

# CHRISTADELPHIAN TRUTH GLEANER

BIBLICAL ~ HISTORICAL ~ CURRENT



*“Buy the truth and sell it not; Also  
wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.”*

*Proverbs 23:23*

Volume Number 5

Issue Number 3, 2006

## *~ Calling an Ecclesia of Chiefborns ~*

*“ .....To the general  
assembly and ecclesia  
of chiefborns, which  
are written in heaven,  
and to God the Judge  
of all, and to the spir-  
its of just men made  
perfect.”*

*(Hebrews 12:23)*



*John records the vision of the New Jerusalem, courtesy of Sarah Bouma, La Luz, NM*

# ~ Calling an Ecclesia of Chiefborns ~

*By Bro. Ronnie Sanders*

## Introductory Reading

### Matthew 4:23-25

<sup>23</sup>And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

<sup>24</sup>And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

<sup>25</sup>And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan."

### Matthew 5:1-16

<sup>1</sup>And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

<sup>2</sup>And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

<sup>3</sup>Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup>Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

<sup>5</sup>Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup>Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

<sup>7</sup>Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

<sup>8</sup>Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

<sup>9</sup>Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

<sup>10</sup>Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup>Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

<sup>12</sup>Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

<sup>13</sup>Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

<sup>14</sup>Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

<sup>15</sup>Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

<sup>16</sup>Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

## The Hope of The Calling

In volume one of *Eureka* brother John Thomas eloquently states a profound Bible truth. He writes:

"*Ecclesia* is a word compounded from the Greek *ek* 'out of', and *klesis*, 'a call or invitation.' Hence an *ekklesis* is 'an invitation to come out;' and the assembly of people convened in consequence of their acceptance of that invitation is an *ecclesia*. The mission of the apostles was to the Jews first, and afterwards to the Gentiles, for the purpose of announcing to them an invitation from the Deity to certain things, which, when accepted, became to the invited, 'the Hope of the Calling.' In delivering this message, or invitation, they distinctly defined the things to which their hearers were invited. In doing this, they informed them of the purpose of Deity; that He had 'appointed a day in the which the whole inhabited earth should be ruled in righteousness by the Anointed Jesus, whom he had raised from among the dead' (Dan. 2:44; 7:14; Acts 17: 31). When this name is completed - that is, when the last believer shall be inducted into it, and all its elements shall be glorified - it will constitute the *ecclesia* in its largest sense. When glorified, its members will occupy 'the heavens'; not the skies, but the apocalyptic heavens, to which the kingdoms of this world belong (Rev. 11:15; Dan. 7:18, 27). In the present state, they are 'an *ecclesia of Chiefborns, who have been enrolled for heavens*' (Heb. 12:23).



“But men and women become elements of this people of the Name *upon certain specified and indispensable conditions*. They are invited to Yahweh’s kingdom and glory; and they accept the invitation in believing the gospel of the kingdom and name, and subjecting themselves to *‘the obedience of faith.’* What Paul styles *‘the wholesome word of the Lord Jesus’*... From these premises, then, it is evident that an Ecclesia is a community of men and women, who have accepted an invitation to the kingdom and glory of the Deity; in believing the promises and testimonies concerning the kingdom and name of Jesus Anointed; and in being immersed into him: by which faith and obedience they have been *‘washed from their sins in his blood; and made kings and priests to the Deity, even to the Father;’* and so separated from the body of mankind for the Age to Come.”

Consider the significance of these words in light of Jesus’ teachings on the mount! As a community of people we have accepted an invitation from Deity, Yahweh, the Father, out of whom proceeds all things, the Creator and Sustainer of every existing thing; or as brother Thomas says, *“from the star of the first magnitude to the minutest insect of the air.”* Yahweh, He who will be manifested in a multitude of beings possessing incorruptibility and life, has separated us from the body of mankind of this present age, to become the future stars and constellations of the new heavens. And now, as members of that community, Yahweh wants us to live our lives as aliens in this present evil world of mankind, denying the flesh with its affections and lusts, and laboring for that which endures unto everlasting life. He does not require that we live in isolation by physically withdrawing from the world but that we separate ourselves to Him and to His service in every aspect of our lives, manifesting in our lives the faith that binds us to our hope and reflects the glory to come. This is our only logical response, our reasonable service, in appreciation of the great salvation that has been offered to us in our weakness.

We separate ourselves from the world because of the teachings of Jesus Christ. The teachings of the Bible stand in direct opposition to the attitudes and philosophies of the world. Our allegiance is to a higher calling.

Worldly systems encourage fleshly ambition based on a human concept of success; an ambition sustained by conceit, pride and self-gratification. The disciples of the world are taught that success comes through intimidation and retribution.

This is the world described in the Bible; that is, all human activity in which Yahweh is disregarded or disobeyed. It is a way of life without Yahweh. The world is flesh-centered and Yahweh sees the world lying in its own wickedness and sin, beguiled by its own wisdom and serving its own ends. The world resists the wisdom of the true God and the Lord Jesus Christ. The disciples of the world do not want to know the true God of Israel, because they believe their future, their salvation, lies within the power of mankind. *“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”* (John 3:19).

## Be Ye Separate

***We separate ourselves from the world because of the teachings of Jesus Christ. The teachings of the Bible stand in direct opposition to the attitudes and philosophies of the world. Our allegiance is to a higher calling. Worldly systems encourage fleshly ambition based on a human concept of success; an ambition sustained by conceit, pride and self-gratification.***

As members of the ecclesia of Christ, we have accepted an invitation, with all its attendant privileges and responsibilities, to come out of the vanity and corruption of this world into a new relationship with Yahweh and His Son.

As stewards of Christ’s ecclesia, our daily code of living should be based on the principles expounded by him in the Sermon on the Mount and perfectly illustrated in his life of righteousness. Now we should know that these words of Jesus form the basis of all righteousness. The whole of the morality taught in the New Testament has its roots in these words and in them Jesus defines the characteristics he will be looking for when he comes to judge his household. I’d like to encourage each of you to read these verses every day in addition to your regular

## Bible study:

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.”*

Now, the way Jesus used this word “*blessed*” was somewhat new to the Jewish multitudes who heard him. The Greek is ‘happy’ and refers not to a temporary passing condition but a continuing condition of the heart manifested in the character and personality of Christ’s brethren. We know what the Jews had come to believe as reflected in the discourse between Jesus and the rich young ruler in Matthew 13, that temporal blessings were what signified righteousness in a man. But Jesus’ use does not describe something to be gained by way of material success in this life, but a comfort and happiness knowing that if this law is written in our hearts, we are his brethren and possessors of great and precious promises. This is not the blessedness as comprehended by the world. Worldly wisdom is based on passing things but Christ is the wisdom of Yahweh. The teachings of Jesus are not in harmony with the wisdom of the world and can never be because the world sees them as mere abstract ideals that can never find any real practical application in the world of mankind. All we have to do is observe what goes on in the world to realize this with the wars and violence and our amoral society.

But Jesus says in John 15, “*These things I command you*”, and in John 12:49, “*The Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say.*” The commandment called for simple obedience, and he says again in John 15, “*Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.*” He says in Matthew 7:21, “*He that doeth the will of my father shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven.*” And in Matthew 7:24, “*He that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, shall be likened unto a man that built his house upon a rock.*” The world which lies in darkness cannot fully comprehend that the secret of the law of Christ does not lie in any conscious actions of his disciples loving their enemies or turning the other cheek. On the contrary, those actions are the natural expression, the blessed condition of the life of one who has accepted the invitation of Deity. These actions are the natural expressions of a person who truly appreciates what Yahweh has done for him in Christ. This is the way of life of a person who loves Yahweh and His Son. This is the life of a steward of Christ’s ecclesia.

When these things are understood and accepted, any mystery or difficulty in how these teachings of Jesus can relate to this current age quickly vanish. His teachings and his commandments are not intended to be a moral guide for the regulation of society. They are spoken to Christ’s brethren and in them Jesus portrays the character of his true followers. They call for the restraint and discipline of the natural man in those who are called to share and reflect the glory of Yahweh in a future state of existence. Yahweh expects us to manifest that hope now in our faith and love of Him and His Truth.

