

**EZEKIEL'S
PROPHECIES OF THE
RESTORATION**

A VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION

of

EZEKIEL CHAPTERS 33 TO 39

Setting forth

**THE GREAT IMPENDING CRISIS AND THE
DIVINE SOLUTION**

By H. P. Mansfield.



Bdo + Karen Pilleon

**EZEKIEL'S
PROPHECIES OF THE
RESTORATION**

A VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION

of

EZEKIEL CHAPTERS 33 TO 39

Setting forth

**THE GREAT IMPENDING CRISIS AND THE
DIVINE SOLUTION**

By H. P. Mansfield.

A LATTER-DAY WATCHMAN

*Do what is right, be valiant for the Truth, teach
it without compromise, and all the lovers of the Truth
will approve of you; for all others, you need not care
a rush.*

—J. Thomas.

LOGOS PUBLICATIONS, WEST BEACH POST OFFICE,
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



CLYDE PRESS, 608-10 High Street, Thornbury, N 17, Victoria Aust.

THE USE OF THE DIVINE NAME

★

In our exposition, we have used the Divine Name, wherever it is appropriate. We have done so because it is obvious that Ezekiel, himself, laid great stress on the Name. In fact, the theme of his book is that "they might know that I am Yahweh." This Name is easily identified throughout the Bible in that the translators have printed the words "Lord" or "God" (wherever substituted for the Name) in small capitals (contrast "LORD" or Yahweh in Ezekiel 38:1 with "Lord" or Adonai in v. 3; or "GOD" or Yahweh in Ezekiel 38:3 with "God" or Elohim in Ezekiel 37:27).

The Name is prophetic of the Father's intention to reveal Himself in a Son and Sons who will be identified with Abraham, Isaac and Israel (Exod. 3:14). If the reader familiarise himself with the doctrinal significance of the Name, his understanding of the Divine purpose will be greatly enriched.

On this, one writer has commented:

"Both in *Eureka* and *Phanerosis* Dr. Thomas wrote much about the name Yahweh. To study the word aright, introduces us to the subject of God-manifestation, the Scripture teaching concerning which many have misunderstood. Some people, with nothing better than a vague notion as to what Dr. Thomas's writings on this subject really amount to, have adjudged him in error on some points; and most frequently a little examination has shown that the points of difference have involved a difficult criticism or an investigation of matters beyond the compass of those who have not seen their way to be content with dealing with things which are within their reach. Others, however, convinced of the impregnability of Dr. Thomas's position, have been thankful for the plainly expressed results of his labor and study, and grateful for the light he shed upon the doctrine of God manifestation in its many revealed phases. . . ." (*The Christadelphian*, 1881.)

Rotherham, in his translation, uses the Name wherever appropriate, and claims that to hide it is to perform a grave disservice to truth. In a section of his Preface, he comments:

"Is not a hidden name almost a contradiction in terms? Does not 'name' in the Bible very widely imply revelation? Men's names are throughout the Scriptures fraught with significance, enshrining historical incidents, biographical reminiscences, and so forth; and why should the Name of the Ever-Blessed be an exception to this rule? Does not the Almighty Himself employ this Name of His as though it had in it some self-evident force and fitness to reveal His nature and unfold His ways? His Name is continually adduced by Himself as His reason for what He does and what He commands: 'For I am Yahweh.' Israel and the nations are placed under discipline, says the Divine Speaker, 'that they may know that I am Yahweh.'"

As a people separated from the nations "for His Name" (Acts 15:14), surely we should have some understanding of it, and to that end, we direct the reader to the expositions of it found in *Eureka* and *Phanerosis*.



Contents

Foreword	4
Ezekiel: Man of Sign (Preface)	7
Historical Background	8
Telescopic View of the Book	11
Analysis of Ezekiel's Prophecy	15
Ezekiel Recommissioned as Watchman (Ezekiel 33:1-20)	17
A Message from the Smitten City (Ezekiel 33:21-33)	24
The Coming Shepherd King (Ezekiel 34)	29
The Doom of Those Who Hate Israel (Ezekiel 35)	37
A Transformed Land (Ezekiel 36:1-15)	43
A Transformed People (Ezekiel 36:16-38)	48
A Transformed Nation (Ezekiel 37:1-14)	57
A Transformed Government (Ezekiel 37:15-28)	62
The Coming Crisis (Ezekiel 38)	67
The Humbling of Flesh and Vindication of Yahweh (Ezekiel 39)	83
Summary	92

Foreword

Ezekiel's Prophecies of the Restoration (Chapters 33-39) provide such an outline of Yahweh's purpose in the earth as to more clearly reveal "the joy set before us." It is important that we should have such pictures of the future ever before us, that we might create a greater incentive to attain unto it. The Lord provides the example of this. The "joy set before him" was so real and tangible that for it he was prepared to "endure the cross and despise the shame," and, in consequence, is now "at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).

Paul similarly urged the need of such a mental picture of the future. He declared: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). The "things seen," are those things that occupy the exclusive attention of most people: houses, land, business, money, power, prestige. These are symbols of power and permanency in the world of flesh, but they assumed their proper relative insignificance to the Apostle, because he set his spiritual vision on the future which he saw so vividly, and which occupied his mind so completely.

This revealed for him the secret of true living in Christ. He declared: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (v. 16).

The study of prophecy can help us attain unto a similar outlook, so that whilst fulfilling the needs of the present, we, like Moses, "see the invisible" (Heb. 11:27).

Unfortunately, the growing tendency today is to ignore the prophetic Scriptures. Those who do so, however, overlook the fact that the Bible is mainly prophetic in its teaching, and that its Author would have us closely study this subject. He has declared that He will "do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7), and the Lord told the Apostles that in so doing he treated them as friends and not as servants (John 15:15). Again, the Scriptures pronounce a blessing upon those who make prophecy the subject of close and sound study (Dan. 12:10; Rev. 1:3), and the Lord endorsed that blessing by exhorting his disciples concerning the prophetic Scriptures: "He that readeth, let him understand" (Matt. 24:15).

Let us not decry the study of a subject that has the seal of Divine approval; let us remember that the Gospel itself is prophetic (Gal. 3:8), and that concerning the Day of which it treats, its Author declares: "For that day do I wait" (Isa. 30:18).

It ill becomes the servants of God to ignore that which He has taken such pains to reveal and record. Speaking of Gog, Yahweh has declared: "Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by My servants the prophets. . . ?" (Ezek. 38:17). All the prophets have spoken of the coming crisis with the greatest interest and enthusiasm because they realised that it would lead to that time when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 3:14).

And yet, as the time draws close when Gog shall manifest himself, and the great crisis of the ages shall burst upon a startled world, interest in the prophetic word seems to be declining, and, in fact, is openly discouraged by some who should know better.

We hope that the brief exposition now before the reader may play a part in arousing some interest in this vitally important theme, and that he may use it as a help in his own independent research of the Word, and his verse by verse marking of his Bible. The Author recognises its many imperfections, particularly in regard to literary style. He acknowledges that it is singularly lacking in that regard, but hopes that through this very lack the reader may be induced to study the Scriptures themselves more minutely. To that end, let him learn to be discerning and selective in the use of these notes, personally analysing the comments given on each verse, and extracting therefrom that which he can endorse. This is best done by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Valuable additional help can be obtained from such works as "Eureka" and "Elpis Israel" to which we direct the reader.

Ezekiel's Prophecies of the Restoration are among the most significant in his book, because they not only outline a future that is soon to be revealed in the earth, but also show the attitude that should be manifested by Yahweh's people as they await the unfolding of the Divine purpose. This is shown in his warning exposition of the duties of watchmen, shepherds, people and flocks. All should heed the prophet's message in those sections.

The Greek word for prophet is a compound word made up of "pro", forth, and "phemi", to speak, thereby indicating that a prophet was one who gave forth the message of God, as well as fore-telling events to come (see 1 Cor. 14:3). It was a prophet's function, not merely to make known future events, but to draw attention to the Divine will in relation to the way of righteousness from day to day. In the Hebrew, the word is "Nabhi", and is derived from the verb, "Naba" signifying "to boil or bubble over." Gesenius likens the idea expressed in the word to the metaphor of a fountain bursting forth from the heart of a man into which God has poured His spirit (Prov. 1:23; 2 Pet. 1:21). Under the influence of the Spirit, the prophet found the impulse to speak absolutely irresistible, and even though he may have been reluctant to do so, he found that he had to speak the message delivered to him.

(Num. 24:1; Jer. 20:9; 1 Cor. 9:16).

That was also the experience of the Psalmist, as he contemplated the coming union of the Bridegroom and Bride. His heart bubbled up in excitement at the prospect, and as he spake of the things concerning the King, he found that his tongue was loosed, like Ezekiel's, and became as the pen of a ready writer (Psalm 45:1 - margin).

A clear outline of what the future will reveal will create in us an excitement and an enthusiasm for its coming. It will cause us to lose our attachment for the things of the present and seek to qualify for the future. It will create an incentive for Godly living now. And, surely, in an age that is noted for the spirit of compromise, the evil character of which is the subject of Bible prophecy (Luke 17:26-37; 2 Tim. 3:1-7), we need every help possible to overcome the flesh. May the Divine blessing be with us in our studies to that end, that they may effect a transformation in our lives to the glory of His holy Name (James 1:5; Acts 15:14).

—H. P. MANSFIELD.

THE PROPER USE OF THE PROPHETIC WORD

In ages past, God has had among the nations a people of His own. These are wise in the wisdom of God, and venerate His word above all things. Though not His counsellors, He has graciously condescended to inform them what He intends to do before it comes to pass. Hence, it is testified by the Prophet, that "the Lord God will surely do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3, 7). This revelation is made that His people's faith may be confirmed and enlarged; and that in every generation they may know the times and seasons to which they stand related. Knowing the signs they are enabled to discern the times; and whilst consternation and dismay cause men's hearts to fail, they are courageous, and rejoice in perceiving the approach of the Kingdom of God. This is the proper use of the prophetic word. It was thus that the ancients used it, and were enabled to live in advance of their contemporaries. This appears from the exhortation of the Apostle who says, "We have a sure word of prophecy, whereunto you do well to take heed; as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts; knowing this first that no prophecy of Scripture originates of one's own prescience. For prophecy came not at any time by the will of man; but the holy men of God spake being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:19).

— *Elpis Israel.*

Ezekiel : Man of Sign Preface

Chapters 33 to 39 of Ezekiel form a separate and distinct series of prophecies relating to the Restoration of the Kingdom of God and the Glory, and, therefore, are of particular significance to our times.

However, the importance of this section of his message lies not alone in the fact that we can discern today the tokens of the fulfilment of this remarkable prophecy, but more particularly in the powerful exhortations that are presented therein. They emphasise the responsibilities that rest upon Yahweh's watchmen today; the duties of a true shepherd in relation to the Ecclesia; and the proper attitude that should be adopted by the flock itself.

It also predicts the vast transformation that is to come over the land and people of Israel, at the expense of Gentile pomp and power; setting this forth in a series of amazing and dramatic contrasts of which the following are a few:

(1)—The Shepherd Prince of Ezekiel 37 successfully battles with the Goliath-like "prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal" (Ch. 38).

(2)—The army of Israel is brought "out of its graves" (Ch. 37:13), whilst the army of Gog is turned into its grave (Ch. 39:11).

(3)—Israel is gathered together for life (Ch. 37); Gog's host is gathered together for death (Ch. 39:1).

(4)—Israel is "brought back from the sword" (38:8); whereas Yahweh calls for a sword against Gog (38:21).

(5)—Israel is shaken together (37:7); Gog's host is shaken apart (38:19).

(6)—The bones of Israel come together "bone to bone" (Ch. 37); but those of Gog's host are scattered throughout the land (Ch. 39:15).

A close, analytical study of these chapters of the Restoration will reveal other dramatic contrasts, to thrill those whose true patriotism is not for Gentilism (whatever country the accident of birth may have placed them in), but for Zion with its glorious future.

"Of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her; and the highest Himself shall establish her. Yahweh shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah!" (Ps. 87:5-6).

Historical Background Of The Message

JUDAH'S DECLINE AND CAPTIVITY

Whilst Jeremiah was ministering to the people of Jerusalem during the last years of the declining monarchy, Daniel and Ezekiel were in exile, ministering to the captives in Babylonia.

Daniel was the first to go into exile, as a young teenager of about 17 years of age. If Ezekiel's reference to the 30th year (Ezek. 1:1) has relation to his age, as seems most probable, he was not only a contemporary of Daniel, but also approximately the same age. He would have been born in the significant year when Josiah instituted the national reform, and led the people back to Yahweh in the national covenant that he inaugurated (2 Kings 23). In that light, Ezekiel appears in the narrative of his book as typical of the Son of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ezekiel was taken into captivity at the time of "king Jehoiachin's captivity" (Ezek. 1:2). This was the third of the six deportations of Jews referred to in Scripture:

- (1)—In the fourth year of Jehoiakim (Dan. 1:1).
- (2)—Six years later, when 3023 Jews or families were taken into captivity (Jer. 52:28)
- (3)—The following year, in the reign of Jehoiachin, when a further 10,000 Jews were taken (2 Kgs. 24:12-16).
- (4)—Ten years later, when 832 were led away (Jer. 52:29).
- (5)—The following year, when the upper classes were deported from the land (2 Kings 25:11-12)
- (6)—Four years later (23rd Nebuchadnezzar) when 745 persons, or families were taken to Babylon (Jer. 52:30).

The Jewish exiles were sent to different settlements throughout Babylonia, where they formed small communities, with a certain amount of local organisation and freedom of worship.

This is implied by Ezekiel's own experience. He had been exiled to the colony at Tel-Abib (Ezek. 3:15), about 45 miles north-west of Babylon, where he ultimately exercised considerable influence. The elders of the little community there, came to regard him highly for his wisdom (Ezek. 8:1), and later, after some of his prophecies had been fulfilled, for the truth of his predictions (Ezek. 33:31).

Meanwhile, in Babylon itself, Daniel had been active for about 13 years, testifying to Yahweh's power and truth by the remarkable incidents associated with his person, and the equally wonderful revelations of Divine wisdom and prophecy that he had set before both king and people.

In Jerusalem, Jeremiah was battling against the deadly dope of the false prophets (Jer. 27:9; 28:1-11) who were spreading the

doctrine that those who remained in the city were Heaven's favorites in contrast to those who had been taken into captivity. They boldly claimed that Jerusalem would be divinely protected, that the long captivity of 70 years predicted by Jeremiah would not take place, and, instead, Babylon would itself soon fall (Ezek. 11:15; 33:24).

This lying philosophy even infatuated the Jews in exile. In complete disregard of the messages which Jeremiah had sent them, and which the prophets of the exile had endorsed, they were seized with the idea that their captivity would soon end (Ezek. 13:16, 19). Hananiah, a false prophet of Jerusalem, publicly proclaimed that the captives would return within two years, bearing the vessels of the Temple purloined by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 28). His message greatly influenced many of the exiles who eagerly grasped this straw of hope, so that they became impatient of any other message. When Jeremiah wrote them, warning them to take no heed (Jer. 29), his letters were replied to by Shemaiah, one of their number, who suggested that the priest, Zephaniah of Jerusalem, should imprison Jeremiah as a madman for daring to suggest that the Holy City would fall, and the captivity would be protracted (Jer. 29:24-28).

However, the death of Hananiah as predicted by Jeremiah, the words and enacted prophecies set before the Jews in exile by Ezekiel and Daniel, and news of further deportations of Jewish captives, revealed that hopes of a speedy return were in vain. Finally, the fall of Jerusalem itself, revealed to the people the truth of Ezekiel's prophecies, and resulted in a great change in their attitude towards him.

EZEKIEL AS A MAN OF SIGN

Ezekiel was a man of indomitable courage, who remained undeterred by the fiercest opposition (Ezek. 3:8-9). He was commissioned to proclaim the purpose of Yahweh whether the people heeded his message or not, and he faithfully carried out his work (Ch. 2:5-7). He was not fluent in speech, and words did not come easily from his lips (Ch. 3:26), but when they did they were weighty and impressive. What he lacked in fluency he made up in action, dramatising many of the prophecies he proclaimed by enacting them before the people. Later, after the fall of Jerusalem, when his predictions had been vindicated in part, he found himself speaking much more fluently, setting before the exiles the thrilling message of coming restoration and glory when the land, the people, and the Temple will be again brought back from the curse resting on them.

He was held in high esteem by the Jews of the captivity, even though they were loathe to heed his message (Ezek. 33:31).

And as his character is gradually revealed through the pages of his book, he gives the impression of being a rather austere man, standing aloof from what took place around him, and, from the high plane of Divine revelation, condemning the apostasy and impiety of the Jews both by word and parabolic action.

His name signifies: *God (El) will strengthen*, and added to this was conferred the title of *Son of Man* (Ch. 2:1). This title is used some one hundred times throughout his book, and thus links him with the Lord Jesus who adopted the same title. Ezekiel's name and title, therefore, proclaim that *God will strengthen the Son of Man*. This is an appropriate name-title for the man who typed the Lord Jesus, for Christ is described as "the Son of Man whom Thou (Yahweh) madest strong for Thyself" (Psalm 80:17).

As a typical man of sign, Ezekiel was commanded to enact the very things that are to be performed by Christ in the coming age. For example, the familiar words of Ezekiel 38:2 are:

"Son of Man set THY face against Gog. . . ."

Though Ezekiel is the man addressed, the Lord Jesus, as Son of Man, will be the one who will fulfil the type. The use of this title, in this place and in the circumstances revealed in the prophecy, is significant; for the title "Son of Man," as applied to the Lord Jesus, is derived from Psalm 8, which commemorates the defeat of Goliath by David the shepherd. And that is the theme of Ezekiel 38, for it is "David the shepherd prince" (see Ezek. 37:24) who will overthrow the Gogian Goliath!

