

THE BEREAN WATERS OF SHILOAH

No. 5

I will return to dwell in the house of Yahweh forever



“O Yahweh, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.” (Isaiah 25:1)

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“To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no light in them.” (Isaiah 8:20)

The Commandments of Christ

“By this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him”

I. Concerning God

1. Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy strength, and all thy mind. (Matt. 22:37).
2. Fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. (Matt. 10:28).
3. Glory in the Lord; not in man. (1 Cor. 3:21; 2 Cor. 10:17).
4. Be imitators of God; be like Him in His kindness to the undeserving. (Matt. 5:45-48; Eph. 5:1).
5. Pray to God always and faint not. (Luke 18:1; Matt. 7:7; 26:41; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6, Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Tim. 2:8; Heb. 4:16). Pray with brevity and simplicity (Matt. 6:7). Pray secretly (Matt. 6:6).
6. Have faith in God; cast your care upon Him: He knows your need and will provide. (Mark 11:22; Matt. 6:25; Philippi. 4:6, 1 Peter 5:7).
7. Give yourselves to His service without reserve, recognizing that you cannot serve God and Mammon (Matt. 6:24; Rom. 12:1).
8. In everything give thanks to Him: for this is His will and pleasure concerning you. (Eph. 5:20 ; Col. 3:15, 17; 1 Thess. 5:18; Heb. 13:15).
9. Recognize Him in all your ways, saying concerning your purposes “if the Lord will.” (James. 4:15; Prov. 3:6).
10. Come out from the world and be separate unto Him, as His sons and daughters. (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

Letter from the Editor

Suffering and the Spirit of Christ

There are times of trial in our lives when all we can do is seek Yahweh's help in earnest, earnest prayer. These times during the disciple's pilgrimage, in hindsight, are often appreciated as wayside markers that provided a time and circumstances which are developmental, even transformative of "the Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8: 6-11).

So important in fact is this personal 'Christ time', when He joins us through our soul being greatly troubled, in response to our earnest entreaty, that the first book of the Psalms, **immediately** after its double introduction, plunges the stranger and sojourner into those very sufferings (Palms 3-6) which must be revisited before it can conclude (Psalms 38 – 41). "The Spirit of Christ" in the Psalmist's experience indicated "the sufferings of Christ" (1Peter 1: 11) as the **divine means** through which he had to pass (Hebrews 5:7-9) and those truly in him, following afar off (Hebrews 12:3-13) that we might with him by "the subsequent glories", "Bless Yahweh the Elohim of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen" (Psalm 41:13).

"Be gracious unto me, O Yahweh, for I am languishing; heal me O Yahweh, for my bones are troubled. My soul also is greatly troubled. But you, **O Yahweh—how long?**"

Out of the depths of unbridled anguish, beyond the reach of any man's out stretched arm when, like Jonah, the flood of alarm and despair closed over him to take his life; the impenetrable deep surrounded him; the bands of anguish wrapped about him, and the bars of death closed upon him, troubled in body and in mind—greatly troubled! It is in this valley of deep darkness that the servant of Yahweh, is seeking God's grace, not to be merely saved out of it but saved "**for the sake of your steadfast love**" (Psalm 6:4). Paul as the divine expositor of Yahweh's steadfast love wrote that the recipients of it "are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be **received by faith**. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins" (Romans 3: 24-25).

"**Save me for the sake of your steadfast love,**" is an expression of understanding appreciation and faithful anticipation that yearns opportunity to give full unhindered expression in worship for "God's unspeakable gift". It is a thankfulness that goes **beyond any temporary healing, deliverance or extension of life** as in the case of David or his son Hezekiah. In the everlasting covenant made to David concerning his greater Son, Yahweh promises "I will be his father, and he shall be my son. In **suffering for iniquity**, I will discipline him with the rod due to men, with the stripes due to the sons of men, but **my steadfast love will not depart from him**, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you" (2 Samuel 7:14-15). In the contemplation of these sufferings which he was made to enter into, he exclaimed, "In death there is no remembrance of you: in Sheol who will give you praise?" (Psalm 6:5) Leading the Psalms final songs of praise, David in the full assurance of faith lifts up the voice, "I will extol you, my God and King, and **bless your name forever and ever**. Every day I will bless you and praise your name **forever and ever**. Great is Yahweh, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable... All your works shall give thanks to you, O YAHWEH and **all your saints shall bless you**... He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also **hears their cry and saves them**. Yahweh **preserves all who love him**, but all the wicked he will destroy. My mouth will speak the praise of Yahweh, and let all flesh bless his holy name **forever and ever**" (Psalm 145).

Hezekiah quoted Psalm 6 as best filling up the type in his providentially guided experience (Isaiah 38: 3-18) of what the prophets indicated by "the sufferings of Christ and subsequent glories". These healings and deliverances of men like David and Hezekiah, expressed by the eternal Christ spirit, caused these men in being made to pass through this anguish, to search out its true wonder, as Paul later exhorted the members of the Jerusalem ecclesia, "Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself"; "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12: 2-3).

David's grief was turned to joy, his pleas and supplications as Hezekiah's accompanied by many tears were heard. David experienced the wonder of his prayers being answered but this temporary deliverance served as a spirit-guided stimulus of a far more transcending salvation, for **3 times** (directing us to the **third day** after the crucifixion), David exclaims, "**He who shall be** has heard the sound of my weeping. **He who shall be** has heard my plea; **He who shall be** accepts my prayer" (Psalm 6:8-9). As David says in another Psalm explained by the Apostle Peter, "**I saw the Lord (Jesus Christ) always before me**, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore, my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; **my flesh also will dwell in**

hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness **with your presence.**” (Psalm 16: 8-11; Acts 2:25-28). The spirit of Christ caused David and his experiences to merge his individuality into that of his greater Son, so that God by this means made known to him the paths of life and how eternally before David, his throne would be established for ever.

For all those whose sojourn has recently been burdened with trials —fear and great afflictions, sickness that so easily could lead to death, and where the allotted time of a pilgrimage has come to an end and a brief falling asleep in Christ is our Lord’s will; to those who mourn our companions and helpers in Christ; whatever the cause of our distress, we have a great eternal consolation in the person of Yahweh’s Anointed. The beloved said “know that Yahweh has set apart the godly for himself; Yahweh hears when I call to him...In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Yahweh, make me dwell in safety”. Our consolation is that the tidal wave of affliction which the Christ spirit confronts immediately after the Psalms dual introduction — “How many are my foes! Many are rising against me; many are saying of my soul, there is no salvation for him in God;”— finds its answer for our blessed Lord and all those who are in him, that they will stand with him at last on Mt Zion. “**All** my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled; they shall turn back and be put to shame **in a moment**” (Psalm 3: 1-2; 6: 10).

PNG ecclesial News

Mount Hagen ecclesial news:

Since our last PNG report posted in October 2021, we received communication from bro. Mathew Ake of the Mount Hagen ecclesia that our new brother Pele had contracted Covid-19 and was admitted to the hospital in Mount Hagen. On 31st October 2021 we received the following update:

Thank God for you all for your support in prayer by upholding Peli in your prayers.

Praise God Peli was discharged today at around 11am. I was very glad to see him. He sends his love towards you all brethren and sisters in Christ in the hope and faith in the hope of Israel. He's now recovering better. Thanks for your prayers support.

May the love of Yahweh be upon us brethren and sisters in Christ in the faith and hope of his return.

God bless
Bro Mathew.

The following report was recently sent to us by bro. Mathew:

Dear bro Peter and sister Sharon,

Greetings to you both and the Brisbane ecclesia from the ecclesia in Mount Hagen and family.

I'll start off with the outreach program at a small isolated neglected village named Tobare in the Gulf province PNG, a village populated with only 400 plus excluding children in the very heart of the thick jungle of Papua New Guinea. People 'uncivilized' in today's modern world influence.

The journey was three days from where the Gulf Highlands road ends to Tobare. There were mountains to climb and big rivers to cross, and then to a first village named Sopisa. We stayed overnight and ministered there. Then we travelled to the next village named Biagi, stayed overnight there, then to the next village named Tawi, stayed overnight there, and early in the morning we took a walk and arrived at Tobare village around 2:30pm. They welcomed us with their own native songs which brought me to tears, seeing how they were placed in such a place where government services hardly reach them, and other religious organizations couldn't go there also. I was escorted by a friend and villager there who ask me to go them. We stayed four days and they gave me time to preach. I preached about the coming kingdom of God based on MATTHEW 21:42-44 and supported by DANIEL 2:35-44. The message was new to them to hear, as I made them to understand the sorts of governing systems the world has, the territories their constitution and people who are citizens abides by to governing powers. Then I compared it to God's coming kingdom, explaining GENESIS 12, 15 and ISAIAH 9:6-7 supported by MATTHEW 1:1. The people were very interested but time didn't allow. I told them only if God's will we'll meet again.

To make the story short it took almost two weeks to go and return. I thank God that we haven't been bitten by poisonous snakes or even chased by wild boar, but we only been bitten by mosquitoes and leeches. It was an experience and unforgettable journey for myself within PNG.

On behalf of the Mount Hagen Ecclesia, Your brother in Christ

Mathew Ake

Since our beloved brother Matthew returned from this journey of proclaiming the gospel he has suffered bouts of malaria and in rising from his sick bed has been busy helping other interested friends prepare for baptism. On 3rd March we received communication from bro. Mathew that two interested friends who had attended our study classes in Mt Hagen over the years, and been studying the Baptismal Review Book, indicated they were ready for baptism. On 14th March 2022 we received the following update:

Dear bro Peter and sister Sharon,

Greetings from Mt Hagen ecclesia to you both and the Brisbane ecclesia.

Saturday 12th (March) was the day that we've got two baptize into the faith, **Gebi Turi** and **Norma Stanley**. Yesterday Sunday was the first time of them both we've gathered together in the meeting and the breaking of bread and drinking the wine to commemorate the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The reading was on LUKE 4; The baptism of Christ where he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the diabolos. The scripture was applied to us all in the meeting, when we come to understand the faith and the gospel that was preach to Abraham believing the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. We get baptized and we are then to face the wilderness.

Both were witnessed by families, the Sunday school kids, the ecclesia here in Hagen and some interested friends also.

Thank you, God bless

Bro Mathew.

We also received the joyful news from bro. Mathew that sis. Norma's daughter Rova Stanley, and bro. Mathew's wife Rose likewise had been preparing for baptism. Bro. Mathew wrote:

"Today Saturday 23rd April we the Hagen ecclesia and family witnessed the baptism of sister Rose Mathew and sister Rova Stanley at Rogen river. It is a great blessing to have two added to the faith and increase our numbers to eight."

Bro. Mathew has shared some photos of their baptisms:



Sis. Norma's baptism (above)



bro. Gebi's baptism (above)



(Above left to right: sis. Norma Stanley, sis Rova Stanley, bro. Mathew Ake, and sis Rose Mathew)

Lae ecclesial news:

With Covid-19 running rampant in PNG, by early October of 2021 the reports were quite alarming of the rise of Covid-19 cases in PNG, hospitals being overwhelmed with covid patients, and the issues that healthcare workers were facing with vaccine hesitancy. Despite the Australian government sending considerable medical support and millions of doses of vaccines to PNG, currently less than 4% of the population of PNG has received a single dose, and less than 3% are fully vaccinated. We sent out a circular email to our brethren and sisters in PNG with some advice and suggestions on how best to protect themselves in a culture where superstition, mistrust in their government and healthcare systems, and social media misinformation abound. We have spoken directly to our brethren about the importance of wearing masks on public transport and in public areas, and getting vaccinated. Bro. Timon of the Lae ecclesia informed us that when the healthcare van came to his village to administer the vaccine, the local residents and even the principal of the local school that his children attend, chased them away. We understand that bro. Timon has since been vaccinated.

Unfortunately the nature of the mis-information is such that our brethren are at risk even letting their countrymen know that they have been vaccinated.

Bro. Kumo of the Lae ecclesia reported the following on 14th October 2021:

Dear bro.Peter and sister Sharon,

On behalf of the PNG Ecclesia I would like to say thank you very much for the word of encouragement and the guideline you both give. I am more than happy to relay the information to the rest of the ecclesia in PNG. As for me personally I got 2x vaccines, first and second dose.

I have inform most of my work mates and friends as well about the vaccines telling them that, God has allowed this thing to occur, and we cannot sit back relax and complain to God. And I always pointed them back into the scripture (**Isaiah 45:7, I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things**).

Our duty is to study the word and prepare to overcome, rather than complain.

Bro. Kumo also sent us the following report that we are pleased to share with the brotherhood:

The baptismal review class and baptism in Lae (PNG) ecclesia.

Dear brethren and sisters in and around the world. We are pleased to share the faith and the one and only hope that we have in serving the true God of Israel which is also our hope.

Our two interested friends (**Micha Titeng** and **Rodney Manzu**) became our members and brethren in Lae after a year of studying the key bible lessons. Upon the completion of the key lessons 1-25, they continued to study the baptismal review book which expounds on some of the key elements of the bible truth that they learned throughout the bible key lessons. We would like to thank our beloved brother Timon Haluma for the wonderful work he put into educating them in the things concerning the kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ. God will deserve all the glory and honor for what He has done through him as his medium or instrument.

We made an arrangement with brother Peter Small in Brisbane ecclesia to have a Zoom classes with us. During the night of Friday 26th November, brother Peter wonderfully expounded on the subject of the atonement, quoting scriptures by scriptures, revealing the truth about the human race real problems at the root cause. Beginning with the following quote;

Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which is not bread?* and your labor for *that which satisfieth not?* hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which is good*, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

Isaiah 55:1-2, 1 Peter 2:2, Acts 2:23.

Behold, the Lamb of God

John 1:29, Revelation 13:8, Genesis 3:15, Hebrews 9:26, Hebrews 10:10

Note: If Jesus was God, Why did he die? Why would John say behold the lamb of God?

Hebrews 2:14 connects with John 1:29

1 John 3:8, Romans 5:12, Romans 8:3

Mark 7:18-23 - root of the devil is the negative thoughts.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 – the heart is deceitful.

Job 34:6, James 1:14,

Romans 7:15-16,19,

Romans 7:16 connects with Mark 7:18-23.

Note: Sin in my members or body refers to flesh & blood. Romans 8:3, Hebrews 2:14.

Romans 6:14, 1 Corinthians 15:54

Mark 14: 64-65.

Conclusion scripture

Romans 3:21-26

Romans 8:3

On Saturday 27th November 2021 we continued the Zoom class with brother Peter around 8am, going through several questions and answers in the baptismal review book and stopped around 12pm.

During the night of Saturday 27th, we discussed amongst ourselves about what we have gone through with brother Peter Small in the baptismal Review book. Brother Kumo Unei Kasu and brother Timon Haluma had assisted by simplifying and expounding what has been mentioned by brother Peter to our newly interested friends (baptismal candidates) so that they may not only follow us by hearing it, but we tried our best to get the words of truth to sink right into their minds so that after their baptism they might be in a better position also to educate and teach others as well in the very things that we have educated them.

Romans 15:8, connects with Galatians 3:8,

Genesis 12:1-3, Gospel preach to Abraham.

Acts 7:2-5 – Abraham didn't receive the promise.

Acts 4:11, Ephesians 4:20.

On Sunday 28th November 2021, during the morning hours we interviewed our baptismal candidates, which was led by brother Timon and assisted by brother Kumo.

The following introductory scriptures were read;

Romans 10:8-13, Acts 16:31-34. Mark 16:15-16, Acts 8:12.

We made some review again with our newly interested friends from 8:00am -10:00am.

We concluded the interview with the following scriptures:

1 Corinthians 15:4, Romans 5:10, Philippians 2:5-8.

After the interview, we went down to the baptism site near the beach around 11:00am, and brother Timon read out Mathew 28:19 at the baptism site before going into the waters of baptism. Based upon these scriptures we baptized them.

After the baptism we hopped on the vehicle and went to Situm for the memorial meeting and extending the right hand of fellowship to our two newly baptized brethren, brother **Micha Titeng** and brother **Rodney Manzu**. We extended the right-hand of faith to our newly baptized brothers, Micah and Rodney by reading Psalms 133 and welcomed them both into the fellowship and we continue with the rest of the meeting and breaking bread and drinking of wine. After the memorial meeting, we had a light refreshment and we dispersed to our various home.

Port Moresby ecclesial news:

(The following report also came from the pen of bro. Kumo who travelled with bro. Timon to Port Moresby to assist and support the Port Moresby ecclesia with the examination and baptisms of those studying with the brethren of the Port Moresby ecclesia)

The baptismal review class and baptisms in Port Moresby (PNG) ecclesia

Dear brethren and sisters in and around the world.

As with our two interested friends who became members and brethren of the Lae ecclesia, our interested friends, **Joseph Angina** and **Isaac Handabe** in Port Moresby studied for a year the key bible lessons and, upon the completion of the key lessons 1-25, the baptismal review book, which expounds on some of the key elements of the bible truth that was learned throughout the bible key lesson correspondence. Our beloved brethren Philemon Kayabi and David Kori of the Port Moresby ecclesia for the wonderful work they put into educating our baptismal candidates in the things concerning the kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ. God will deserve all the glory and honor for what He has done through them as His medium or instrument.

We again arranged with brother Peter Small in the Brisbane ecclesia to have Zoom classes with us. During the night of Thursday December 23rd, as he did for our Lae baptisms, brother Peter wonderfully expounded on the subject of atonement, quoting scriptures by scriptures revealing the truth about the real cause of the problems of the human race. On Friday 24th December 2021 we continued the day session with brother Peter around 8am, going through several questions and answers in the baptismal review booklet, and stopped around 12pm. After two hours of break we continued at 2pm through several key discussions in the baptismal review book and finish around 4:30pm.