There is a beautiful analogy that brother Thomas draws between the love of a husband and wife and the love of a believer for the Truth. We would all probably agree that true love is the one great secret to a successful marriage in this age. Brother Thomas equates this principle of true love (of course on a more sublime level) to the members of Christ’s ecclesia based on the scriptural concept of the ecclesia as the bride of Christ. Just as the partners in a marriage who truly love one another have forsaken all others and become one in heart and mind, **true** followers of Christ (faithful stewards of his ecclesia) have rejected this carnal world and its deceits.

Brother Thomas writes:

“By grace are men saved, through faith that works by love, and purifies the heart (Eph. ii. 8; Gal. v. 6; Acts xv. 9). Assuming then, that a sinner ‘*believes the things of the Kingdom of the Deity and of the Name of Jesus Anointed;*’ and that he has fallen in love with them; and that, loving what he believes, and the effect of this affectionate belief, or ‘believing with the heart,’ has been to alienate his affections from ‘the pleasures of sin,’ and ‘earthly things’; and has caused him to set them upon the things anew, or exalted, where the Christ is on the right hand of the Deity sitting; assuming this to be the state of his mind and disposition, he is then in a condition to receive repentance, and to be saved from his past sins, and to obtain a right to eternal life, through the Name of Jesus Anointed, who is ‘the Lord the Spirit.’ But, if the sinner have not this affectionate belief, he can receive nothing through the name; because he has no faith for justification, and no disposition such as Abraham had, to be reckoned for repentance. Without the faith that works by love and purifies the heart, it is impossible to please the Deity.”

## The Character of the Chiefborns

The apostle Paul, in the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of Romans, reminds us that our lives should be an outward manifestation of faith in what Yahweh has promised and should reflect our appreciation of what He has done for us in Christ. And, if this is so, **our aims, objectives and behavior will be noticeably different** from those around us as we seek for the glory, honor and immortality that comes only through Christ.

Jesus and Paul say that we, as faithful stewards of the ecclesia, should live peaceably among all men. We are to seek wisdom from above which is pure and peaceful; not provoking any to wrath nor seeking opportunity to quarrel with any person. If we're following that wisdom then we're studying those things that make for peace, and thereby is our faith manifested and Yahweh is glorified.

This is the law of Agape Love. This is the way of non-resistance, and the foundation of the world's redemption is laid upon this divine principle. Jesus says in Matthew 5 beginning at verse 38:

*“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*”

Jesus says, “... pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;” and Paul quoting Proverbs 25 says: “Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.”

The obvious lesson is that compassion and prayer for our enemies can bring the opportunity for peace and possibly, if only temporarily, reconciliation. A true follower of Christ loves his enemies, turns the other cheek, prays for those who persecute him, and cuts off the hand that

## Faithful Stewards

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offends because all those things are the natural expressions of the life into which we have been called. One who is poor in spirit will not look for the mote in his brother's eye. One who truly hungers and thirsts after righteousness will not be seeking worldly success and material wealth. Jesus says these people are blessed because this way of life is a reflection of their heart, a manifestation of their love for Yahweh and His Truth and not outward appearance only. The righteousness of this person exceeds that of the Pharisees and Sadducees who, in their hypocrisy and materialism, sought only the favor of men and temporal rewards.

Now an essential aspect of the life of one who truly loves the Truth, one who truly loves Deity and appreciates what He has done for him in Christ, is discussed by the apostle Paul in Romans 13. He says beginning at verse 1: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. He continues in verse 7: “Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”

This world, which lies in wickedness and ungodliness,



is not the world of a follower of Christ. Faithful followers of Christ spend their lives seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness as strangers and pilgrims in this earth. Our attitudes and actions regarding the powers that be are based on this fundamental principle of our faith. We know that the governments of mankind are ordained by Yahweh and are used by Him according to His divine purpose, ultimately to the benefit of His called out ones. And so we should ask ourselves just how do we stand in relation to the governments of the world? Jesus made no critical comments about any individual government or ruling authority. His comments about all governments were simple: *“The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve”* (Luke 22:25-26).

The follower of Christ, for the Lord’s sake, must submit to law and order and to rulers and authorities. A true follower of Christ does not belong to or sympathize with any political party or power. A true follower of Christ does not openly criticize the ruling authorities but he does not deny the fact that evil exists in worldly systems. He does not condone or take delight in that evil but with the insight that comes with a knowledge of the Truth, a believer can see, with a spiritual eye, the end of all this ungodliness.

*Seeking first the kingdom of God* means that we take no part in any form of politics (at any level), the armed forces, or law enforcement, and we separate ourselves from the world’s general culture of sin. It means that we do not participate in reform movements or protests aimed at changing public opinion or established laws. The only change we seek is the establishment of the Kingdom of God in this earth.

Paul says: *“whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.”* We have to remember that Jesus and Paul lived under one of the most extreme forms of government that has ever existed on this earth. Believers were regularly persecuted and endured torture and all forms of suffering. Jesus and Paul didn’t seek social reform or political power simply because true followers of Christ, those who have accepted an invitation to the

Kingdom and glory of the Deity, take no interest in and certainly do not join politically oriented organizations or protest groups of the current age. We should realize that one consequence of participation in politics is the possibility of doing harm to our neighbors or other people through the results of any reformed policy or legislation; reform that we, by participation, could be partly responsible for. And, most important of all, is the danger of committing serious error in going against Yahweh’s will in anything He has ordained. Christ set the standard, and we are not to deviate from that in this age of materialism and self-indulgence (Rom. 12:1-2).

As stewards of the ecclesia we render unto Caesar *and* unto Yahweh. As true believers we are to be decent law abiding members of our communities, obeying not only all laws established by the ruling authorities, but rules

## Faithful Followers

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and regulations at the workplace and school. Our reasonable service to Yahweh requires us to obey, without disdain, all manmade laws (even those we regard as trivial or foolish) that do not conflict with the laws of Yahweh. We are blessed in that the laws of man in this country very seldom conflict with the laws of Yahweh. The most common examples of conflict with the ordinances of Caesar would be the call to jury duty or military service in the event of the draft. The course of action for a believer is obvious here, and we can be thankful that we live in a country where we do have recourse in these cases.

There is a great exhortation to us in a letter which Jeremiah sent to the *“residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon...”* He gave

positive, helpful instruction to all strangers and pilgrims in this world. This advice came from Yahweh and it told the people to become resigned to their environment, to build houses, plant gardens, marry, beget children, and “*seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof you shall have peace*” (Jer. 29:7). Now, this was not a call for the people to join in social reform or political activism to relieve any oppression or injustice, but on the contrary, it was a call to remembrance that they were strangers and pilgrims looking for a better country, a “*city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*”

And again, most believers today live in countries which allow freedom to worship and freedom to discuss and teach the Truth. We should not neglect to pray for the peace of our country, subject to Yahweh’s will. To this end Paul in his letter to Timothy confirms the advice of Jeremiah: “*I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgiving, be made for all men: for kings, and all that are in high places, that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God and our saviour*” (1 Timothy 2:1-3).

There is a great lesson in the answer Jesus gave to the Pharisees when he was asked about giving tribute to Caesar. He was not torn between loyalty to the state and Yahweh. His allegiance to Yahweh was greater than to this world. The lesson is that we should fulfill any claims the world has on us unless and until they clash with the will of Yahweh. The follower of Christ obeys the laws of the land not out of loyalty to his country but because of his allegiance to the ordinances of Yahweh. Don’t begrudge Caesar his tribute of denarii and ordinances and statutes but “*love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*” Caesar and all he represents will soon return to dust and vanish forever. Our devotion should be to those things that are unseen and eternal, our lives and characters a reflection of the example set by Jesus.