The Lord Jesus is priest after the order of Melchizedek, and therefore fittingly typified by Ezekiel the priest. It is also significant that both commenced their public ministries at the age of thirty years (Ezek. 1:1; Luke 3:23). However, unlike Jesus, Ezekiel was married (Ezek. 24:18), and lived in his own house at Tel-Abib (Ch. 8:1). Though hesitant in speech he frequently dramatized the messages he delivered to the people: at one time lying on his side for a period of time to enact the impending siege of Jerusalem (Ch. 4:4-6); on another occasion shaving his head to indicate that the Nazarite nation had "defiled the head of its consecration" (Ch. 5:1; Num. 6:9). By such-like "divers manners," he underlined the meaning of his teaching, and brought more vividly to the attention of the people the lessons he was sent to proclaim.

●

"I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel" — Ezekiel 12:6.

Telescopic View of the Book of Ezekiel

THE THEME

Daniel and Ezekiel, the two prophets of the captivity, built their messages around a common theme. That of the former is expressed in the words of Chapter 4:17:

"This matter is to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."

That of the latter is stated in the words that are constantly affirmed throughout his book, "They shall know that I am Yahweh." This declaration was proclaimed by the prophet at least seventy times. He announced it twenty-nine times in predicting punishment on Jerusalem; twenty-four times in prophesying judgments on the Gentile nations; and seventeen times in foretelling the restoration of Israel, and the final blessing then to be made manifest.

The declaration is significant. To "know" Yahweh in the sense intended means much more than merely recognising that He exists, or comprehending His purpose in the earth; it requires "knowledge" of such compelling influence as will effect a change in the character of the one embracing it, so that the fruits of "knowing" will be seen in action.

This is indicated by the use of the same term to denote the most intimate union between husband and wife leading to a new life. Thus Genesis 4:1 declares: "Adam *knew* Eve his wife; and she conceived . . ." As a result of this conception, Eve ultimately brought forth fruit to the glory of her husband, and this became typical of the union between Christ and the Ecclesia resulting in fruit to the glory of His name. The Lord taught Nicodemus the need of a "new birth" from above before a person could "see" or "enter" the Kingdom of God (John 3), and later Peter added his comment to this theme by teaching that believers are subjects of a new begetting:

"Being begotten, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God . . . and this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:23, 25).

And so Jesus prayed the Father:

"This is life eternal to KNOW Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. . . ." (John 17:3).

Mere academic knowledge will not result in eternal life, but a faith-generating knowledge that is expressed in action, and assists to reproduce in the believer the Divine characteristics to the glory of His name, will do so.

That is Ezekiel's theme in a national sense. He shows that both Jew and Gentile have ignored this principle in the past, and have revealed contempt for the Father's Name; but because He is jealous for His holy name, therefore:

"I will sanctify My great name, which was profaned among the heathen which ye have profaned in the midst of them: and the heathen shall know that I am Yahweh, saith Adonai Yahweh, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes" (Ezek. 36:23).

Those nations that learn to respect that Name in the Age to come, will enter the Kingdom as mortal subjects under the immortal Name-bearers then to be made manifest (Rev. 14:1). Incorporated into Israel they will receive eternal life in a political sense (Dan. 7:12).

Ezekiel's book is divided into five major divisions, all associated with Yahweh's Glory. It opens with a description of that Glory manifested in the Cherubim sweeping down towards Jerusalem for judgment (Ezek. 1); it continues with a vision of its departing from the city (Ch. 11:23); it follows with prophecies of judgment on the nations, revealing that though the Glory was hidden, it was still powerful; it then outlines predictions of restoration for Israel, intimating the preparation of the Glory to return; and it reaches its climax when the Glory is seen returning to the Temple of the Age to come, and the thrilling declaration is made: "Yahweh is there!"

REMARKABLE CONTRASTS

There are wonderful points of contrast in the Book of Ezekiel. We outlined some of these in the preface when comparing the uprise of Israel with the downfall of Gentilism, as set forth in the Prophecies of Restoration and similar contrasts can be traced in the departing and returning of the Glory, as predicted by the prophet.

For example, the departing Glory in the early chapters is balanced by the returning Glory in the closing vision; Ezekiel's indictment of the city of Jerusalem and of its elders because of idolatry, with which his ministry opens, is more than compensated by the more glorious Temple-city of the Millennium cleansed of the pollutions of the past; the tragedy of Jerusalem's destruction is avenged by its triumph over the Gogian confederacy; the bitterness of the captivity, the wickedness of the apostate people, the abandonment by Yahweh of the guilty city (all covered in the early chapters of the book) give place to the wonderful vision of complete restoration of Israel, of spiritual rejuvenation of the people, and the return of Yahweh's glory to Jerusalem (all covered in the last chapters) which consummates in the final, thrilling statement: "The name of the city from that day shall be, *Yahweh Shammah*, Yahweh is there!"

Those familiar with Brother Sulley's work on the Temple

will know that the city here referred to is not that of Jerusalem, but one some miles south of that city where the pilgrims from all parts of the world will assemble prior to ascending to the Temple-city in the north. The name of this city will be styled *Yahweh Shammah*, or Yahweh from thence, or Yahweh is there! because it apparently will be the terminus from whence the worshippers will move north to the Temple for worship.

As one reads the prophet's final statement regarding the name of the city in Ch. 48:35, one can almost see the finger of Ezekiel pointing towards Jerusalem. There, in the city that Yahweh elected in which to place His name, He will again dwell among His people "as in the days of old." It was His intention so to do when He called them out of Egypt (Exod. 25:8), but because they "would not hear" He withdrew from them (Jer. 13:11). The time is coming however, when His purpose in Israel will be vindicated, and the world will learn that Yahweh is again dwelling in the midst of His people, this time in the multitudinous Christ that will manifest His glory (Rom. 5:2; Ezek. 43:1-3). Thus the glory will return, and the anti-typical Cherubim will be manifested in the earth.

THE APOCALYPSE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The writings of the three contemporaries: Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, comprise the Apocalypse of the Old Testament. Many of the themes contained in the Book of Revelation have been drawn from one or the other of the writings of these prophets, and expressed in almost identical language. Jeremiah predicted the complete overthrow of literal Babylon (Chps. 50, 51), and John uses similar language to describe the destruction of modern, mystical Babylon (Rev. Chs. 17,18). Ezekiel and Daniel were "companions in tribulation," as also was John (Rev. 1:9). Ezekiel was called upon to eat a "little book" (Ezek. 3:1-4), and such experience was shared by John in Patmos (Rev. 10). Ezekiel prophesied of a Gog and Magog to be manifested before the commencement of the millenium (Ezek. 38), and John prophesied of a Gog and Magog to be manifested at its end (Rev. 20). Ezekiel saw a vision of the Cherubim (Ezek. 1), and John describes and explains them (Rev. 4, 5). Ezekiel, in vision, visited the literal Temple of the Age to come, and John visited the spiritual Temple, which is the anti-type of the literal (Rev. 21:10-27). Ezekiel concluded his book with the statement: "Yahweh is there." (Ezek. 48:35), and John finished his with the prayer: "Even so come, Lord Jesus."

The warnings, pleadings and visions of Ezekiel and Daniel greatly assisted in the development of a people prepared for the decree of Cyrus and the restoration under Zerubbabel when it came, as the warnings, pleadings and visions of the Book of

Revelation can help prepare a people today for the anti-type of Cyrus, even the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophets rebutted the truth-denying teaching of the false prophets, and their example roused the people from their apathetic and decadent state, energising them for the return. They, therefore, played a powerful part in preparing the people for the work of the restoration, drawing them out of the thralldom of error and setting them firmly on the pathway of truth. Their writings and example can help us today as we await the manifestation of the anti-typical Cyrus and the Kingdom he will set up on earth which will bring about the destruction of spiritual Babylon.

Analysis of Ezekiel's Prophecy

There are five main divisions in Ezekiel's book, and appropriately (for five is the spiritual number of grace) these set out the principles of Divine grace. They are as follows:

THEME AND OUTLINE OF EZEKIEL

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. <i>Ezekiel's Commission</i> | — Chapters 1-3. |
| 2. <i>Judgment on Jerusalem</i> | — Chapters 4-24. |
| 3. <i>Judgment on the Nations</i> | — Chapters 25-32. |
| 4. <i>Prophecies of the Restoration</i> | — Chapters 33-39. |
| 5. <i>The Glorious Consummation</i> | — Chapters 40-48. |

The basic message relates to the Glory, however, and so these five sections can be divided up in the following way:

THE GLORY APPEARS — CHAPTERS 1-3

The Vision of the Cherubim	Ch. 1
Ezekiel's Commission	Ch. 2:1-8
Ezekiel's Instruction	Ch. 2:9-3:14
His Duty as a Watchman	Ch. 3:15-27

THE GLORY DEPARTS — CHAPTERS 4-24

Siege of Jerusalem dramatised	Ch. 4
Horrors of the Siege described	Ch. 5
A Remnant preserved	Ch. 6
Final desolation of the Nation	Ch. 7
Idolatry among the Elders	Ch. 8
Discrimination between Just and Unjust	Ch. 9
The Glory departs	Ch. 10, 11
The Impending Captivity Predicted	Ch. 12
The Guilt of the False Prophets	Ch. 13
Yahweh's Righteousness Vindicated	Ch. 14
The Parable of the Fruitless Vine	Ch. 15
The Parable of the Foundling Child	Ch. 16
The Parables of the Eagles, the Vines & the Cedar	Ch. 17
The Parable of the sour Grapes	Ch. 18
The Parable of the Lioness and Whelps	Ch. 19
The Goodness and Severity of Yahweh	Ch. 20
The Sighing Prophet and Sharpened Sword	Ch. 21
Yahweh's Witness against His People	Ch. 22
The Infidelity of Aholah and Aholibah	Ch. 23
The Parable of the Boiling Pot and Mourning Prophet	Ch. 24

THE GLORY HIDDEN — CHAPTERS 25-32

(Seven nations mocked at Israel's distress, and the hidden glory struck them down).

Ammon - Moab - Edom - Philistia	Ch. 25
Tyre	Ch. 26-28
Egypt	Ch. 29-32

WHAT IS PROPHECY?

Prophecy is a revelation of God's will and designs in relation to man, and the government of the world.

Prophecy may include doctrine, instruction, warning, entreaty, expostulation, or whatever Yahweh has been pleased to reveal to man. But specially and principally, Prophecy is the foretelling of future events. It is a delineation of the fate of cities, nations, kingdoms, and empires; sometimes with all the minuteness of historic record.

To reveal future events is solely the prerogative of Him who "sees the end from the beginning"; with whom all things are present — nothing past, nothing future.

Man is the medium through whom God has been pleased to reveal the purposes of His will; and those through whom He thus communicates are called Prophets.

—J. Thomas.

THE GLORY PREPARES — CHAPTERS 33 - 39

Prophecies of the Restoration

Ezekiel re-commissioned as a Watchman	Ch. 33:1-20
Partial Vindication of his Prophecies	Ch. 33:21-33
The coming Shephid-Prince	Ch. 34
The Final Doom of Israel's Enemies	Ch. 35
A Transformed Land	Ch. 36:1-15
A Transformed People	Ch. 36:16-38
A Transformed Nation	Ch. 37:1-14
A Transformed Government	Ch. 37:15-28
Gentile Invasion of Yahweh's Land	Ch. 38
Flesh Humbled and Yahweh Exalted	Ch. 39

THE GLORY RETURNS — CHAPTERS 40 - 48

The Millennial House of Prayer	Ch. 40-42
The Return of the Glory and Cleansing of Israel	Ch. 43
The Royal Priesthood	Ch. 44
The Holy Oblation and Sanctuary	Ch. 45
The King in His Beauty	Ch. 46
The Living Waters of Jerusalem	Ch. 47
The Complete Restoration and Settlement of Israel	Ch. 48

THE COMING GLORY

Paul instructed his contemporaries who looked for the presence of the Lord Jesus Anointed, and their gathering together around him, that the day of that apocalypse should be preceded by an apostasy from the truth, which should attain great and powerful development. This Apostasy exists in what is called *Christendom*, in all its *Names and Denominations*; and is largely treated of in the Apocalypse. It will shortly attain that maturity which precedes annihilation. The coming is for this purpose that when abolished, "the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh may cover the earth as the waters cover the sea" (Num. 14:21; Isaiah 11:9; Hab. 2:14; Rev. 18:1). The Day of Christ is now at hand, the signs of his coming are abroad in the earth; and blessed will they be who are watching and prepared.

Eureka vol. i, p. 139.

Ezekiel Re-commissioned as Watchman

Ch. 33:1-20

This section of Ezekiel's prophecy records his appointment as watchman to the people. It is similar in wording to Ch. 3:15-21 where the prophet records how he had received an earlier appointment to the same position. Why should the commission and its terms be repeated here? For a most significant and important reason. The appointment recorded in chapter 3 came from Yahweh, and, at that time, was not endorsed by the people who did not recognise the prophet's authority as such. But time had wrought a change. The people had learned that the words Ezekiel spake were weighty words of truth, and they had come to trust and lean upon him, and finally to accept him as "their watchman" (see Ezek. 33:2).

But though Ezekiel was now respected and accepted by a people who had previously rejected his message, his duties and responsibilities as Watchman remained the same. He must not allow the popular acclaim and respect that he was now receiving to affect his loyalty to Yahweh or weaken the words of exhortation and warning he must deliver to the people. He must seek to please Yahweh and not flesh. If the situation demanded it, he must set forth the word of Yahweh in forthright, compelling language, even though it might be unpalatable to men. Ezekiel's example will be followed by true spiritual watchmen to the present day, who seek to magnify Yahweh's Word above all else (Psalm 138:2).

Responsibilities of a Watchman— Vv. 1-6

If he fails to give due warning of approaching danger to the people, the blood of those who die in consequence of the disaster will be required at his hand!

VERSE 1

"The word of Yahweh came unto me"—That word is of power, and must be heeded (Isa. 55:11). The prophet prefaces his new revelation with these words to indicate that it is authoritative.

VERSE 2

"When I bring a sword upon the land"—The people to whom Ezekiel spoke had been through

the troublous times of the Babylonian captivity, and had therefore seen "a sword upon the land." Now they are taught to interpret such as the hand of Yahweh, and to recognise such national disasters as evidence of Divine judgment (see v. 21). They are encouraged to heed the signs of the times.

"If the people of the land take a man"—Times of distress are designed to humble flesh, and cause men to seek help. God punished the nation to that end. Now Ezekiel is instructed what to do when a humbled people seek him for assistance. The appointment is similar to that found in ch. 3, with this great difference that there Ezekiel is represented as being commissioned by Yahweh (see Ch.

3:17), here by the people. When the appointment came from Yahweh, the prophet's duty was clear: he must perform the will of Yahweh. But what when the appointment came from the people? Must he disregard public opinion even under such conditions? The prophet is shown that he is responsible to Yahweh alone! How significant are the instructions to him in view of the present method of appointing those to Ecclesial authority—by democratic vote! Yahweh's words to Ezekiel should be heeded by all such.

It is obvious, from the chapter before us, that the status of Ezekiel, in the eyes of the Jews in dispersion had gradually changed. As the storm-clouds gathered over Jerusalem, and it became increasingly evident that his warnings of impending destruction were about to be fulfilled, the people realised that he spake with divine authority. He won their respect, whilst the false prophets, who had previously opposed him, were shown to be but liars. The people now desired to hear Ezekiel's message (Ch. 33:30-33), so that he became their spiritual leader. Nevertheless, his appointment was primarily from God, and only later endorsed by the people, and in this he typed the Lord Jesus who, at his second coming, will find acceptance with the people.

"A man of their coasts"—One of their own number, who was thus more likely to give loyal service to their cause. A true watchman must identify himself with the people over whom he is placed.

"Their watchman"—The Hebrew word *tsaphah* signifies "to lean forward," to "peer" as though into the distance. A watchman, therefore, is one who is on the lookout for danger, and who is prepared to faithfully warn those who have placed him in that position of trust. The success of a spiritual watchman depends on the blessing of Yahweh, without which he "waketh in vain" (Psalm 127). The

attitude of a true watchman should be one of constant vigilance, anticipating the future, and assuming a position of responsibility to those under his care, whilst, in all these things, seeking the divine blessing.

VERSE 3

"When he seeth the sword come"—He will begin to warn the people, when he observes the approach of danger from afar. He will not wait until the danger is apparent to all, but will anticipate its coming by the signs he will perceive as he peers into the distance.

"He blow the trumpet and warn the people"—The bounden duty of spiritual watchmen is to be ever vigilant, with head figuratively bent forward, and eyes peering into the distance, that they may warn should danger approach. If it does, their duty is to disturb the people by sounding the harsh, strident note of the trumpet, (see Isa. 58:1; Amos 3:6; Jer. 6:16-17). They utterly fail in their duty if, on such occasions, they fail to awaken their hearers with an imperative note of warning, that will instantly alert them of the danger confronting them. They had to recognize that to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

The trumpet sounded by watchmen of old was the *shofar* trumpet, an instrument that gave a harsh, ear-splitting, warning note. It was the noise of this trumpet that heralded the opening of the Jewish civil year on the first day of the seventh month of the sacred year (Lev. 23:24), which was also the first month of the civil year! This was ten days before the Day of Atonement (v. 27), and concerning its use on this solemn occasion, one Jewish writer has stated:

"The sound of the Shofar, consisting, as handed down by tradition, of three distinctive Shofar-notes—tekiah, shevarim, teruah—has been looked upon from time immemorial as a call to contrition and penitence, as a reminder of the Shofar-sound of Sinai; and the Day

of Memorial, the beginning of the ten days of Repentance, which culminate in the Day of Atonement, as a time of self-examination and humble petition for forgiveness. The Scriptural injunction of the Shofar for the New Year's Day has a profound meaning. It says, 'Awake, ye sleepers, and ponder over your deeds; remember your Creator and go back to Him in penitence. Be not of those who miss realities in their pursuits of shadows, and waste their years in seeking after vain things which cannot profit or deliver. Look well to your souls and consider your acts; forsake each of you his evil ways and thoughts, and return to God so that He may have mercy upon you.'"

