than those flammable materials. We recall in the Gospel the story of the man who prayed and fasted so much and thanked God that he was not of the class of the poor beggar who lay on his face at the back of the synagogue. The beggar, at the same time, was only pleading, “Have mercy on me, a sinner.” As the Lord explained the story it was found that the beggar's humility and pleas for mercy were the real gold, silver, and precious stones, and all of the holy protests of the supposedly righteous one in the front were the worthless hypocrisy of wood, hay, and stubble.

Paul now specifies that we shall be rewarded for the works that survive the fire:

If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward (I Cor. 3:14).

We shall receive jewels for our crowns for the good works we have done in this life. It is well to remember that the rewards of the Christian come at the end of this life in heaven and not on this earth.

Paul also specifies that we shall suffer loss for the works that do not qualify—the wood, hay, and stubble.

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire (I Cor. 3:15).

We must notice in the passage above the phrase “but he himself shall be saved.” God is very clear on the point that salvation is a free gift, not an earned prize. We cannot lose our salvation by bad works, and certainly not by sins, which were forgiven the moment we came to belief in Christ. We shall suffer loss of our rewards, in effect, for our bad works, but we shall not fall back out of heaven. Peter thought the heavy net of fish which he had “caught up” might break, and some fish might fall back into the water (John 21:11). However, the Lord had selected the fish on this occasion, and none were lost once they were caught up.

The fire, of course, is not meant to consume the believer. God has fire that does not burn, such as with the burning bush and the lake of fire. The fire is only to purify away the bad works, as fire sterilizes away bacteria from foods. The sense of the judgment seat of Christ is to prepare us as a spotless bride for the Lord (II Cor. 11:2). If we were to go on to our wedding with the Lord with the consciousness that our sins are forgiven, but with the memory of many bad works we had done in lifetimes of service, we would have, as it were, a guilty conscience, and we would not be the pure virgins the Lord wishes as His bride. Thus the judgment seat of Christ is the final preparation for the marriage supper of the Lamb. Just as any earthly bride adorns herself in her finest garments, so we will go before the Lord cleansed of all bad works, forgiven of all sins, and in effect, as perfect as He is Himself.

It sometimes surprises many believers, in their humility, that we will indeed be the equal of Christ in purity, in the future. But this is our destiny; the Scripture is very clear. Christ could not marry less a bride than He Himself is, and of course, we shall reign with Him in the Kingdom as the Queen on the earth.

This, then, is true Christianity, a transcendence of this worldly life, this worldly state, this worldly body, this worldly mind and this entire worldly labor—we trade it all for a state of eternal bliss in the presence of God Himself in Christ Jesus.

THE MARRIAGE

Now we are ready to marry the Lord.

It is fascinating to compare the events in heaven with the wedding tradition of Israel in the time of Christ. There was a seven day “honeymoon” in the bridal chamber for the bride and groom, preceding the reception or marriage supper. This pertains exactly to the seven years in heaven and the judgment seat of Christ, leading up to the marriage with Him. The Jewish wedding and all of its Gospel implications are explained fully in another book of this series, *A Christian Love Story*.

John covers the marriage scene for us in two glorious verses in his Revelation of Jesus Christ:

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints (Rev. 19:7-8).

The white linen costumes, or bridal gowns, that we shall wear when we marry the Lamb fulfill a fascinating Bible type that reaches back to the Tabernacle of ancient Israel (Exodus 25-30). In the Tabernacle, plain white linen was associated with pure righteousness. The linen curtains around the entire Tabernacle, the tent, as it were, were pure white. No one could enter through the sides or the rear because they would have to have been perfectly righteous to pass through the white linen. The door of the Tabernacle, however, was sewn with the colors of Christ — scarlet, purple and blue threads, indicating sacrifice, royalty and heaven. All the Israelites had to enter by the door and, of course, the implication was that they were entering by means of the Messiah. Jesus said “I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (John 10:9). The priests of the Tabernacle were obliged to wear the Messianic colors in their costumes, and the colors also appeared in the hangings of the various courts and on the coverings that made up the roof.