## **Love, the fulfillment of the Law**

Paul reiterates a fundamental teaching of Jesus in Romans 13:9: “*For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love*

*is the fulfilling of the law.*”

Paul is reminding us of a vital principle taught by Jesus: love is the fulfillment of the whole character of the law. Paul quotes the last five of the ten commandments which he says are summarized in what James refers to as the royal law: “*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*” He’s telling us that love should be an active living principle among Christ’s brethren. An active sincere love means that the spirit of the law is written in our hearts. This would be highly effective in preventing offences and maintaining peace among us.

Now, holiness forbids us from associating with sin and error, and it also forbids us from passing final judgment on our brother. But on the other hand, we are absolutely NOT to allow error or obvious sin in the ecclesia. We should remember that sincere love for our brethren in full appreciation of our responsibilities as ecclesial stewards does not mean that we (guided by fleshly impulses) blindly condone or even tolerate obvious sin or error within the body of Christ. Love for the body of Christ does not mean that we ignore or try to minimize doctrinal error or sin among our brethren. This stands as an absolute and undeniable scriptural principle. As stewards of the Truth we place the welfare of the ecclesia (of Christ’s body) above inclinations of the flesh and its deceitfulness. We know that if one member suffers from spiritual sickness, the health of the whole body is affected. “*Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*” If this is true, if the law is truly written in our hearts, we will faithfully perform our reasonable service to Yahweh and thereby give Him glory, demonstrating, from our hearts, our love and appreciation for His great salvation and the grace in which we stand.

Paul says in Romans 13:12: “*The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*”

## **Conclusion**

We all wonder how much longer this worldly system with its violence and detestable practices can continue. Surely the night is far spent and hopefully what we’ve talked about here will help to remind us of how we, as

## On the Threshold...

***We are on the threshold of the one great event of the ages. We have been called by Deity to separate ourselves from the world of mankind to the apocalyptic heavens of that Age to Come. If we are to attain to the heavens that rule, the stars and constellations of the New Heavens, we must continue steadfast in our reasonable service to Yahweh, being lights in the midst of the darkness of this world, manifesting our love for the Holy One of Israel and His Son, our Redeemer and great High Priest.***

stewards of the ecclesia, should be living our lives in this present world of evil.

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***We are an "Ecclesia of Chiefborns, enrolled for the heavens" of the Age to Come.*** As stewards of that Ecclesia, our reasonable service to Yahweh in this present evil age is to live lives of holiness. Our spiritual act of worship in appreciation of this grace in which we stand is to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, which is holy and pleasing to the Holy One of Israel.

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:3-7).*

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Watchman, What of The Night?

**Upcoming Watchman issue for December 2006**

- "All Eyes on Israel" - The "Burdensome Stone" upon which all nations are fixed.
- The Biblical Truth about the division of Islam between East and West?
- The Damascus-Tehran-Moscow Axis
- The burden of Damascus, prelude to Armageddon.
- Energy - The New Russian super weapon - the makings of a Franco-German-Russian Alliance.
- The Papal quest for "re-Christianizing Europe" - building the next Papal empire.
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# *The Glory of Yahweh Revealed Through the Heroes of Israel*

## *Part 4 - Judges Chapter 1*

### *~ Triumph through Faith vs. Weakness of the Flesh ~*

*By Bre. Al Bryan and Bryan Cram*

## **Outline**

- I Judges 1:1-2** *“Praise and Hearing”*
- II Judges 1:3-4** *“Calling and Election of Believers”*
- III Judges 1:5-7** *“The Power of Death Destroyed”*
- IV Judges 1:8** *“Jerusalem, A City under Siege”*

### **I. Praise and Hearing**

In our introduction to the book of Judges, we considered the placement of the book within the chronicle of Scripture as well as the place of the Israelite among the peoples of Canaan. We have shown that the book marks a definite transition period between the work of Joshua the conqueror and the establishment of the Throne of the LORD in Jerusalem under David. Typically speaking, therefore, the book of Judges purposely represents the times of the Gentiles in which the faithful would have no king, save Yahweh. It is a book of many examples to which we can look for guidance as well as knowledge. It is a book of symbols, a book filled with parable and prophecy that foretells the work of Christ. Within its pages we also find the high and holy calling of Yahweh’s servants, those few (elected from among the many) who will follow after the faithful leaders of Israel, those who are ordained unto eternal life (Acts 13:48). In the opening verses of the book, Yahweh clearly sets forth this principle of Divine election as a key ingredient in His master plan for fulfilling His purpose in the earth (Rom. 9:11; 11:5-7; 2 Peter 1:10). Let us now peer into the book and see what lessons we can glean from the wealth of detail that Yahweh has seen fit to record.

**Judges 1:1-2:** *“Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand.”*

In the account before us we find that Judah is chosen by Yahweh to lead the other tribes and is commanded to go forth to conquer and prepare an inheritance in the land of their forefather Abraham. This act of obedience on

Judah’s part is true to the meaning of his name: bringing “praise” to the God of Israel, a foreshadowing of the day when Jesus (the *lion of the tribe of Judah*) will bring forth the praises of Yahweh, having rendered perfect obedience, bringing salvation to the condemned race of Adam.

But Judah was not alone in the battle for the inheritance, nor will Messiah be alone in the battle for and administration of the Age to come. Those *who will be* a part of the future Age will be found preparing and busy-ing themselves right now in the service of Yahweh out of a love and a desire to please Him. Such men and women of faith are foreshadowed by Simeon, the only tribe among Israel that heeded the call to the battle for Canaan. Simeon means “hearing” [Heb. *shimon*, from the root word *shama*: to *hear intelligently* (often with implication of *attention, obedience*, etc.; causatively to *tell*, etc.)], and we know from Paul that “*Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God*” (Rom. 10:17). From this principle being enacted by the tribe of Simeon we see that it is through *both hearing and decisive action* (understanding-faith-works) on a personal and then a collective level that we will, Yahweh willing, receive our eternal inheritance. It is unfortunate that the principle of “good works” is sometimes confused with the “works of the law of Moses”. The works of the Law are indeed “dead works” at this point in time, seeing that they were fulfilled in Christ’s offering of himself. But fruitfulness in the sense of *works of the spirit* in the service of the Truth is a characteristic of the elect of all ages. Indeed, love and good works are the *evidence of faith*, necessary elements to develop a righteous character in those who are called out of darkness (Col. 1:10; I Tim. 5:7&10; 2 Tim. 2:21; Titus 1:16; Prov. 15:19; Matt. 25:26-30). This principle of tried faith is repeated throughout the Bible, for without tried faith, no one will enter the Kingdom. “*That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ*” (I Peter 1:7; Rev. 7:14).

## II. Calling and Election of Believers

**Judges 1:3-4:** “*And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot [allotted territory], that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him. And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men.*”

This passage sets forth the same calling and election of all those who would be true Christadelphians as expressed by Jesus (Yahshua) saying, “*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*” (Matt. 25:34). This is a calling to “rise up” from the depths of sin into the “heavenlies” in Christ, that is “*the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 3:14). This principle is also epitomized in the fourth chapter of the Apocalypse where John is given the invitation to “*come up hither and I will show thee things which must be hereafter*” (Rev. 4:1). Here John is called up in vision to the future political heaven where he beheld the rainbow angel gathered about the throne of Christ. The throne, says the spirit, resembled an emerald, the fourth foundation stone of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:19). This illustrates the four-square Israel of the Deity in full manifestation of glory and power. The invitation to this future state was made to John *as a representative* of all individuals of faith – those who answer the call of the Gospel, the “*good news of the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ*”.