Spiritual watchmen must aim to stir up similar responses in their hearers and thus awaken them to a sense of personal responsibility. It is significant that the Shofar trumpet should have three distinct notes, for Bible prophecy (the fulfilment of which, in our days, acts like a Shofar trumpet to awaken us to our responsibilities) indicates also three distinct "notes" that shall usher in the Kingdom of God. Paul likens these times to periods of "sudden destruction" which shall come upon the world, "as travail upon a woman with child" (1 Thess. 5:3). Like the three-fold blasts of the Shofar-trumpet, the pangs of childbirth are not continuous; they come on and recede in three main stages, with ever increasing strength, until birth. Bible prophecy likewise indicates three great crises leading to the birth of the New World. The first of these (World War I) saw the Turks driven from Immanuel's Land, and the doors of Palestine swing open to receive returning Jews; the second (World War II) witnessed the emergence of Russia as a world power, and the establishment of Israel as a nation; the third (World War III) will consummate in the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

Watchmen should give due

warning to the people of these matters.

VERSE 4

"Whosoever heareth"—The Hebrew renders: "He that hearing heareth" (see mg.) The language of Ezekiel thus anticipates that of the Lord Jesus whom the prophet, as Son of Man, typed (see Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29).

"Taketh not warning"—The Hebrew for "warning" is *zahar*, "to gleam," and figuratively "to enlighten." The person who heeds the sound of the warning trumpet will stand out, or gleam from amidst those of his contemporaries who fail to do so, because he will act upon the things heard. The very enlightenment that he will receive will cause him to gleam with intellectual understanding. On the other hand, those who refuse to heed the warning message remain in spiritual darkness, and bring upon their own heads the result of their folly. However, whether the people took heed or not, the watchman was exempt from all responsibility once he had faithfully discharged his duty.

VERSE 5

"He took not warning"—In this verse, Ezekiel shows that there is a solemn duty resting upon the people to heed the message delivered unto them. The watchman is exempt from all blame if he has warned the people with the harsh, peremptory sound of the trumpet. Thenceafter responsibility rested with the people.

VERSE 6

"If the people be not warned . . . his blood will I require at the watchman's hand"—Ezekiel is warned that if he hesitates to sound the harsh warning note of the trumpet in time of danger, he would be held accountable if the people suffered. A true watchman is thus called upon to rouse those under his care at the slightest sign of danger, long before the city might be at the point of attack.

Under such conditions, those suddenly roused from sleep might well be incensed at what they would consider an unwarranted interruption of their slumber. Spiritual watchmen have been censured for so doing. Indeed, that was the attitude of Israelites in the days of the prophets, for the people irritably demanded of them: "Speak to us of smooth things, publish us words of deceit." They did not recognise the danger, and therefore much preferred to sleep in the hope that all was well, rather than be harshly disturbed.

In view of this attitude on the part of the people, there naturally would develop a reluctance on the part of watchmen to disturb them, and so Yahweh warned Ezekiel of the tremendous responsibility resting upon him as a watchman to faithfully proclaim the warning message delivered to him, come what may. If he did not do so, the responsibility of lost lives would rest on him. It is far better to risk offending man than risk offending God!

The Watchman's Duties Re-defined —Vv. 7-9

Ezekiel was called upon to recognise that though the people might appoint him as "their watchman," it was his duty to faithfully proclaim the word of Yahweh come what may.

VERSE 7

"I have set thee a watchman"—Though the people might appoint Ezekiel as "their watchman" (see v. 2), his real appointment was from Yahweh, and his greatest obligation was to Him. Ecclesial appointments should be viewed in this light, even though they are made by popular vote. God rules in the Ecclesias (Rev. 2:1), as much as He does in the nations (Dan. 4:17), and any who possess talents or have received authority should see that they use these as "good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. 4:10).

"Therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me"—This is the onerous duty and responsibility of a watchman. He must hearken first to Yahweh, and then proclaim the Word to the people without fear or favor (cp. Ezek. 2:7-10). It is not personal opinion that should be heard, even though it might be based upon fleshly wisdom and practical experience, but rather the Voice and Wisdom of Yahweh as expressed in the Word.

VERSE 8

"If thou dost not speak to warn . . . his blood will I require at thine hand"—It is important to notice the emphatic repetition of this principle (cf. v. 7). It is just that watchmen should bear responsibility in proclaiming the warning message of Yahweh. Paul recognised this principle and faithfully and fearlessly acted upon it. To the elders of the Ephesian Ecclesia, he declared: "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27). But he also went on to warn that there would be those manifested in the Ecclesias who would fail to do this, and in order to draw disciples after them would not proclaim the whole counsel of God. What a tremendous responsibility rests upon those holding office in the Ecclesias!

VERSE 9

"If thou warn the wicked . . . thou hast delivered thy soul"—Paul again applies this principle, this time to Timothy, when he exhorts him: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:16).

A Message Of Hope For Israel— Vv. 10-11

The warning of the watchman to the sinners in Israel was designed

to impress them with the extreme danger that faced them, but blended with the threat of punishment was also the promise of mercy. If the people would but turn from their wicked way, the impending destruction could be stayed.

VERSE 10

"If our transgressions be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we live?"—Ezekiel had already warned the people that they would suffer punishment if they persisted in turning from Yahweh (Ezek. 4:17; 24:23), and in doing so had endorsed the teaching of the Law (Lev. 26:39). Yet the nation remained blind to its failings. The wicked justified themselves in their wickedness by stating that punishment could not be avoided since Yahweh had decreed it should come, and therefore they might just as well continue on in their impious ways which they enjoyed anyway. They inquired: "If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?" By "pining away," they meant succumbing to a gradual consumption of life.

VERSE 11

"As I live, saith the Lord Yahweh"—This declaration is made on the grounds that Yahweh is the source of life, and therefore finds no pleasure in death, not even in that of the wicked.

"I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked"—As the God of life, Yahweh delights in the spiritual and physical life of His people, and derives no pleasure from their punishment or death. One of the most compelling statements of Scripture in that regard is found in Jeremiah 29:11, where He states His desire to help His people, for His thoughts towards them are for good and not evil. To that end, He continuously pleads with the wicked to "turn from their way and live" (see 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9). Ezekiel showed that true reformation will only come from Yahweh's spirit-word (Ch. 37:14).

A Message Of Warning For The People—Vv. 12-16

There is a tendency to blame the leaders of a nation or an Ecclesia for troubles that arise, to the exclusion of the people. But it should be realised that a responsibility rests upon the people to seek righteousness and true peace whatever course of action the leaders might take. People cannot evade their responsibility by blaming their leaders—particularly if they have been partly responsible for placing the leaders into their positions of trust. That was the case with Ezekiel. The people had appointed him as their Watchman, and now a message of warning was directed to them that they must heed the message of the watchman when it is delivered unto them.

VERSE 12

"The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression"—Righteousness must be manifested consistently, else it will be unavailing. This does not mean that a righteous person does not sin, but it means that a person recognising that he has sinned, will seek forgiveness. David sinned grievously, but obtained mercy, and provided an example for all those who find themselves in a similar position. But there is such a thing as "the salt losing its savor," "the branch abiding not in the vine," "apostatizing from the faith," "running well for a time" (Gal. 5:7), and then "turning from the Truth." Such inconsistencies will prove fatal in the day of judgment in spite of past righteousness (Matt. 5:13; John 15:6; 1 Cor. 9:27; 10:3-12; 2 Cor. 6:1; Heb. 10:26; Heb. 10:31, 38; 2 Pet. 2:20-21; 2 Pet. 3:17; 2 John 8; Rev. 3:11).

"The wicked shall not fall in the day that he turneth"—There is mercy extended to all if they will but grasp it (Zech. 1:3; Jer. 3:14). In view of this promise of hope, there was no need for any to complain that they would inevitably "pine away in their sins." They

would only do so if they refused to repent.

VERSE 13

"If he trust to his own righteousness"—Flesh has no righteousness of its own (Isa. 64:6). How then can one trust in his own righteousness? Paul declared of himself, that trusting in his own righteousness made him a sinner! (Phil. 3:3-7; Rom. 10:3)

"If he commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered"—The message Ezekiel was called upon to deliver should have impressed the people with the fact that Yahweh requires the manifestation of truth in consistent action.

VERSE 15

"If the wicked . . ."—In this verse the prophet reveals to the people how they should reveal faith in action. The things he calls upon them to do fall into three categories, and can be summed up in (1)—acts of mercy to others; (2)—the manifestation of integrity before God; (3)—obedience to the will of the Father.

"Restore the pledge"—This was a merciful provision of the Law of Moses, and thus denoted acts of mercy to others by waiving personal rights (Exod. 22:26). That is what Ezekiel called upon the people to do.

"Give again that he had robbed"—Manifest integrity in action as did Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8; See Exod. 22:1, 4, 7; Lev. 6:2, 4, 5). The robber is known unto God, although he may be unknown to the community, and in openly restoring the spoil he has gained in secret, his integrity would be made manifest to God.

"Walk in the statutes of life"—This means to obey the commandments of Yahweh, which is the manifestation of a true love towards Him (2 John 5, 6). By so doing, they would become doers of the word and not hearers only

(James 1:22; Lev. 18:5. Consider Abraham: Gen. 17:1).

"Without committing iniquity"—Without doing so habitually. This is the obvious meaning as v. 16 shows; otherwise there would be no need for forgiveness.

"He shall surely live"—The statutes of the Law are described in this verse as the "statutes of life" on the assumption that if a man kept the statutes, he should live in them (Lev. 18:5; Ezek. 20:11). These "statutes of life" emphasised the reality of sin and the need of a redeemer (Rom. 7:10; 8:3). The doer of the law, therefore, lived within the framework of what the law pointed to, and recognised that in spite of all his "works" he still sinned, and must look in faith to the covering that Yahweh would ultimately provide (Ps. 32:1; Rom. 4:6). Such an Israelite had his eyes opened to behold wondrous things out of Yahweh's law (Ps. 119:18). He recognised the sacrifices were but a foreshadowing of the reality that would be provided in the person of the promised seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). In the light of that knowledge, his sins were forgiven him (Ezek. 33:16), and he could attain unto life (Luke 10:28). Therefore, it was only possible to "walk in the statutes of life" through faith, as Paul shows in Romans 10:5-9.

Yahweh's Judgment Is Just—Vv. 17-20

The people complained that Yahweh was not just in His dealings with them, and particularly in His judgments against them. But the prophet showed that far from that being the case, Yahweh is just in all His ways, whereas the people had proved completely inconsistent in their ways.

VERSE 17

"The Lord"—According to the Companion Bible, this should read "Yahweh," being one of the emendations of the Sopherim, according

to which it is claimed that the Jews changed the original text from Yahweh to Adonai.

"Is not equal"—The Hebrew word *takan* signifies "to weigh, ponder," and implies a judgment that is revealed as just by carefully pondering the issues. The Jews claimed repeatedly that Yahweh was not just, or did not carefully weigh the issues (Ezek. 18-25, 29; 33:20), but in this they spoke foolishly. How different was the attitude of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:2-3) and Solomon (Prov. 16:2)! How completely just Yahweh is, is shown in the principles of the atonement for the forgiveness of sins (Rom. 3:25-26).

"Their way is not equal"—They are not consistent in their attitude, for they do not carefully weigh up all the circumstances and issues involved. Consider what is expected of us in that regard (Heb. 5:13-14).

VERSE 18

"He shall even die thereby"—The prophet thus appealed for consistency in action on the part of the people. The warning was appropriate to the times, for it was given on the eve of news being received of the final destruction of the city and Temple of Jerusalem. Such a depressing report could have caused even the righteous to despair, and turn from serving God under the

false impression that their case was hopeless. The prophet warns that should this happen, and the righteous lapse from their previous consistency, they would surely die without hope. Thus he appealed to their faith, and called upon them to reveal it in action.

VERSE 19

"If the wicked turn"—The judgments that Yahweh had poured out upon guilty Jerusalem provided a salutary warning to the wicked that they could not escape similar punishment if they continued in their folly. The prophet appealed to them to heed the exhortation, and turn from their ways in the assurance that they would receive forgiveness of their sins if they did so in faith.

VERSE 20

"Ye say, The way of Yahweh is not equal"—The very circumstances of the Jews at the time illustrated the perfect justness of Yahweh in judgment. Guilty Jerusalem had been punished; but a remnant had escaped. The remnant had escaped for "their good" (Jer. 24:5). Therefore they were warned not to misjudge circumstances, but by carefully pondering all the issues involved, to see that Yahweh is just in all His ways, meting out perfect judgment.

SUMMARY OF A WATCHMAN'S DUTIES

- * He must be able to correctly interpret the true state of affairs, and the real significance of events (vv. 1-2).
- * He must sound a loud, harsh note of warning when necessary (v. 3).
- * He must accept a personal responsibility in delivering his message (v. 6).
- * He must hearken to and expound the word of Yahweh (v. 7).
- * He must not force reform by his individual personality but rather lead to reformation by personal example and sound teaching (v. 9).

A Message from the Smitten City

(Ezekiel 33:21-23)

In this section of the prophecy, Ezekiel describes how that a messenger arrived at Tel Abib from the doomed city of Jerusalem, bringing the sad news of the complete overthrow of the capital and Temple after a two years' siege by the Babylonians. He was the forerunner of that sad, doleful company of captives brought from the destroyed city to Babylon. Yet when he arrived, he found the prophet in a state of ecstasy, and with lips unsealed, at last speaking freely upon the purpose of Yahweh. Sad as the message from Jerusalem was, it confirmed the word of Yahweh that the prophet had proclaimed to the people, and vindicated the warnings and the promises that he had uttered. So the truth and wisdom of Yahweh's Word were revealed by events.

On the very day that Jerusalem was besieged for the last time a series of signs had been given to Ezekiel (Ezek. 24:1), indicative of the destruction about to fall upon that city. After an interval of time (v. 15), he was warned that his wife, "the desire of his eyes" would suddenly die (v. 16), but he was commanded that he was not to mourn for her. When the time came for this to happen (the day the city fell), Ezekiel, faithful to the instruction of Yahweh, gave no sign of sorrow or mourning. This amazed the people, who were by it reminded that there is a sorrow too deep for tears, and a tragedy too terrible and final for mourning. In Ezekiel's day the sorrow would be that consequent upon the destruction of the beloved city and Temple, a calamity so terrible in the estimation of the people as to overshadow mere personal tragedy in the death of sons or daughters, husbands or wives (Ezek. 24:20-23).

But though this sign had been given the Jews in captivity at the time the city fell, the full impact was not felt until this messenger arrived from the smitten city with his doleful news. His presence caused Ezekiel to freely speak words of warning, reproof, and, above all, of hope in the national redemption of Israel. In the destruction of Jerusalem there was the vindication of all that he had proclaimed before in the face of false prophets who declared it would not happen; and now, with the evidence of this judgment before them, the people heard words of warning that the disobedient remnant would not inherit the land (Ch. 33:25-26), whilst a humbled, disciplined, spiritually enlightened people would ultimately do so (Ezekiel 37).

EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES OF THE RESTORATION

The Messenger from Jerusalem—
vv. 21-22

The impact of this message upon the people of the captivity must have been profound. Many had been hoping that Ezekiel's prophecies of doom would prove wrong, and not Jerusalem but rather Babylon would fall (Jer. 28: 1-4). But the news they now received completely destroyed any hope of immediate restoration.

VERSE 21

"The twelfth year"—The twelfth year would have been about eighteen months after the fall of the city which seems a long delay before the news was received. However, many mss have "eleventh year" instead of the "twelfth," which would date this event about six months after the fall of the city (2 Kings 25:2, 8).

"One that had escaped"—Ezekiel had prophesied that such a messenger would arrive from the doomed city, and the terms of his prediction (see Ezek. 24:26) imply that it was on that day that his wife died (v. 25). He had also predicted that his tongue would then be loosed, and he would be able to speak freely about the future (v. 27), which he subsequently did in these prophecies of the restoration.

VERSE 22

"The hand of Yahweh was upon me"—He felt the influence of Yahweh's presence, as though Yahweh had physically taken hold of him and imparted strength to him. See also Ch. 1:3.

"Had opened my mouth"—The Divine influence upon him so affected him that he was now able to speak freely. Previously he had been hesitant in speech, but now, following the vindication of his earlier, gloomy prophecies, he is able to predict with joy the coming glory. This freedom of speech had been promised (Ch. 24:27).

The Attitude of the Remnant In
Judah—Vv. 23-29

Jeremiah (see chapters 40-43) records that the remnant who remained in the land after the destruction of the city, continued in a state of rebellion against both Yahweh and Babylon. This led to the shameful murder of Gedaliah who had been placed in authority over the remaining Jews, and to the subsequent flight of the remnant into Egypt, contrary to a promise made to Jeremiah that they would heed the Divine instruction which required of them to remain in the land. Now Ezekiel makes reference to the results of this folly.