But now, the Church shall wear white! “Fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” The very fact that we can now appear in white—glowing white, as it were, as did Christ after His resurrection — testifies to our final perfection.

Paul compared earthly marriage to this great marriage of Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:21-33). In heaven, we will see the final fulfillment of the apostles’ patient exhortation of the infant Church.

When our marriage to the Lord is accomplished in heaven we will be ready to immediately return to earth with Him to occupy His Kingdom. This is exactly the manner in which, in the Israeli wedding, the bride returned with her bridegroom after the marriage to housing he had arranged for them. They did not remain in his father’s house but instead departed for their own abode.

A Job Well Done

Recently our ministry received a pleasant phone call from CBN, the largest Christian network. It seems that our program has achieved exceptionally high ratings and that was worth congratulations from the program director of the network.

You are backing a winner.

More than that you are backing a soul-winner. As our teaching reaches out further and further, there is no question that more lives are rededicated and more souls are saved. We hear this good news constantly in our mail.

Our high production values and location programming from Israel are responsible for a lot of this favorable viewer attention. Ultimately, you are the ones to be thanked. You have given us the means to create a most unusual and original kind of Christian program. Thank you for that. If the ratings go high enough we can get a better airtime.

Please keep up the support and we will keep the good programming coming.

Thanks again for a job well done.

Midnight at the Wall

On our recent trip to Israel I managed to fall asleep in the airplane on the way over. I slept like a baby. I must be getting old.

As a result, I found myself wide awake at bedtime in Jerusalem. We put the tired travelers to bed and then Jeff Seif, Josef, our faithful Israeli guide of many years, and I finally ended up at the Western Wall of the Temple, the so-called "Wailing Wall".

Our taxi driver must have thought we had some important prayers to make indeed. After much negotiation he agreed to wait for us and we found ourselves at the center of the earth.

It was there that Josef disclosed to me that he had become a believer. Of course, I was overwhelmed. It has been a job of years to transmit the faith to this good brother of the Holy Land.

Josef is the second guide who has come to faith primarily because of accompanying our tour groups. Naturally the guides are keen observers of people and they can discriminate true believers from mere professed Christians. I am delighted that our pilgrims provide so effective a witness. In years past our former guide, Simon, came to the Lord by the same means.

When an Israeli comes to the Lord it is not quite the "up-the-aisle" ceremony we are familiar with in the Western world. Josef simply said, "I have come to think the way you do." It was one of the most spiritual moments I ever enjoyed at the Wall, and there have been many of them.

You can see Josef on our new series of programs, "Israel, My Love". He is featured in numerous location scenes heading our group of tourists. He is particularly featured in the program about Galilee where he reads the Beatitudes in Hebrew at the scene of the Sermon on the Mount.

The Hebrew New Testament Josef reads from is one that our ministry provides to our Israeli friends. He fell into the habit of reading from it often, and of course, the Word of God never returns void.

When we all go to Israel for 1,000 years in the Kingdom to come, we can rest assured there will be two competent guides among us to show us the way home.

Going Home

In Psalm 137 we find the psalmist lamenting, saying, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" From his perspective there was only one place on earth that could ignite his affection, and he identifies that place in verse five, Jerusalem! Having been there recently, I can more readily appreciate what he means, for I too can consider Jerusalem to be of a "highest joy!"

You can't imagine how breathtaking it is to have your feet planted on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem. It was from this hill that Jesus entered the city, on the colt, to the throngs of Jewish people exclaiming, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

This city and land was the setting for the world's most important drama! This was the stage and it's amazing how well the location has been preserved! Jerusalem still is there, as the magnificent city set on a hill. The Galilee is still there, as are most of the towns and villas of Bible days.

I read the Bible now and as I read I see a "slide-show" in my mind. Pictures come to focus and not only do I read the Bible, but I actually see it! Israel isn't a vacation, it's an experience! Once you've tasted Jerusalem you'll become a psalmist too!

You'll need to write songs, for words alone won't suffice to express the experience that only Israel can give!

Jeff Seif