During the night of Friday, we discussed amongst ourselves about what we had gone through with brother Peter Small in the baptismal Review book. Brother Kumo Unei Kasu and brother Timon Haluma had assisted by simplifying and expounding what has been reviewed by brother Peter to our newly interested friends, so that they may not only follow us by hearing it, but we tried our best to get the words of truth sink right into their minds so that after the baptism they might be in a better position also to educate and teach others as well in the very things that we have educated them.

On Saturday 25th December 2021, brother Timon Haluma and Kumo Unei Kasu went through a series of questions in the baptismal review booklet from 8am in the morning to 12pm. We had a couple of hours break and, during the night, brother Timon gave a wonderful study regarding the Law going through several passages of scriptures.

On Sunday 26th December, 2021, during the morning hours we had the baptismal interview, which was led by brother Timon Haluma and brother Kumo Unei Kasu also assisted him. The following introductory scriptures were read;

Romans 10:8-13, Acts 16:31-34. Mark 16:15-16, Acts 8:12.

We made some review again with our baptismal candidates, **Joseph Angina** and **Isaac Handabe** and concluded the interview with the following scriptures: 1 Corinthians 15:4, Romans 5:10, Philippians 2:5-8.

After the interview, we went to the baptism site at 17-mile, and brother Timon read out Mathew 28:19 at the baptism site before going into the waters of baptism. Based upon these scriptures we baptized them into saving name of the Lord Jesus Christ. After the baptism we went back to Boroko for the memorial meeting and extended the right hand of fellowship to our two newly baptised brethren, brother **Joseph Angina** and brother **Isaac Handabe** by reading Psalms 133, and welcomed them both into the fellowship. We continued with the rest of the meeting and the breaking of bread and drinking of wine. After the memorial meeting, we had a light refreshment and we dispersed to our various homes.

Our final words for the progressing of the work of truth in PNG, we pray that God deserves all the praise, honor and glory for all this, and not forgetting our brethren and sisters from the Brisbane ecclesia for their continual support for the progressing of the gospel in PNG and also their prayers of support. May the Lord God continually bless them richly and abundantly physically and spiritually.

Your Brother in Christ,

Kumo of the Lae ecclesia

Note from the editor: Since this correspondence bro. Kumo has returned to Lae and has been active in supporting the ecclesia in Situm. Bro. Timon remained in Port Moresby engaging in several preaching efforts in and around Port Moresby with great interest being generated. Brisbane has organised another large consignment of books, bibles, pamphlets and several sets of Key Lessons to be distributed among newly baptised members and interested friends in Port Moresby and Lae. Brother Timon has since returned to Lae at the end of March to assist with the preparation of other interested friends who have been studying the Baptismal Review Book. In all this work we with our beloved brethren and sisters of PNG give Yahweh the glory and thanks for choosing what the world considers “foolish”, “weak”, “low” and “despised” who believe that God has chosen “things that (as yet) are not, to bring to nothing things that are” (1 Corinthians 1: 27-28).

After a brief service for Christ, bro. **Rodney Manzu**, who was baptised on 27th November 2021, has recently fallen asleep in Christ due to extended poor health. Our brother had come into contact with Christadelphians as a young man, and through the hand of providence, reassociated himself with the teachings of the truth as a result of his son bro. Fasanu responding to the gospel that was preached in Lae. We remember well the joy of bro. Rodney when sis. Sharon and I travelled to the area where he, as a pioneer, first settled. The response that we received from his village, and the kindness of the people continues to fill our hearts with joy. We

know that it was bro. Rodney's sincere hope that that gospel message which he had so enthusiastically embraced as an older man, would be continued to be preached in and around his village area. These are the very things we encourage our brethren in Lae, led by bro. Timon working with bro. Rodney's son bro. Fasanu, to do to the glory of our loving heavenly Father.

The Gospel Part 2: Teaching at Mt. Elgon. The name of Jesus Christ.

(The following article was sent to us from our beloved bro. Bob Bent from the Austin ecclesia in the USA, and is a continuation of the article he submitted in our last edition of the Berean Waters of Shiloah. Bro Bob has given much of his energies to the preaching of the gospel in Africa and his efforts are a great encouragement to our brethren and sisters in PNG.)

After a lovely lunch meal and a chance to chat with and answer some questions given by the host, we ventured back out under the tree for continuation of our lesson on the Things of the Kingdom of God and Name of Jesus Christ.

In our last session we made the point from the scriptures that the Gospel consisted of the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and that this Kingdom is a future Kingdom which will be set up on the Earth, and Jerusalem as its headquarters where the Law will be uttered.

*And many nations shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to **the** mountain of **the** LORD, to **the** house of **the** God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. Micah 4:2*

So now we shall look at the King, one of the ingredients of a Kingdom. Friends we have established in our last session that this King will be Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Not God the son.

Let us start at Genesis, the Beginning. Remember we are also told that the Gospel was first preached in the Old Testament and that a plan of redemption was established from the time that man sinned and came short of the glory of God. So by the man Adam, sin entered the World. So how was sin to be removed from the Earth? Come with me please, to Gen. 3:15. Speaking to the serpent He says:

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.

Now let's dwell on this verse for a minute. There is to be an enmity, or a division. Here is the dictionary definition of Enmity:

enmity (noun): The state or feeling of being actively opposed or hostile to someone or something.

So there will be an opposition or hostility between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Now as our brother Epharatus has told us previously, this Serpent is not the Devil or Lucifer as the churches say, but it was a beast of the field which the LORD himself created, Gen.3:1. And he was cunning. So enmity was placed and the bruising comes. Now let's 'chew on' what it says. How fatal is a bruise on the heel? Not fatal at all, is it? But look at what the serpent will receive. A bruise on the head. Is that likely to be fatal? Of course it is! What do we see from this passage? What is it saying to us? That this seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent, render it a fatality, while only receiving a bruise on the heel. Now when did this bruising take place? It happened on the cross when our Lord Jesus was crucified. Hebrews 2:14-15 gives us this clearly.

¹⁴Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. (ESV)

We know from our brother's presentation that the devil represents sin in the flesh and that the serpent was a representation of that sin that we have in our nature. So Paul tells us that this devil or enmity to our spiritual was first put to death by Christ when he was hung from that cross. 1 Peter 3:18 gives us this clearly.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, (ESV)

But did he die as a substitute for us? Of course not! He died as a representative. Christ was first raised from the dead as a firstfruit or a first to accomplish the transformation, from natural to Spiritual.

1 Corinthians 15:20: *But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the **firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep.*

And then on to verse 23. *But each in his own order: Christ the **firstfruits**, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.*

So now we see how Christ was the seed of the woman that will fatally bruise the serpent or sin. Let us now see where the scriptures tell us he will be King. So from 1 Corinthians 15:23 he tells us that *Then at his coming*. So he will come again. And in what state will he come?

Revelation 17:14 *They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful."*

Who is the lamb that is referred to here? John said it when he first saw Christ coming to be baptized of him. *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the **Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29).*

So we have established who this Christ was, and who he will be. But there is more, friends. Let us go back to the Old Testament and see where this promise was made. A few passages are given to us to show the Kingship of our Lord Jesus.

First let us look at 2 Samuel 7:12-16 (ESV)

¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, ¹⁵ but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."

Let us note some important facts here. First, verse 12 speaks of when David will lie with his Fathers, meaning when he is dead and buried, his offspring will be raised, or elevated. Remember friends when David was told this, Solomon was already born, right? So it would clearly mean that Solomon will be elevated in status to a Royal position. But this was not speaking only of Solomon, for in verse 16, David is told *"Your throne Shall be established FOREVER."* We know that the Throne of David that Solomon occupied was taken down and one day will rise again. We went over this previously. We know that Solomon was made King and then when Solomon died various Kings sat on the throne but because of the evil nature of most of them, we can see all this in the book of the Kings and Chronicles, the Throne was eventually removed and saved for him who will sit forever in the Kingdom.

Ezekiel 21:25-27: *²⁵ And you, O profane wicked one, prince of Israel, whose day has come, the time of your final punishment, ²⁶ thus says the Lord God: Remove the turban and take off the crown. Things shall not remain as they are. Exalt that which is low, and bring low that which is exalted. ²⁷ A ruin, ruin, ruin I will make it. **This also shall not be, until he comes, the one to whom judgment belongs, and I will give it to him.***

And remember when we spoke of the prophecy made by the Angel to Mary on the Birth of Jesus?

Luke 1:31-33 *³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the **Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,** ³³ **and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.***

So here we are. The Things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, The Gospel, or Good News, as the Apostles and Disciples believed, taught and are asleep awaiting its total fulfilment.

Acts 8:12 *But when they believed **Philip** as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*

The message is there for us to think about, to digest. Other passages we can look at in reference to Christ and his Kingship. Please note these and in your spare time, look at them and the picture becomes even clearer.

Isaiah 9:6-7; Romans 5; Acts 2

A WORD IN SEASON — The turning back of the shadow of Ahaz's sun dial

We gather this first day of the week in many and varied locations and circumstances. Our lives are not untouched by world events; indeed of necessity they also press down upon us. The troubles affecting the whole world, particularly the poor, are aggravating existing chronic problems that man is helpless to solve. In PNG, as we write, their violent month-long election process has had to be further extended, overshadowed by mass protests and violence including the massacre of 18 people in the Highlands. In what Australian media has described as the worst election trouble in PNG's history, groups of men representing opposing candidates have attacked people with bush knives outside vote counting centres in the capital Port Moresby, and is becoming a daily occurrence. Our beloved bro. David has informed us that in travelling to the memorial meeting last week, such a group attacked a man in front of their bus, slashing him with knives. All on board feared what would happen if their bus was stopped! Our prayers are with our brethren and sisters in these troubled times; that Yahweh who is our strength, rock, fortress and deliverer will encamp around them, and that though they walk through the valley of deep darkness, the God of comfort will be with them so that they will fear no evil.

The worldwide pandemic, in combination with climate change—which extenuates the severity of drought, heat waves, the melting of vast areas of the Arctic's ice sheets, the thawing of the permafrost releasing powerful greenhouse gases, uncontrolled worldwide wild fires in Europe, USA and particularly in Siberia, releasing more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and warming the permafrost further in those northern regions while in other parts of the earth destructive floods, the loss of crops and the inevitable political upheavals which have always followed extended periods of catastrophes—are being manipulated by Yahweh in his punishment of the nations. Famine contributed to the unrest which preceded the French Revolution, as it did in more recent times with respect to the Arab Spring and the protests which convulsed the Middle East at that time. Nineteen of the hottest years on record have occurred since 2000, corresponding to the coming to power of Vladimir Putin. It is the nations leaders and religious systems that have collectively filled the world with lies, violence and gross darkness, and it is God's judgements upon them that are laying the circumstances that will bring to a finality the arrogant, cruel, God-defying kingdom of men. Economic turmoil, supply chain disruptions, raging inflation exacerbated by the first major war in Europe for 77 years, is affecting all mankind, but particularly the poor who are harassed and helpless in the face of corrupt and cruel leaders. Whether Putin is the **antitypical Sargon or his successor Sennacherib – the Gog** of Yahweh's prophecy through Isaiah, will be revealed in the years to come as the world passes what its intelligentsia acknowledge as a tipping point of irreversible climatic catastrophe. This will coincide with and accentuate "a time of trouble, such as never has been till that time".

Like the Assyrian of old in besieging the objects of their conquest, Putin is using hunger, the deprivation of resources, and in particular energy, as weapons of war and economic chaos in a war of attrition, not just against Ukraine but against its liberal democratic enemy's western supporters. Putin says Russia is used to deprivations. A seismic change in world dominance is now beginning to be played out, and the longer the misery can be extended the more likely what Putin views as the weak western democracies, particularly in Europe and the "United States, so-called" will not be able to sustain their resolve. Europe is melting under 40°C heat but will soon face another catastrophe — a winter economic "meltdown" as gas and electricity prices explodes, which could bring about a **seismic change in the unity of the EU**. Putin has been slowly choking the gas supply which flows from Siberia to Europe, and has done more damage to the economies of his enemies than all the missiles he has fired at Ukraine. As the months pass, the West is getting tired of the war in Ukraine, and this coming winter is feared by many western commentators to prove to be **an historic test of European solidarity** — with implications far beyond the energy sector. Russia, to press its advantage, could decide to forgo the revenue it gets from exporting gas to Europe as Yahweh "Putins" Europe into the grip of one of its coldest winters in order to gain political ascendancy. "Putin's initial aims in this European war was to destroy Ukraine as a functioning state. This remains his long-term goal, and initial military setbacks ensures his continued long-term engagement in the very territories **north of Israel** Gog is said to have to be occupying (Ezekiel 38:4-6) as other developments take place which play their part in preparing the nations for the crisis of the time of the end. The other Putin goal was to show that his power in reasserting Russia's will over the spheres of its influence is greater than the West's. The world will be a very different place if he succeeds. **God's prophecy tells us a seismic political change is coming.** As bro. Thomas reminds us, "*When Russia makes its grand move for the building-up of its Image-empire the end of all things, as at present constituted, is at hand.*" Before the wreck of the nations by the little stone power, the very fact that Gog's image-empire will be permitted to stand on its feet in all the flesh's pride and arrogance will itself be destructive of the West's credibility and power which it has built up over decades.

While Europe is facing its historic test of solidarity, the midterm elections in the US will be taking place, with right wing extremist commentators like Tucker Carlson questioning and ridiculing those who support Ukraine. In two years, another US election will be held against a background of high inflation, rising unemployment, and civic unrest caused by a constitution that has ensured power will rest in its high court, and in the hands of evangelical Catholics. The chant of endless wars which the US is financing will mobilize a sycophant republican base and its **candidates**, promising once again to “make America great again”!!! Autocrats and Tyrants, whether Russian, European, Chinese or American anti-democracy insurrectionists, if given the opportunity, will seek to assert their will upon the world with no regard to the consequences. Indeed it is their strategy to inflict the most misery possible upon the nations to compel recognition of their status, historic claims and guardianship over their so-called spheres of influence.

In the midst of this worldwide economic, climate, political and social deterioration, among the teaming masses of the poor of this world, Yahweh has preserved a tiny remnant who “contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints”. “They lift up their voices, they sing for joy; over the majesty of Yahweh they shout from the sea. Therefore in the realm of **light** (Heb. ‘**Urim**’ the term used for the polished Gems of the breast plate worn by the high priest), give glory to Yahweh; in the coastlands of the sea, give glory to the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel. From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise, of glory to the Righteous One” (Isaiah 24: 14-16). From the destruction of Jerusalem by the little horn of the goat to the coming of the same power headed up by the latter-day Assyrian, the Lord Jesus speaks of this remnant in the Apocalypse, as do the prophets, “who put Yahweh in remembrance, take no rest, give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth” (Isaiah 62: 6 – 7). This remnant is described by the apostle Paul as “blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom they **shine as lights** in the world, holding fast to the word of life” (Philippians 2:15 – 16). This remnant is spoken of in Isaiah chapter 24 as intimately related to their high priest as the “Urim” of his breastplate of JUDGEMENT.

Set against this remnant in the earth are the nation’s rulers, “the traitors who have betrayed” — an apt description of the Assyrian autocrat Sennacherib — the Gog of the Isaiah’s prophecy and that to be manifested as the head of the serpent power,

“Terror and the pit and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth! He who flees at the sound of the terror shall fall into the pit, and he who climbs out of the pit shall be caught in the snare. For the windows of heaven are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble. The earth is utterly broken, the earth is split apart, the earth is violently shaken. The earth staggers like a drunken man; it sways like a hut; its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls, and will not rise again”. (Isaiah 24:17-20).

In contrast Yahweh then reveals how his judgement will be executed.

*“On that day the Lord will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth. They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished. Then the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, for the Lord of hosts reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, **before his ancients gloriously**”. (Isaiah 24:21-23)*

And again,

*“Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is **a dew of light**, and the earth will give birth to the dead. Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the fury has passed by. For behold, the Lord is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain” (Isaiah 26: 19-21).*

In the Psalms of the Degrees (Psalms 120-134) we have the moving response of a king who was greatly inspired by his personal identification with this great work of salvation and his desire to help others be transformed by its correct understanding with thankfulness and blessing. The great salvation King Hezekiah memorialises is set against **the coming of the Assyrian to besiege Judah and Jerusalem**. The great salvation we memorialise this morning is set against **the movements of the King of the North in those very countries in relation to Israel**, from which Yahweh commands the prophet Ezekiel, as symbolising the immortal saints, to prophesy against Gog, to turn him about, **from the uttermost parts of the north**, against the mountains of Israel. In association with Yahweh’s great salvation, Hezekiah and the ecclesia were put to a further test to establish whether Yahweh’s salvation was really appreciated. Initially Hezekiah “did not make return according to the benefit done to him, for his heart was proud” (2 Chronicles 32:25). As a result, Yahweh’s “wrath came upon him and Judah and Jerusalem”. The king did not harden his heart against

this rebuke through the prophet Isaiah but rather he manifested that “poor and contrite spirit” which alone is the prerequisite of acceptable approach to Yahweh, as is embodied in the greater than Hezekiah who intercedes on his wayward people’s behalf (Isaiah 66: 1–2; 57:15–19).

“Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word Yahweh has spoken” (Isaiah 39:8). That is, Yahweh is full of goodness and mercy. Hezekiah determinedly changed, and as a result there was peace and truth in his days. Here was a statement of resolution **to use the time Yahweh’s grace granted him** – fifteen years -which is not a long time. It does just go in a blink! Sister Sharon and I first came to PNG in 2011 in response to requests for the gospel to be preached and in response to earnest prayer to the throne on high. Yahweh has over seen that work. How long any of us have to respond to Yahweh’s grace we know not, but fifteen years will bring us to 2026, a year we have spoken to you of as part of our discussions on the prophetic time periods. Bro. Rodney, who has fallen asleep in Christ, had first had contact with Christadelphians in his youth. He lost contact with them and renewed his acquaintance with us as an elderly man albeit with deteriorating health, but with a determined resolution not to let Yahweh’s grace towards him and his household slip away. His baptism after a life time of searching began what proved to be a short, merciful opportunity to respond to the love Yahweh extended to him.

Fifteen years of peace and security was granted to Hezekiah. What was he going to do with it? Those fifteen years were to be commemorated in the fifteen Psalms of the degrees; ten of them he would write by the spirit’s inspiration, corresponding to the divine sign granted to him in turning back **the shadow of Ahaz’s sun dial**; four were by David, and one by Solomon, which he arranged in a very interesting grouping, which we will come to in a moment. But it was only an outward expression of his inward determination to rebuild the nation spiritually. At the centre of that rebuilding was the organization of the scriptures, amongst which were of course the Psalms, the Proverbs, the organization of Yahweh’s scriptures that were then extant, to build the nation up in preparing for the day of Yahweh’s judgments. And that of course is what we have to do likewise. We have the blessing of the completed work of God’s truth. That was not the case in the days of Hezekiah. Had it not been for the grace of God touching the heart of men like Hezekiah, an essential aspect of organizing the scriptures would not have occurred. He organized and arranged the scriptures that had been written up until that time in such a way that their full force would be available to mould the ecclesia of the living God, during those last fifteen years of his life, to build others up for the coming of God’s kingdom and the coming of Messiah, the greater than Hezekiah.

In that beautiful Psalm 131, which forms a part of the Songs of the Degrees, it commences *“Oh Yahweh, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high”* (ESV). Here is the great reversal, the great change. *“I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvellous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul.”* Although David originally penned these words, which illustrate the Christ disposition that enabled him to have the victory over the giant of flesh, Hezekiah found no better words to reflect that same disposition which showed a deep appreciation for deliverance from that same power of sin. He had been occupied with showing the Babylonian envoy everything that had to do with “his” – all his treasures and all his possessions and all his this, that and something else. Yahweh’s rebuke brought a reversal of all “this” and a clear perspective. He was not going to occupy himself during these fifteen years of grace with these sorts of things which only multiply the cares of this life and their corresponding anxieties. Instead, he quieted his soul *“like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child”* he taught all Israel to sing, *“so is my soul within me. O Israel, hope in Yahweh, from this time forth and forevermore.”* He was going to use the time granted him to organize the scriptures which Jewish tradition records he whole heartedly did, which included the extraordinary prophecies of Micah, Isaiah and the Psalms, the latter two being the most quoted books that bear witness of Yahweh’s great salvation, in the greater than Hezekiah, in the New Testament. This was *“to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite”*; so that Yahweh’s gift to him would be extend far beyond the fifteen years graciously added to his life, to **all eternity, as the sign of the turning back of the shadow of Ahaz’s sun dial symbolizes.**

In 2 Chronicles 32:32 we read *“Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.”* In Ezra’s recounting of this work of Hezekiah, here in the Chronicles, he mentions Hezekiah’s kindnesses. He was a person that the nation looked up to and could go to for that particular aspect, that kindness that he was ever touched by the plight of his people. The strength of Yahweh’s word in his heart and the meekness of his wisdom that he showed forth in his life, is something that is really wonderful. The apostle Paul in Corinthians talks about this principle. He says in 2 Corinthians 10:1 (ESV) *“I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!”* (bold because he wrote mighty letters). Here Paul talks about the meekness and gentleness of Christ, and it is the

same language that is used here about Hezekiah, a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Likewise in 2 Kings 20:20 we read of this epitaph of Hezekiah *"And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?"*

What an extraordinary way that record concludes with all the things that could have been said of Hezekiah, how he saved others, how he built up their trust in Yahweh, how he sacrificed his own life for the nation, that he kept one of the greatest Passovers in the scriptures, how he extended Yahweh's salvation to apostate Israel, and even to gentiles, how he reformed the nation, how he opened the doors of the temple, how he put his trust in Yahweh, and in doing so, laid down his life for the nation and was able to take it up again through the grace of God, and how the nation was delivered from the Assyrian. All these things could have been mentioned in summing up his life, but here in this extraordinary record, his memorial centres on that conduit and that pool of Shiloah, how the waters were brought into the city. This has to do with the **virgin's fountain**, that is, the things concerning **the name of Jesus Christ**, because that in particular is what that water represents; it has to do with those "waters which go softly" or gently; the waters of life from the virgin's fountain gave strength to **the remnant called to come to a spiritual birth**. It was a life given to strengthen others, and that conduit or **the means** by which the waters of life were brought into the city speaks to us of the great **means or method of Yahweh** in providing a way of salvation in which **his righteousness was declared through the condemnation of sin in the flesh**, that those who are invited to see it and exercise faith in it, may have their sins forgiven and be delivered from all that afflicts them. This is the parable of the life of Hezekiah, and it is those great principles that we see illustrated in those fifteen Psalms that commemorate what the **turning back of the shadow of Ahaz's sun dial** meant to the inspired Hezekiah. It is those great principles that we will be considering by way of a series of exhortations, if God wills.

Beginning with Psalm 120, we have fifteen Psalms, 120–134, interestingly placed right after Psalm 119, the longest of the Psalms, no doubt written by David — a Psalm where the word or the testimony, the law, the precepts, the rules of Yahweh, are in practically every verse, and it is an expression of how the eternal Christ spirit, that spiritual disposition, that would conquer the power of sin, is set forth in every facet of life, in every thought, in every action. Everywhere you turn, the word of God is there. It is after that monumental Psalm that we have the Psalms of the degrees — the songs of the degrees. The Hebrew word 'mahala' is used likewise in Isaiah 38:8 and 2 Kings 20: 9-11 for the **shadow of the sun dial of Ahaz**. It is that instrument to which these songs of the degrees relate, which was turned back ten degrees as a sign to King Hezekiah that he would recover from his sickness that was unto death, and fifteen years extension of life given to him. So, we have fifteen songs of the degrees, and it is the degrees of **Ahaz's** dial, that wicked man, whose shadow was cast over Hezekiah's whole life. He bore the scars of that wicked idolatrous man all the days of his life! There was a **turning back**, literally to **the light of dawn**, to **"a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing up after rain by the clear shining of the sun"** (2 Samuel 23:4), and it was very much associated with what David referred to as **"all his salvation and all his desire"**, that **"everlasting covenant"**.

All these things speak to us of **the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ**, Yahweh's great salvation and guarantee of all the blessedness that would follow. This is **the key** to the Psalms of the degrees, but not before sin in the flesh was condemned and not before that suffering which was associated with, **"darkness over all the land until the"** time of the evening sacrifice. He was treated as sin for our sake by the hand of "worthless men" who David describes as "thorns that cannot be taken with the hand; but the man who touched them must be filled with iron and a shaft of a spear" (2 Samuel 23:6-7). He is "the lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world" by which His **father's righteousness was declared**. "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness'" rolled back the stone, and the darkness was pierced by the glory of the Father, so that in our hearts that same light might shine "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6). All this speaks to us of the **turning back of the shadow of Ahaz's sun dial**.

As we have noted Hezekiah himself was a great type of the Lord Jesus Christ as his life provided the foundation of Isaiah 53. The eternal Christ spirit in the prophet speaks to us of the Lord Jesus throughout that wonderful section of the servant prophecies, but Hezekiah's life and his sufferings, provided a partial fulfilment of those things, pointing forward as a type to what would be achieved at last in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, his death and his resurrection. These fifteen songs of the degrees of Ahaz's sun dial and how Christ's victory over the tyrant of sin — "sin in the flesh" or diabolos, the source of all rebellion against God — had to be destroyed in order that God's righteousness could be declared. It is that great principle which lies at the foundation of these fifteen Psalms. In laying that foundation as set forth in **Hezekiah's typical death and resurrection**, we have the means by which all God's servants who identify with what God achieved in the greater than Hezekiah can then take hold of as the source of their strength and spiritual power

in the time of trial and tribulation. That also is what these songs of degrees are for as alluded to in Isaiah 38:20– Hezekiah’s songs or Psalms that were to be sung all the days of his life, during the next fifteen years, in the house of Yahweh.

There is a divine pattern in relationship to the songs of the degrees, a wonderful spiritual symmetry. Psalm 127 is the middle Psalm; it is ascribed to Solomon, and we think that is very appropriate. Here is a son of David granted great wisdom, in whom a partial and therefore typical fulfilment of God’s covenant made to David was set forth, who was to be a king of peace after the great wars that David fought, through whom the Son of promise would descend– **the builder of David’s household** (2 Samuel 7:11, 25-29). Here Psalm 127 stands at the centre, like a pillar, and on each side of this anointed pillar are gathered seven Psalms. This wonderful spiritual symmetry is further developed, for in each half of these seven Psalms on each side of Psalm 127, we have two Psalms of David, Psalm 122 & 124 in the 1st group of seven. In the 2nd group of seven we have Psalm 131 & 133. It is like the ark of the covenant, and the **two cherubim**; seven Psalms on one side representing one cherub and seven Psalms on the other side representing the other, and the mercy seat — Psalm 127, written by Solomon, in the midst. **The four Psalms of David corresponding to the four faces of the cherubim**, presents a spiritual pattern that no doubt Hezekiah was caused to meditate upon. The fifteen Psalms taken together represents the **divine purpose of God manifestation as revealed in the Lord Jesus and the ecclesia of the living God**. In the first seven Psalms the name Yahweh occurs twenty-four times, and likewise in the 2nd group of seven Psalms the Yahweh name appears twenty-four times, producing an echo of David’s arrangements of the twenty-four orders of the priests; and the greater than Hezekiah gathering of all these same representations in the Apocalypse (Revelation 4:8-11; 5:9-11). The twenty-four elders represent the glorified saints in their priestly functions, in the education and ministry of acceptable worship of Yahweh to the mortal nations who learn righteousness as a result of Yahweh’s judgements. This is by the four living ones’ execution of the judgement written, this honour has all his saints, who “in co-operation with the Spirit carry on the war to its victorious consummation” (Eureka Vol. 2, pg.37). In Psalm 127, the centre pillar of the Psalms of the degrees, the Yahweh name appears three times, and it was to be on the **3rd day** that Hezekiah, as a type of he who is the resurrection and the life, was promised that he would be healed of his sickness unto death and ascend the house of Yahweh (2 Kings 20:8-11).

Intimately connected with Hezekiah’s typical death and resurrection, and the divine sign of the turning back of the shadow of Ahaz’s sun dial, is Judah’s and Jerusalem’s deliverance from the Assyrian, all of which is memorialized in the fifteen Psalms of the degrees. There could be no deliverance from the **latter-day** Assyrian Sin power for Israel, without first the condemnation of sin in the flesh by the crucifixion of Christ. This is where the victory was won and the captain of salvation divinely provided. It was in condemned human nature that God’s righteous treatment of sin was to be proclaimed, in **the lamb** who bore our sins in **his body** on the tree; **a body** under the dominion of death because of sin; **a defiled nature** that he by this means was to be **redeemed from**; because he was the **lamb of God without blemish or spot**; a work **accomplished in himself** to open the way into the holy of holies **for himself; on behalf of his saints**. This victory insured that Christ will be, in the words of Hezekiah’s contemporary Micah, Israel’s “peace”. “When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him **7** shepherds and **8** princes of men (symbolized in the **fifteen Psalms of the degrees**)”. **7** is the number of perfection and **8** the number of representation; therefore the **7+8** symbolizes “one **like** the son of man” or multitudinous Christ (Daniel 7:13,14; Revelation 1:4-16). “They shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod at its entrances; (i.e. Having entered Babylon the Great like a thief and breaking the serpent’s teeth on the mountains of Israel by the battle of Armageddon, Christ’s immortal army will pursue the adversary to the gates or origins of Daniels 4th beast system and utterly destroy it) and he (Christ manifest) shall deliver us (Israel) from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and treads within our borders” (Micah 5:5-6).

It is very apparent when we study the songs of the degrees, that there is a further **pattern of 5 by 3**; that there are five groups of three Psalms, that each group of three follows a particular theme where the **first of the three speaks of distress**, the **second speaks of deliverance and resurrection**, and the **third speaks of blessings and peace in Zion**. Looking at Psalm 120 to illustrate this, it commences immediately with the words “In **my distress** I cried unto Yahweh and he heard me”. Distress and suffering, helplessness and weakness characterized by the overwhelming power of sin is what focuses the Psalmist’s mind with all his being on the only **means** of deliverance. Psalm 121 commences with the words “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from where does my help come?” So here is a Psalm that calls for us to put our trust in and to seek help from Yahweh who alone can deliver us from all that afflicts us. Then Psalm 122 commences with the words “I was glad when they said unto me let us go into the house of Yahweh”. Here is a Psalm that is dedicated, as verse 6 states, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem”, to the blessing and peace in Zion, the great

hope of God's ecclesia in all generations. It is that pattern of distress, deliverance and resurrection, blessing and peace, that is repeated on each occasion in these 5 groupings of 3 which together comprise the Psalms of the degrees.

With the ideas of trial and distress that commences each of these five groupings of three, followed by trust in Yahweh who alone can provide deliverance, and blessings and peace in Zion, we have before us a spiritual progression, which is the pattern that is the experience of all the sons and daughters of Yahweh for whom the Psalms of the degrees have been provided. It is a pattern that we all must pass — trial, tribulation and distress, which encourages us to seek help from Yahweh, to put our trust in Him through His provided means of deliverance, in the sure hope of blessing and peace; "the peace of God which surpasses all understanding" that "will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4: 7). It is on this theme, encapsulated so magnificently by Hezekiah, that the apostle Paul, as few of the servants of God, in sharing the sufferings of Christ could write:

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in **all our affliction**, so that we may be able to comfort those who are **in any affliction**, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. **For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.** If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you **patiently endure the same sufferings** that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort. For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened **beyond our strength** that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received **the sentence of death**. But that was to make us **rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead**" (2 Corinthians 1:3-9).*

Here is a New Testament summary of the Psalms of the degrees. Paul's sharing of Christ's sufferings as he ministers to the gentiles in a representation of Christ crucified to them is the spirit's portrayal of Hezekiah. Paul speaks of receiving **the sentence of death**, which was Hezekiah's experience when Isaiah came to him, and said to him, "Thus says Yahweh: Set your house in order, for **you shall die, you shall not live**" (Isaiah 38:1). At the very time when Sennacherib's army was encamped outside the walls of Jerusalem, Hezekiah had in earnest prayer and supplication pleaded; "O Yahweh our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone are Yahweh." He had received the blessing of prayer answered, in terms of the Emmanuel prophecy, "this is the word that Yahweh has spoken concerning him (Sennacherib): "She despises you, she scorns you— the **virgin daughter of Zion**... Have you not heard that I determined it long ago? I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass... I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will turn you back on the way by which you came.' 'For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David'" (Isaiah 37: 20-35).

At that very time, "**In those days**" Hezekiah became sick and was **at the point of death** and received from Yahweh through the prophet **the sentence of death**. **This was however as Paul explains, "to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead"**. That is assuredly what Hezekiah did, and he was typically raised from the dead—a resurrection to life defined as "I will add fifteen years to your days", a resurrected life to be memorialized by the Psalms of the degrees and divinely associated with the salvation of the remnant, so that Hezekiah's personal deliverance is **the means, in type, of his brethren and sisters salvation**. "I will **deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria**, and will defend this city" (Isaiah 38: 6). This was on the basis of Hezekiah as a son of David and **as a type of Jesus "in the days of his flesh"** having "walked before Yahweh in faithfulness and with a whole heart and had done what was good in his sight" (Isaiah 38:3). "Yahweh, the God of David **your father**" responded to his "prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him" (Isaiah 38:5; Hebrews 5:7-10).

Hezekiah as a boy was scarred by the fires of Molech that his idolatrous father had made him pass through in order that he might be Molech's servant. He had no majesty or beauty that men should look upon or desire (Isaiah 53:2). He stood, we believe, with the faithless Ahaz, "at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer's Field" (Isaiah 7: 3). It also was a time when Jerusalem was assailed by another **northern confederacy** and the heart of Ahaz and that of his people "shook as the trees of the forest before the wind". At this place Isaiah told the king of Yahweh's salvation and was commanded to ask for a **sign** in the deep or the heavens above as proof that Yahweh's word would accomplish that which he purposed and succeed in the thing he sent it (Isaiah 55:11), but he would not ask! A sign was provided to the house of David,

“the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel”. A sign that spoke of Yahweh’s **heavenly intervention among men to bring the great salvation**. Now at this later crisis and the shadow of his own father’s apostasy, cruelty and faithlessness ever haunting the darkness of his memories, **borne in his flesh**, the king choose an heavenly sign, “that Yahweh will do this thing that he has promised: Behold I will make the shadow cast by the declining sun on **the sun dial of Ahaz** turn back ten steps” (Isaiah 38:8). If the sign was granted at the time of the evening sacrifice when the burnt offering of **the lamb that takes away the sin of the world** was offered, then the heavenly sign would take the house of David to a time “while it was still dark” to a tomb very early in the morning, a tomb where the stone had been taken away and the shadow on the dial of Ahaz turned back.