VERSE 24

"They that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel"—The "wastes" had been caused by the devastations of the Babylonians, and those who inhabited them comprised the remnant that was allowed to remain in the land after the captives were taken to Babylon (Jer. 40:5).

"Speak saying"—They were moved by religious fanaticism that blinded their eyes to their own shortcomings, and the manifest judgments of Yahweh against them. Previously they had placed their confidence in the fact that the Temple remained (Jer. 7:4), but with the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple, they took comfort in another argument, claiming that they were still in the land promised to Abraham, and because the land had been promised to him, they would never be removed therefrom. They were wrong as Jeremiah had declared (Jer. 24:8-10).

"Abraham was one, and he inherited the land; but we are many"—How easy it is for men to blind themselves to facts. This miserable remnant put confidence in the fact that they were numerically greater than Abraham. They claimed that if he were but one and could inherit it, they could do so because they were compara-

tively many. They overlooked the fact that he never did properly inherit it, but is to do so in the future, and will do so because of his faith, and not because of his personal ability or power (Rom. 4:19-24).

"The land is given us for inheritance"—The RSV renders: "is surely given us." This was their boastful claim, and it was voiced in defiance of Yahweh's decree.

VERSE 25

"Thus saith the Lord Yahweh"—Yahweh repudiates the boastful confidence of flesh, and clearly reveals the sin of the people.

"Ye eat with the blood"—They broke the explicit instructions of the Law (Lev. 3:17), and refused to acknowledge Yahweh as the Provider of life's needs in the way appointed. Israelites were required to pour out the blood of beasts slaughtered for meat as a token that they would devote the strength derived therefrom in service to His holy Name.

"You lift up your eyes towards your idols"—You do not respect Yahweh's omnipotence in worship.

"You shed blood"—You manifest violence, and not love, towards your neighbours (cp. Isa. 1:15).

"Shall ye possess the land?"—Shall such people as you be permitted to possess the land? This was the indignant question of Yahweh through the prophet. They would have done so if they had obeyed Yahweh.

VERSE 26

"You stand upon your sword"—You live by violence (Jer. 41:1-2). They relied upon the sword, and to the extent that they did so, they proclaimed the doctrine that might is right.

"You work abomination"—They openly repudiated every principle of righteousness.

"You defile your neighbour's wife"—By your infidelity and im-

morality you destroy the very foundation of healthy family and national life.

"Shall ye possess the land?"—In these words Yahweh again indignantly rejected the concept that such a people could inherit the land promised to Abraham.

VERSE 27

"Say thou thus unto them"—The prophet's words of rebuke related to the remnant still in the land.

"You shall fail by the sword"—This came to pass in the anarchy and bloodshed that followed the rebellion against Gedaliah in which he was slain (Jer. 41).

"Those in the forts"—The word "forts" is *metsad* in Hebrew, and is the same word as is rendered "strong holds" in 1 Sam. 23:14. These were strongholds formed by nature in the caves or rocks of the mountains, where the fugitives might hide in safety from their tormentors. But though they might seek refuge in places that seemed beyond the reach of man or beast, even there the outstretched arm of Divine judgment would reach forth to punish them.

VERSE 29

"They shall know that I am Yahweh"—This is the theme of Ezekiel's message. The power of this Name will be vindicated in that His warnings and prophecies will be fulfilled.

The Attitude Of The Captives In Babylon—Vv. 30-33

In the remaining section of this prophecy, Ezekiel turns to his fellow captives to warn them of the folly of their ways, and exhort them to seek Yahweh in truth. They are reminded that they must be doers of the Word, and not hearers only (see Isa. 29:13).

VERSE 30

"The children of thy people"—This form of address indicates the status that Ezekiel was now en-

joying among the people of the captivity. He had assumed the leadership among the dispersed in Tel Abib.

"Still are talking against thee"—The margin changes this to "of thee," and this change is supported by the Revised Version. The captives were speaking "of Ezekiel," not against him. The fulfilment of the prophet's words had been followed by a change of attitude on the part of the people. He was now accepted as their watchman (v. 2), and was respected by them. But though the people gladly hearkened to him, they did not act upon the exhortations they listened to so readily. He was the popular preacher among them, but the significance of his message did not penetrate their hardened hearts.

"By the walls and in the doors"—In both public and private places Ezekiel was the topic of conversation. In view of the remarkable fulfilment of his prophecies, people were encouraging one another to come and hear the word of Yahweh at his mouth.

VERSE 31

"They come as the people cometh"—They went to him as disciples flock to their teachers.

"They sit before thee as My people"—In words and worship they expressed great respect for Yahweh and esteem for His law.

"They hear, but will not do"—They were excellent listeners, but were not doers of the Word, and therefore they deceived themselves (James 1:22, John 13:17).

"With their mouth they shew much love"—This is a sin that is not limited to that generation of Israelites. To speak of love is cheap; to reveal it in action requires the sacrifice of self. And comparatively few are prepared to make that sacrifice. See Psalm 78:36-37; Jer. 12:2; 1 John 3:18; 2 John 6; John 14:23. Notice that a true love is revealed in obedience

to the Word. See 1 Cor. 13.

"Their heart goeth after their own covetousness"—The RSV renders this: "Their heart is set on their gain." With the fall of Jerusalem, the captives settled down in Babylonia, realising that there was no hope of an immediate return to their land. They became intent upon establishing themselves therein, perhaps justifying their attitude by a wrong application of Jeremiah's words (Ch. 29:4-7). And Babylon, like its modern counterpart, offered many attractive opportunities. Gradually the prospect of gain took possession of the captives, so that Ezekiel's message of restoration had but little appeal for them.

VERSE 32

"Thou art unto them as a very lovely song"—They listened to Ezekiel's expositions for their entertainment, and not for their edification. They hearkened as one would to a song, rejoicing in the harmony and beauty thus revealed, but failing to personally apply the words of the prophet so that they made no lasting impression. We can likewise treat the word in that way. We can rejoice in its beauty and in its harmony, but fail to apply the very message it is intended to convey.

"They hear thy words, but they do them not"—They listened to the prophet as they might hearken to a person skilfully playing an instrument. They were pleased with what they heard, but they did not "play" themselves. How often the exposition of the Word is hearkened to in that way. The Bible can captivate us with its sheer beauty, and we can be left in wonder at its harmony and wisdom without applying the principles revealed therein. Let us both listen and learn to apply. This is the responsibility of the followers of the Lord in every age. They must heed the warning voice of spiritual watchmen, and act accordingly. They have a personal responsibility in that regard.

VERSE 33

"Lo, when this cometh to pass"
—The promised restoration prophesied by Ezekiel in these chapters, had a typical fulfilment when the Jews returned under Zerubbabel as recorded in the book of Ezra, though its complete fulfilment awaits the future.

"They shall know that a prophet hath been among them"—The partial fulfilment of the prophecy of the restoration in Zerubbabel's day, brought about a

changed attitude on the part of the people. They saw the vindication of Yahweh's words, and recognised the value of Ezekiel's instruction. A tremendous reformation was wrought among the people that went into captivity through the influence and teaching of such as Ezekiel and Daniel; for whereas they left Jerusalem tainted with paganism, they returned under Zerubbabel spiritually regenerated, never again to be so affected by idolatry.

THE BIBLE AND THE WORLD

What is the value of the world's opinions on divine things? Literally nothing; yea, worse than nothing — they are positively pestilential; and sedulously to be avoided by all who would attain to the knowledge of the Truth. What can a man know of mathematics or chemistry who has not studied the principles of these sciences? Should such a person by any possibility be found in the seat of Euclid, Newton, Davy, Dalton, or Faraday, would he not be the scorn and derision of all intelligent and skilful mathematicians and chemists? Such is the world for wisdom in the things of God, in the estimation of "scribes instructed for the kingdom of the heavens." Mankind are commanded to dig for knowledge as for hid treasure if they would acquire it. This is a law to which there are only rare exceptions; as it may please God. Even His own prophets had to dig in the fields of one another for treasure not specially, or personally revealed by the Spirit. Witness the case of Daniel's study of Jeremiah (Dan. 9:2). . . . How absurd, then, to regard the opinions of the world concerning God and His Truth as any more than mere folly and conceit! The only depository of knowledge respecting these (excepting His eternal power and Deity, which are manifest from His works) is the Scripture; and into that mine mankind do not dig.

— *Herald Of The Coming Age*, 1857.

The Coming Shepherd King

Ezekiel 34

This chapter beautifully reveals the duties of a shepherd and of the flock; the promise of a coming Shepherd King, and the grand transformation that he will effect in the midst of Israel. It indicts the shepherds of the past because they scattered the flock instead of caring for it, and ate the sheep instead of feeding them. The chapter needs to be studied in conjunction with Psalm 23, John 10 (the parable of the Good Shepherd), and such shepherd-types of the Lord Jesus as Abel, Joseph, Moses, David and so forth. The king of Israel was looked upon as the shepherd of the nation, leading the army in time of war and the people in time of peace (2 Sam. 5:2). As he ruled for Yahweh, so he was called upon to manifest the Shepherd characteristics of Yahweh before the people: for Yahweh is the Great Shepherd of the flock (Ps. 80:1).

Describing the work of a shepherd, Thompson in "The Land and the Book" has written as follows:

"The shepherd goes before, not merely to point the way, but to see that it is practicable and safe. He is armed in order to defend his charge; and in this he is very courageous. Some sheep always keep near the shepherd, and are his special favorites. Each of them has a name to which it answers joyfully; and the kind shepherd is ever distributing to such, choice portions which he gathers for that purpose. These are the contented and happy ones. They are in no danger of getting lost or into mischief, nor do wild beasts or thieves come near them. The great body, however, are mere worldlings, intent upon their own pleasures or selfish interests. They run from bush to bush, searching for varieties or delicacies, and only now or then lift their heads to see where the shepherd is, or rather, where the general flock is, lest they get so far away as to occasion remark in their little community, or rebuke from their keeper. Others, again, are restless or discontented, jumping into everybody's field, climbing into bushes. These cost the good shepherd incessant trouble. Then there are others, incurably reckless, who stray far away and are utterly lost. I have repeatedly seen, a silly goat or sheep, running hither and thither, and bleating piteously after the flock, only to call forth from their dens the beasts of prey, or to bring up the lurking thief, who quickly quietens its cries in death."

The chapter before us reveals the responsibilities of both shepherds and flocks, and includes a prophecy concerning the coming of the great shepherd prince who will restore the flock to its land and carefully care for it to its ultimate benefit.

The Failure of Israel's Shepherds
—Vv. 1-6

The shepherds appointed over the Israel flock are indicted because of their selfish indifference to the welfare of the flock. They are revealed as mere hirelings, and not as true shepherds.

VERSE 2

"Prophecy against the shepherds of Israel"—The word shepherd is translated from the Hebrew *ra'ah* which is derived from a root signifying "to pasture, rule, associate with" (as a friend). This is what a true shepherd should do. The term comprehends both civil and ecclesiastical rulers (see Isa. 56:11; Jer. 2:8).

"Woe to the shepherds"—They are indicted because of their failure to look after their charges according to their appointment. See similar "woes" pronounced (Jer. 23:1; Zech. 11:17; Matt. 23:14).

"That do feed themselves"—The word in the Hebrew for "feed" is that used in the same verse for "shepherd." The shepherds shepherded themselves! They were prepared to sacrifice the flock for themselves, whereas they should have extended their self-sacrificing devotion to the flock, and carefully pastured, or shepherded it.

VERSE 3

"Ye eat the fat"—The Septuagint and Vulgate read "milk" instead of "fat" following a different reading: *chalab* (milk) instead of *cheleb* (fat). The difference is only one of vowel points, and as Hebrew was originally written without these, "milk" is probably correct, especially as killing is referred to in the next clause. Whatever reading is accepted, the indictment is that the shepherds lived off the flock instead of tending to it (v. 8; Isa. 56:11).

"Ye kill them that are fed"—These so-called shepherds drained the wealthy among the people of

their resources by their demands for tithes and tribute, whilst they gave nothing in return. Thus they were condemned by the rebuke: "Ye feed not the flock."

VERSE 4

"The diseased have ye not strengthened"—The RSV renders this as "the weak."

"Neither have ye bound up the broken"—They did not manifest the characteristics of Yahweh, the chief Shepherd Who sets this forth as part of what He does for the flock (see Ps. 147:3; Isa. 61:1). As His under-shepherds, they should have imitated His characteristics. A true shepherd will tenderly care for those lambs and sheep in his care that cannot walk, and will carry them on his shoulders even at the expense of his personal discomfort (Isa. 40:11).

"Neither have ye sought that which was lost"—As a shepherd will go out of his way to seek for a lost sheep, so also should the spiritual shepherds in regard to straying members. This is part of their responsibility before the Master-Shepherd, even Yahweh. Israel's shepherds gave more care to their literal flocks than they did to Yahweh's flock (Matt. 18:12). Paul warned of a time when Ecclesial shepherds would act in the same way (Acts 20:28-31). The warning of this chapter applies to such.

"With force"—The Hebrew word, *chozгах*, signifies "vehemence" or the undue exercise of force.

"With cruelty"—The Hebrew word, *pehrek*, signifies "to break apart, to fracture." Israel had experienced this in Egypt (Exod. 1:13-14), and therefore Yahweh had strictly warned against any Israelite manifesting such an Egyptian characteristic to his fellows (Lev. 25:43). Yet, in spite of that solemn warning, the very shepherds of the flock were guilty of doing so.

"Ye ruled them"—The Hebrew word, *rawdah*, signifies "to tread

down, to subjugate." The Shepherds should have pastured them; instead they dominated them, and trod them down.

VERSE 5

"My sheep wandered through the mountains"—Driven away by their shepherds, Israel wandered like silly sheep without purpose or true leadership; they wandered aimlessly as sheep will, following those who take the lead, even into trouble and death.

Judgment On The Shepherds—Vv. 7-10.

Shepherds were responsible to those who employed them for the entire flock, and were held accountable in case of loss. The day of judgment will reveal the negligence of many who have claimed to be shepherds over the flock of God, but have failed to assume proper responsibility.

VERSE 10

"I am against the shepherds and will require My flock at their hand"—It was the shepherd's responsibility to make good any loss that resulted from his negligence (cp. Gen. 31:38-39), and a similar responsibility rests upon spiritual shepherds (Ezek. 3:18; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). As the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus accounted for the entire flock placed in his charge (John 17:12). A tremendous responsibility rests upon those who assume the authority over the Ecclesial flock, and this should not be taken lightly. The indictment of Ezekiel applies as much today as it did in his days if one is negligent of his duty before Yahweh.

Yahweh the Chief Shepherd To Restore The Flock—Vv. 11,16

Having accused the shepherds of gross negligence, Yahweh reveals that nevertheless they cannot frustrate His purpose. He will carefully search out His sheep, and restore them.

VERSE 11

"I will search My sheep"—Yahweh is revealed as the Chief Shepherd (Ps. 23:1; 80:1; 78:52-53), and here He represents Himself as seeking out His lost sheep. The Hebrew for "search" is *darash*, and signifies to "tread, frequent, follow," and thus "to trace steps." So Yahweh represents Himself as carefully seeking out the tracks of His scattered and wandering sheep, that He might restore them to the fold. True spiritual shepherds will emulate this Divine characteristic, and will reflect upon the fact that His will will be accomplished whether they are faithful or not.

"And seek them out"—The word "seek" is a translation of *baqur*, "to plough, to lay open with the object of inspection, to care for, to consider." All this Yahweh will do for His flock. He will carefully inspect it to ensure that it receives the attention it requires.

VERSE 12

"As a shepherd seeketh out his flock"—A true shepherd will use the greatest care and diligence in caring for the flock. So also will Yahweh. He will seek His flock, gather it together, count its members, bring them into the fold, carefully inspect them to observe their condition, bind up the wounds of the lame and torn (Ps. 147:3), and eventually lead them to lush, green pastures (Jer. 3:15).

"The cloudy and dark day"—A day when the bright illumination of the sun (Yahweh's truth and influence) is clouded over. The terms describe a period of storm and tempest sweeping down upon the land, and such expressions have been used to describe times of trouble (Ezek. 30:3; Zeph. 1:15; cp. Ezek. 38:9).

VERSE 13

"I will gather them"—Yahweh will restore the Israel flock through the Good Shepherd later described in this chapter. (See also Ezek. 11:17; 38:8; Deut. 30:3-4; Ps. 107:

3; Isa. 65:9-10; Jer. 23:3; 50:19.)

"And feed them"—The word "feed" is the same word for "shepherd." "I will shepherd them." He will teach them with His knowledge through the pastors (shepherds) He will provide (see Micah 7:14-16).

VERSE 14

"They shall lie down in a good fold"—They shall be sheltered, cared for, and pastured. This is what the Lord Jesus also promised (John 10:16), and he is the one predicted in this chapter who will accomplish it (Ezek. 34:23).

VERSE 15

"I will cause them to lie down"

—They shall be gathered into the fold, and there find peace and contentment, when they have learnt to acknowledge that this was Yahweh's doing (Jer. 23:6-8).

VERSE 16

"I will seek that which was lost"—He will thus fulfil His purpose in Israel, and accomplish through His Good Shepherd, what the hirelings of the past have failed to accomplish (ct. v. 4; see Mic. 4:6).

"I will destroy the fat and the strong"—Having judged the shepherds, he will also judge the sheep. Those that have prospered in Gentile pastures will be turned away. See Amos 4:1.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A SHEPHERD

- He must instruct, rule and lead the flock (v. 2).
- He must inspect the sheep to seek out the sick and weak (v. 4). He must manifest skill in attending them (v. 4).
- He must reveal care and concern regarding straying sheep (v. 4).
- He must go out of his way to seek the wandering sheep (v. 4). He must assume a personal responsibility over the flock (v. 10).
- He must seek out good pasture. He must be prepared to protect the flock.
- * He must lead the way, not drive the sheep.