Even among the failing ecclesias of Asia Minor, the Divine appeal was declared amidst a lax majority that was slipping (if not turning away) from the Truth. “**Who hath ears to hear let him hear**” is the seven-fold invitation to life for those hearers and doers of the Word. Those who heeded the call were men and women well armored and prepared to follow after their captain (the Lion of the tribe of Judah) into the battle field of adversity. These are they who will ultimately triumph over sin (Eph. 6:10-18) as did Judah and Simeon in the account before us. We do not know which of the first century believers answered the call to faith and righteousness, but we can have a say in whether or not we personally will

put off dull sloth and take positive action. Though we cannot “earn a place in the kingdom”, the fact remains that it is through Christ alone that our faith, love, and works are made effectual. Paul writing to the Ephesians states that “*by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast*” (Eph. 2:8-9). The key phrase in this passage is **through faith**. Faith is evidenced by our works of righteousness and is made effectual by the grace of Yahweh through Jesus. Judah and Simeon demonstrated their faith by taking decisive action to conquer the enemy of Yahweh. The formula must be whole and complete: faith, love, works, and grace. These must be manifested together through obedience to divine principles and practice. Any suggestion that falls short of this delicate balance is folly.



**Lord Bezek orders his Canaanite confederacy**

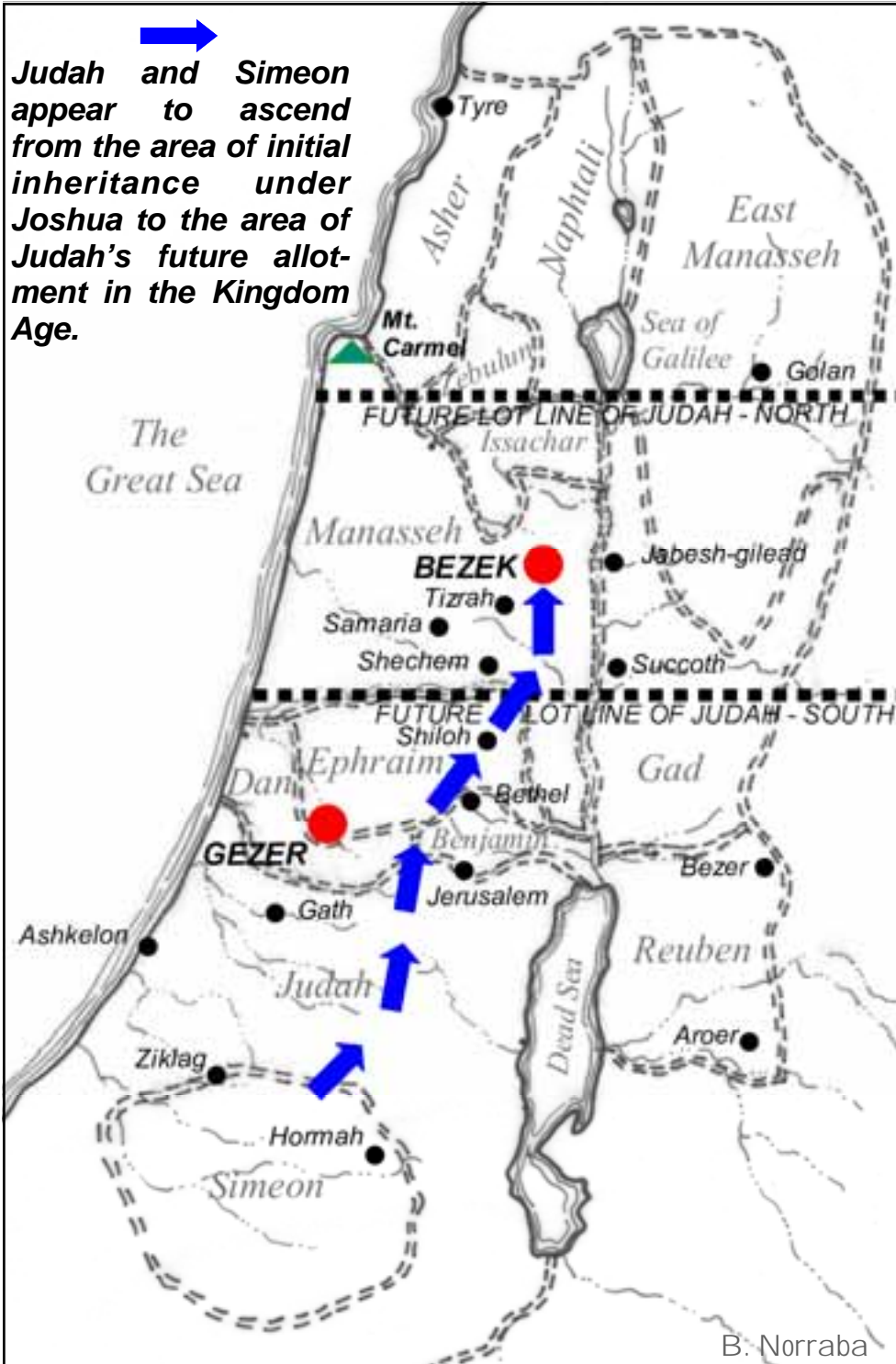
By Tissot

## III. The Power of Death is Destroyed (Adonibezek, Lord of Lightning, Lord of the Breach)

**Judges 1:5-7:** “*And they found Adonibezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. But Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.*”

We now turn our attention to the beginning of Israel taking possession of the land following the conquest of the Canaanites by Joshua. While we have previously





➔  
**Judah and Simeon appear to ascend from the area of initial inheritance under Joshua to the area of Judah's future allotment in the Kingdom Age.**

This period of conquest begins at a Canaanite city called Bezek. Eusebius of Caesarea (c.260-339 AD), in his work entitled *Onomasticon*, speaks of two villages of this name as being 17 Roman miles (approximately 12 English miles) northeast of Shechem, on the way to Scythopolis. The International Bible Encyclopedia identifies this as the modern site of Khirbet Ibziq, and suggests that the army probably assembled here for battle or on the neighboring height called Ras Ibziq, a mountain 2,404 feet above sea level.

The Biblical account records that Judah called to Simeon to “*Come up with me into my lot*”, or inheritance. This is noteworthy because neither Judah nor Simeon had any inheritance this far north of Jerusalem in the vicinity of Bezek. Instead, this would have been well within the borders of Manasseh. Even if the alternate site of Gezer were chosen (thought by some scholars to be the Bezek of the Judges account), this city would also fall within the borders of Ephraim according to Joshua 16:3, being some 19 miles north west of Jerusalem. What then can be the answer to this riddle? It is suggested that in looking at this account as a whole that we not forget who shaped the events and recorded the message that transcends this period of history and yet looks to the future where Messiah enters the picture. There in the future we will find the final inheritance of Judah and Simeon along with the other tribes in the Kingdom Age as described by the prophet Ezekiel (Ch. 48:7-25). It appears that within the future inheritance of the tribes the answer to the riddle may be found, as the area in question falls squarely within the **future allotment** to the tribe of Judah. This inheritance will be eternal, made possible by the atoning work of Yahshua by which he became both Lord and Christ.

Seeing that all names and places in the

discussed the meanings of the names of the Canaanites, it is worth reiterating that the Hebrew root for Canaanite signifies “*humiliation*”, in the sense of being humbled or subdued. Here, in the first chapter of the Judges this meaning comes into play with the Perizzites (“*an unwallled village*”), together revealing the condition of the Gentile nations before Yahweh: void of His protection, the nations are destined to be brought down low from their haughty position in relation to Israel (Isa. 45:23-15). Adonibezek, leader of the Gentiles at this point in the account, is certainly a fit representative of what will happen to the nations when confronted by the future leader of Judah and Israel.



Bible are important, we believe that there is much to be learned from a study of the details of this account. “Bezek” (Strong’s 965, *bazaq*) means a “flash of lightning” or “fragments”, and according to Young’s it means a “breach”. There appears to be a relationship between these meanings if we look at several other related Hebrew words. For example, the Hebrew word for lightning is *baraq*, which can signify a “flashing” or “two-edged sword”. Such a sword of spirit power may be used to cleave or sever (Heb. 4:12), and the root word signifies to “cast forth”, hence causing a “breach” between two things that were once joined.