The Psalms of the degrees memorialize what this heavenly sign of Yahweh’s great salvation meant to king Hezekiah and to all those who constitute the house of the beloved. Paul wrote, “For God, who said, *“Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*”. “We have this treasure” says Paul, says Hezekiah, “in jars of clay, to show that the **surpassing power belongs to God and not to us**.” The Psalms of the degrees enables us to say with Paul and Hezekiah, “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh...For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Corinthians 4: 7-12). That is what the Psalms of the degrees is all about, brethren and sisters—this glorious pattern repeated five times, God’s grace which does not forsake in our distress, then takes us into the reason for that suffering that we may put our trust and confidence in the means of Yahweh’s deliverance. And finally they take us to the blessing and the peace which belongs to Zion—that eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

As we contemplate these things before we partake of the emblems of God’s love, we fellowship Hezekiah’s great desire to obtain that sign given by God’s grace—**the turning back of the shadow of Ahaz’s sundial**, and with him be the recipient of his “unspeakable gift”; “the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3: 9-11).

Identifying the major “latter day” participants in “the time of the end” drama of Armageddon

The world is in fear and anxiety about what is coming upon the earth. It is a comfort to remind ourselves of the **broad outline** of what we have been shown through the prophets at this time, so we are not carried away by the world’s madness. We are not informed of all the detail of how the Lord Jesus, having been given all power in heaven and earth, will manipulate the nations to take up their final stance at the coming crisis, when “the Ancient of Days came, and judgement was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom” (Daniel 7: 22). We do not know for example how Putin’s present invasion of the Ukraine will ultimately contribute to the divine preparations of the coming crisis. We do not know whether this break out of war in Europe—the likes of which has not been seen in 77 years—will even meet the Russian autocrat’s goals. What we may be sure of is that current events represent a turning point for Russia, Europe and ultimately for Israel, and that current events will ultimately play their part in developing the divine plan Yahweh has long foretold (Isaiah 25: 1).

To the watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem “all the day and all the night shall never be silent”; the eternal Christ spirit urges “You who put Yahweh in remembrance, take no rest, and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth”. These watchmen keenly scan the political horizon for the movements of the latter-day Assyrian and the confederacy of nations he is destined to influence and control when he comes against the mountains of Israel, as coinciding with what the sure word of prophecy actually reveals. They do not allow current events to sway them to misread and ultimately be taken unawares. There have been occasions during the decades since the beginning of the **epoch** of “**the time of the end**,” in which Yahweh has been preparing the principal nations that will play a crucial part at last at that time’s impending crisis, to allow current world events to influence interpretation of bible prophecy.

During the early years of WW2, Nazi Germany's military victories brought Hitler's armies of the Third Reich to the outskirts of Moscow and threatened the demise of its equally authoritarian autocrat Stalin and the subjection of Rus. It was argued by some that the Gog of Ezekiel 38-39 was the central European power of Magog, that the then current events proved this hypothesis. Likewise, the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan 1979 – 1989 prompted some to maintain that the Gog and his host of Ezekiel 38-39 was predominantly Russian and its satellites, and did not include the central European powers. In both cases these events marked turning points for all the major powers involved in their divinely controlled "time of the end" development, which in fact **necessitated the destruction of Nazi Germany and the end of the Soviet Union!**

Current world events must therefore be viewed against what the sure word of prophecy actually reveals that constitute the divine markers, along which all things are tending. At any given time we may not be able to appreciate how the divinely controlled geopolitics—shrouded by the fog of war, exasperated and inflamed by famine, disease, pandemics, pestilence, social and economic upheavals of God's judgement upon sin—serve as the means by which the Lord manipulates the nations to belligerently come to the great crisis of the ages. Let us therefore remind ourselves who are the divinely identified powers being prepared by current events for the coming crisis of "the time of the end".

Ezekiel as a man of sign commanded to set his face against Gog

Ezekiel 38-39 is a divine prophecy against "Gog" and is summarized in 39: 1-2. Yahweh addresses this power "Gog" through his prophet Ezekiel as a man of sign who **represents the multitudinous, resurrected, glorified "Son of man"** whom Yahweh "strengthens" (meaning of Ezekiel) to be his Elohist mighty ones. He is, says bro. Thomas **"the representative of Him who is to vanquish Gog"** (Exposition of Daniel Section 2). We can confirm this by comparing other well-known prophecies that deal with the same time period, preliminary events to, and the crisis itself. Ezekiel's contemporary Daniel, in his last great prophecy (chap. 10-12) was caused to see a vision of a certain "man" or "man of the one" the sound of whose voice was like **a multitude** (10:6). Daniel saw this vision along with his own personal experience of resurrection to be a part of this **resurrected glorified multitudinous man of the one**, who will take his place in those divine events which are to "happen to **his people (the Jews) in the latter days**" (10:14). In "the glorious land" "between the sea and the glorious holy mountain" when Michael—"he who is like God"—shall "stand for the children of your people (Israel)" (Daniel 11: 41, 45; 12: 1).

Similarly, the Lord Jesus, through his apostle John immediately after the salutation of the Apocalypse, announces **"Behold, he is coming with clouds"** (amongst this immortal multitude will be Ezekiel, Daniel and John – Hebrews 12: 1). This "coming" is so arresting that the prophet Habakkuk describes these mighty ones coming from "Teman, and the Holy one from Mount Paran ... Before him went pestilence, and plague followed at his feet. He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations" (Hab. 3: 3-6). David, moved by the spirit in Psalm 68, **beholds this coming of Christ with clouds** and their objective, "Elohim (mighty ones) arise" and their "enemies scattered; and those who hate him shall flee before him...The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands; The Lord (Yah) hath come from Sinai (the location of the judgement seat of the responsible), **into his sanctuary (Jerusalem, the judgement seat of the nations** – Daniel 7: 9-10) (Psalm 68: 1,17 ESV & Rotherhams translation).

This coming of Yahweh (Zechariah 14: 1-5), terrible in manifestation against Israel's enemies, consuming in its destruction, will be witnessed by the whole world as John testifies "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him (the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem – Zechariah 13:6; 12:10), and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him" (Revelation 1: 7; 16: 14-16). It is therefore significant that Yahweh commands **Ezekiel as the representative of this multitudinous "Son of man" to "set your face against Gog,"** (Ezekiel 38:1) clearly implying that when the power referred to as "Gog" with his confederacy, comes against Israel, the judgement seat of Christ has concluded its work in preparing his "mighty ones" for the great day of God Almighty that he might **"set his face against Gog"**. Ezekiel 38:1-6; 39: 1-2 also **informs us what part of the earth this power "Gog" will be militarily engaged when the multitudinous Son of man is caused to antitypically prophesy against him.**

"And you, son of man, **prophesy against Gog** and say, thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, **prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal**. And I will **turn you about** and drag you along and bring you up **from the uttermost parts of the north**, and lead you against the mountains of Israel" (Ezekiel 39: 1-2 ESV).

The reader will note that when we refer to a map of the Mediterranean, Europe and the Middle East (below) the nations immediately **north** of Israel are **Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus**

and Russia. God's word tells us plainly the "**prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal**" will be turned about from his **military, political and empire building desires NORTH of Israel** when he is "dragged" or compelled by events, which Yahweh will cause in the middle east, to be turned south from these **northern pursuits—northern pursuits from Israel** which must include all the nations we have noted above, and many others. These chapters in Ezekiel and Daniel imply that the power referred to as **Gog is in fact prepared by Yahweh** by these **northern military, political and empire building pursuits– North of Israel**. This divinely controlled preparation will at last enable "Gog" to form a great confederacy that will **unite Europe east and west** with the "**ruler of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal**" so as to come against the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 38: 1-12). Current events and the form of the "peace cry" (1 Thessalonians 5: 1-10) that follows will compel **all Europe** (with the exception of Great Britain) to unite with the "**ruler of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal**". **This may seem impossible at this juncture, but the sure word of prophecy reveals this to be the inevitable outcome.** The events occurring in Ukraine, as we write, are **precisely in the very northern area from Israel** that Yahweh has informed his servants through Ezekiel that Gog will be dragged from when he invades the middle east.

At present however, we are witnessing a united Europe, the Tarshish power of Britain, it's young lions and the latter-day Tyre – USA, against Russia. This will dramatically change as the result of unfolding providential events in Russia, Europe, the Middle East and the "United States so called". The sure word of prophecy has long foretold of the decoupling of the Tarshish power and its allies from Europe. This commenced with Brexit but must ultimately lead to the demise of NATO. Europe will be forced to accept that its only means of sustainable **PEACE, reliable energy and economic security** lies in permitting **Russia** to act as **Europe's "guard"** (Ezekiel 38:7), or in the words of bro. Thomas a "sentinel, shepherd, or supervisor". This process will accelerate, leading to a crisis, we believe between 2025 – 2034, as the writer has discussed with many of our brethren and interested friends since our earliest visits to PNG.

Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East



Bro. Thomas provides us with an important diagnostic principle of prophetic interpretation for the powers of the latter days, by the territories they will occupy, **geographically identified by the ancient names of those lands** familiar to the prophets:

*"... so that the prophecies treating of those lands at the time, are really delivered concerning that power; for the prophets speak not so much of races and individual potentates, as of **powers on the territories named from the ancient founders of states upon them**" (Exposition of Daniel – Section 27).*

We can certainly apply this principle to the nations designated by their ancient names in Ezekiel 38 & 39 to understand the territories or modern-day nations that will make up the Gogian confederacy that is to invade the middle east at the time of the end. We are not however left with even having to perform this exercise, for as a **general unmistakable geographic indicator** already noted, the power designated by "Gog" will be "dragged" from "**the uttermost parts of the north**" (**north of Israel**), to be led "against the mountains of

Israel". If "**dragged**" we may assume that those activities preoccupying him are seen by him as most important to Gog's ambitions, and indeed to his very identity. Therefore, we would expect that in the **preliminary** events leading to this crisis, the power that Yahweh through his prophet refers to as "Gog" must either control, occupy, or be in alliance with the territories **NORTH** of Israel i.e., **Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus and Russia**, for him to be dragged from these **northern parts**. As mentioned above it is a characteristic of "Gog" that this power will act as a "guard" to the great confederacy he eventually heads when it invades the middle east from these **northern parts**.

Is there such a power **NORTH** of Israel, which either controls, occupies, influences, or has historical designs on the nations listed above, that constitute these **northern** parts the very area Gog's military forces may be found engaged **NORTH of Israel** when the multitudinous Son of man is caused to antitypically prophecy against him? Let us review these countries north of Israel in their current state with what the sure word of prophecy reveals concerning "Gog".

Lebanon

Lebanon is a failed state with one quarter of its population made up of refugees from its neighbouring similarly failed state of Syria. It is **controlled by Russia's Middle Eastern ally Tehran through Hezbollah**, Israel's inveterate enemy which calls for the destruction of Israel. Hezbollah is the most influential political organization in Lebanon, but operates largely without accountability. Even after recent parliamentary elections where it has lost its majority, it will still manage to pursue its goals domestically and regionally as it has done in the past, according to political commentators on Lebanon. In fact, Lebanon's political and economic morass offers plenty of opportunity for Hezbollah; it is skilled in taking advantage of this crisis in order to grow stronger.

*"Despite political setbacks in the past **Hezbollah** were still able to retain their arsenal, grow their organizational infrastructure, and embark upon adventures in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen,"* David Daoud, Lebanon expert pointed out. It facilitates advanced training regimens for Shi'a militias aligned with **Iran (or Persia)**—which is the **first** nation named as being **with Gog in their latter day "mustering" to go against the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 38: 5-8)**. It is noteworthy that **Putin's first trip outside of Russia since Moscow's Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine was to Iran. This coincides with souring of relations between Russia and Israel. Yahweh has providentially caused Russia to draw even closer to Israel's arch-enemy Iran as the Kremlin battles against the impact of unprecedented sanctions imposed by the US and other western countries over the war in Ukraine.**

The Jerusalem Post notes that Iran has *"positioned its constellation of 'Resistance Axis' proxy militias on three of Israel's borders, upgrading their arsenals with increasingly accurate and longer-range missiles, and pursuing its capability to reinforce these militias with a nuclear umbrella. The Islamic Republic and its proxies have also sought to develop the ability to operate behind Israeli lines, including sowing chaos within the West Bank—which overlooks Gush Dan, Israel's vital nerve and population centre—and igniting ethno-religious violence between Arab and Jewish Israelis"*.

Iran's expeditionary forces such as Hezbollah has expansive illicit financing activities across the region to such an extent that Hezbollah has become a regional player acting at Iran's bidding. Hezbollah controls the border with Syria and uses the Port of Beirut to transport drugs, weapons, and explosive material in and out of Lebanon with no state oversight or intervention. This port was destroyed in 2020 by the detonation of illegally stock piled ammonium nitrate. One of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history was the result—far bigger than any conventional weapon—made an estimated 300 000 people homeless and further exasperating Lebanon's descent into anarchy.

Russia refuses to designate Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, and in fact says it "fights terrorism" while supplying it with weapons! Since the USA's retreat from the Middle East, **successive Democrat and Republican administrations** have allowed **Russia's intervention in the Syrian** civil war, backing its long-time ally Bashar al-Assad and his regime. Russia has **provided decisive air power to Syrian and Iranian-backed ground forces**, Hezbollah, which has been Iran's proxy in the Syrian civil war. This has enabled the expansion of Bashar al-Assad's territorial control and solidifying the regime's hold on power.

Syria

As the result of national unrest resulting from "the Arab spring" fomenting into civil war, **Syria**, since 2011, has had an estimated 13 million of its people uprooted either as internal refugees or have fled the country—more than half of the estimated pre-war population. Of those who remain, more than 80% require

humanitarian assistance. Local infrastructure, including water, sanitation and hospitals, is also crippled. Over 12 million Syrians are in need of healthcare. Of the displaced Syrians, 6.6 million are living as refugees in neighbouring countries — namely Turkey (3.8 million), Lebanon (nearly 840,000), Jordan (675,000), and Iraq (over 250,000). The Syrian regime remains in power only because of its **Russian and Iranian** allies. **Russia has established military bases in Syria**, which was a direct result of the USA's diminishing interest in the middle east, so that **Russia has been acknowledged as "the king maker" of the region**. When Russia re-entered the region as a major player with its 2015 incursion into Syria, **Russia in fact became Israel's de facto newest neighbour**.

"The invasion of Ukraine demonstrates", says an anonymous Israeli official, that **"Putin is not an easy neighbour to have."** Unlike Ukraine "Israel is a small and narrow country whose very existence has long been rejected—often violently—by its neighbours. What acceptance it has achieved has been recent and largely with autocratic regimes of dubious durability, while people-to-people ties have lagged. The volatility that has rocked the Middle East over the past decade has only heightened Israel's fears, with two concurrent factors proving the most concerning for Jerusalem: accelerated Iranian expansionism and **American contraction**". Israel was in fact in secret alliance with their **southern Arab neighbours** well before the much-lauded Abraham Accords in an attempt to counter the threat posed by Iran. Israel knew they could **not** trust the **Russia-loving, Autocrat-embracing, isolationist Trump, or his faction of the Republican party who oppose democracy in their own country**. Nor could Israel trust the liberal policies of the Democrats under Biden, though he, unlike Trump, has reinforced the importance of NATO and other international relationships— something Trump continually attempted to undermine and that Russia warmly applauded. With the coming to power of the Biden administration Russia's applause has been replaced with the bitterest contempt! We believe this was a necessary temporary reprieve to unite Europe and strengthen it militarily for the part it will play when it will no longer oppose Russia but be confederate with her.

This current policy of "the United States, so called," which has unified Europe against Russia, will in all probability suffer a major reversal assisted by American isolationism which will be reasserted after the 2024 presidential elections. The Jerusalem Post sums up Israel's relationship as follows: ***"the United States—Israel's traditional guarantor and central ally—has been reducing its global and regional footprint, which have historically been a central pillar of Israeli security. Israel is concerned that the rise of the progressive left and isolationist right in US politics—each with their own negative dispositions towards the Jewish state—will fundamentally weaken the US-Israel relationship***". This is the reason a paranoid Israel, the only truly democratic country in the middle east, initially refused steadfastly to support Ukraine in the fear of upsetting their **"Russian neighbour"**.

Syria, Lebanon and Iraq

Syria and Lebanon, though ancient territories, are not mentioned by name in Yahweh's prophecy against Gog for a most important reason. In Daniel's parallel prophecy of this power's invasion of the middle east at "the time of the end", Gog is referred to significantly by the title, "The king of the **North**" (Daniel 11: 40-45). This was the title given to the ancient **Greek** Seleucid power **North of Israel** whose territory included **Syria, Lebanon and Iraq** (Daniel 11: 5-32). "Gog" as **"the king of the North"** must totally control Syria and Lebanon, and as the head of the **kingdom of Babylon** in its final **"time of the end" manifestation**, it must also **occupy the ancient territory of Babylon or modern Iraq**. As Daniel 11: 40-45 depicts this power as a **revival** of this ancient **Greek Seleucid** (Daniel 11: 22-32) with its allies, the **first** of which is **Iran** (Ezekiel 38:5), it must be "particularly hostile to Judah, as was Antiochus Epiphanes". In returning from an invasion of Egypt in 167 B.C., which was frustrated because of Rome's intervention, Antiochus took Jerusalem by storm, tens of thousands of Jews were massacred (Daniel 11: 30-33), and as the **guardian** of this power's Hellenizing policies, enforced these on the Jews, forbidding the worship of Yahweh and all Jewish rites. In their temple, he erected an altar to Zeus, with sacrifice made at the feet of an idol in the image of the King!