Judgment On The Flock—Vv. 17-22

While a heavy responsibility rests on the shepherds, a similar responsibility rests also upon the flock. In the absence of fully qualified shepherds, there is a tendency among sheep to follow any of their fellows that might assume the lead. These leaders of the flock must see that they do not lead their fellows from the right path, for judgment will be meted out against those who do.

VERSE 17

"I will judge between cattle and cattle"—The marginal rendition discriminates between the larger and older cattle and sheep, implying

that these have a greater degree of responsibility than those smaller and younger than them, and that this will be taken into account at the judgment seat.

"Between the rams and the he goats"—The Good Shepherd will judge between the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:32-33). This will apply to both spiritual and natural Israel (see Zech. 13:7; Amos 9:9; Zech. 10:3). There will be a careful discrimination and weeding out of rebels from among the Jews, before the remainder are settled in the Land and incorporated into the Kingdom (Ezek. 20:37-38). In this judgment, a heavier responsibility will rest upon the leaders, for it is

the "rams" and "he goats" to which reference is particularly made. This will also apply to Ecclesial leaders. See the exhortation of James 3:1.

VERSE 18

"You have eaten up the good pastures"—This is the basis of Yahweh's indictment of the leaders of the flock. He declares that they have looked after themselves to the exclusion of weaker members, whom they have roughly horned out of the way in order that they themselves might be supplied with food (v 21). What a powerful exhortation! Though there are no Divinely appointed shepherds today, there are plenty of leaders, and if their influence has been used for evil the future judgment will rest heavily upon them. Let them make the greatest use of their opportunity now, by going out of their way to care for the weak among their number, otherwise they may be eventually called to account.

VERSE 19

"As for My flock"—The context shows that these words relate to the general members of the flock, many of whom have been despised by the so-called "strong." Though so treated by the stronger rams and he goats, they are nevertheless acknowledged by Yahweh as His flock (cp. Isa. 66:5; 65:5).

"They eat that which ye have trodden . . . and drink that which ye have fouled"—The picture drawn by the prophet is that of powerful sheep and goats ruthlessly pushing the weak out of the way to obtain the best of the pasture, and then treading the remnant of it down so that little remains for the weak after they have gone their way; or forcing their way to the water's edge, and after drinking their fill, fouling the water which the weaker of the flock must then drink or go without. It is a graphic picture of the selfish attitude of those who may have advanced further than others in their understanding of Scripture and who then treat with utmost contempt the bleatings of

lesser sheep. Ezekiel's words show that the strong of the flock are expected to care for the weak, and assist them by leading them to pasture suited to their needs. How frequently do those deeply taught in the Word, speak above the heads of "babes in Christ," and refuse to feed them with simple elements of the faith. Whilst it is a responsibility upon all to develop in understanding (Heb. 5:12), the stronger among the flock have an added responsibility to "bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves" (Rom. 15:1). That is the principle laid down by Ezekiel here, and which should be heeded by the "Israel of God" in every age. If they do not heed it they will rue it at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

VERSE 21

"Ye have thrust with the side" etc.—You have manifested complete indifference to the feelings of others in setting forth your principles, and as a result "ye have scattered them abroad." In doing so, you have thought of yourselves more than of others and have thus made yourself amenable to Divine judgment when Yahweh will "save His flock," and will "judge between cattle and cattle."

The Promise Of The Good Shepherd—Vv. 23-24

The rest of this chapter outlines the prophecy of the coming of the Good Shepherd, and his future work in restoring the flock, leading it to lush pastures, and granting it the security of his protection. There are some beautiful expressions in this glorious section of the prophecy.

VERSE 23

"I will set up one shepherd"—Yahweh will set up over Israel a master-shepherd, or ruler, in place of the hirelings of the past. This is the "good shepherd" of John 10. A careful consideration of this parable will reveal that it is divided into two parts: the parable of the

door (vv. 1-9), and the parable of the good shepherd (vv. 10-18). Christ is both the door and the good shepherd. He taught that "he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep" (John 10:2). But the Greek text lacks the definite article, and should be rendered "a shepherd," not "the shepherd." There are shepherds besides the good shepherd (see 1 Pet. 5:1-4), and the Lord is here defining the duties of such shepherds. They will invariably lead the sheep to the door (i.e. to Christ), and the Porter (Yahweh through His word—see John 6:44; Acts 14:27) will grant access into the fold through that door. The shepherds of Jesus' day were decried as thieves and robbers because they failed to perform their duty. Later, in the same parable, the Lord likened himself to a "good shepherd," leading the flock through the valley of death, onwards to the green pastures beyond (vv. 17-18). He endured the trials, and rose to glory, laying down his life in such a fashion that God could restore it to him again in perfect righteousness, enabling him to lead the flock on to victory. The Lord's parable is clearly based upon Psalm 23 and Ezekiel 34. In claiming that he was the "good shepherd," he identified himself with the "one shepherd" of Ezekiel 34:23.

"My servant David"—The name of David signifies "the Beloved," so that we may read: "My servant the Beloved" (see Isa. 42:1 for Christ as the beloved servant). As the antitypical David, these words were used of Jesus at his baptism, the Voice from heaven referring to him as, "My Son, the Beloved" (Matt. 3:17—Diag.). The Lord Jesus is Yahweh's servant to restore Israel to Him, and to be a light to the Gentiles (Isa. 49:6). He is His servant to be a Savior, "to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). To that end "he shall feed (shepherd) them, and he shall be their shepherd" (Ezek. 34:23).

VERSE 24

"A prince among them"—The word for prince is *nasi*, "one lifted up, an elevated one." This shepherd-prince is shown in contrast to the "wicked prince" of Ezekiel 21:25. He is the shepherd-prince, because he will lead the people to Yahweh, protecting them, as David did his flock, from the lion and the bear (1 Sam. 17:36). Thus he is revealed in belligerent manifestation against the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal of Ezekiel 38.

A Covenant Of Peace—V. 25

At the time when the Shepherd-prince will again be in the midst of Israel, and "shall feed them," a covenant of peace will be made with the flock then gathered together.

VERSE 25

"A covenant of peace"—The word "peace" is *shalom* in Hebrew, and is derived from a root signifying "to be at one," thus implying fellowship. Whereas Gentiles use the term "peace" to describe cessation of war, *shalom* signifies complete unity of mind and outlook; a oneness such as Christ described in John 14:27: "My peace I give unto you," and John 17:21: "That they may be one." This covenant of peace with Israel after the flesh, will be made upon a basis of truth (See Jer. 31:31-34, Ezek. 20:37; 37:26; Isa. 54:10; Rom. 11:26).

"The evil beasts"—The Gentile nations will be driven from the land. See Dan. 7:3 for the use of the symbol as descriptive of nations. The shepherd-prince will protect his flock by driving out Israel's oppressors.

"Dwell safely in the wilderness"—The term "wilderness" does not describe a desert, but an open space. The picture thus presented is one of peace and security, in which the Israel-flock lies down unmolested in the open spaces and

woods. See the expressions of Micah 7:14.

Showers Of Blessings—V. 26

The literal and spiritual drought conditions of the past will be completely broken, when the law goes forth from Zion.

VERSE 26

"My hill"—Yahweh's hill is Mt. Zion, the future rallying place for Israel and the world. See Ezek. 40:2. This will become the site of the future House of Prayer for all nations and Israel will constitute a blessing unto all who are drawn unto Yahweh in this worship. See Zech. 8:13; Isa. 19:24.

"I will cause the shower to come down"—In Bible symbology, this expression denotes Divine blessing (Lev. 26:4) through Divine teaching (Deut. 32:2). At present there is a severe drought of Divine truth throughout the world (see Amos 8:11-12), but that drought will be broken through the work of Christ and the saints, as they proclaim the Divine will and purpose to mankind (Joel 2:21-24).

"Showers of blessing"—There will be great fertility throughout the Land of Israel in the future, and this will be symbolic of the blessings of truth that shall also go forth from that centre to all mankind. The showers of blessings that will fall on all nations that accept Christ, will make the future for them bright with hope and promise.

Complete Security—Vv. 27-28

The showers of blessing will cause ample growth to the glory of Yahweh, in the midst of which the Israel-flock will lie down in complete security, no "wild beasts" any more molesting them as before.

VERSE 27

"The fruit of the tree shall yield her fruit"—The expressions of this verse—trees, fields, flock—are those

frequently used to describe Israel. The "showers of blessing" will result in ample growth of fruit, verdure and flocks, typical of spiritual increase to the glory of Yahweh.

"They shall be safe in their land"—Thus fulfilling the promise made to David (2 Sam. 7:10).

"I have broken the bands of their yoke"—This is an expression drawn from the Law, and particularly the Levitical covenant of Lev. 26:13. The promise to break the "bands of their yoke" was conditional upon Israel "keeping Yahweh's sabbaths and reverencing His sanctuary" (Lev. 26:2). Both will be done in the future age (Ezek. 44:24). The blessing that was promised the nation in consequence provided for ample rain (Lev. 26:4), plentiful crops (v. 5), outstanding victories in battle (vv. 7-8), a numerous progeny (v. 9), the continued manifestation of Yahweh in the midst of the nation (vv. 11-13). All this was to follow the "breaking of the bands of Israel's yoke" when they would be made to "go upright" (Lev. 26:13). The deliverance from Egypt is also described as a breaking of the bands of Israel's yoke (Jer. 2:20), and is typical of the coming complete deliverance of the nation (Jer. 16:14-15; 32:37). In that day, yet future, the terms of the Levitical covenant will be fulfilled as Ezekiel predicted.

VERSE 28

"Neither shall the beast of the land devour them"—In keeping with the type, Israel is likened to a flock of sheep (v. 31), and the Gentiles (and particularly the Fourth Beast of Daniel 7) are likened to the "beast of the land" about to devour them. They will be protected from this menace by the Good Shepherd.

"None shall make them afraid"—Israel has never yet experienced a state of complete immunity from trouble, but will do so when the security of Messiah's protection and reign is established in the land. See Ezek. 28:24-26.

**The Plantation To The Name—V.
29**

In keeping with the pastoral scene so beautifully expressed in this section of the prophecy, Israel has been likened to a flock of sheep dwelling securely in the open spaces, and enjoying the pasture that has resulted from the "showers of blessing" that have brought fertility to the previously arid conditions. In the verse now before us, the prophet describes how that a figurative plantation of trees will provide shade for the sheep to lie down in comfort. These trees are called "a Plantation to the Name."

VERSE 29

"I will raise up for them a plant of renown"—The Hebrew words, *matta leshem*, signify "a plantation to the name" (see Rotherham and RV). This plantation of trees will have been "raised up" through a resurrection, and can be identified with the "wood of life" of Rev. 22:2. Thus the plantation of trees is symbolic of the company of the redeemed gathered together in the land. At present they comprise those whom God is "taking out of the Gentiles, a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14). Isaiah saw their future manifestation when, as the Name of Yahweh, they will belligerently occupy the land, destroying the enemy then in possession thereof (Isa. 30:27). Once planted in the land, the company of the glorified Redeemed will constitute a plantation to the Name, for Isaiah declares: "Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of My planting the work of My hands, that I may be glorified" (Isa. 60:21). In the shadow and protection of this Plantation, the Israel flock of sheep will rest in perfect security and confidence.

"They shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land"

—The very reverse of this is predicted in Amos 8:11-12, where Yahweh proclaims His intention of sending a famine in the land, "not of bread nor of water, but of hearing the words of Yahweh." This has been the state of Israel for centuries past, but with the showers of blessing that shall come from the presence of the "cloud of witnesses" in the political heavens, the spiritual drought will be brought to an end. No longer will the sheep suffer from spiritual malnutrition as they do today! They will be carefully pastured by pastors (shepherds) competent to tend them and supply their every need (Jer. 3:15).

"Neither bear the shame of the heathen any more"—Rotherham renders the word "shame" as "reproach." And what is that reproach? Ezekiel expresses it in Ch. 36:20: "The heathen said, These are the people of Yahweh, and are gone forth out of His land." Israel shall no longer "profane the holy Name," and therefore will no longer hear the reproach of the Gentiles.

A Converted Nation—Vv. 30-31

The final picture presented in this prophecy is that of Israel as a flock of contented sheep, rejoicing in the goodness that comes to them from heaven.

VERSE 30

"They shall know that I, Yahweh their God am with them"—They shall see evidence of this in the goodness that they will experience in that day (Rom. 11:22-23).

"And ye are the flock of My pasture"—Thus Israel will at last feed off Yahweh's words (Ps. 74:1).

The Doom of Those Who Hate Israel

Chapter 35

This chapter comprises a prophecy against "Mount Seir," and foretells its complete desolation. Why should the prophecy be included at this place, in the midst of prophecies of the Restoration? Because Mount Seir (or Edom) is used in Scripture as a type for Gentile political power. When Esau and Jacob were born, Rebekah was told that they represented "two nations . . . two manner of people" (Gen. 25:23). Paul, commenting upon that fact, declared that Esau was representative of those who are profane, and who despise the birthright found in a Divine heritage (Heb. 12:16).

In Hebrew, the words Adam and Edom have the same consonants and almost the same meaning. The former signifies "red earth", and the latter "red". This name and color both point to the flesh; and, as a type, Edom represents the flesh in political manifestation.

In view of this, the history of Edom is particularly significant. When Judah was taken into captivity by the Babylonians, the Edomites occupied Palestine, being driven out of their own territory by a section of the Arab nations. Their presence in the land was thus a hindrance to Zerubbabel in the restoration that he initiated and effected. Though driven out of Northern Judah, the Edomites in the south remained a thorn in the side of the returned exiles, until, in the period of the Maccabees they were completely subdued, being given the choice of either accepting Judaism or the sword. Thus they faced either destruction or conversion, and were assimilated into the nation. Thus, in the days of Christ, Herod the Idumean (Edomite) reigned in Jerusalem.

All this history helps to illustrate the type. As the Edomites were given the choice of either conversion or the sword, so also will the Gentiles at Christ's return (Isa. 60:12). As they were incorporated into the nation of Judah, so the Gentiles will be incorporated into the Kingdom of God. As Edom finally was completely overthrown, so also will Gentile political and military power be completely overthrown at Christ's coming.

Chapter 35, therefore, predicts the destruction of Gentile political power as a foundation for the ultimate triumph of Israel, which is the subject of the next chapter.

"I Am Against Thee"—Vv. 1-4

If the flock of Israel is to lie down in safety in the land, the evil beasts (Gentile nations) must be ejected therefrom. Thus Yahweh sets His face against the typical representation of Gentile military and political power: Edom.

VERSE 1

"Moreover"—This introductory word links the judgment of Mt. Seir with the redemption of the nation of Israel which is the subject of the previous chapter.

VERSE 2

"Son of man set thy face against Mount Seir"—"Son of man" is the title of both Ezekiel and the Lord Jesus. Here he types the Lord, for it will be Christ who will destroy political Mt. Seir at his coming. Mt. Seir represents Edom, as Mt. Zion represents Israel. One opposes the other as darkness opposes light, or error opposes truth. The Edomites were known for their implacable hatred of Israel (Amos 1:11; Ezek. 25:12; Obadiah 10; Psa. 137:7) and in this represented the rabid hatred of Israel by Gentiles. Mt. Seir was the mountain range of Edom. The name, like that of Esau, means "hairy" or "shaggy." Like the flesh, Mt. Seir has much that attracts. G. A. Smith in *The Historical Geography Of The Holy Land* describes it thus:

"It attains a general elevation of 4 to 5,000 feet above sea level, far higher than that of Hauran, Gilead or Moab . . . The variety of Mt. Seir is thus greater than that of the range to the north. Besides the cool, stony plateaus, which it has like the latter but lifts higher, its west flank is a series of ridges, shelves and strips of valley, mazes of peaks, cliffs and chasms that form some of the wildest rock scenery in the world. In the sandstone above the Arabah are the Siks (shafts), clefts or corridors between perpendicular rocks. Springs emerge between the porous

upper strata of limestone and at the contact of the latter with the sandstone. On the limestone plateau devoid of springs, cisterns preserve some of the winter rain and at various periods dams and reservoirs have caught the surface water in both the shallow and deep wadies."

Mt. Seir, therefore, stands as a fitting symbol of the flesh. In height, in variety, in ruthless spectacular scenery, it exceeds its neighbors to the north. Like the flesh, its first sight is calculated to excite admiration, even envy—but hidden behind that facade is the sterility of death. Mt. Seir stands for the flesh in political manifestation, whilst Mt. Zion is the symbol of the Spirit (Heb. 12:22).

VERSE 3

"I will make thee most desolate"—Literally this will not be so, for the desert shall blossom as the rose (Isa. 42:11; 43:20), but politically Mount Seir is to be made most desolate. Obadiah declares that it shall be "cut off for ever" (V. 10). The establishment of the Kingdom of God will bring Gentile political power to an end, so that Ezekiel declared: "When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate" (Ezek. 35:14).

VERSE 4

"I will lay thy cities waste"—As Mount Seir is here considered as a symbol, or a type, its cities must relate to places such as Rome, etc. They are to be made most desolate at the time when the whole earth will rejoice. Modern Christendom is described as Babylon (Rev. 16:19), and of it, it is predicted: "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell." The great centres that are representative of the flesh in its political manifestation will be completely overthrown and made desolate at the time when the Lord Jesus Christ rules. (Notice the marginal rendering of Ezek. 35:3! It implies complete destruction.)