Next we consider Adonibezek, the king over this Canaanite city. Adoni means “sovereign” or “lord”, which when accompanied with *bezek* gives us a “lord of lightning”, a sovereign having power to sever, causing a fragmentation or a *breach*. Without question, this is exactly what Adonibezek accomplishes in the literal account before us. By his own confession he brought his enemies into subjection “having their thumbs and their great toes cut off”, thus they were brought into bondage under his sovereign power.

It would be tempting to simplify our consideration by looking at the typical relationship between Adonibezek and Christ our Lord (Adoni), who cut off sin in the flesh (sever/breach) and leave it at that. Although we believe that there is certainly a connection between the two, there are broader principles of the atonement worth considering that are confirmed in this account.

We must keep in mind that the root cause for an atonement being necessary is sin; more particularly, the first sin in the Garden of Eden. The result recorded in Genesis 3 was that Adam and all his posterity were condemned to return to the dust of the ground (Gen. 3:19). As such they were brought into the “bondage of corruption” (Rom. 8:21) and became by nature servants of sin (Romans 6:16). In addition Yahweh “sent him [Adam] forth from the garden” (Hebrew *shalach*, to send away, cast out, forsake), hence a breach was made between man and Yahweh that could only be solved by a Divinely-appointed means. We know that this “appointed means” would involve the cutting off of sin’s flesh, a principle that appears to be acted out in the account before us in the person of Adonibezek. After this fashion this “lord of

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the breach” represents sin which reigns as a sovereign lord over all mankind, even extending its grip over the balance of the earth (Rom. 8:22). Based upon Romans 5:19, Bro. Thomas entitles this principle *The Constitution of Sin* and remarks that “It is the constitution of the world; and as the world is sin’s dominion, or the kingdom of the adversary, it is the constitution of the kingdom of sin” (*Elpis Israel* pg. 129, Logos edition). This is a universal condition which had to be overcome by our Savior if the way of life was to be preserved.

Let us now change our vantage point so that we may see the “appointed means” by which sin and death would be dealt a fatal blow, providing a way by which men may receive “the sentence to the pardon of life” (*Elpis Israel*, pg. 135) and by which the breach of sin would ultimately be healed. Genesis 3 provides a starting point: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15). Here is revealed the battle of the ages between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman that we have all been taught ever since our earliest days in Sunday School. This is a battle that was waged in the person of Jesus, a battle in which he emerged as the victor, becoming both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36) destroying “him that had the power of death, that is, the diabolos.” Likewise, this is a battle that must be waged by all of Yahweh’s servants “that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin” (Rom. 6:6). Thus the conquering and removal (or covering) of sin by the blood of the perfect sin offering (Christ, and those related to his covenant sacrifice via baptism) embodies the doctrine of the atonement. Yahweh, in His mercy, provided His Son as the deliverer to remove the breach and abrogate the sentence of condemnation (*katakrima*, meaning *an adverse sentence* – Rom. 5:16 and Rom. 8:1) upon the race. The bringing in of another law to abrogate the first may be entitled “*The Constitution of Righteous-*

*ness*” (see *Elpis Israel*, pg. 134-139, for an in-depth explanation). In process of this final victory which brings in the righteousness of ages, Christ will also ultimately rule as “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:16). In other words, the righteous reign of Christ and his associates shall completely displace the current system of sin set up by fallible flesh. In the account before us, we believe that this process is represented by the overthrow of Adonibezek through the warfare of Judah and Simeon.

The Apostle Paul brings this “battle of the ages” before us using a similar personification of sin versus righteousness as a sovereign lord of power vying for victory.

*“For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence [paraptoma – a side slip, willful transgression, offense – from the root para - from beside (nigh unto), and pipto – to fall] of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation [katakrima – adverse sentence]; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification [dikaioma – render just] of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made [kathistemi - constituted] sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made [kathistemi - constituted] righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence [paraptoma] might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:17-21).*

The doctrine of the atonement enumerated in these verses is confirmed for us in the hidden lesson of Judges 1 and further authenticates the Divine authorship of the principles at hand. However, let us briefly summarize the subject from several additional vantage points that will further strengthen our understanding of the account, and most importantly, the principles that we believe to be the Truth.

### 1. Judah’s Victory Over Sin:

In Hebrews 2:14 we are told “*that through death he [Messiah – the lion of Judah] might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil [diabolos]; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*” In a single utterance, the anti-type of Judah’s victory over Adonibezek is expressed. It is Christ who overcame sin and brought it into bondage

in his own body. Submitting to His Father’s purpose, Christ willingly cut it off. His personal battle against sin came to a climax outside the city walls of Jerusalem in the same manner that Adonibezek was brought by Judah to a place outside the Jebusite fortress (Jerusalem) and put to death (for Israel had not yet obtained the city). This should come as no surprise when we consider two other incidents that bear upon the same principles and that occurred in the same location, though separated in time by 1000 years. First, nearly five hundred years before the time of the Judges, Abraham offered up Isaac in a figure of sacrifice, and received him again in the figure of resurrection upon Mt. Moriah:

*“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure” (Heb. 11:17-19).*

Then, nearly five hundred years after our Judges account, David defeated a great champion of the flesh, Goliath, and brought his head likewise to Jerusalem as a figure of the ultimate victory over sin, through Christ (I Sam. 17:54), “*and they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull*” (Mark 15:22). These amazing facts do not merely amount to “Bible trivia” as some would have it, but are firm evidence of the Divine authorship of the Bible – a book that presents the “heavenlies in Christ” in no less glorious detail than the natural heavens above, the complete depths of which are unknown to mortal man.

### 2. Hearing, Working, Walking:

Under the Law of Moses, the priests were sanctified by the offering of two rams. “*And he slew it; and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron’s right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. And he brought Aaron’s sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet*” (Lev. 8:23-24). **Hearing, Working, and Walking** uprightly in the light of the LORD is the great antitype. It is sin alone which hinders this effort toward godliness in the bodies of sinful men, even as Adonibezek hindered his enemies physically. At the same time, for the man of God to be successful in the race before him, he must himself *cut off* sin in the flesh. “*And if thy right hand*



## JUDGES - PLATE NO. 7

### ~ *Where Israel Lived in the Times of the Judges* ~

The children of Israel, under Joshua, invaded Canaan around 1450 B.C. and thereafter began to colonize the land. Whilst the Canaanites lived predominately in centralized villages centered near strong walled or fortress cities (Num. 13:28; Deut. 1:28; Josh. 10:20; Josh. 19:35), the Israelites were predominately rural village dwellers, living an agrarian lifestyle.

Within the last half century, archaeologists have discovered about 300 small agricultural villages that sprang up throughout the central hill country of Canaan between the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C., usually far removed from Canaanite urban centers (stretching approximately from Bethlehem in the south to Dan in the north);

***“that accords well with Biblical accounts of the emergence of the ancient Israelites in the central hill country of Canaan,”*** writes William Dever, archaeologist and historian.

These villages usually are characterized by clusters of small buildings such as the one pictured above, divided into four or six small rooms, with an adjacent enclosed livestock yard and single gate. This coincides precisely with the existence of family living in close proximity to farm operations in which both family and servants were involved in the work as illustrated in Judges 6:11 and Ruth chapter 3.

Another point of interest about this era is the introduction of agricultural terracing (below, left), which was well suited to small scale farming. Again, archaeologists point out that such terracing was not common in the land until 1200 – 1000 B.C., a strong indicator of the presence of a new people settling the land - Israel. The Canaanites were not familiar with this technique of building rock walls to retain the soil in flat terraces, thus catching the rain water and increasing crop production.