Antiochus Epiphanes, bro. Thomas reminds us, "was a type of the violence of **the Little Horn** (of the goat Daniel 8: 8-12 or **Roman** power) that should come against Jerusalem (AD70) **out of his (the northern or Seleucid horn's) territory**" (Exposition of Daniel Section 9). Furthermore, bro. Thomas emphasizes the significance of the extraordinary identification between this Northern Grecian horn and the Roman power, noting that by "the absorption of the northern (Greek Seleucid) kingdom into the Roman empire, a union was formed between it and the Graeco-Babylonian power of the Seleucidae; so that as these were heirs of Alexander's kingdom of Babylon, the Romans inherited it from them. Hence **the power peculiar to this territory**, styled "the whole earth", may very properly be called the **Romano-Greek Babylonian**; or the Latino-Greek Babylonian. **This name is descriptive of it in its relation to the Holy Land, in all its future**

phases until its utter destruction by Messiah the Prince and his holy ones" (Exposition of Daniel Section 9).

Daniel 8 shows us it will be this same **Roman** power—the **little horn of the goat**, following the type of the Greek Seleucid, Antiochus— "without warning shall destroy many" (Daniel 8:25) that will become "the ruler of Egypt's treasures of gold and of silver and all the precious things" i.e. He will do what Antiochus was prevented from doing in AD167, for "the land of Egypt will **not escape**" (Daniel 11: 42-43). "And he shall go out with great fury to destroy and **set apart (devote) as an offering to the Lord** many to destruction. And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain" (Daniel 11: 44-45 ESV). This **latter-day Antiochus** will consider his taking of Judah and Jerusalem as having **religious** significance as **the guardian of Greek Orthodoxy!** As the latter day political and military component of Daniel's Roman 4th beast system it will "stamp what is left with its **feet**" which are noted as "claws of **bronze**" (Daniel 7: 7, 19 ESV). Daniel's **Roman** 4th beast, with its 10 horns **and brazen claws**, must have as its political and military head a power that is the revival of the **Greek Seleucid king of the north** which will not be frustrated by a Roman rival in the **latter days** because it will be **the military head of that system, unique in history**. It will not be frustrated by the Roman power, for **the king of the north will have become the little horn of the goat and will be in alliance with the 4th beast's 11th or papal horn** (Daniel 11:30, 40-41; 8: 23-26; 11: 38-39).

Bro. Thomas in comparing the visions of Daniel chapters 2 & 7 at the crisis of the kingdom of Babylon about to be smitten by the little stone power at the coming of "the ancient of days" states:

*"These ten horns thus conditioned, **with the brazen-clawed feet**, represent the **same things as the iron-clay feet and toes of the Image** (Daniel 2). When the Russo-Greek elements (clay and brass) are combined with the Gomerians (iron) in the Gog confederacy, **the feet of the Graeco-Roman Dragon will be manifested**; and it will then "stamp the residue with the feet of it". Hitherto the Dragon has destroyed with its "great iron teeth"; **hereafter** it will use **its feet and claws**. The Feet of the Image, and the Feet of the Dragon, have **yet to be formed out of existing elements**; and it is **the King of the North's mission to accomplish the work**". (Exposition of Daniel Section 6)*

Bro. Thomas reminds us that of the divisions that the Grecian empire was divided into, only **two** "were indispensable to the representation of the Eastern Question of our day, called 'the Time of the End'". These divisions, though absorbed into the territory of the Roman empire, are therefore introduced again in Daniel 11: 40 to mark **the beginning of the epoch of "the Time of the End"**. The Ptolemaic "king of the **south**" (again so designated in relation to Israel) or a **foreign** power (the Tarshish power of Britain) occupying Egypt, in marking **the commencement of this epoch**, was to "thrust" at the power occupying the territory of "the little horn of the goat" or Turkey so as to displace it from the middle east, and in particular from the territory of Israel. This occurred in 1917 and commenced the epoch of the time of the end. For a long period of 2500 years of Jewish dispersion from the time of Ezekiel and Daniel, Israel was preserved as a separate and distinct people,—though suffering the most horrendous persecution—so that there could be a partial latter-day "*pre-advental colonization of Palestine on purely political principals*"; as bro Thomas writing in 1848 understood, "the Jewish colonists will return in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus" (Elpis Israel) to the very land promised to their fathers. This provides **the key** to the extraordinary prophecy of Ezekiel 38 & 39. Of all the territories that are named and the powers that will occupy them at the crisis of the ages, "in the latter days", the victim of the **northern aggressor alone** still bears its ancient name—**ISRAEL** (Ezekiel 38, 39).

Israel

It is significant that this name **Israel** is used in a national sense, for it was only in May 1948, when the leader of the Jews, David Ben-Gurion declared that the new state in the Middle East would be called Israel, for the first time since the destruction of the nation by the Little horn of the goat (Daniel 8: 9-12) or Romans in AD70. The Southern horn, having driven the Turks out of Palestine in 1917, Palestine was given to Britain under a mandate from the League of Nations, and in issuing the Balfour Declaration to make Palestine a National home for the Jews, this **southern horn of the British power disappears** from **Daniel's** "representation of the solution of the Eastern Question...called the Time of the End" (Daniel 11: 40-45). The fact that in noting that "the land of **Egypt** shall not escape" (verse 42) from the northern invader with no reference to "the king of the south"—or even that the king of the north shall "come into the south" (Daniel 11: v's 25, 29) as in the historical type of the Syrian wars (Daniel 11: 5-29)— indicates at the time of this "latter-day" crisis, **Egypt will be an independent nation**. Though the southern horn disappears from this Time of the End representation in Daniel, one horn, says bro. Thomas – "*the **northern**, is kept in view to the end of the chapter, being **inseparable at last from the Little Horn of the Goat** which came up out of it and merges again into it;*

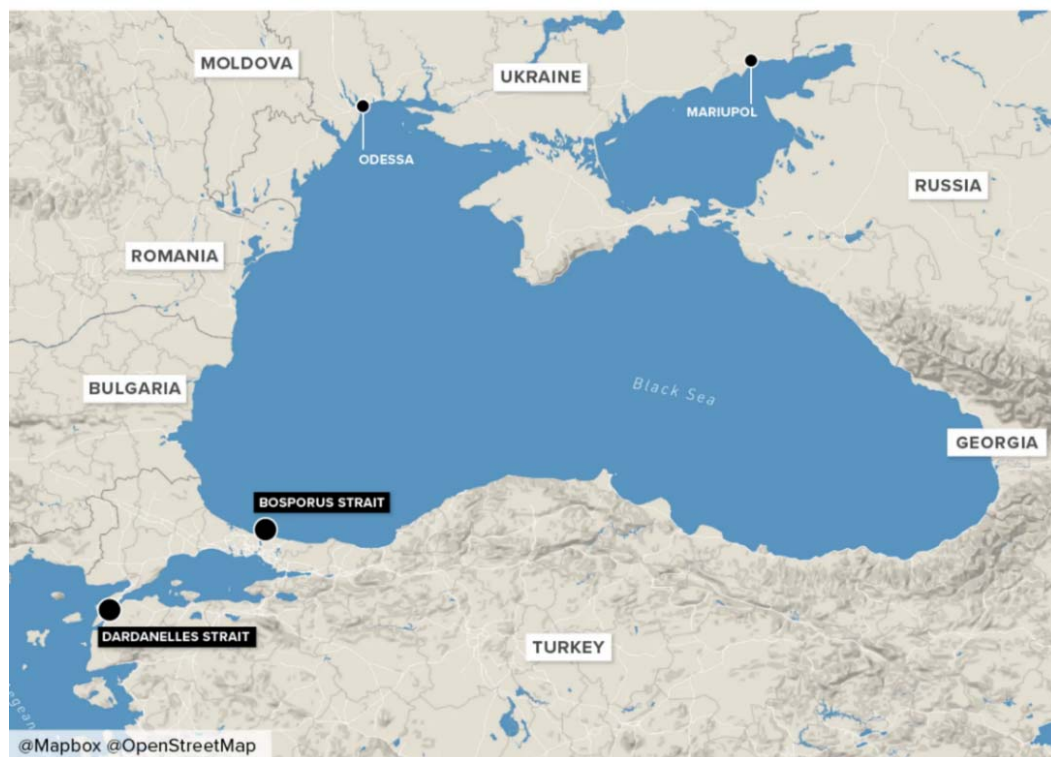
so that the **fate of the one becomes the fate of the other**, which is to be broken without help" (Daniel 8: 25; 11: 45) (Exposition of Daniel Section 9).

Turkey

This brings us to the next nation immediately **north of Israel** from which the power "Gog" is destined to be "dragged" from, to invade the middle east at the Time of the End – **Turkey**.

Turkey borders the Mediterranean on the south and the black Sea on the north, and is strategically the most important country in the worlds most troubled region. Istanbul, the old capital of the Ottoman Empire, is positioned like a bridge between the European and Asian continent.

The Black Sea



Turkey's control of the straits between Europe and Asia gives it unique maritime power. The Bosphorus and Dardanelles are the only water routes in or out of the Black Sea. That gives Turkey influence over how Russia's navy can move.

Its true significance, however, lies in its ancient **Roman** antecedents and its **Roman destiny**. In AD324 Constantine, the first **Christian emperor**, became sole ruler of **the Roman Empire**. He set up his Eastern headquarters at the ancient **Greek colony of Byzantium** in AD330. The etymology of Byzantium suggests that the name is of Thracian origin. It may be derived from the Thracian personal name Byzas which means "**he-goat**"– the Greek king of the Megarian colonists and founder of the original city. The city, renamed Constantinople after its **Roman** founder, was also known as the "**new Rome**." With Constantinople as its imperial centre the empire extended from the Atlantic Ocean across the entirety of the Mediterranean Sea, including what we consider today to be northern Africa, the Middle East, Turkey, and eastern and western Europe, extending to the Black Sea. Constantinople became the capital of the Byzantines after the Roman Empire was formally divided. In **1453**, when the Ottoman Turks conquered the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople became the capital of the new Ottoman Empire. (The city's name was changed to Istanbul in 1930.) Situated on the Bosphorus, Istanbul has always been the centre for trade but is most disastrous during war. During the Turkish independence war (1923), Istanbul was occupied via ships and is one of the reasons after the democratic revolution of the 1920's that the capital was moved to Ankara. Although Ankara is Turkey's political capital, the de facto capital for everything else is most definitely Istanbul to this day. **Constantinople has been eyed covetously by Russia for a millennium and has been providentially denied her prize but not for much longer.**

The author Cyrus Hamlin writing in **1886** stated:

"For a thousand years, Russia has had a vision of Constantinople as the centre of Russian power. Her first descent upon it was made in the ninth century, while still a heathen nation; and her latest in

*the nineteenth. Can any parallel instance be found, in which a nation has **held fast to one great idea for a thousand years, through all vicissitudes of fortune, and all changes in government, religion, and civilization? It has been called the dream of Russia, — is it not a marvelously prophetic dream?***

Prophetic indeed!!!

The first announcement to the world of Russia's intentions was made in **1472** by Ivan III when he married the **Princess Sophia, niece of Constantine Palæologus, the last of the Greek emperors**, and assumed the **double-headed eagle of the Byzantine Empire**. The Byzantine symbol emphasized that the empire **united both East and West under its wings**. As the symbol— especially of **Putin's Russia** (adopted again after the fall of the Soviet Union)— it emphasizes **Russia's link to antiquity, it's purpose among the nations that it views as its sphere of influence, its status and very soul. The double headed eagle uniting East and West under its wings symbolizes Russia's destiny in reclaiming the legacy of Byzantium and of its Roman guardianship of Orthodox Christianity.**

The Orthodox tradition developed from the Christianity of the **Eastern Roman Empire**, and was shaped by the pressures, politics and peoples of that geographical area. The Greek word "orthodox" simply means "correct belief" and at the same time, "correct worship" as has been the claim of all the harlot daughters of "Babylon the great". It became the name applied to the Christian Church that grew and flourished in the eastern, predominantly **Greek-speaking** regions of the late Roman Empire. The nominal head of the Eastern Orthodox Churches is the **Patriarch of Constantinople**. However, he is only regarded as first among equals of this eastern leg of "Babylon the great". The Eastern Orthodox Church is decentralised, having no central authority, earthly head or a single bishop in a leadership role. Nonetheless the Greco/Roman Orthodoxy acknowledges **in order of precedence**: the Church of **Constantinople, Turkey**; Church of **Alexandria in Egypt**; Church of **Antioch**¹; Church of **Jerusalem**. The majority of Orthodox Christians under the Jerusalem patriarchate are Palestinians and Jordanians, with significant minorities of Russians, Romanians, and Georgians. However, the church's hierarchy is dominated by **Greek** clergy, which has been a source of recurring tension and dispute. The Church of **Russia** is the largest autocephalous Eastern Orthodox Christian church.

The primate of the **Russian Orthodox Church (ROC)** is "the Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus". The ROC, as well as its primate, officially ranks fifth in the Eastern Orthodox order of precedence, immediately below the four **ancient patriarchates** of the Greek Orthodox Church: **Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem**, but is destined to control all these territories and therefore **the religious politics of them all**. The "Christianisation of Kievan Rus", widely seen as the birth of the ROC, is believed to have occurred in AD988 through the baptism of the Rus' **prince Vladimir** and his people by the clergy of the **Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople**: "the Metropolitan of **Kiev and all Rus**" remained in the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate until 1686 when he was pressured into transferring the Metropolitan of Kiev and all Rus' from the jurisdiction of Constantinople to that of Moscow. The handover brought millions of orthodoxy and half a dozen dioceses under the ultimate administrative care of the Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus', leading to the significant Ukrainian presence in the Russian Church. **The ROC currently claims exclusive jurisdiction over the Eastern Orthodox Christians who reside in the former member republics of the Soviet Union, irrespective of their ethnic background.**

Putin saw the necessity of **harnessing Orthodoxy** which had been so repressed during the Soviet era to **form the fabric of a resurrected Czarist Russia**, and projects himself as an historian on the subject. Putin shares the same political goals as Patriarch Kiril, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, and his distorted and perverse views make him a close ally. Any supporter of **liberal democracies** are **NAZIS and apostates** and are the enemies of this Russian autocracy, to be mercilessly eradicated from sacred Russia and its Czarist empire, even if you are Jewish and most of your family died in the holocaust and your relatives fought with Russia against Hitler's Germany during WW2!!!

With these historical perversions as the basis of your national theology, we can understand why at the centre of "the Russian dream" political, strategic and religious, all lead inevitably to **Constantinople and finally Jerusalem**. The future of **Ukraine** is an example. It simply does not matter how long or how many Russians must die to achieve its sacred destiny, no matter how many atrocities have to be perpetrated or who the autocrat that rules Russia is, **Ukraine will fall under Russia's control as must Constantinople.**

¹ The seat of the patriarchate was formerly Antioch, near the current city of Antakya, Turkey; in the 14th century, it was moved to Damascus, modern-day **Syria**.

Ukrainian Orthodox Church

In October 2018, the **Ukrainian Orthodox Church** officially split from its Russian counterpart, after more than 300 years. The decision, which was **approved by the Patriarchate of Constantinople**—the symbolic “first among equals” of the world’s Orthodox churches—triggered a major fallout within the Orthodox world, possibly the most serious in 1,000 years! The same month the declaration was made, the Russian Orthodox Church announced that it would break off relations with the Ukraine Patriarchate. The independence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was ratified in a ceremony in Istanbul on Orthodox Christmas Eve 2019, when the Metropolitan of Kyiv, the young Epiphanius I received Tomos². The document granted autocephaly to the newly-formed and newly-recognised Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

For Ukraine, this was a major moment, as it represented another step in **breaking away from political, economic and religious subservience to Russia**. In Russia meanwhile the decision caused great consternation. **Ukraine has the world’s third largest Orthodox Christian population**, followed by Russia and **Ethiopia**; approximately 12,000 of the Russian Orthodox Church’s 36,000 parishes were in Ukraine.

As a result of the split, the Russian Orthodox Church stands to lose much of its territory, believers and, crucially, its **spiritual and symbolic authority over Ukraine**. Both **Russian President Vladimir Putin and Patriarch Kirill made strong statements condemning the schism**. The Russian Orthodox Church, along with the Russian government, has been actively subverting the newly-established church. To this day, other than **the Constantinople Patriarchate** which bestowed Tomos in the first place, only **the Patriarchate of Alexandria** (Egypt) and the Orthodox churches of Greece and Cyprus have recognised the Ukrainian Orthodox Church’s dominion over Ukraine’s parishes. After the ratification of Russia’s occupation of **Crimea**, the Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill publicly supported Russian separatists in **Donbas**. During the Battle of Ilovaisk, the bloodiest engagement of the war, he admonished Ukrainian “Uniates and schismatics” for fighting against “their fellow Orthodox brethren” in the ranks of the separatists and their supporting force. Patriarch Kirill, and the Russian Orthodox Church, are but the religious mouth piece to the political objectives of Russian powers.