The Cause Of Yahweh's Anger—Vv. 5-6

The unremitting hostility of the Edomites against Israel is indicative of the unreasoning opposition of Gentilism to the purpose of Yahweh worked out through the people of Israel. This was the cause of Yahweh's anger against Edom in the past, and it is the cause of His anger against the world of Gentilism today.

VERSE 5

"Thou hast had a perpetual hatred"—The flesh has ever hated the Spirit, both nationally as well as individually. In the past Edom bitterly opposed Israel which then constituted the Kingdom of God. In the same way, the flesh in political manifestation will oppose the restoration of the Kingdom of God in the future. It has manifested a perpetual hatred against the purpose of Yahweh (Ezek. 36:2; Ps. 137:7; Obad. Vv. 10, 11).

"Hast shed the blood of the children of Israel" . . . in the time of their calamity"—The relentless antipathy of Edom towards Israel culminated in the last days of Jerusalem (Obad. V. 13), when the Edomites did their best to completely destroy the people of Israel. The attitude of Edom in that regard has been repeated by Gentile powers ever since in that, whilst Israel has been in dispersion, they have subjected her to persecution. This has been displeasing to Yahweh, as Zechariah declares. Through him the Spirit proclaimed: "I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction" (Zech. 1:15). The persecution that the children of Israel have experienced during their dispersion, as they have been driven from country to country, illustrates the principle set down in Ezek. 35:5.

"In the time that their iniquity had an end"—The attitude of Edom at the time when Israel was finally overthrown will find its

counterpart at the "time of Jacob's trouble", when, however, Jacob shall be delivered (see Jer. 30:7). It is significant that Rotherham translates this phrase as: "the time of the final punishment for iniquity". The Revised Version renders: "in the time of the iniquity of the end". This is the time of Judah's final transgression, the time of Jacob's trouble yet to come. Therefore the words of Ezekiel point forward to the last great crisis of the ages as outlined in his prophecy, Chapter 38. At that time of crisis, when Israel will experience great tribulation, so that "two parts shall be cut off and die" (Zech. 13:8), punishment will also be meted out against the antitypical Edomites, even the Gentiles.

VERSE 6

"I will prepare thee unto blood"—Israel will be revenged upon her persecutors when Gogue's invasion of the land will be completely overthrown by great slaughter (Ezek. 39:17).

"Thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee"—Rotherham in a footnote suggests as an alternative: "Since of blood thou hast become guilty . . ." The AV implies that instead of hating the sight of blood, the Edomites loved cruelty and rejoiced in bloodshed, and therefore reaped what they had sown. This will likewise prove true of typical Edom, namely Gogue's forces. As Gogue will try to establish his policy through the shedding of blood or fleshly power, so the blood of those with him will be shed and his power shall be completely overthrown.

The Complete Destruction of Edom Vv. 7-9

Antitypical Edom (the flesh in political manifestation) is to be completely and utterly subdued under the Lord Jesus Christ, even as Edom was under Judah in the days of the Maccabees.

VERSE 7

"I will make Mount Seir most

desolate—As regards the nation of Edom, this was literally fulfilled. When the Jews were taken into captivity in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, the Nabateans, an Arabian tribe, drove the Edomites out of their possessions and forced them westwards. The Edomites settled in southern Judea, but were ultimately conquered and converted by the Maccabees. Thus the history of Edom serves as a type of the future destiny of Gentile power. When the Jewish people were driven into dispersion, the Gentiles occupied the Promised Land. However, the time is coming when they in turn shall be driven therefrom, and they will be presented with the alternative of accepting the principles of the Lord Jesus Christ, or of being destroyed. Isaiah declares: "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (Isa. 60:12). Political "Edom" will be either converted, or destroyed. That is also the declaration expressed in Amos 9:11-12. The prophet declares that the tabernacle of David that is in ruins will be raised up, or restored, as in the days of old. They shall then extend their power to "possess the remnant of Edom". This statement is most significant, for there are no literal Edomites existing today, so that the verse can only be understood in its typical or symbolic sense. That sense is literally expressed in the quotation already given (Isa. 60:12).

"Cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth"—This is a Hebrew term describing people who as travellers move through a country. Because Edom's power will be revealed for what it is, i.e. evil, and then will be completely overthrown, no admirers will seek it or flock to it.

VERSE 9

"Thy cities shall not return"—Historically this was fulfilled in the past. Edom never regained the cities from which it was driven

by the Nabateans. The nation was subdued under the Maccabees and finally incorporated into Judea. Since the destruction of the Jewish State in A.D. 70, history knows nothing more of the Edomites. The nation was completely destroyed. In like manner, the flesh in political organisation will never exert itself again once the Lord Jesus Christ has subdued it. No longer will flesh control the centres of power as it has in the past. (See further notes, V. 15).

In attacking Israel Edom attacked Yahweh—Vv. 10-13

Unthinking Gentiles do not recognize that when they oppose Israel and persecute the Jewish people, in effect, they oppose Yahweh and persecute Him. This now becomes the ground of the prophet's indictment against political Edom.

VERSE 10

"Thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine"—By the "two nations" is meant Judah and Israel. Historically, when the Edomites were driven from their possessions they entered into the southern portion of Judah, and occupied that country. They rejoiced to see the Jewish people driven therefrom by the Babylonians and, like Esau of old, they tried to grasp the blessing given to Jacob. Since then, the flesh in political manifestation has imitated the action and attitude of the Edomites. It has opposed the Truth, wherever the Truth has been proclaimed in purity, and it has extended its unclean hands to grasp hold of the Land of Promise, or to persecute the Jewish people.

"Whereas Yahweh was there"—This is a principle that the flesh has never understood, either in regard to the Truth, or in regard of the purpose of God with Israel. The Promised Land is His land (Lev. 25:23); the people of Israel are His people (Exod. 5:1); His eyes are ever upon the land (Deut. 11:

12); He dwelt there in the past (Deut. 12:5), and will do so again in the future. Yahweh will dwell in the midst of His people once again in the person of His glorified son. Jerusalem will then constitute "the city of the great king" (Matt. 5:35), and all nations will recognize that God is again with His people of Israel (Zech. 8:23). Therefore the blessing that will come upon Israel will be a means of drawing all nations ultimately to Yahweh. Jeremiah declares: "It shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it (Israel)." (Jer. 33:9). Ezekiel's statement, "Yahweh was there" (Ch. 35:10), is significant, for this will yet become the name of the city of the future, according to Ch. 48:35. There we read: "And the name of the city from that day shall be, Yahweh is there (*Yahweh Shammah*)". This is the basic theme of Ezekiel's prophecy. The glory was once in the midst of Jerusalem, but was withdrawn (Ezek. 8:4; 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:23). It is, however, to return to this city! Gentilism does not recognize this, for as Micah declares: "They know not the thoughts of Yahweh, neither understand they his counsel" (Ch. 4:12). The day is coming, however, when all the world shall recognize the Truth, and will seek to worship before the Son of God at Jerusalem (Zech. 14:16).

VERSE 11

"I will even do according to thine anger"—This is expressive of the perfect justice that we may expect from God. The Lord Jesus Christ lays this down as a principle according to Matt. 7:2: "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Yahweh, through His saints (Ps. 149), will pour out judgments upon political Edom

such as "Edom" in the past has poured out upon both the people of natural and spiritual Israel. One of the greatest cities of political Edom has been Babylon the Great, and in the day when she shall be destroyed, there will be found in her "the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (Rev. 18:24).

"I will make myself known among them"—They will recognize the true character of Yahweh by the judgments that will be heaped upon flesh both nationally and individually.

VERSE 12

"I have heard all thy blasphemies"—A blasphemy is a lie against the Truth (Rev. 2:9). Thus everyone who has declared that the Jews shall not return to their land has been guilty of blasphemy; and everyone who has opposed the purpose of Yahweh in any way whatsoever has blasphemed against Him. Edom's boast against the mountains of Israel has been blasphemous.

"They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume"—This boast against Israel has been the attitude of the flesh as it has observed the desolate state of the land and people. It has seen in the reverses of the nation an occasion to extend its own power. In this it has grievously blasphemed, for it has not known the true purpose of Yahweh.

VERSE 13

"With your mouth ye have boasted against me"—The Gentiles have so spoken in relation to the Jewish people and the purpose of Yahweh as though God has not the power to make good His promises towards His people, or assert His right in Israel. Therefore, though men may not have appreciated this, they have actually boasted against Him. All the anti-semitic utterances of Gentiles have been a boast against the God of Israel. Tyre, as with other ancient nations, was punished because she boasted against Israel, and took pleasure in

the downfall of the holy nation (Ezek. 26:2).

All to Rejoice but Edom—Vv. 14-15

These verses bring the prophecy to a climax, and show that at the time when all the earth rejoices, Edom will be made desolate.

VERSE 14

"When the whole earth rejoices"—Historically, the fall of Babylon caused the whole world to rejoice (Isa. 14:7). Following that fall, Israel returned under Zerubbabel, and Edom was subsequently overthrown by the Maccabees. The terms of Isaiah (Ch. 14) clearly show that this is typical of the future. When Babylon the Great is overthrown, then Israel will be completely restored to their land and antitypical Edom, as a political force, will be no more. So, at a time when the whole earth rejoiceth, Edom will be made most desolate. It is obvious that Edom does not relate to the Arabs, because they, in common with all mankind, will rejoice at that time (Isa. 60:6-7).

VERSE 15

"As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee"—The purpose of God as regards antitypical Edom is expressed in the prophecy of Daniel. The prophet recorded: "I

beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Dan. 7:11). This describes the destruction of antitypical Edom, the flesh in political manifestation. In Ezekiel's prophecy Edom types the fourth Beast which is to be completely overthrown as foretold by Daniel. This is in contrast to "the rest of the beasts which have their lives prolonged" (7:12) i.e. they shall continue to the end of the millenium, though their dominion, or power is taken away.

"They shall know that I am Yahweh"—The name of Yahweh was proclaimed when Moses was sent to deliver the people of Israel from Egypt (Exod. 3:14). In its significance this very name guarantees the ultimate triumph of Israel because it is expressive of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When Edom is overthrown, and the purpose of Yahweh is manifest in all the earth; when the Lord Jesus Christ is ruling from Jerusalem and the law is going forth from Zion to a rejoicing earth, then the full significance of the Name of Yahweh will be recognized throughout the world. Men will behold in the destruction that shall have come upon political Edom, and in the glory that shall then be manifested in Israel both "the goodness and the severity of God" (Rom. 11:22).

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 35

The Characteristics of political Edom —

- * It manifests hatred towards Israel (V. 5);
- * It loves violence (V. 5);
- * It is noted for antisemitism (V. 10);
- * It is noted for its anger and envy (V. 11);
- * It utters blasphemy (V. 12);
- * It is arrogant (V. 13);
- * It rejoices at Israel's calamity (V. 15).

The Doom of political Edom —

- * It is to be made completely desolate (V. 3);
- * Its cities are to be overthrown (V. 4);
- * It is to be destroyed by violence and bloodshed (Vv. 6-8);
- * It will never be restored (V. 9);
- * It will be made desolate when all the earth rejoices (V. 14).

A Transformed Land

Chapter 36:1-15

The Levitical covenant (Lev. 26) warned that if the people did not properly observe the sabbath (and a true sabbath rest is a rest from the works of sin), Yahweh would scatter them among the nations, in order that "the land shall enjoy her sabbaths" (v. 34). This took place when Israel was dispersed among the Gentiles. The land has enjoyed its sabbath rest, as it has lain quiet over the centuries. But the time is at hand when it will again be stirred into full activity, to be transformed, and made the fertile abiding place of a transformed and regenerated nation.

This section of Ezekiel's prophecy speaks of this. It shows that the Gentiles are to be ejected from the land (Ch. 36:1-7), after which it will yield its fruit (vv. 9-15).

The promise of this rejuvenation of the land is in striking contrast with the punishment pronounced in Ezekiel 6. There a prophecy is recorded against the land of Israel because of the evil abominations that the people committed therein, in consequence of which it would be made quite desolate (vv. 1-6). But here Ezekiel predicts its restoration in order to provide the foundation of life for Israel in the Kingdom. For as the Kingdom of God in the past was established upon a rural basis (Lev. 25), so it will be in the future (Micah 4:4). Divine Law, the Land, and the Family will form the nucleus of the new order for mortals, to be set up by Christ. This will correct the worst ills of modern life, for they stem from three sources: alienation of man from God, from the soil, and the modern disruption of family life. The artificial conditions of city life are largely responsible for this, and those who would serve God should take heed of this fact, that they might avoid its worst influences as much as possible. The Kingdom will drastically change these conditions.

It is significant that man's very name (Adam) illustrates his need. Adam means "earth" (Heb. adamah), and all his sustenance comes from the earth. A rural life, enlivened by Divine worship and stimulated by the mental exercise of the Word, is the best type of existence possible under present conditions. But the further that man has drifted from this, the more completely has he become severed from God. It is not without significance that Cain, after he had been driven from the presence of God through disobedience, went and built a city (Gen. 4).

In order to provide a sound basis for the re-establishment of the Kingdom of God in Israel, the land will first be cleansed

of Gentile influence, and then made fertile as a fit habitation for the people. Armageddon will accomplish the first; and the great earthquake at Christ's return supplemented by ample rainfall that will be then provided, will result in the second. Thus the land will be transformed in preparation for the people.

The Gentiles To Be Ejected—Vv 1-7

In order to thoroughly cleanse and prepare the land, the Gentiles will be ejected therefrom. This will be effected by the victory of Armageddon outlined in Ch. 38.

VERSE 1

"Prophecy unto the mountains of Israel"—Contrast the prediction of this chapter with that proclaimed against Mt. Seir in Chapter 35, or that spoken against the "mountains of Israel" in Chapter 6. Whereas Ezekiel 6 proclaims impending desolation of the land, this chapter speaks of its restoration to its former glory and fertility. In that day, figuratively as well as literally, the mountain of the house of Yahweh will be established above the surrounding mountains (Isa. 2:2).

VERSE 2

"Because the enemy hath said against you"—The ground of Yahweh's indictment against the Gentiles is their boastful jubilation against Israel in dispersion. Nobody can touch the people of God with impunity, and even though Gentiles might be used by Him as the medium of Divine punishment against Israel, their real motives are only to advance their own aggrandisement, and because of that they are punished (see Isa. 10:5-15).

"The ancient high places are ours"—The "high places" were used by Israel for false worship, and are today claimed by the Gentiles as their own. The fact that these ancient places of false worship are specifically referred to is a hint as to the cause of Israel's calamity: because of the use to which they were put. Their modern counterpart are the so-called "holy

places" in the land which the Gentiles (and particularly the Greek and Roman Catholics) claim as their own. In this way the anti-typical Idumeans have stretched forth their hands to grasp Israel's inheritance, and have defiled the land by so doing.

VERSE 3

"Because they made you desolate"—It is the land which has been made desolate, and therefore these words are addressed to it. Gentile occupation of it has brought this state about. Daniel refers to the Gentiles as "desolators" (Dan. 9:26).

"Ye are taken up in the lips of talkers"—The Gentiles have mocked and derided both the land and people of Israel, as Moses predicted they would under such conditions (Deut. 29:24-29).

VERSE 5

"In the fire of My jealousy"—The fire of Yahweh's jealousy is the heat of His anger. The same word is translated "zeal." The desecration of the holy land and people is hateful to Yahweh, even though the wickedness of the latter demands such punishment. The motives of the Gentiles in oppressing Israel, however, are not to fulfil the Divine purpose, but extend their own power, and for this they will be punished in the "fire of Yahweh's jealousy." His zeal shall be extended to preserve the remnant (Isa. 37:32), will cause Him to arm His warrior (Isa. 59:17), to fight against the nations (Isa. 42:13; Zech. 8:2), to gather them for judgment (Zeph. 3:8), and ultimately to restore the throne of David in glory (Isa. 9:7).

"I have spoken against the resi-

due of the heathen"—The residue of the heathen refers to those who will refuse to heed the appeal of Christ to submit to him after Gog has been destroyed (Isa. 60:12). The term "residue" is used because not all of mankind will be in this category, for some will see the light and submit (Ps. 68:31-32; Dan. 7:12). Tarshish will be among the first to do so (Isa. 60:9).

"Against all Idumea"—The residue of the heathen is compared with all Idumea which is to be completely destroyed. Idumea is Edom, and as Ezekiel has already shown in Ch. 35, the Edomites figuratively represent the flesh in political manifestation. This, like Edom in the past, will be completely overthrown (Ch. 35:14). Thus, whereas the "residue of the nations" is warned, the complete destruction of "all Idumea" is pronounced. The Gogian Confederacy, or latter-day manifestation of the Fourth Beast, is the antitypical Edom in belligerent manifestation. It is to be completely overthrown.

"Have appointed My land... with despiteful minds"—The Hebrew word *sheat*, here rendered "despiteful" signifies "contemptuous." The RV renders the phrase: "despite of soul." The word is expressive of minds that are so poverty-stricken as to be incapable of an enriching thought, minds, so absolutely destitute of the influence of Divine truth, as to manifest an utter contempt of what God has promised. Such minds see in the land and people of Israel only an impoverished country and a scattered people, and in their contempt would destroy those whom they detest. The cause of such an attitude has been expressed by Micah as: "They know not the thoughts of Yahweh, neither understand they His counsel" (Mic. 4:12).

VERSE 6

"Ye have borne the shame of the heathen"—See Ch. 34:29.