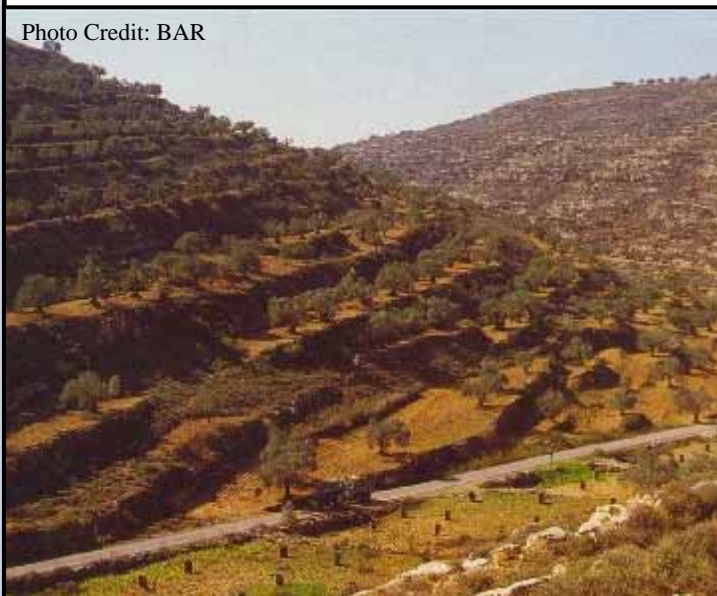
Stone walls were also used as hedges to keep out wild animals from damaging crops and for protection of the flock by night.

In reference to the house of Yahweh, or ecclesia, Solomon writes, *“A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.”* Dwellings were most likely a part of the wall structure on the family farm, thus the “house” and the “garden” of the LORD are one in the same. Likewise Jesus speaking of the “sheepfold” said, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.”*

Photo Credit: BAR



Photo Credit: BAR





*offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell*" (Matt. 5:30). This principle is again reinforced in Judges 1:6, "*But Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes.*" As servants of Yahweh we must in like manner put sin to flight by wielding the sword of the spirit: "*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7). But we must also bring into bondage the motions of sin, "*bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience*" (II Cor. 10:5, 6). Only then can we truly walk uprightly and set our hands to work in a manner that will be blessed of Yahweh.

### 3. Continual Warfare Until Sin is Destroyed:

Hands and feet are also representative of the activity of warfare (Psa. 18:34; Rev. 10:1). Adonibezek neutralized his enemies by removing their thumbs, whereby they could not grasp a sword, bow or a spear, and by removing their great toes so that they could not run in battle. Judah and Simeon returned the same upon Adonibezek, thus removing his power as a warrior-king and bringing him lowly to Jerusalem. On a grander scale, the eventual overthrow of the nations is represented in these events. The nations will be gathered to Jerusalem to battle, "*for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger*" (Zeph. 3:8) and there they will be defeated by the Lion of Judah and his associates. Moreover, the nations will be disarmed. "*And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand*" (Ezek. 39:3). This process will continue until every foe is vanquished, so bringing peace to the world after 6000 years of bondage under the tyranny of sin (Mic. 4:3, 5:5-6; Psa. 149:5-9).

## IV. Jerusalem, A City Under Siege

**Judges 1:8:** "*Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire.*"

The history of Jerusalem is a storied one, to say the least. The future of the city is a glorious one indeed. Woven throughout the turbulent record of Jerusalem is a parable for our reflection. Lessons of distraction, defecation, destruction and despair are interwoven with those of promise, praise and glory.

Through the prophet Ahijah Yahweh declared, "*And unto [Solomon's] son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there*" (1 Kings 11:36). The city has been a special place since its beginning, but it has also been a place of great expectation, both past and future. "*For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required*" (Luke 12:48) and to those who called Jerusalem their capital "*were committed the oracles of God*" (Rom 3:2).

The city's failures were met with judgment, its successes with blessing. It was a repeated cycle throughout the scripture record, and one that has continued right through history, as Yahweh never fully deserts His chosen people, even in their darkest days.

### Exposition of Jerusalem Past

The first mention of Jerusalem proper is found in the conquests of Joshua (Josh. 10:1-4). Jerusalem (Strong's 3389, *yer-oo-shaw-lah'im*) signifies *Foundation (or Vision) of Peace*, and teaches that true peace can only be established upon the basis of the hope of Israel. The military success of the Israelites under Joshua had created widespread alarm among the nations within the land of Canaan. Jericho, Ai and Bethel had already fallen, and the Gibeonites had formed their deceptive league with the Children of Israel. In an attempt to counter this rising threat, the Canaanites began to unite and planned an attack upon the Gibeonites in order to stall Joshua's offensive. It was Adoni-zedec, king of Jerusalem, who organized this confederacy.

Adoni-zedec means *lord (or ruler) of right*. The name (or title) seems good enough at first glance, but the king opposed Joshua, the servant of Yahweh, so we are required to dig deeper into the account.

Originally, Jerusalem was called Salem, and its king was Melchizedek. Melchizedek means *king of right (or righteousness)*, and he was "*the priest of the most high God*" (Gen 14:18). It was Melchizedek who came out to meet Abram following his typical victory over the northern power in Genesis 14, offering bread and wine, and blessing Abram. Salem, according to Strong's, means *peaceful, an early name of Jerusalem* (Heb 7:1-2), thus we connect Salem with Jerusalem, and both names with the concept of peace.

As evidenced in Joshua's conquest of Jerusalem, the city had from its very beginning a future of suppression



***The Siege of Jerusalem, by David Roberts***

and siege. The sieges of Jerusalem in Joshua 10:1 and again in Judges 1 serve as an epitome of the city's subsequent history. The judgments that have been poured out upon Jerusalem and its inhabitants are well documented and familiar to us all. It has been a *city of siege* for most of its existence.

The Companion Bible notes that Jerusalem has come under siege no less than 27 times, 14 of which are recorded for us in scripture. Twenty-seven stands out as an interesting number (9 X 3). We know that nine is the number of *Judgment*, manifested in this instance by Yahweh's control and evidenced in the sieges experienced by the city. Three, however, speaks of *Completeness and New Life*. Though the judgments of the Almighty have continually been levied out upon Jerusalem, the city has continually found a new life. Jerusalem has held a somewhat permanent presence throughout history.

But we can add to this point. The last siege (number 27) listed in the Companion Bible occurred in AD 1244, when the "wild Kharezmian tartar hordes captured and plundered the city." If we add to this 27<sup>th</sup> siege the conquest of Jerusalem by the Sultan Selim of the Ottoman Empire in 1517 and the British occupation of the city un-

der General Allenby in 1917, we now have 29 conquests of Jerusalem over the course of its history.

The scriptures confirm that another siege of the city still remains (Zech. 14:1-2). The fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Gogian confederacy would make the 30<sup>th</sup> siege, also a number not without significance. The number thirty is comprised of the numbers 10 X 3. Ten speaks of *Ordinal Perfection (or Completeness)*, and three, as stated earlier, implies of *Completeness and New Life*. In Ezekiel 21:25-27, the prophet refers to the three main judgments that would fall upon Jerusalem and its disobedient inhabitants: first, at the hands of the Babylonians, which included the destruction of the Temple; next, in AD 70 by the Romans, in which the Temple was also burned with fire and destroyed; and thirdly, the future siege of Jerusalem that we read about in Zechariah 14.

It is interesting to note that, using Bullinger's chronology, these three "overturnings" would mark the 10<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> sieges, respectively. Three "tens," if you will, matching the prophetic "overturning" of Ezekiel 21 with the divine order set forth in Yahweh's plan. The completion of Ezekiel's brief prophecy, culminates with



the ultimate newness of life for the city at the hands of Christ and the Saints.

### The Warning of Jerusalem Present

In the days of Joshua, the king of Jerusalem had retained virtually the same title as that of Melchizedek centuries earlier. Melchizedek (*king of righteousness*) had morphed only slightly into Adoni-zedec (*ruler of righteousness*). In this we see that the kings of Jerusalem had retained *virtually the same title* up to this point.

However, though the title remained almost unaltered, Adoni-zedec was in no way the “*priest of the most high God*,” as was his long ago predecessor, a position held by the king of Salem under Melchizedek’s sovereign rule. This subtle change in title carries with it a significant lesson in the *Parable of Jerusalem*.