Constantinople

In returning to Russia’s historical intentions with respect to Constantinople, the Russian prince Ivan III saw himself as the heir of Byzantium because of **his** marriage to the **Princess Sophia, niece of Constantine Palæologus, the last of the Greek emperors** in 1472. He assumed the **double-headed eagle of the Byzantine Empire** despite Mehmed the Conqueror having ascended the throne of the Ottoman empire, having successfully conquered Constantinople in 1453, bringing to an end the Byzantine Empire and **claiming the title “Caesar of the Romans”**. Mehmed’s claim as Caesar rested principally with the idea that Constantinople was the rightful seat of the Roman Empire, as it had indeed been for more than a millennium since its consecration in AD330 by Emperor **Constantine I**. Contemporary scholar George of Trebizond wrote ***“the seat of the Roman Empire is Constantinople ... and he who is and remains Emperor of the Romans is also the Emperor of the whole world”***. In 1454, Mehmed ceremonially established Gennadius Scholarius, a staunch antagonist of Catholicism and of the Sultan’s European enemies, as Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and ethnarch of the Greek Orthodox Christians within the Empire. In turn, Gennadius endorsed Mehmed’s claim of Imperial succession. **Mehmed II viewed the Ottoman state as a continuation of the Roman Empire** for the remainder of his life, seeing himself as “continuing” the Empire rather than “replacing” it. By this means the Ottoman Turkish power assumed the mantle of “the little horn of the goat” and is the “him” of Daniel 11: 40 against whom “the king of the south thrusts” (British power who occupied Egypt in 1917) and against whom the King of the north is destined to rush like a whirlwind (Daniel 11: 40).

By marriage and by the decree of “THE Most High who rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will”, **Ivan III** united the **Greco/Roman and Russian destiny**. Ivan III’s claim as the **rightful heir of the Byzantine Empire** has been prosecuted for five centuries, says Hamlin writing in 1886.

“Russia was then an unknown, insignificant power, but just casting off the trammels of the Tartar domination, and slowly gathering the elements of that mighty strength of which she alone was conscious. She is now the terror of the world. Her territory was then about 740,000 square miles; it is

² A tomos is a scroll or a small book which codifies a decision by a Synod, or council of Orthodox bishops or from the **Constantinople Patriarchate**

*now more than eight millions! Every square foot of it has been won by **the sword and stained with human blood**".*

Between the 16th and 20th centuries the world witnessed one of the longest series of military conflicts in European history—the Russo-Turkish wars (or Ottoman–Russian wars), a series of **twelve wars** fought between the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire. Except for the war of 1710–11 and the Crimean War, the conflicts ended disastrously for the Ottoman Empire in accordance with the divine decree, that the waters of the Turkish power must be dried up (Revelation 16: 12); conversely, they showcased the ascendancy of Russia as a European power particularly after the modernization efforts of Peter the Great in the early 18th century.

In the working out of Yahweh's long anticipated plan, bro. Thomas, in viewing its end from where he providentially stood in the same 19th century as Hamlin, wrote:

*"The Ottoman nation is more Greek than Turkish, with but little of the Latin element; but when the **Latins and Greeks come to form a confederacy under Russia** (when Russia like Mehmed II takes Constantinople) as the fragile medium of combination, the **Latino-Greek Babylonian power** will be in full "blossom", when the sour grape is ripening for the vintage (Isa. 18:5; Rev. 14:18). **If these things be apprehended**, the reader will be prepared to read **the destiny of Russia and the nations in the solution of the Eastern Question**; for, the working of it out **is the manifestation of the Gogian Image, or Latino-Greek Babylonian power** in consummation for its signal and final overthrow by the hand of Deity" (Exposition of Daniel Section 9). "When the Autocrat **gains Constantinople**, and Russianizes Italy and the West; and having superseded the Ottoman regime in Asia, **comes as Gog** to invade the Holy Land and to besiege Jerusalem, **the Little Horn of the Goat will again represent the power of the whole dominion briefly united under one chief**, and he the proudest that ever exalted and magnified himself above all the rulers upon earth. In that near future **the Little Horn of the Goat** will be "exceeding great", overshadowing all the sovereignties represented by the Two-Horned, and Ten-Horned, Beasts, and the Pseudoprophet of the Beast" (Exposition of Daniel Section 18).*

*"During its enthroned existence (in Constantinople) it (the Autocrat of Russia) will be all that is affirmed of the Little Horn of the Goat and of 'the King that does according to its will', in the eighth and eleventh chapters of Daniel. At this crisis, its power will be mighty, and it will destroy wonderfully, and prosper, and practise. As Lord of Europe and Asia the continental dynasties of the West will be gathered unto it. They will acknowledge its supremacy, and seek to it as the shadow and strength of their dominions. The **Constantinopolitan Little Horn Power** will then be in **final fourth-beast manifestation**, "dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly; having great iron teeth; devouring and breaking in pieces, and **stamping the residue WITH THE FEET of it**; and having ten horns". It is while the **post-Ottoman dynasty occupies the throne** that the **"stamping the residue with the feet of"** the beast is accomplished. **The Feet represent a power, a stamping or conquering power, which subjects "the residue" to its dominion.** The claws of these feet are of **brass**, while the feet themselves are part of iron and part of clay; for **the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's Image, and those of the Fourth Beast, are representative of the same power.** The brass, the iron, and the clay, then, are representative of the **national elements constituting the power.** The Greeks, and the Latins, mixed up with the heterogeneous peoples **under the guardianship of the Czar**, moulded into form under his imperial sceptre, are the Feet-power that stamps the residue. The residue may be discerned in **the names of countries and races hereafter to be confederated under Gog** as their appointed "guard" (Exposition of Daniel Section 20)*

*"But when it is "broken in pieces without help" it appears no more as a symbol upon the prophetic page. **Its mission in the Holy Land and against Judah ends with its own Pharaoh-like destruction**; and the East delivered, future events re-open in the **West, where only a Beast, the False Prophet, and the Ten Horns**, their **Russian Constantinopolitan confederacy** being dissolved, remain to be ground to powder, and destroyed by fire and sword" (Exposition of Daniel Section 18).*

The Serpent's head

Bro. Thomas reminds us of the importance of correctly identifying who Gog is and those nations that will comprise his confederacy:

"Son of Man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Thuval, and prophesy against him". In this title to the prophecy the antagonists are indicated, namely, the Son of Man (ben-adam) or seed of the Woman, on the one side; and the Prince of Rosh, the Head of the Serpent

Confederacy, on the other. Hence, by understanding Gog's title, the reader may know which of "the powers that be" is chosen of God to personate the Serpent's Head when it is bruised by the Women's Seed".

Ukraine

In reviewing the nations **north of Israel** from which Gog is "**turned about**" and to "**bring you out**" from, we come to **Ukraine** and **Russia** itself—which as we speak is engaged in what Yahweh clearly intends to be a **protracted war** to ultimately control what historically Putin's Russia considers it's spiritual, economic and strategic heartland. Thirty years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Putin's attempt to bring back some of those key countries under Russia's control is now occurring at a most compelling period with respect to the epoch of "**the time of the end**". With very little discussion with the Russian political elite, many of whom were caught by surprise by Putin's decision to, at this time, attempt to extend Russia's seizing of the **Crimea** in 2014 to eventually control all of Ukraine. Putin's support from average Russians in seizing the Crimea and the present war is very high. This fact makes historians such as Serhii Plokhy, acknowledge that the situation is "*very serious and dangerous and goes **far beyond Putin***". "*What you see in Putin's language in his July 2021 History Essay or his justification since the invasion of Ukraine is the replication of the thinking of the **Russian Imperial View** of the big Russian nation, the thinking of the Russian **Imperial elite from the mid-19th Century to the revolution of 1917** which was replaced with different policies introduced by the Bolsheviks that **Putin does not like***". Putin paid tribute recently to Tsar Peter the Great on the 350th anniversary of his birth, drawing a parallel between what he portrayed as their twin historic quests to win back Russian lands. "*Peter the Great waged the **Great Northern War for 21 years**. It would seem that he was at war with Sweden, he took something from them. He did not take anything from them, he returned (what was Russia's),*" Putin said after visiting an exhibition dedicated to the tsar. In televised comments on day 106 of his war in Ukraine, he compared Peter the Great's campaign with the task facing Russia today. "*Apparently, it also fell to us to return (what is Russia's) and strengthen (the country). And if we proceed from the fact that these basic values form **the basis of our existence, we will certainly succeed** in solving the tasks that we face.*"

Peter the Great, an autocrat, ruled for 43 years and gave his name to a new capital, St Petersburg—Putin's hometown—which he ordered to be built on land he conquered from Sweden. It was a project that cost the lives of tens of thousands of serfs, conscripted as forced labourers to build Peter the Great's "window to Europe" in the swamps of the Baltic Sea coast. Prior to Putin's visit to the exhibition, state television aired a documentary praising Peter the Great as a tough military leader, **greatly expanding Russian territory** at the expense of **Sweden** and **the Ottoman Empire** with the modernized army and navy that he built.

Historian Serhii Plokhy states:

"Russians and Ukrainians belong to the eastern Slavs and in particular Belarusians, the linguistic barrier between Russia and Ukraine is not huge. Russians would not normally understand Ukrainians only with some effort. Therefore, this war is being fought in two languages. Most Ukrainians are bilingual, president Zelinski in fact speaks Russian better than Ukrainian. Ukrainians however understand Russians because of the dominance of the Russian culture for so long over Ukraine. There is a commonality and is the reason why this war came as such a major surprise to many Ukrainians".

Though this may be the case with the Ukrainians it most certainly is not so with the student of Bible prophecy who have been informed that it is from these **northern parts in relation to Israel** that Gog must be "turned about" to be joined by his Confederacy to at last invade the Middle East. Polkhy continues:

*"Historically however the differences between Russia and Ukraine are very visible. The war which commenced in 2014 started with the excuse of **protecting Russian speakers** and it is the Russian speaking areas of Ukraine that are being completely destroyed like Mariupol. Ukraine is not united around language they are united around **democratic institutions**, the **European choice** that they are trying to protect. Where else in the world would you see people dying under the EU banner? So, in historical terms it is all about the different projectory of the development of regions and nations after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ukraine is looking west to European values".*

But what of Ukraine's religion we might ask, does not Ukraine look to the east? Polkhy answers:

*"Ukrainians look to the east but not to Moscow! **To Constantinople** this is where their Christianity came from, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church jurisdiction was under the Church of Constantinople until the late 17th century then Ukraine was taken over by Moscow and the Russian Empire and the switching of the centre first to Saint Petersburg and then to Moscow. What we're seeing now are major cracks in the*

*Orthodox unity of the last few centuries to the degree that the leader of the Ukrainian Orthodox church has issued an appeal to Putin talking about 'the sin of Cain' – turning Putin's argument about and talk of brotherly nations turning against its brother nation. Putin gave as one of the alleged goals for this war as **denazification!** There is **no historical basis** to Putin's claims whatsoever in relation to Ukraine today, it is **pure propaganda** to say that Ukraine has in some way been taken over by Nazis, it is **pure nonsense!** In terms however of **what is happening in Russia** there are many definitions of what is **fascism** and many historians say there is elements of **fascism** in Russia".*

Significantly Plokhyy draws our attention to the **striking parallels between Nazi Germany and Russia's** philosophy and ambitions as being executed under Putin:

"I would draw parallels between the history surrounding the start of WW2 and the Nazis attempt to build a greater Germany – collect the German speaking lands under the control of Berlin which is exactly what Putin did in 2014 in Crimea and what he is doing right now. There are the most striking parallels between Putin's attempt to build a greater Russia and Nazi Germany."

Not only is Ukraine fundamental to the origins, identity and religion of Russia and therefore its importance at this crucial juncture of time in preparing Gog, but the very war now being played out in this most important historical region which defines the king of the uttermost parts of the north in relation to Israel, has fundamentally changed Putin's attitude to **Russian Jews and the Jewish state itself**. Putin has had strong emotional ties with Russian Jews throughout his life and his policies have reversed the persecution they suffered under the Soviet era and assisted in a cultural and religious revival in Russia. The war against Ukraine however has been used by Putin to flame a Russian religious nationalistic identity crisis that demands absolute loyalty to its sacred cause! Putin has long courted Jewish community leaders in Russia. Some are now getting out of Russia while they still can amid the escalating tensions over the war. The chief rabbi of Moscow was stood down from his position after he left the country in March following what he says was pressure on him to publicly support Russia's invasion. The worsening relations between Israel and Russia, he said, **"will of course have an impact on the attitude to Jews inside Russia"**.

Gog and the land of Magog

"Son of man, set your face towards **Gog and the land of Magog, ruler of Ros, Mosoch and Thobel**, and prophesy against him and say to him, This is what the Lord says: Behold, I am against you, O **Gog, ruler of Ros, Mosoch and Thobel**. ... **I will round up you and all your force... Gomer and all around him, the house of Thegrama (Togarmah or Turkey) from the extreme north parts and all those around him** and many nations shall be with you" (Ezekiel 38: 2-4, 6 New English Translation of the Septuagint). Gomer, Magog, Meshech and Tubal named in Ezekiel 38 were all the sons of Japheth, son of Noah, while Togarmah was the son of Gomer. They are the progenitors of the races whose ancient territories are named in this prophecy so as to identify Gog as the **ruler** and guard over these lands when the prophecy is about to be fulfilled. Here is an extended family whose descendants, as we shall see, occupied those areas **north** of Israel and migrated into central Europe. The descendants of **Magog** originally settled in the **North and Eastern parts of the Black Sea**. They inhabited the country of the **North Caucasus in southern Russia** bordering Georgia and the north-east shore of the Black Sea and **all around the mouths of the rivers Don and Dnieper**. The mouth of the **Don** River empties into **the sea of Azov** (right side of map below) which is **bounded by Russia on the south-east and by Ukraine on the north-west**. The **Dnieper** River flows through Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, the mouth of which empties into the **Black Sea** near the Ukrainian city of **Odesa** which is **a key objective of the current Russian invasion**.



Russia is aiming to take full control of southern Ukraine as well as the eastern Donbas region, a senior Russian commander says. Maj Gen Rustam Minnekayev was quoted in state media as saying that goal would allow Moscow to form a land bridge to Crimea, which it annexed in 2014. He also said it would give Moscow access to the Russian-backed separatist region of Transnistria in Moldova. Transnistria is a small region that borders Ukraine's west.

The Jewish historian Josephus notes that “**Magog** founded the Magogians, thus named after him, but who were by the Greeks called **Scythians**”, concerning whom, the ancient Greek historian Herodotus wrote: “They spread **from** the river Tanais, or **Don**, **westward** along the banks of the Ister, or **Danube**”.

Along with this quotation from Herodotus Bro. Thomas states:

"The Greeks", observes Major Rennel, "appear to have first used the term Scythia in its application to their neighbours the Scythians of the Euxine (the Black Sea), who were also called Getae, or Goths; and were those who afterward subdued the Roman empire: and from which original stock the present race of people in Europe seem to be descended".

The Danube's mouth empties into the Black Sea (note map below, lower left between Romania and Bulgaria near to the borders of Moldova and Ukraine). The Danube is the longest river in the **European Union** passing through **ten** countries, more than any other river in the world, and played a vital role in the settlement and political evolution of Central and south-eastern Europe. Its origins are in the Black Forest region of Germany. It is most interesting that **the descendants of Magog originally occupied the very area that Russia now is so ruthlessly determined to take back from Ukraine between the Don and Danube, i.e., the Donbas, Luhansk, Mariupol, Kherson, Odesa along with Crimea which they annexed in 2014.** As if **right on queue**, Yahweh is inviting those who are students of bible prophecy to ponder who is Gog, his origins and destiny. These descendants of Magog journeyed west along the Danube as far as East Germany where the present Russian autocrat was stationed during the breakup of the Soviet Union—what he refers to as “*The greatest geopolitical tragedy of the 20th century.*”

Brethren and sisters, let us remember **our task is to ascertain where the lands identified in the prophecy by their ancient names were and apply the divine predictions to whatever power occupies those lands at the time the prophecy is preparing to be fulfilled.**



One of the earliest references to Magog was by Hesiod, "the father of Greek didactic poetry," who **identified Magog with the Scythians and southern Russia in the 7th century B.C.** Hesiod was, in effect, almost a contemporary of Ezekiel. The evidence of the geographic areas the descendants of **Magog** settled extends from writers predating Ezekiel to Russian archaeologists.

Historians inform us that the "**Cimmerians**" are the oldest of the European tribes living **north of the Black Sea and Danube**. The Cimmerian period in the history of **southern Ukraine began in the late 11th century B.C.** The Cimmerians were the **first specialized horse-nomads to make their name in history**. The earliest archaeological evidence of the domestication of the horse occurs **south of Kiev** about 2500 B.C. Historians estimate that their nomadic lifestyle, including mounted warriors, fully developed between the 9th and 7th centuries B.C.. It is significant that **Gog's army**, like the ancient name of the lands, are described in terms that the prophet and his contemporaries could understand. Most generations during the last 2500 years could identify the power north of Israel whose armies were characterized by "horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armour, a great host, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords" (Ezekiel 38:4). They are first mentioned in secular literature in Homer's *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad* (8th century B.C.), and in Assyrian cuneiform texts from the 8th century B.C. (before Ezekiel), and especially in Herodotus (5th century B.C.). Herodotus indicates that the whole North Pontic steppe region, occupied in his time by the **Scythians**, belonged **earlier** to the **Cimmerians**. Some scholars derive the name of **"Crimea"** from the Cimmerians (Strabo 7.4.3.). In the 7th century B.C., the **Scythians** swept across the area, **displacing the Cimmerians from the steppes of the Ukraine east of Dnieper River**, who fled from them across the Caucasus—a chain of mountains separating Circassia - North Caucasus from Georgia, the south-eastern part of Russia. Even the name "Caucasus" appears to have been derived from Gog-hasan, or Gog-Cassam, Cassam meaning, in Arabic, **a fort or stronghold**; therefore **"Gog's Fort."** (Dr. John Gill, *A Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1748). The descendants of Magog's ancient ruler named Gog used Mount Caucasus as his stronghold, and was called Gog's Cassam (eventually corrupted to Caucassam and Caucasus).