VERSE 7

"I have lifted up Mine hand"—

This was the gesture made when swearing an oath. Yahweh has sworn two such oaths in relation to promises He has made, and these guarantee the future prosperity of both the land and people of Israel. The first was the oath confirming the promise made to Abraham (Gen. 22:16); the second was the oath made to David (Ps. 132:11). Both the Abrahamic and Davidic promises include the future of Israel. Abraham was told: "I will make of thee a great nation" (Gen. 12:2); David was told that the nation would be established in "a place of its own" and "move no more" (2 Sam. 7:10). Both covenants were confirmed by oaths, so that Paul adds: "By two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Heb. 6:18). Salvation itself is bound up with the redemption of Israel (John 4:22), and those brought within the bonds of the covenant are constituted the true "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). As such, their patriotism is for Israel, and they rejoice in its hope (Acts 28:20).

"The heathen shall bear their shame"—The Gentiles will bear their shame in the sense that they will suffer the just punishment of Yahweh. All the pomp and power of their might will be reduced to nothing before Him, whilst that which is today despised by them (the truth, Israel, the land) will be elevated to true greatness.

The Land Will Yield Its Fruit—Vv. 7-15

Having cleansed the land of Gentile pollution, it will begin to flourish. This is to be a Divine work, and not to be confused with the present efforts of the Jews to rehabilitate the land. It will be Yahweh Who will cause it to really blossom and bring forth fruit; not flesh, whether Jew or Gentile.

VERSE 8

"Ye shall shoot forth your branches"—The Divine blessing on the land will cause great fertility, so that growth will be quickly apparent.

"To My people of Israel"—Such a declaration reveals the status to be enjoyed by the people of Israel. They are Yahweh's people even now, but will be more so in the future when they are humbled and restored. Those in the land at Christ's coming will suffer much from the depredations of Gog (see Zech. 13:8-9), but the remnant will be saved to rejoice in their Messiah when he reveals himself to them (Zech. 13:6; 12:7-14). Politically, they are accounted as Judah, whilst those scattered abroad are treated as Israel, Ephraim or Joseph (Zech. 9:13; 10:6-7; Ezek. 37:16). Both those in the land, as well as those scattered abroad are to be restored to fellowship with God through the new covenant that He will make with them (Jer. 31:31-38; Rom. 11:23). When that takes place, the division that was brought into existence at the time of Rehoboam and Jeroboam will be healed, and the twelve tribes will enjoy the full status of "my people of Israel" (see Hos. 1:10).

"For they are at hand to come"—As the full restoration of all the tribes of Israel will be brought about after the destruction of Gog (Ezek. 39:25-26), the whole land is to be made ready to receive them. Elijah will be deputed to this work, and will organise the return of Israel to the land in successive migrations (Jer. 3:14).

VERSE 9

"Ye shall be tilled and sown"—The land has been tilled and sown in the past, but not very successfully. The context of this passage, however, implies that it will be done with the greatest success for "I am for you," saith Yahweh. The produce of this fertile country will be used to supply food

for those pilgrims who will enter the land during the millenium to worship at Jerusalem (Ezek. 48:18-19). They will be accommodated at the city called *Yahweh Shammah* prior to ascending to the Temple city of Jerusalem for worship (Ezek. 48:35), and the twelve tribes in turn will supply it with provisions (v. 19).

VERSE 10

"All the house of Israel, even all of it"—This double emphasis shows that all the twelve tribes will be restored to the land (Ezek. 37:21-22). Paul confirmed this by teaching that "all Israel (i.e. all the tribes) shall be saved" (Rom. 11:23).

VERSE 11

"I will settle you after your old estates"—Israel is to be restored "as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11. See also Ezek. 16:55; Rom. 11:26), so that the golden age of Israel's history (the epoch of David and Solomon) becomes a type of the restored Kingdom of God in the future.

"Will do better unto you than at your beginnings"—Under Messiah's reign they will enjoy a greater measure of prosperity than they enjoyed in the past.

VERSE 12

"Thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men"—The faithless spies who were sent by Moses to survey the Land of Promise, returned with a scandal against it, for they declared that though the Land was most desirable, the people would be destroyed in trying to conquer it (Num. 13:32), and therefore the land would "bereave them of children" (RV). This complaint, which would have proved wrong in a faithful community, actually proved true in the case of Israel (see Jer. 15:7), because of the faithlessness of the people. Therefore, Ezekiel's declaration that the land will no more bereave the nation of men, must be

made on the basis that the people, once restored under Messiah, will prove faithful (see vv. 25-28).

VERSE 13

"Thou land hast bereaved thy nations"—The RSV renders this: "You bereave your nation of children." If, however, the AV is to be retained, the nations in question comprise the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel (see Ch. 37:22). After the restoration this reproach will no longer be heard, for the twelve tribes will be completely united together, and will find true fellowship with Yahweh, in the new covenant that He will make with the nation.

VERSE 15

"The shame of the heathen"—The RSV renders this as "the reproach" of the nations (cp. v. 6). The expression of that reproach is stated in Deut. 29:24-29; Lam. 2:15-16.

"The reproach of the people"—The RSV renders this: "The disgrace of the peoples." The word *'ammin*, peoples, is normally used of Gentiles; and the disgrace that Israel has suffered in the eyes of such is that the latter have been able to conquer their land, even though Israel has claimed to have been under Divine protection. Consider the words of Nehemiah in Ch. 2:17.

"I WILL SETTLE YOU AFTER YOUR OLD ESTATES"

(Notice how the past patterns the future.)

Past	Future
Jerusalem: the Throne of Yahweh (1 Chron. 29:23)	Jer. 3:17
One king over a united nation (1 Kings 4:20)	Ezek. 37:22
Israel a multitudinous, powerful nation (1 Kings 4:20)	Mic. 4:7
Israel the chief among nations (1 Kings 4:21)	Mic. 4:8
Gentile wealth flowing to Jerusalem (2 Chr. 9:23-24)	Isa. 60:11
A greatly fertile land (1 Kings 4:22-28)	Isa. 35:1-2
The nations under submission to Israel (1 Kings 4:21)	Ps. 72:8
Israel secure and at peace (1 Kings 4:25)	Ezek. 34:28
Jerusalem the centre of wisdom (1 Kings 4:34)	Isa. 2:2-4
Jerusalem the centre of worship (2 Chr. 9:23)	Zech. 14:16
A Temple erected under royal supervision (1 Kings 6)	Zech. 6:13
The Temple plans supplied by God (1 Chr. 28:11-19)	Ezek. 40
The work assisted by Gentile labour (2 Chr. 2:2, 17)	Isa. 60:10, 13
Zadok the high priest officiates (1 Kings 1:34)	Heb. 7:11-12
Tremendous building activity (1 Kings 9)	Isa. 65:21-22
Satan bound (1 Kings 5:4)	Rev. 20:2
Israel a blessing in the land (2 Chr. 9:26)	Isa. 19:25
The king noted for piercing, unerring judgment (1 Kings 4:29)	Isa. 11:3
Priests figuratively immortal (Ps. 134)	Rev. 5:9-10

A Transformed People

(Ezekiel 36:16-38)

The land having been rejuvenated, and showing every sign of fertility, all will be ready for the restoration of the people. They will enter the land after the destruction of Gog (Ezek. 39:25-26), though the invitation for them to do so will go forth before that time. Before the "great and dreadful day of Yahweh come" (cp. Mal. 4:5 with Zech. 14:1), Elijah and his associates (like the school of the prophets he established in the past) will be sent forth to the people of Israel in dispersion to inform them that the Messiah has returned (Mal. 4:5). His mission will commence as the Middle East will be involved in battle. Like Moses of old, he will doubtless be able to authenticate his message with God-given signs which will establish his identity; and he will appeal to the people along the terms of the message contained in Jeremiah 3:12-4:2 (notice the appeal and response in these verses). Elijah's exhortation will bring home to the people a realisation of their past blindness and folly, will cause them to "sorrow for the burden of the king of princes" (Hos. 8:10), and will bring about a state of mind that will cause them to "be willing" to respond to the Divine invitation (Ps. 110:3). But their efforts to return to the Land (then involved in war) will be hindered by some Gentile nations (Isa. 43:6), in consequence of which they will have to fight their way back (Ezek. 20:33-38). Doubtless the determined attempt of Jews in Europe to make their way back to the Land of Israel will be misinterpreted as a fifth-column movement designed to assist the Jewish people in the land against Gog. Other nations will assist them back; the English-speaking world being foremost in that regard (Zeph. 3-10 RV; Isa. 18; 60:9). God will be with those who must fight their way back, and mighty deeds that will astonish the nations will be manifested by them in their efforts to return. A period of forty years will be occupied in the complete restoration (Mic. 7:14-17), and from Jer. 3:14-16 it seems that they will return in comparatively small migrations.

The returning exiles will enter the land from two directions: either across the Euphrates in the north, or the Red Sea in the south, but in either case, they will be compelled to "go through the water" (Isa. 11:11, 16; 27:12-13; Zech. 10:11). They will thus re-enact, either Abraham's journey into the land across the Euphrates; or the exodus of Israel from Egypt. During the period of probation, as they are fighting their way out of the countries of their dispersion, the rebels will be purged out of the nation, and will not be permitted to enter the land (Ezek. 20:38). A new covenant will be made with the remainder (Jer.

EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES OF THE RESTORATION

31:31-38; Rom. 11:23). They will be baptised into Christ (Mic. 7:19), and will be settled in the land as twelve tribes, to each of which will be granted a new division or cantonment of the land (Ezek. 48). Each tribe will have its individual ruler subject to the Lord Jesus, and these positions of authority will be assumed by the Apostles (Matt. 19:28).

After Elijah has been sent forth upon his mission, the Lord Jesus Christ, in company with the glorified saints, will emerge from Sinai (Deut. 33:2; Hab. 3:1; Ps. 68:7,8,17), against a world at war. The Arab nations will be first disciplined (Hab. 3:7; Isa. 21:13-15; 60:6); then the occupying force that Gog will leave in Egypt as he will move north to besiege Jerusalem will be overthrown by Christ's forces (Isa. 19), and then the nations gathered together for war at Jerusalem will be overwhelmed. Christ will then reveal himself to the Jews in the land (Zech. 13:6; 12:9-14), thus "saving the tents of Judah first" (Zech. 12:7).

With the overthrow of Gog, and the cleansing of the Land of Promise, the work of the true restoration (Acts 3:21) of the people of Israel will take place. All the tribes will ultimately be restored, fulfilling the words of Paul that "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26). The flourishing land will then be occupied by a regenerated and flourishing people.

Israel Defiled The Land In The Past—Vv. 16-20

The prophet reveals that all the sufferings of the people have stemmed from their own folly, and that the land has been considered as "defiled" in consequence (Lev. 19:24-30).

VERSE 17

"They defiled it" — Under the Mosaic Law, ceremonial defilement was contracted by contact with any defiling influences. For example, a person touching a dead body was considered "defiled" thereby, and had to go through a ritual of purification. This taught the basic truth that moral defilement is easily contracted, and also emphasised the fact that the mortality and sinfulness of man (which developed out of disobedience to God in the first instance) quickly manifests itself in acts of wickedness. The people of Israel had been warned when they entered the land that it was

considered defiled because of the evil deeds of its original inhabitants. For that reason, the Canaanites were to be driven therefrom (see Lev. 18:24-30), and from this the Israelites should have recognised the need to keep themselves pure lest a similar state befall them. But instead, they followed the ungodly ways of the Canaanites. "They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works, and served their idols" (Ps. 106:35-36), and as a result "the land became polluted with blood." To this day, Israel remains blind to the real cause of their suffering and dispersion, but the time is coming when they will recognise the truth. They will "loathe themselves for what they have done" (Ezek. 20:43). It will be part of the work of Elijah to bring this home to them. Meanwhile, the state of Israel over the centuries testifies to the manner in which flesh can be blind to its own folly. They were destroyed "through lack of knowledge" (Hos.

4:6). How important it is that we recognise our failings and try to correct them before it is too late.

"Their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman"

—Until a woman in such a state was ceremoniously cleansed, she was excluded from worship at the Tabernacle or Temple, for contact with her made others unclean (Lev. 15:19). Yahweh presses this thought home to Israel because, figuratively, she was as His bride (Isa. 54:5) who, because of her state, was excluded from Divine worship.

VERSE 19

"I scattered them . . . according to their way"—The path, or way, along which Israel elected to walk was that which "seemed right in their eyes" but was the "way of death" (Prov. 14:12). This was a corruption of God's way (Gen. 6:12), and of that way along which Moses desired to walk (Exod. 33:13). In the New Testament, God's way is described as "the way" (Acts 9:2; 16:17; 18:25; 19:9,23; 22:4). It is that which Christ described as the "narrow way" leading to the Kingdom of God. From this Israel had strayed, and in consequence was driven from the land. In that case, the punishment fitted the crime.

VERSE 20

"They profaned My holy name"

—The holy name is that of Yahweh. This was named upon Israel (Num. 6:27), constituting them a "people for the name" (Acts 15:14). As the people of the Name, their actions either honored or dishonored it, according to how they manifested the attributes of it (see Exod. 34:6-7). If their ways were inconsistent with the principles of this family name named upon them, they would disgrace or profane it, for Scripture clearly shows that the Name is taken in vain when the people of the Name, act inconsistently with its principles (see Prov. 30:9; Amos 2:7).

Thus Nathan told David that his action gave cause for "the enemies of Yahweh to blaspheme" (2 Sam. 12:14). This is the manner in which the Name of Yahweh is profaned, or "taken in vain," and not by pronouncing it with understanding. The Jews, with superstitious dread, will not utter the Name, but they nonetheless profane it through their actions. How easy, therefore, is it for believers to profane the name, and thus give cause for "the enemies of Yahweh to blaspheme." Ezekiel shows that the Name was profaned by Israel inasmuch as their actions caused Gentiles to say: "These are the people of Yahweh, and are gone forth out of His land." Their inconsistent actions had brought reproach on the name they bore. As the Ecclesia today constitutes the people of the Name (Acts 15:14), its members can likewise "profane the Name" by acting inconsistently with it, and so causing a reproach to fall upon Yahweh Who has called them to His purpose and His family name.

Yahweh Will Vindicate His Profaned Name—Vv. 21-24

The purpose incorporated in the Divine name makes certain its fulfilment despite the inconsistency of Israel, and Yahweh will move to establish it, and thus vindicate His holy name.

VERSE 21

"I had pity for Mine holy name"

—Gesenius translated: "I will be sparing of My holy Name," i.e. I will care for its honour. How will He do this? By bringing to pass that which it proclaims. The name is prophetic in its meaning, proclaiming the intention of Yahweh to manifest Himself in a multitude of Israelites. When those after the flesh failed, He turned to the Gentiles, calling out from among their number, a people for His name, who constitute true Israelites (Eph. 2:11-13; Rev. 2:9). The Divine Name is holy, and the greatest

care needs to be exercised in regard to it. Those who delight in the Name of Yahweh should not be condemned because of their intelligent use of it; on the other hand, it should not be made a bone of ungodly contention. Yahweh Himself will vindicate it in due time. Meanwhile, we can but heed what the Scriptures say in regard to it. Malachi taught that Yahweh looks with pleasure upon those who "think upon it" (Mal. 3:16). Jesus, in his prayer, declared that he had both manifested and declared it (John 17:6,26), and asked that his followers might be kept within its power (John 17:11). He taught his disciples to pray: "Hallowed be Thy name," and as Yahweh is the only Name of God, he must have had that holy Name in mind. All other "names" such as "Lord," "God," "Father," "El Shaddai" and so forth, are mere appellations. Isaiah declared: "the desire of our soul is to Thy memorial Name" (Isa. 26:8 see RSV). It is also described as a strong tower of defence (Prov. 18:10), a protection (Ps. 124:8), a heritage (Ps. 61:5,8; 69:36), a source of confidence (Ps. 9:10), a means of elevation (Ps. 91:14). It is a Name never to be despised (Mal. 1:6), but one to be exalted (Ps. 34:3-4), extolled (Ps. 68:4), remembered (Ps. 20:7; 45:17), feared (Ps. 86:11, 12), praised (Ps. 113:1-3; 145:1-2), loved (Ps. 119:132; Isa. 56:6), blessed (Ps. 96:2, 100:4), understood (Isa. 52:6), published (Deut. 32:3; Exod. 9:16; Isa. 12:4), sung about (Ps. 61:8; 66:2-4), expressed in prayer (Ps. 140:13; 116:4; 80:18).

Israel despised the Name and profaned it, and the nation suffered in consequence. The Ecclesia today needs to learn the lesson of Israel's mistake, and enter into the spirit of the Psalmist's exhortation: "Extol Him by His name of Yah" (Ps. 68:4).

VERSE 22

"I do not this for your sakes"—Israel will not be restored on the grounds of personal merit, but

because of the covenants of promise that are incorporated in the Name of Yahweh. All would acknowledge that Yahweh would be within his just rights to destroy the nation that has so completely rejected His way and crucified His son, but instead of doing so, He has preserved the nation. Why? Not because Jews are any better than Gentiles, but because of the Name that pronounces great mercy and forgiveness of sin, whilst upholding the honor of His majesty (Exod. 34:6-7). What a privilege, therefore, to have such a Name named upon one (cf. 1 Thess. 1:1). The Lord declared: "To him that overcometh . . . I will name upon him the name of my God" (Rev. 3:12). At the beginning, Israel was chosen for the fathers' sakes, and not because of personal greatness (Deut. 4:37; 7:7-8), and they will be restored for the same reason (Rom. 11:28). They were called out of Egypt to glorify the Father's Name (Deut. 28:9-11), and will be restored to the land for the same purpose (Jer. 33:9). The restoration of Israel in spite of all that the people have done is a token of Divine love and forgiveness, and also an assurance that absolute reliance can be placed upon all such Divine promises as are incorporated in the Name.