**Like the Canaanites of Joshua’s time, “Christianity” today resembles the true teachings of Yahweh in title only. The teachings of Christ and his apostles have been thoroughly corrupted by the papal system and its deceptions. The “daughters” of that harlot system, the other religions claiming to be “christian”, are not much closer to practicing “the faith once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).**

The original title was divinely amended because apostasy now prevailed in the city that was once called the *City of Peace*. Adoni-zedec opposed the Children of Israel, and thus was considered the enemy of Yahweh. The corruption of divine Truth had been complete among the Canaanites, and godly “righteousness” was no longer appropriately associated with the title.

What we have here before us is a picture of a slight and deceptive deterioration of the Truth. The history confirms that there was no semblance of the righteousness displayed by the city’s first king, Melchizedek, yet the title remained virtually unchanged. The parable is prophetic. The purity of the apostolic teaching of the first century was also soon corrupted (2 Tim 4: 3-4).

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*saints*” (Jude 3). Abominations before Yahweh such as a triune God, an immortal soul and heaven-going are a constant with the “good christians” with whom we interact in our worldly associations.

Unfortunately, the Ecclesia today is not immune from the lessons of the parable. The title “Christadelphian” has also deteriorated from its introduction by Bro. Thomas some 150 years ago. What would the first-generation Christadelphians think of this title being associated with some of the current teachings and suggestions within the Body today? Regrettably, we as a community are not in a position to sit back and be thankful that our “title” has not been corrupted like that of “Christianity”.

As the true Brethren of Christ we must heed the warning found in the *Parable of Jerusalem*. We must sound the warning of the watchman, for the history of Jerusalem provides the answer of what happens to the “city” that goes astray. In the days of Melchizedek, it stands to reason that there was an “ecclesia” of believing servants living in Salem. What happened to this faithful community? Based on the state of the city under the leadership of Adoni-zedec, the Canaanite king, we can only conclude the worst. Following the death of Melchizedek, the Truth somehow became corrupted, or was gradually ignored, until ultimately it was lost entirely to the people of that city.

As we ponder what went wrong for those of Salem over the years, may we again reflect upon the warnings made available to us in the apocalyptic letters to the seven ecclesias (Ephesus – Rev. 2:4; Pergamos – Rev. 2:14-15; Thyatira – Rev. 2:20; Laodicea – Rev. 3:4-17). The tragic history of Jerusalem serves as exhortation to us in our day. The deterioration of the Truth does not occur instantaneously. At some point, sound doctrine is challenged or ignored, thus weakening the foundation of the city. Moral values also begin to collapse, as the influences of the environment around the city take hold of the citizens and war against a godly character.

How could such deviations be accepted in a faithful community? At the risk of oversimplifying, it happens for one of three reasons. One, no one really knows any better, the direct result of a lack of personal and collec-



tive Bible study. Two, no one cares enough about the responsibilities latent in Yahweh's Word, finding themselves too caught up in "the cares of this world"; or three, the citizens plain and simply value the wrong things.

The bottom line is this: If no unmistakable stand is made in defense of the purity of the Truth, the result is fatal. The Truth will be lost to such people as evidenced time and again in the *Parable of Jerusalem*.

### The Promise of Jerusalem to come

It is significant that the first mention of Jerusalem in scripture, Joshua 10, is associated with war. This illustrates the meaning of its name as the *Vision of Peace*; *Vision* implying that peace is something ahead, something future. The resiliency of the city to continue to rebuild itself should not surprise us, for Jerusalem is also a city of promise.

Literal Jerusalem will be fully restored, naturally elevated, and home to Ezekiel's Temple - the center of Yahweh's kingdom on earth. Ezekiel was carried away in Spirit to be shown the literal city of Jerusalem in its future glory (Ezek. 40:2-4). What Ezekiel was shown over the following eight chapters was the detail of the glorious temple to be constructed at Jerusalem in the millennial age, new life given to the city of which Yahweh had chosen. This time it will be a new life that will last for the aion of the aions.

The city had long been declared a primary position in the plan of Yahweh (Psa 132:13-14). It is the principle of "dwelling" found in this passage that ties together Jerusalem past with Jerusalem future. The word "habitation" (Strong's 4186, *mo-shawb*´) means *a seat*; by extension *an abode, dwell in, dwelling (-place)*. It is from the root word *yaw-shab*´ (3427 *to dwell, to settle, to marry*). This same word *yaw-shab*´ is translated "dwell" in verse 14. Both verses speak of God manifestation, not in a physical city, although His glory will most certainly be a constant in Ezekiel's Temple, but rather, this manifestation is found in a righteous multitude of immortalized *called-out ones*, the Bride (*yaw-shab*´: *to marry*) of Christ. It is the fulfillment of His divine Name revealed to Moses in the flame at the bush; He who shall be manifested in whom He shall be.

In the apocalyptic letter to the Philadelphian ecclesia,

the promise to him that overcometh is this: "(Him) *will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name*" (Rev 3:12). On this point Bro. Thomas states, "It is called 'New Jerusalem' in contradistinction to the Old Jerusalem under the Mosaic constitution, 'in bondage with her children'. The latter was the mother of those whose name was good for nothing, but the former is the mother of all who believe the promises concerning the glorious things spoken of her approaching future" (*Eureka*, vol. I, p.399).

***The tragic history of Jerusalem serves as exhortation to us in our day. The deterioration of the Truth does not occur instantaneously. At some point, sound doctrine is challenged or ignored, thus weakening the foundation of the city. Moral values also begin to collapse, as the influences of the environment around the city take hold of the citizens and war against a godly character.***

The promise of Jerusalem to come introduces us to a typical term regularly used to present the city in the future age: Zion. Zion is often used as a figure for the Redeemed (Psa. 87:1-3,5 and Heb. 12:22-23). The Hebrew word for Zion is *tsee-yone*´, which is *a mountain of Jerusalem*, and suggests *a permanent capital*. The Greek version of Sion (*see-own*´) also speaks of *a hill of Jerusalem*, but Strong's Concordance adds to this the figurative implication of *the Ecclesia (militant or triumphant)*: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads" (Rev. 14:1).

Thus it is clear that "New Jerusalem" speaks of a glorious multitude manifesting the Name of Yahweh, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2). Revelation 21:10 reads, "And he carried me (John) away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." John was shown in vision the spiritual city in its future glory, New Jerusalem, a "city" to be composed of living people. This is the promise of Jerusalem to come (Isa. 60:14-15).

[Sources referenced: *Joshua: His Life and Times* (Bro. Ullman), *The Joshua Expositor* (Bro. H.P. Mansfield), *The Gospel in the Book of Judges* (Bro. Ian Giles); *The Judges* (Christadelphian Scripture Study Service).]

# *Biblical Allegories*

## *Zerubbabel - Man of Sign*

*By Alex M. Briley*

The captivity in Babylon had come to an end, and the Israelites had returned unto the land. The man who was appointed to be the Governor (also called the Tirshatha; cp. Ezra 2:63 margin) of the returning exiles was named Zerubbabel. The prophet Zechariah called him a “man of sign” (see Zechariah 3:8, marginal rendering). As we look at his actions and life, we see why he is indeed a man of sign. His actions and life are typical of a greater governor to come, our lord Yahshua the anointed.

### **The Name Zerubbabel**

His name is significant and has been translated in a variety of ways by Bible commentators. The reason for the variety of meanings given to his name is the result of translating his name in either Chaldean or in Hebrew. His name has been defined as “*a shoot (seed) of Babylon*” based on its Chaldean meaning. As a man typical of Yahshua the anointed, we remark that our savior has been drawing a seed unto him from the nations. Paul writes to the Galatians that when we become Christ’s we are that “seed” drawn out of the apostate religions around us.

In the Hebrew tongue we find a bit more information about this man of sign. In Hebrew, his name means “*dispeller of confusion*” or “*dispeller of Babylon*”. This name reveals two very important facts about Yahshua’s mission. When he returns as the Governor of Judah, he will remove all confusion from this world. He will also “dispel” Babylon the Great, which will then be no more.