The Scythians = Magog

We know **the descendants of Magog by their Greek designation as the Scythians**. The name **Scythian designates a number of nomadic tribes from the Russian steppes**, one group of which invaded the Near East in the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. After being repulsed from Media, many of the later Scythians settled in the fertile area of the **Ukraine north of the Black Sea**. Other related tribes occupied the area to the **east of the Caspian Sea**.

Herodotus describes them **living in Scythia (i.e. the territory north of the Black Sea)**. He describes Scythia as encompassing the **lower reaches** of the Dniester, Bug, Dnieper, and Don Rivers where they flow into the **Black Sea and the Sea of Azov**. (B.A. Rybakov, Rus: Herodotus's Scythia, Nauka, Moscow, 1979, p. 19). The Scythians, as bro. Thomas shows in quoting Herodotus, also **migrated west** so that the name of Scythae or Magog was **not** to be confined to the area north of the black sea i.e., Crimea and Ukraine, but to **Germany** and those nations around her, penetrating even to the Baltic that is geographically connected with Galatae, or **Gomer (France)**. Bro. Thomas quotes Diodorus Siculus, who lived about a century before Josephus, and describes the Scythia as "above Gaul (or France) extending towards the Baltic" In presenting an over view of the Scythians bro Thomas then quotes the historian Strabo. "The ancient Greeks", says he, "at first called the **northern nations by the general name of Scythians**; but when they became acquainted with the nations **in the west**, they began to call them by the different names of Celts, and Celto-Scythae"; and again, "the ancient Greek historians called the northern nations collectively Scythians and Celto-Scythae". The latter name plainly denoted the most **western portion of the Scythae, adjoining Gaul (France)**; among whom were the "Scythae on the north of the Galatae".

In Exposition of Daniel bro. Thomas states: "In this **general description** may be easily discerned that extended portion of **the West of Europe**" (Exposition of Daniel Section 24). It is therefore most significant that Ezekiel as **the representative of Him who is to vanquish Gog** is asked not only to set his face towards him, but immediately adds, "**and the land of Magog**". Bro. Thomas in quoting J D Michaelis, a Prussian biblical scholar of the 1700's, notes: "*Whoever reads Ezekiel can hardly entertain a doubt that **Gog is the name of a sovereign, and Magog that of his people**; the prophet speaks of the former, not as a people, but as an Emperor*".

If Gog is destined to be the supreme ruler of the nations whose ancestors inhabited those lands stretching from southern Russia and Ukraine to the Baltic, where is this Sovereign's throne situated? On **three** occasions in Ezekiel 38-39 he is emphatically said to be the **"ruler of Ros, Mosoch and Thobel"**.

Archaeology reveals the extent of the Scythians

It has been demonstrated that Scythian culture extended not only into western Europe but more than 2,000 miles **east** from Ukraine. There has been discoveries of tombs in the Chilikta Valley of East Kazakhstan, which show that Scythian culture had spread to the Mongolian border as early as the 6th century B.C.. Countless Scythian burials, ranging from the 6th - 2nd century B.C., have been uncovered in the areas to the north and east of the **Black Sea**—in many cases beyond the limits of what Herodotus demarcated in his day as "Scythia" proper. More than 1,200 graves were investigated by A. Leskov in **the Crimean area** between 1961 and 1972. Hundreds of Scythian graves from the 4th and 3rd centuries have been discovered since the 1930s by B. Grakow, A. Trenoschkin, and E. Tschernenko, in the **Ukraine**. One of the many implications of these discoveries is the authentication of the reliability of Herodotus as a source of knowledge of the Scythians.

In July 1995, Russian archaeologists found a 2,500-year-old Scythian horseman under more than seven feet of ice in **Siberia** near the Chinese and Mongolian borders. The frozen conditions marvellously preserved textiles, remains of horses, human skin and hair, entrails, undigested food, etc., for more than 2,300 years! According to Herodotus and archaeological evidence, the Scythians not only occupied territory from the Danube to the Don, their northern boundary extended not only beyond the latitude of Kiev, but also far beyond these original ancestral lands. It has long been generally understood by many Russian academics that much of their population is descended from a branch of the Scythians. The Russian poet and translator, Alexander Blok, noted such in one of his poems, "The Scythians". Also, Russian historian Alekseyev, in his work, "In Search of Our Ancestors", writes that **the Russians are a branch of the Scythians**.

Rosh

Dr Gesenius in his Hebrew and English Lexicon wrote that "**Rosh** was a designation for the tribes then north of the Taurus Mountains, dwelling in the neighbourhood of the Volga" (Gesenius 1872: 534, 626, 955, 1121). He concluded that **in this name we have the first trace, historically, of the Rus or Russian state**.

Dr Daniel Schenkel's Bible-Lexicon: "**Rosh** in Heseq (Ezekiel) 38:2, 3; 39:1, **is the name of a people of the north, named along with Meschech and Tubal, and all together as subject people of Gog**...Rosh was a proper name for a people and was used by Byzantine and oriental writers; but the statements concerning the same people, dwelling in northern Taurus, as also towards the Muscovite Mountains," or, as some other authors maintain, "on the Taurian Peninsula (Crimea), and still further to the north **along the Volga, - agree in a most striking manner with the combination of Rosh, Meschech, and Tubal**...**Rosh is the oldest historical name to designate the tribal peoples of the Russians of history**." Soviet scholars contend that

tribes of the Antes who lived on the lower Danube River, in the north western Black Sea region, (present-day Moldova and central Ukraine), and in the regions around the Don River (in Middle and Southern Russia) was known as the '**Ros**' and later modified to '**Rus**' which resided along **the river Ros, a tributary of the Dnieper in the southern Ukraine**, just north of the Black Sea.

Tubal

In discussing Tubal, Gesenius noted that Tubal was the founder of the Tiberani, "a nation of Asia Minor dwelling by the Euxine (or Black Sea) to the West of the Moschi". He concluded that there should be no doubt that **Tubal and Meschech comprise the modern Russian people** (Gesenius 1872 : 858). The people of Tubal were variously known as Tubla, Tabal or Tabali by the Assyrians who refer to them giving tribute of "great horses" to Ashurbanipal; Tiberani or Tibarenoi by the Greeks; and Thobelites by Josephus (Josephus Antiquities 1: 6:1). They were always identified with the Moschi in Asia Minor. The Septuagint version translates "Meschech and Moschi" as "Mosoch and Thobel". Historians can trace two branches of the descendants of Tubal: one migrated northward, the other westwards. The branch of the Toboli which migrated northwards, perhaps gave their name to Lake Bataton Balta and the Baltic Sea. They are today settled north-east of Moscow around Tobolsk.

Meschech

The descendants of Meschech are noted to have migrated with Tubal up to the Black Sea and into the Russian plains. Gesenius states that "*Meschech became the Moschi, a very barbaric people. They dwelt, he said, in the Moschian Mountains*" (Gesenius 1872 : 534, 626, 955, 1121). The Moschian Mountains were the connecting chain between the Caucasus and Anti Taurus Mountains. The Scofield Reference Bible says that the "reference to Meschech and Tubal (Moscow and Tobolosk) is a **clear mark of identification**". Strabo, whom Bro. Thomas often quotes, claimed that here was a district named "Moschice", a very barbaric people, while Lempriere stated in his dictionary that the Moschi were a people to the west of the Caspian Sea. Milner explains: "The whole district within five hundred miles of Moscow seems to be saturated with the name of Meschech" (Milner, W. (1941) The Russian Chapters of Ezekiel).

Bro. Thomas in surveying what Yahweh reveals through his prophets constitute "the territory of the **Kingdom of Babylon as it is destined to exist in its last form** under the **King of the North** in his **Gogian** manifestation" will historically be **unique**, for "**Besides 'All the Russias'**, it will take in **Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Prussia** (the territory of Prussia was absorbed following WW 1 and II into Poland and Germany and minor portions into Belgium, Denmark, Lithuania and Russia), **Austria, Turkey, Persia, Tartary³, Greece, the Roman Africa, and Egypt**. This will be a dominion of great magnitude, extending from the North Sea to the Wall of China and Afghanistan, and from the Ice-Sea to the Deserts of Africa and Arabia" (Exposition of Daniel, Section 25. - Future Magnitude of Gog's Dominion).

As Yahweh lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country

In concluding our review of the latter-day participants that will comprise Gog's confederacy, especially those nations which lie directly **North** of Israel, it is worthy of note that the **2nd exodus**, subsequent to the smiting of the Russo/Greek Babylonian Image at Armageddon, is characterized as a deliverance peculiarly "out of the **north** country". An estimated 1 million Jews live in Russia, according to the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia, who have been alarmed by the fallout from growing nationalist sentiment following Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Their continued presence in Russia is necessary that scripture may be fulfilled, many of whom will be trapped and no doubt face Nazi like persecution as "the time of the end" crisis unfolds:

"Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares Yahweh, when it shall no longer be said, 'As Yahweh lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' but '**As Yahweh lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the NORTH country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.**' For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their fathers. Behold, I am sending for many fishers, declares the Lord, and they shall catch them. And afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks. For my eyes are on all their ways. They are not hidden from me, nor is their iniquity concealed from my eyes. But first I will doubly repay their

³ The countries of central Asia from the Caspian Sea to China and Mongolia from Afghanistan and Iran to Russia including the 5 "Stan" ex-soviet republics – Kazakhstan etc.

iniquity and their sin, because they have polluted my land with the carcasses of their detestable idols and have filled my inheritance with their abominations.”

“O Yahweh, my strength and my stronghold, my refuge in the day of trouble, to you shall the nations come from **the ends of the earth** and say: “Our fathers have inherited nothing but lies, worthless things in which there is no profit” (Jeremiah 16: 14-19).

As we have already noted it has been recently reported by numerous media organizations that after three decades of increasingly friendly ties, tensions over Putin’s invasion of Ukraine are triggering the worst rift in relations between Russia and Israel since the Soviet Union’s collapse when Mikhail Gorbachev opened up the country. The falling-out between Israel and the Kremlin represents a **providentially** dramatic turnaround after Putin cultivated ties with Israeli leaders for years as part of a wider Russian push for Middle East influence. Putin had been feted in Jerusalem as recently as 2020 at a ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Nazi Germany’s Auschwitz death camp by the Soviet Red Army. Since the beginning of the Ukraine war however Russian Jewish emigration has dramatically increased. After Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24th 2022 Israel became one of the main destinations for a wave of emigration, an exodus that included many workers from Russia’s technology industry. About 16,000 Russian citizens have registered as immigrants in Israel since the start of the war, **more than three times as many as in the previous year**; another 34,000 arrived as tourists. In Volgograd in **southern Russia**, a Jewish community leader, said that the rate of emigration to Israel from their city appeared to have doubled in recent months. Putin sees those trying to abandon Russia at this time as traitors—raising echoes of the Soviet era, when Jews suffered from being seen as having dual loyalties.

In this further clear evidence of the crisis of the time of the end building, **the Kremlin’s deteriorating relationship with Israel**, as a direct result of the far-reaching consequences of the war in Ukraine, Russia is threatening to ban the **Jewish Agency for Israel**. This agency was founded nearly a century ago, which was instrumental in helping establish Israel in 1948, and has facilitated the emigration of millions of Jews from around the globe. About one million immigrants from the former Soviet Union arrived in Israel from the late 1980s to the end of the 1990s. Jewish negotiators have disclosed that Russia is using spurious legal claims against the agency and that its real complaint is that Israel has been taking some of the best minds out of Russia, which is home to hundreds of thousands of people of Jewish descent. The push to close the Jewish Agency is **a warning to Israel not to align itself with the Tarshish power and its young lion allies against Russia over the war in Ukraine**.

Prime Minister Yair Lapid of Israel has warned Russia that shuttering the agency would be a “grave event” that damages diplomatic relations. “The attempt to punish the Jewish Agency for Israel’s stance on the war is deplorable and offensive,” Israel’s minister for diaspora affairs, Nachman Shai, recently stated. “The Jews of Russia cannot be detached from their historical and emotional connection to the State of Israel.”

Israeli delegates who visited Moscow to discuss the case have to date made no progress in averting the Russian threat. “The Jewish community in Russia is deeply connected with Israel,” Mr. Lapid said in a statement. “We will continue to act through diplomatic channels so that the Jewish Agency’s important activity will not cease.” These attempts must ultimately fail, Russia will be compelled to see Israel as the ally of its democratic enemies led by the Tarshish power who along with the southern Arab allies will oppose Gog (Ezekiel 38: 13).

Yahweh created Israel as His witness to all the nations of the veracity of all Yahweh has said through his prophets concerning His purpose with the earth (Isaiah 43: 15, 10-12; 44: 6-8). Accordingly, Yahweh has also used the Jewish people as the means of a blessing for the sake of the promises made to His friend Abraham (Genesis 12: 2-3) amongst the nations where they have been scattered. They have been transformative, providing the disrupting influence in directing Science, Technology, Arts, Business, Commerce and Democracy, completely changing the world in which we live. Russia hating what they represent nonetheless values how they can be used to enrich themselves, and if this means keeping them as captive slaves then so be it. This will form a part of Gog’s “evil scheme” when he “turns his hand against the waste places that are now inhabited, and the people who were gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell at the centre of the earth,” “to seize spoil and to carry off plunder” (Ezekiel 38: 10-12). No wonder Yahweh through His prophets state that an essential aspect of the vindication of His holiness in the sight of many nations on the mountains of Israel when He draws Gog out of **his place** out of the **uttermost parts of the north**, will then extend to **Israel’s 2nd exodus**. By this means, “through them”, Yahweh will “vindicate His holiness in the sight of many nations”. “Then they shall know that I am Yahweh their God because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land. **I will leave none of them**

remaining among the nations anymore". It will not be as the result of Israel's secular government but Yahweh through His Anointed addressing Israel's **northern captors** "to the **north, Give up**, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth" (Isaiah 43: 6).

Current events ensure Russia's growing hatred of Israel and everything Jewish

The war in Ukraine has caused Putin to seek for allies in his escalating conflict with the West, while feeding an expanding campaign against anyone inside Russia with suspect loyalties. Putin's recent visit to Iran, Israel's archenemy, celebrated a rapidly tightening relationship in a meeting with the country's supreme leader which providentially has coincided with a growing hatred for Israel and all that is Jewish. It is truly remarkable that Yahweh has provided a nemesis for Putin in the Ukrainian president who is not only Jewish but much of whose family were victims of the Nazi holocaust.

Also in Israel, a politics long influenced by a large and influential Russian-speaking diaspora comprising 13% of the population has been caused to begin moving away from the Kremlin. Naftali Bennett, Israel's prime minister when the war broke out in February, avoided direct criticism of Russia, citing Israel's security interests in Syria as well as the need to protect the safety and free movement of Jews in both Ukraine and Russia. But Yahweh intervened to ensure this appeasement did not continue.

The Israeli government initially went out of its way not to offend it's Russian/Syrian King of the North neighbour trying to tread a diplomatic middle path with its former prime minister, offering to mediate between Putin and Zelensky, his Jewish Ukrainian counterpart. Russian disgruntlement with Israel over a variety of other matters were then used by the Kremlin to put pressure on Israel not to be swayed by the US to support Ukraine with military weapons. These ongoing tensions include Israeli military activities in Syria targeting Iranian arms supplies to the Hezbollah group in Lebanon, and reported plans by Israel to attack Iranian nuclear installations.

Israel has also recently confirmed a report that Russian anti-aircraft batteries in Syria fired at Israeli air force jets. There is also an unresolved dispute over ownership of church property in Jerusalem. The then prime minister Bennett tried to stall any decision on this ongoing dispute involving Russian church property near the so-called Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem which had been registered to the Russian Imperial government during the Otterman empire. Putin who "by his cunning has made (religious) deceit to prosper under his hand and in his own mind has become great" (Daniel 8: 25) as Czar Peter, claims the church as a holy site and he, the holy sites of Jerusalem and orthodoxy in general, ordained "Guard" (Ezekiel 38: 7).

The growing crisis in Russian/Israel relations worsened when the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov caused an uproar by suggesting that Adolf Hitler was part Jewish. This tied conveniently with Putin's excuse of invading Ukraine to save it from its Nazi/Jewish-led government. Tensions deepened after Lapid switched from foreign minister to acting prime minister when Naftali Bennett's government collapsed along with his policies of Russian appeasement, triggering parliamentary elections set for Nov. 1.

At a July 14th press conference with US President Joe Biden in Jerusalem, Israel's acting Prime minister Lapid condemned "Russia's unjustified invasion of Ukraine," two days after Israel sent a second batch of non-lethal military aid including helmets and protective vests to the government in Kyiv. Lapid, who took over as prime minister, has largely abandoned former prime minister Bennett's attempts at mediating in the war and has said that Russia has committed war crimes in Ukraine. Israeli officials have also become increasingly outspoken in their criticism of Russia's war in Ukraine, after initially trying to tread a diplomatic middle path.