*“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen,*

*is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Revelation 14:6-8).*

### **The Head of those exiled**

Ezra records that Zerubbabel came to Jerusalem at the head of 12 princes (cp. Ezra 2:2 with Nehemiah 7:7). These 12 princes are representative of the immortal company that will come to Jerusalem with the Governor of Judah. John writes of New Jerusalem in Revelation chapter 21 as having “*twelve gates*” (vs.12) and describes this city as “*the bride, the Lamb’s wife*” (vs. 9). As Zerubbabel was listed as the “*head*” of those who returned, Paul likewise speaks of Yahshua as our head, “*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the ecclesia: and he is the saviour of the body*” (Eph. 5:23; see also 1 Cor. 11 and Col. 1:18).

### **Zerubbabel lays the foundation**

*“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house” (Zechariah 4:9).*

Before the work of the exiles was interrupted, Zerubbabel laid the foundation of the house of Yahweh. This work is representative of Yahshua the Messiah’s work at his first advent. He came to lay the foundation for His house. “*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*” (1 Corinthians 3:11). “*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone*” (Ephesians 2:19-20).

When he was engaged in laying the foundation for the house of Yahweh, it is noteworthy that Ezra calls Zerubbabel by the name of Sheshbazzar (cp. 1:8). Sheshbazzar means “*joy in affliction*”. The work of building the house of Yahweh was joyful for Yahshua, but full of affliction



and persecution as well. *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”* (Hebrews 12:2).

### **Keeper of the Vessels**

*“And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto one, whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor”* (Ezra 5:14).

Take note that Zerubbabel was given the charge of protecting the vessels of Yahweh’s house. This is typical of Yahshua’s role of protecting those who are in him, for they are his vessels. *“Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?”* (Romans 9:21-24). *“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work”* (2 Timothy 2:21).

Brethren, be joyful in our affliction, for our Lord cares over us!

### **Zerubbabel finishes the House**

*“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Yahweh of hosts hath sent me unto you”* (Zechariah 4:9).



**After the work of those who opposed the house of Yahweh had been defeated, Zerubbabel completed his house. This is typical of the finished work of the great house of Yahshua and his saints.**

After the work of those who opposed the house of Yahweh had been defeated, Zerubbabel completed his house. This is typical of the finished work of the great house of Yahshua and his saints. It should be remembered that the book of Zechariah was written during the interval between the laying of the foundation of the house and the completing of it. Zechariah prophesied of both the completion of the spiritual house (cp. 3:7-8; 4:11-14) and the literal house to be built in Jerusalem (cp. 6:13). Paul makes reference to the spiritual house in Hebrews, *“Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end”* (3:6). Likewise, John refers to this great house in Revelation 21 and further references are made to the literal house in Ezekiel chapters 40-48.

### **Zerubbabel destroys the great mountain Babylon**

*“Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain”* (Zechariah 4:7).

Here we see a typical reference to the work of Yahshua (Jesus Christ) in destroying Babylon the great. The prophet sees what is necessary for the building of Yah-

weh's great house. All enemies of Truth must be made low. They must be removed from their high places of power. They must be defeated and destroyed. Isaiah also saw Babylon as a high mountain:

*“The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see. Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles. I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Yahweh of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even Yahweh, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land” (Isaiah 13:1-5).*

**Haggai delivers the message, “In that day, saith Yahweh of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith Yahweh, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith Yahweh of hosts” (Haggai 2:20-23).**



HAGGAI, C. J. Staniland

Jeremiah also saw the destruction of this mountain:

*“Thus saith Yahweh, “Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind.... Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith Yahweh, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee” (Jeremiah 51:1,25).*

The message of Zechariah was complemented by the words of Haggai the prophet when Haggai spoke words of future fulfillment in Zerubbabel's day:

*“And again the word of Yahweh came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying, **Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith Yahweh of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith Yahweh, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith Yahweh of hosts” (Haggai 2:20-23).***

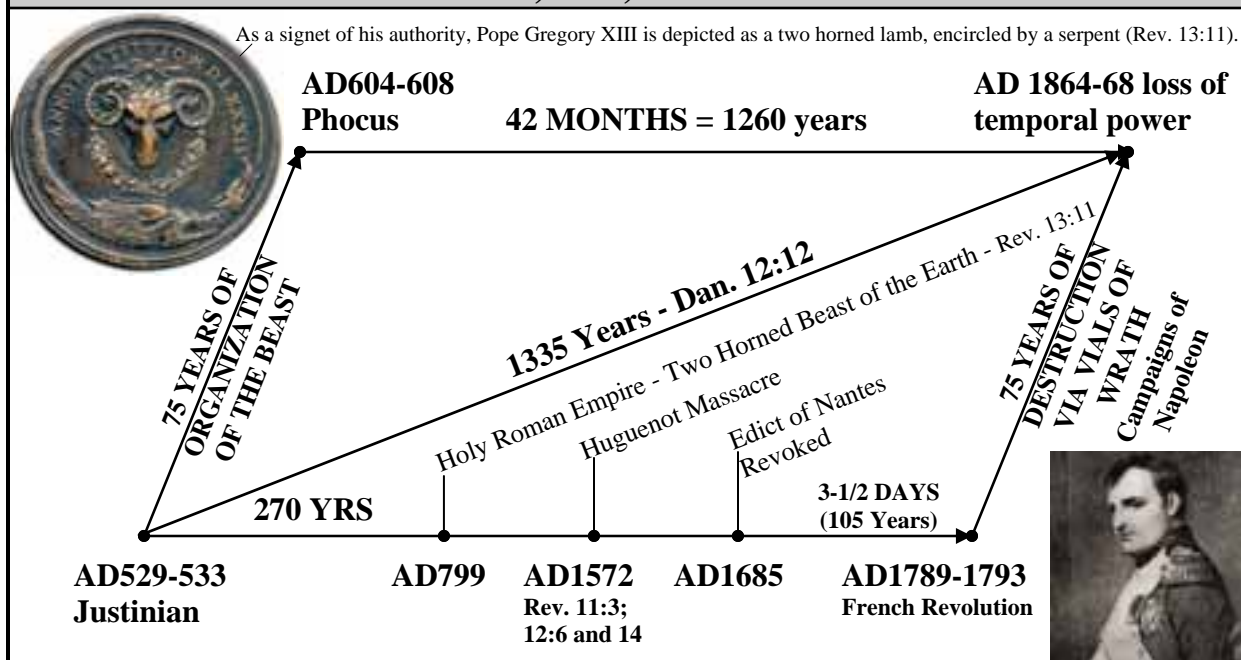
Signet, from the Hebrew root *chatham*, means to *close up*, or to *seal, make an end*. It is significant that the last work recorded of the Tabernacle was the making of an holy crown of pure gold with a writing “like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to fasten it on high upon the mitre; as the LORD commanded Moses. Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished” (Exod. 39:30-32).

Yahshua, as the Governor of Judah and indeed all Israel, will bring an end to “the mystery of God”, such that it “should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets” (Rev. 10:7).

May that day be at the door.



## Prophetic Parallelogram - Elpis Israel, Pg. 372 Rev. 11:2,9-13, and Rev. 13:5



This diagram first published in *Elpis Israel* depicts how the 42 months, or prophetic 1260 year time period, is utilized by Yahweh as a “building block” for bringing about His plan in the earth. We see another 1260 year period beginning in AD 312, the era of Constantine the Great, and terminating in AD 1572. The Justinian Code, begun in AD529 and fully implemented by 604, designates the setting up of the Papal Lucifer in the west (Rome) by the Eastern Emperors in Constantinople. 1260 years from each of these dates terminates with the rejection of Justinian’s Code and dethronement of the Papacy over a period of 75 years during which the French Monarchy, or “Tenth part of the City” (Rev. 11:13) [or one of the Ten horns of Daniel’s fourth beast] was overthrown by the “great earthquake” (French Revolution). This was followed by the Spirit’s pouring out of five of the seven vials (judgments) of wrath upon the “beast of the earth” or the Holy Roman Empire.



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