Girding up the loins of our minds

At the beginning of this article to scripturally identify Gog we noted Ezekiel as the representative of the **multitudinous** "Son of man" was commanded to "set your face against Gog," (Ezekiel 38:1), clearly implying that when the power referred to as "Gog" with his confederacy, comes against Israel, the judgement seat of Christ must have already concluded its work in preparing his "mighty ones" for the great day of God Almighty. This judgement process commencing at the household of Christ will have in all probability occupied a period of some 10 years. These preliminary movements of Russia, **north of Israel**, may be the final indications of that impending startling cry at the midnight hour of Gentile darkness, "Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him" (Matthew 25: 6). The virgins who were found ready by their Lord, having ensured they had prepared extra oil in their flasks with their lamps, went in **with** their Lord into the marriage, "until the day breaths and the shadows flee" (Matthew 24: 4-13; Song of Songs 4: 6). This multitudinous "son of man" will be commanded to "**prophecy against Gog** and say, thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog,

prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. And I will **turn you about** and drag you along and bring you up **from the uttermost parts of the north**, and lead you against the mountains of **Israel**" (Ezekiel 39: 1-2 ESV).

Amongst those nations **north of Israel** which we have reviewed, from which the "**prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal**" will be turned about from his military, political and empire building pursuits to come against the mountains of Israel, is the nation of Turkey. In the most significant bible prophecy for the generation that stands related to the crisis of "the time of the end" — Revelation 16 turns our attention to the significance of the drying up of the Euphratean power (verse 12) a process that must conclude in Constantinople falling to Russia. This indispensable element in the forming of the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image so that it might stand in defiance against Yahweh on the mountains of Israel must, as we have already noted in this article, have its preparation in the king of the North's coming against the present occupier of the ancient Roman military capital like a whirlwind (Daniel 11: 40). It is in the context of this unexpected sudden extension of current military activities North of Israel that the Lord Jesus warns his household, "Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!"

To this generation the author of Elpis Israel appeals:

"When Russia makes its grand move for the building-up of its Image-empire, then let the reader know that the end of all things, as at present constituted, is at hand. The long-expected, but stealthy advent of the King of Israel, will be on the eve of becoming a fact; and salvation will be to those who not only looked for it, but have trimmed their lamps by believing the gospel of the kingdom unto the obedience of faith, and the perfection thereof in 'fruits meet for repentance'" (Jas. 2:22; Heb. 9:28). (Preface Elpis Israel)

John Thomas and his rediscovery of Bible truth (continued)

Philadelphia: Practicing and Preaching

Thomas again determined to break away from the preaching career which was being forced upon him. He told his friends that he must be off to see Philadelphia before going to Richmond, which was his ultimate destination. His determination was soon redirected, and his travel plans were providentially interrupted so that two important events could take place: he was married, and he commenced his editorial career.

Rather than arrive in Philadelphia a complete stranger, Thomas accepted a letter of introduction to a brother Hazlett, deacon of the local Campbellite congregation. Hazlett welcomed his guest, and immediately pressed him into speaking. After three weeks, the congregation proposed that Thomas should remain among them, promising that they would do their best to provide him medical practice if he would be content to speak to them on Sundays. The prospect of settling into his own profession sounded good, and speaking was becoming easier. Thomas agreed with the proposal.

The arrangement did not work favorably for Thomas's professional plans, but was highly conducive to the work which Providence had assigned to him. His friends fulfilled their part of the contract so far as finding medical practice for him. But preaching practice, which was exceedingly distasteful to Thomas, demanded a great amount of scripture study, and interfered with the doctor's occupation. Looking back on this critical point in his life, Thomas wrote:

"Had we devoted ourselves to medicine, as we did the things of the kingdom, we might probably have succeeded; but the fact is, that having to address the public continually, our time and energies were absorbed in preparing to acquit ourselves... as a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Ever since leaving the West, our spiritual pursuits have been clashing with our temporal, until we have been obliged of necessity to place our profession in abeyance."

Thomas's Bible study and preaching were destined to pave the way for great results.

The Apostolic Advocate

Quite unexpectedly, and apparently providentially, Thomas was offered the job of editing a monthly periodical to promulgate the principles of the Reformation. The *Apostolic Advocate* was so named since it was to "be devoted to the ancient Gospel and the original constitution of things as proclaimed and appointed by

the apostles.” Thomas’s evaluation of current Christian teaching and his intention to contend uncompromisingly against clerical doctrines are easily perceived in the words of the prospectus:

“Never was there a time since the days of William Penn, when this and adjacent cities required such an ‘advocate’ as at this present. The voice of the apostles is stifled by the clamour of sectarian declamation. It is true, indeed, they are talked about and their statues adorn cathedral parapets and steeple walls; it is also true that the commercial marts of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York abound in religious establishments, each and every one of them amply furnished with all the gorgeousness and splendid trappings of temple worship; they can boast too, of an erudite, courtly, eloquent, and right reverend priesthood — the depositaries of wisdom and sacred knowledge — whose fertile ingenuity illustrates, sustains, and fulminates the dogmas of creeds for the deglutition of an unsuspecting and too confiding laity. But all these things, however adored, may be easily unmasked and resolved into their ultimate constituents: the devices, traditions, and commandments of men, and will be proved to be no part of the religion of Christ or of the traditions and teachings of the holy apostles. The *Advocate*, therefore, will unroll his brief against the corruptions of Christianity and while he pays all respect to persons that is due, he will use every honourable and scriptural means to disabuse the minds of his fellow citizens of the philosophical dogmas and christianized Orientalisms palmed up on them for the glorious gospel of the blessed God...

The *Advocate* will glean from the fields of Christian literature whatever is calculated to illustrate the magnificent and sublime politics of the Messiah’s reign. He will endeavour to do justice to all who may oppose and differ from him, his object being to convince, not to condemn... ‘hear the other side’ shall always vibrate in his ear; for having neither sympathies nor antipathies to gratify, having no gift or ‘sacred office’ of pecuniary emoluments to blind the eyes, to pervert his judgment, or to distort his mental vision, being interested in upbuilding no religious dogmas, in sustaining no sects, in pleading for no sectarian creed, the *Advocate* will strive to exemplify the apothegm: “let justice be done though the heavens fall’. Let the opponents of the ancient gospel go and do likewise.”

This prospectus indicates the remarkable tone of the doctor’s mind so early as 1834. Its stance was applauded by Alexander Campbell, who published the prospectus in his own periodical, the *Millennial Harbinger*, with favorable remarks.

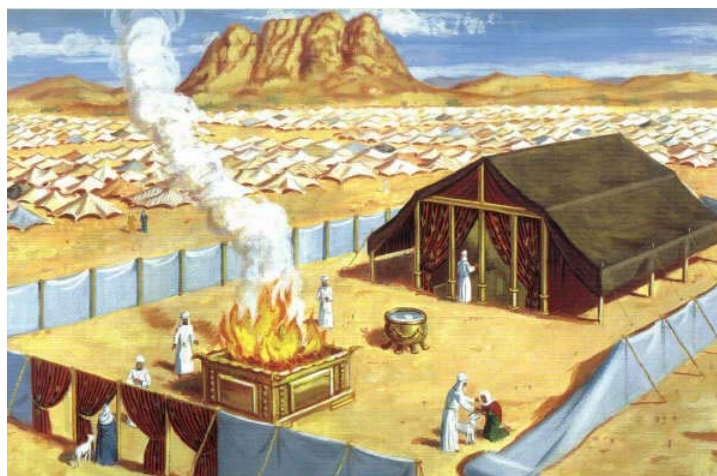
(to be continued).

Sunday School Corner – sis. Sharon

The Tabernacle in the Wilderness – God’s meeting place with His people

(Readings: Exodus 25:1-9 and Exodus 35)

“And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.” (Exodus 25:8-9)



In our last lesson we showed how God cared for the children of Israel when they left Egypt and journeyed into the wilderness of Shur. They were in desolate country, and the people complained to Moses about all that they had in Egypt. But Moses prayed to God for help, and God showed them that He could make the bitter

waters of Marah sweet and rained down food in their camps. Every day for forty years, God showed them that if they put their faith in Him, He would provide for them. The lesson for us is the same. He will provide for our needs as long as we stay on the path that He has outlined for us, and if we pray for His guidance in all that we do.

In this lesson we will learn about the Tabernacle that God commanded Moses to build in the wilderness.

The Tabernacle was a sanctuary, a holy place set apart from their tents, where God could meet with the children of Israel. God gave Moses the pattern and plan, and details of what materials they needed to build this tabernacle. It was designed to be set up wherever they camped, and packed up and carried as they continued on their journey through the wilderness.

These materials that they were asked to provide for the building of the tabernacle are listed in Exodus 35:5-9:

- gold, silver, and brass (verse 5)
- blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine twined linen and goats' hair (verse 6)
- tanned rams' skins (dyed red), badgers' skins, shittim wood (verse 7)
- oil for light, and spices for the anointing oil and for fragrant incense (verse 8)
- precious stones (onyx stones and stones for setting) for the ephod and breastplate (verse 9)

There is great meaning to these materials that God chose for His tabernacle, with the purpose of reminding the Israelites what God had commanded them to do.

Blue is a symbol of heavenliness. The Israelites were commanded to have a ribband of blue on the fringe of their garment to remind them of the heavenly commandments of God.

Scarlet is a symbol of sin, or the colour of blood. God chose this colour to represent the nature of sin in the flesh, or mortality.

Purple is a colour that comes from mixing blue and red. it is a symbol of salvation, which comes obeying God's heavenly commandments and the change that this can bring to our sinful state.

God told Moses that he must only take offerings from the children of Israel that were given willingly and from the heart. He also told Moses that every skilful craftsman from among the Israelites must come and make all the parts of the Tabernacle and pieces, such as the hooks, frames, bars, pillars, bases, etc.

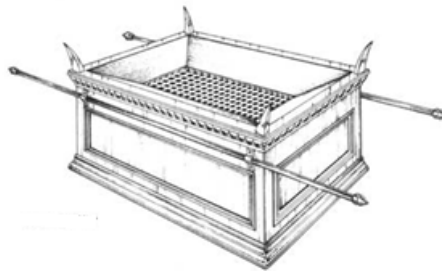
When Moses explained what God wanted them to do, they went back to their tents. Then everyone who could make a contribution, both men and women, came back to Moses with their offerings, willingly bringing their jewels, bracelets, earrings, spun yarns of blue and purple, and precious stones as a freewill offering to the Lord (Exodus 35:20-29). The people of Israel were so willing to help with the tabernacle that there were more than enough materials to do this work. Everyone who was skilled in different crafts, in working with gold, silver, bronze, wood carving, weaving and embroidery and in design, became involved. So everyone, both men and women who were able to follow God's instructions, became involved in this very special work of building a Tabernacle that was fit for the God of Israel. God also chose two men, Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah and Aholiab of the tribe of Dan, to manage the construction of the Tabernacle (Exodus 35:30-35).

The plan for the tabernacle is given in Exodus chapter 26. It was 30 cubits long and 10 cubits wide and 10 cubits high. A cubit is about half a metre, so the tabernacle building measured 15 metres by 5 metres wide and 5 metres high. The walls were made of shittim wood that was covered with gold. The tabernacle was surrounded by a wall of white linen curtains, and the top of the building was covered with animal skins. The tabernacle stood in a court measuring 50 metres long, and 25 metres wide that was enclosed by a wall of fine white linen attached to pillars of brass and with silver hooks and clasps.

The entrance to the tabernacle was on the eastern side through a curtain of linen that was embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet. It was through this curtain that people would come to give the priest who served God their offerings for sacrifice.

Inside the curtain was the outer court, where the priests and Levites offered up burnt sacrifices. There was the brazen altar and the laver in the outer court.

The Brazen Altar was square and made of wood overlaid with brass. The altar had rings on the side so that it could be easily transported, and 4 horns made of brass used as supports for laying on the wood for burnt sacrifices.



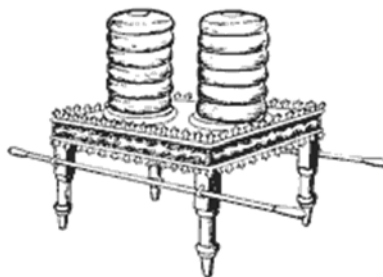
The Laver was also made of brass and was used for washing, like a sort of baptism. The Laver was located between the altar and the entrance to the Holy Place. The priests would wash their hands and feet before entering the Holy Place. Washing and keeping ourselves clean is an important symbol of how God's word should 'wash' us and keep us from disobeying God.



There were two rooms in the tabernacle, **the Holy Place** and **the Most Holy Place**, separated by another curtain called the Veil. The Holy Place was 10 metres long and 5 metres wide. The Most Holy Place was a perfect cube measuring 5 metres long, 5 metres wide and 5 metres high.

After leaving the outer court, the priest would go through a curtained door of the tent into the Holy Place. Everything in the Holy Place was made of gold. In the Holy Place, there was the table of shewbread on the right side, the golden lampstand on the left, and the altar of incense.

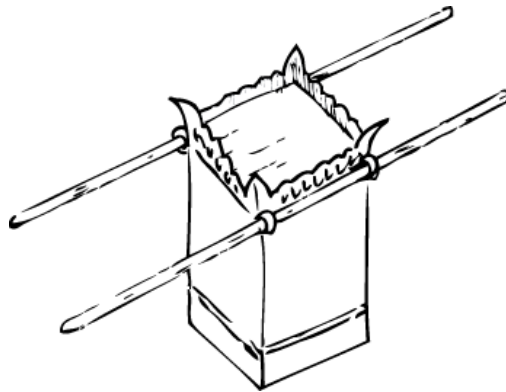
The Table of Shewbread was a golden table. The nation of Israel had to provide the fine flour that the priest used to bake these cakes as an offering to God. They were placed in two groups of six to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. These cakes had to be replaced every seven days. Only the priest was allowed to eat the shewbread.



The Golden Lampstand had seven branches, and represents the Word of God, which is a "lamp unto my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)



The altar of incense had four horns on each corner and rings for carrying. Offering incense was to remind the people of Israel that any approach to God must be acceptable to Him, like a sweet fragrance. It was also a symbol of prayer.



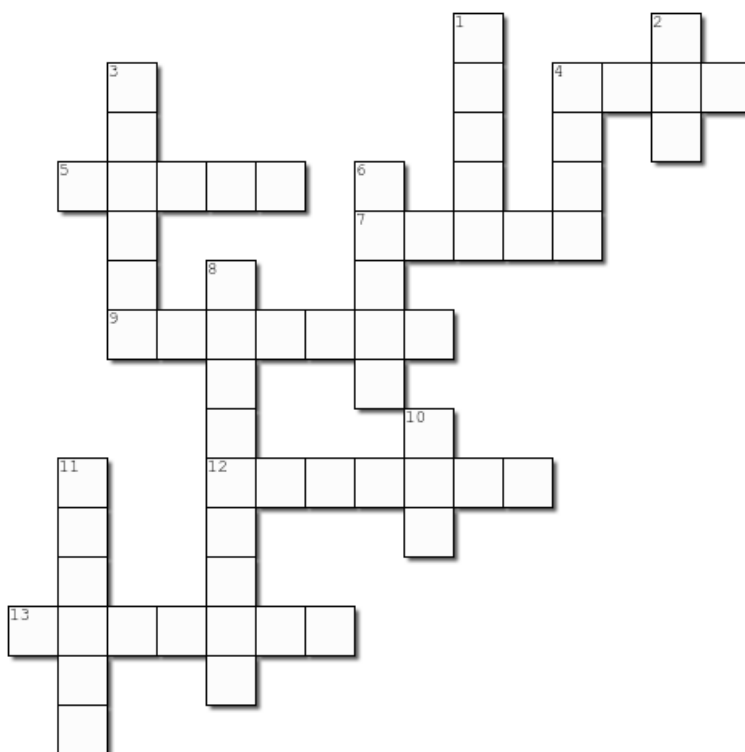
When the tabernacle was finished, it was to be set up in the very centre of the camp of the Israelites. A large area was left around the outside of the tabernacle where the Israelites could come and hear the words of God. The camp was arranged in a square with the tents of the Levites pitched on three sides of the Tabernacle. In front of the curtained gateway on the east side were the tents of Moses and Aaron. They followed the same order each time they set up camp. At all times God was in the midst of His people and could be seen by His cloud that hovered over the camp.

When it was time to move camp, the cloud rose up and went ahead, and the people moved in a very orderly manner. We can read more about how the camp moved in Numbers chapter 10.

A very important lesson in this study of God's Tabernacle in the wilderness is that God accepts gifts and offerings that are given willingly and from the heart. God is not pleased with complaints and grumblings about what we don't have. God likes a cheerful giver, as we know from 2 Corinthians 9:7 "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver". We may not have a lot to give, and it does not matter how much we have, but whatever we give to God's work must be given from a willing heart and it must be the best we have to offer. Only then will it be acceptable to God.

Sunday School Activity: Crossword Puzzle

(Solutions are in Exodus 25 & 35)



Across

4. The hair of this animal was given for the building of the tabernacle (Exodus 25:4)
5. The fine material that the women spun in blue and purple and scarlet (Exodus 35:25)
7. Precious stones were set in this and the breastpiece (Exodus 35:27)
9. The colour of the yarn and fine twined linen (Exodus 25:4)
12. Yahweh had commanded the people of Israel that this was a day of solemn rest (Exodus 35:2)
13. Spices were used in this to make it fragrant (Exodus 35:28)

Down

1. Bezaleel was from this tribe (Exodus 35:30)
2. The skin of this animal was given for the building of the tabernacle (Exodus 25:5)
3. This was needed for anointing oil (Exodus 25:6)
4. The lampstand was made of this (Exodus 25:31)
6. The number of lamps in the lampstand (Exodus 25:37)
8. This was used for light in the tabernacle (Exodus 35:14)
10. Aholiab was from this tribe (Exodus 35:34)
11. One of the precious metals that the people of Israel gave for the building of the tabernacle (Exodus 25:3)

A Closing Hymn



1 Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

2 Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

3 Take my will and make it Thine:
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own:
It shall be Thy royal throne.
Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

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