"For Mine holy name's sake"

—The Name of Yahweh guarantees the promises made to the fathers of the Jewish race (Deut. 9:5); it proclaims His power (Ps. 106:8), mercy (Isa. 43:25), and glory (Isa. 48:11). It has been the enemies of Yahweh who have reproached and blasphemed the Name, and this has been distressful to His true sons (Ps. 74:10). Israel will be restored on the merits of the Name, and because of it, great mercy will be extended to the people (Isa. 54:1-10). As a result of this they will become a blessing instead of a curse among the nations (Zech. 8:13).

"Ye have profaned among the heathen"—Israel has profaned the name of Yahweh, yet through

superstitious awe the people will not pronounce it. Surely this shows that profanation is not caused through an intelligent use of the Name, but rather by acting inconsistently with it.

VERSE 23

"I will sanctify My great Name"—He will do this by redeeming Israel and thus fulfilling the promise inherent in the name (see Ezek. 20:41-44), and by correctly revealing its principles in the Son of His love who will be set up as King in all the earth.

"When I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes"—To be sanctified is to be "set apart" as unique before all flesh. Yahweh's name will be vindicated in the deliverance that He will accomplish in Israel, and as all mankind will witness this, so He will be sanctified before the eyes of all nations. Jeremiah 33:9 declares that the deliverance and conversion of Israel "will be unto Him a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all the nations of the earth which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it." As a result, the nations "will take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8:23). Thus the whole world will be brought to acknowledge the righteousness of God, through His goodness towards Israel.

VERSE 24

"I will take you from among the heathen"—Verses 24, 25 and 26 reveal the successive stages by which Israel will be restored. They can be summarised as: (1)—An invitation: "I will take"; (2)—A separation: "Ye shall be clean"; (3)—A dedication: "A new heart." These are the same three stages by which God is today "taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name" (Acts 15:14). "God is calling" implies Invitation; "out of"

demands Separation; "for His name" requires Dedication.

As far as Israel is concerned, the first step is the invitation which Elijah will take to them. Their future restoration will be a repetition of the first when they were called out of Egypt by Moses, and the Name was first pronounced upon them (See Jer. 16:14-15).

The People To Be Cleansed From Iniquity—Vv. 25-32

No restoration will be possible without the people acknowledging the Truth. "They will be grafted in if they abide not still in unbelief" (Rom. 11). It will be this understanding that will truly cleanse their hearts, and make them amenable to the Divine will. The prophet illustrates this by the use of figurative speech taken from the ordinances of the Law relating to the ceremonial cleansing of a people defiled by sin.

VERSE 25

"I will sprinkle clean water upon you"—Having accepted the invitation issued to them, separation next follows. Under the Law, the "water of separation" was sprinkled upon a person to be cleansed from defilement caused by contact with death (Num. 19:17-19). It was also used upon the Levites at their consecration (Num. 8:7, 21), and upon the whole of the people when separated unto Yahweh (Heb. 9:19). All three occasions have an application in the cleansing of Israel in the age to come. Firstly, the people must be cleansed from defilement from the guilt of the death of Jesus; next, they must be separated unto Yahweh; thirdly, they must be consecrated as a priestly nation.

Zechariah likewise speaks of this figurative water of separation being used to cleanse them (Zech. 13:1), but what does it actually mean? It is a symbol relating to the cleansing influence of the Word of God. Jesus represented the truth he offered unto mankind as a well of water leading to life eternal (John

4:10-14; John 7:37-39). It was the influence of this word to which David made reference when he declared: "Wherewithall shall a young man cleanse his ways? By taking heed according to Thy word" (Psalm 119:9). When the realisation of his great sin was brought home to him, he declared in prayer to Yahweh: "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Ps. 51:6-7). It is only the dynamics or power of the truth that can separate us, cleanse us, and ultimately elevate us to priesthood in the Age to come (Rev. 5:9-10). But whereas the saints will be immortal priests, Israel after the flesh will only be mortal priests (Ezek. 44:10-11).

"Ye shall be clean"—Hebr. *taher* = "to be bright", i.e. to be pure or holy, an object of emulation.

"From all your filthiness"—Hebr. *tum'ah*, signifies "impurity", and according to Dr. Strong especially religious impurity. It therefore speaks of ceremonial uncleanness; an uncleanness indicative of their moral state, but particularly brought about by false and impure worship.

"Your idols"—Hebr. *gillul*, rendered by the *Companion Bible* as "filthy idols", with impure sexual implications. This word is used 39 times by Ezekiel, perhaps because of the immoral Babylonian environment of the people of the captivity.

VERSE 26

"A new heart also will I give you"—This is the third step in the regeneration of the people, and refers to their dedication. Yahweh is represented as giving them this heart. He does this inasmuch as He will provide them with the means whereby it can be created (see Ps. 51:10). Similar prophecies to this end are contained in Ezekiel 11:19 and Ch. 18:31. The people are there reminded that they must co-operate with God in an effort to obey His will in order that this new heart might be created. Whilst Yahweh provides the means, they

must use them to effect the reformation. Jeremiah declares that Yahweh will "put His law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (Jer. 31:33), but for this to be done, the people must make their hearts amenable to His influence.

"A new spirit will I put within you"—The term "spirit" is frequently used in Scripture to denote the power of divine teaching that has been delivered through the holy Spirit. Nehemiah declared: "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them" (Neh. 9:20) which is doubtless a reference to the Law. Isaiah declares on behalf of Yahweh: "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring" (Isa. 44:3) which is a reference to the outpouring of the Truth in the age to come (see also Joel 2:23). In John 6:63 the Lord Jesus declares that the words that he spake were spirit. They constituted spirit for two reasons: Firstly, they were given by the power of the Holy Spirit; and secondly, they were words charged with power, and capable of transforming the lives of those who embraced the ideas expressed in them. By that means they became spirit words. Paul declared that "the sword of the spirit is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). John taught that the spirit "is the truth" (1 John 5:6). All these expressions show that "spirit" and the power of Divine truth understood are synonymous terms. In his epistle to the Galatians, Paul makes reference to believers being "led by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:18), by which he means that they were led by the power of the teaching of the Truth. This is the "new spirit" that God will put within the hearts of the Jewish people. He will not pour out upon them the power of the Holy Spirit and so transform them by its influence, but will accomplish this through the regenerating efficacy of the Word of Truth.

"I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh"—

Throughout the centuries Israel has manifested a hardened heart (Rom. 11:7 marg.). This, however, will be changed. It was when the people were subjected to terrible hardship in Egypt that they turned to Him, beseeching His help (Exod. 2:23-24). In like manner, the coming "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7), will cause the people to recognise their need of Yahweh, and therefore will soften their hearts towards Him. Their hearts thus having been made pliable, He will be able to enscribe upon them the influence of the Truth that He will then cause to be presented to them. In 2 Cor. 3:3 the apostle Paul contrasts a softened heart with "tables of stone". He declared that the ecclesia constituted "the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God", upon the fleshy tables of the heart. Paul's expressions here are doubtless derived from such Old Testament prophecies as that before us, and illustrate what is meant when Yahweh says: "A new spirit will I put within you, and I will give you a heart of flesh."

In this verse Yahweh declares that He will remove the old stony heart which had remained impervious to all appeals (Zech. 7:12), and would replace the heart of Israel with one that is able to "know" Him (Jer. 24:7). This change will be brought about by the influence of the Spirit Word, transforming the people of Israel, and bringing about a moral and spiritual change that will reflect to the glory of their Creator.

VERSE 27

"I will cause you to walk in my statutes"—To obey the Divine statutes is a necessary condition for true prosperity. Moses promised Israel a fertile land, a prosperous nation, and security if the people would do this (See Lev. 25:18-19; 26:3).

VERSE 28

"Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God"—This is the

covenant relationship which Yahweh promised He would establish with Israel if the people proved obedient (Lev. 26:9, 12). Ezekiel's statement here signifies that that which was set forth before Israel as an ideal under the Mosaic covenant will be fulfilled under this new covenant which will be affected in the age to come.

VERSE 29

"I will also save you from all your uncleanness"—Yahweh now promises them a Savior who will make possible the forgiveness of their sins. This will be fulfilled through the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:21), who will fulfil the prophetic promise contained in Rom. 11:26 that "there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob".

The word "also" in this verse indicates a continuance of the saving grace promised according to V. 25. In other words, forgiveness of sins will be available to individuals through redemption in Christ Jesus, as well as to the nation as a whole.

VERSE 30

"Ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen"—In Deut. 29:22-28 Moses warned the people that if they proved disobedient they would be driven from the land which would be brought under a curse, causing the nations to thereby reproach Israel "because they have forsaken the covenant of Yahweh." This reproach of famine among the heathen shall cease when Israel again turns unto Yahweh.

VERSE 31

"Shall lothe yourselves"—The statement of this verse constitutes a refrain that is found throughout Ezekiel's prophecies (See. Ch. 6:9; 20:43). The state of mind suggested, will be brought about when the people recognize their folly, and acknowledge the goodness of Yahweh towards them. They shall loathe themselves in their own sight.

There will be manifested a mixture of sorrowful repentance towards Yahweh, indignation against themselves, and abhorrence for the offences they have committed. As they with understanding review the past and consider the then present they will realise that all the hardships to which they have been subjected were brought upon them in complete justice and for their good (Ch. 14:22-23).

This also, will be the experience of all those "called to be saints" who shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

VERSE 32

"Not for your sakes do I this"—This, again, is a refrain frequently used by Ezekiel to impress upon the people that there is no personal merit in Israel to warrant the salvation that shall be extended towards them. (See notes on V. 22.)

Israel established in the land as the holy flock—Vv. 33-38

In this section of the prophecy, Yahweh shows the cumulative effect of Him thus restoring and cleansing the people of Israel. They are to become a dedicated people, given over entirely to His work.

VERSE 35

"They shall say"—The effect of Israel's restored prosperity will cause surrounding nations to recognize the purpose of Yahweh in the nation, and thus the Hope of Israel. As Jeremiah 33:9 likewise points out, this will have the effect of drawing the Gentiles to more closely consider the goodness of Yahweh, and to acknowledge His saving grace.

"This land . . . is become like the garden of Eden"—For the reverse picture see Joel 2:3. In the Septuagint the word "garden" is rendered as "paradise" (See also Isa. 51:3). Such prophecies, doubtless, were the basis of the Lord's promise to the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43). In Isa 58:10-11 this

figure of speech is used to describe the future state of the people of Israel, so that the land will reflect the spiritual qualities of the nation of Israel in the age to come.

"The ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited"—There will be no need for conventional fortifications in the age to come. In what way, then, will the cities be fenced and fortified? The answer is: by Yahweh's protection (see Zech. 2:5). Meanwhile Israel is a "land of unwalled villages" (Ezek. 38:11).

VERSE 36

"The heathen that are left"—i.e. those who are left after the national judgments of Armageddon and its aftermath (see Zech. 14:16).

"Shall know"—They shall see in the restored nation, and in the grace of Yahweh that is extended to it, the fact that this restoration is a Divine work and not one that stems merely from human ingenuity or strength (see Jer. 33:9).

"I Yahweh build the ruined places"—It is not generally recognised, that the partial restoration of Israel at present being effected in the land, is a Divine work, but when the restoration of Israel in the age to come is brought about, it will be acknowledged by all beyond all doubt.

"I Yahweh have spoken it, and I will do it"—Yahweh's word is power and will accomplish what it proclaims (Isa. 55:11). That is the difference between the declarations of God and those of flesh (cp. James 4:15).

VERSE 37

"I will yet for this be enquired of"—This statement implies that Yahweh will favourably accept the request to be made. (Compare with the language of Ezek. 14:3 where He refuses to be enquired of by Israel). The fact that He uses this language implies a restoration to favour of the people of God.

"I will increase them with men like a flock"—This is a repetition of thought expressed in Ch. 34:23 where the Good Shepherd is represented as presiding over the Israel flock. Zech. 10:8 declares that this shepherd will lead them back to the land, and in that way the nation will be "increased with men like a flock". The expression suggests that they shall willingly follow the shepherd back to the land.

VERSE 38

"As the holy flock"—The margin renders: "As the flock of holy things"; The *Companion Bible* renders: "The flock of holy offerings". Isaiah declares that some of the nations shall assist the Jewish people to return back to their homeland as an offering unto Yahweh (Isa. 18:7; 66:20). In that same sense they will be a flock of holy offerings presented as voluntary tribute by the Gentiles to the Lord Jesus Christ. Zechariah declares that Yahweh "shall save them in that day as the flock of his people" (Ch. 9:16), and shows that they are to

be a people exclusively given over to the divine worship and service in the age to come (Ch. 14:20-21).

"As the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts"—Flocks that entered Jerusalem in the days of solemn feasts were dedicated as offerings for the divine service. The phrase is here expressive of the spiritual state of the nation in the age to come. Israel will comprise a completely dedicated people wholly absorbed in the service of Yahweh. The term "solemn feasts" literally signifies "appointed seasons for meeting" with Yahweh, and has particular reference to the three main feasts which were "set times" of meeting for the people with Yahweh. This verse, therefore, teaches: 1) Israel will be greatly multiplied in the land; 2) they will constitute a dedicated people attending to the needs of divine worship; 3) they will form the meeting place between God and man. In other words, as Ezekiel shows in his great Temple prophecy, transformed and regenerated Israel will constitute the medium between all other nations and Yahweh.

RESTORATION A WORK OF TIME

The restoration of the Jews is a work of time and will require many years to accomplish. God has said: "I will save the tents of Judah first" (Zech. 12:7), and the context shows that those in the land, at the advent of the Lord, are treated as Judah. Following their redemption, the ten tribes scattered abroad will be subsequently received back home. Though Elijah will be sent forth before the battle of Armageddon to invite them to return (Malachi 4:5), the Jews before whom he will appear, will not arrive back in the land until after it has been cleared of the enemy. Once in the land, and separated into their various tribes, the Kingdom will again be restored to Israel (Acts 1:3,6), and the nation will constitute the chief dominion in the world empire of Christ (Micah 4:8).

See *Elpis Israel*, part iii.

A Transformed Nation

(Ezekiel 37)

The previous chapter reveals that the Land and People of Israel are to be transformed and regenerated; this chapter shows how it will be brought about as far as the nation is concerned: by a tremendous political earthquake!

The prophet was transported by the Spirit to a great valley which was "full of bones". Here he had the amazing experience of witnessing the resurrection. First, he was called upon to walk around the valley and to observe the condition of the bones. And then, at the bidding of the angel, he was called upon to pronounce that these bones would live.

Ezekiel then heard a great noise which was accompanied by a tremendous shaking. Suddenly bone leapt to its fellow bone, until skeletons were formed, sinews appeared to tie the bones together, and flesh covered them until now it was a valley of dead bodies. But could such bodies live? The four winds of heaven were called upon to breathe upon the dead that they might do so; and in response, life entered into the bodies, and as living men they stood upon their feet, a great army.

It must have been a most awe-inspiring experience for Ezekiel, even though it was but a vision. He had, in fact, witnessed the resurrection as a type of the nation of Israel that will ultimately be caused to be raised from its national graves.

The Resurrection in The Valley Of Dry Bones—Vv. 1-10

The prophet inspects the hopeless state of Israel among the nations.

VERSE 1

"The hand of the Lord was upon me"—The Spirit took hold upon Ezekiel to reveal to him yet another vision relating to the restoration, which he recorded by Yahweh's command.

"In the midst of the valley"—"Valley" is literally "plain". It signifies a wide plain, or valley between mountains. Ezekiel saw this plain filled with dry bones, as of an army that had been ambushed and slain.

VERSE 2

"Caused me to pass by them round about"—The prophet was caused to silently walk around that valley and look upon the desolate

and pathetic scene before him. He saw the bleached bones of a great army of slain. He observed that "they were very dry", completely bleached out by the sun, thus emphasizing the state of utter hopelessness in which he found them.

VERSE 3

"Son of man"—Ezekiel again types the Lord Jesus who applied this title to himself (Matth. 24:30), thus identifying himself with the events foretold by these prophecies. (See also Notes 35:2).

"Can these bones live?"—The question was put to the prophet, but so hopeless did the proposition seem as he viewed the bones, and yet so great is the power of Yahweh, that the prophet was hesitant to give a decisive answer. He recognized that if the bones were to live it could only be through the power of Yahweh. And so he replied: "O

Lord Yahweh, Thou knowest." He stressed that only Yahweh could accomplish the seemingly impossible, and raise such dead bones to life.

VERSE 4

"He said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones"—Ezekiel is addressed as "son of man," because he typed the Lord Jesus Christ who likewise used the same title. What he was called upon to prophesy here, will be fulfilled by the Lord Jesus. It will be Christ who will cause the "bleached bones" of Jewry to be formed first into the framework of a skeleton, and finally to spring to life.

VERSE 5

"Behold I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live"—This declaration proclaims the intention of Yahweh in relation to Israel. The word for "breath" in the Hebrew is *ruach*, often rendered "spirit." It is the spirit, or the power of the Truth believed that alone can bring "life" to Israel. See notes on Ezek. 36:26. The transforming influence of the spirit-truth will turn Jacob, "the supplanter," into Israel, "a prince with God." Thus Ezekiel saw the breath or spirit of God enter the resurrected bodies of Israel and so energise them. Hosea similarly predicted a national resurrection of Israel (Hos. 6:1-3).

VERSE 6

"I will lay sinews upon you"—The bones having come together, sinews or ligaments would be required to tie them together, after which flesh or muscles would be formed over the sinews, and finally the covering or skin. In this vision, therefore, Ezekiel had a preview of the resurrection.

"Ye shall know that I am Yahweh"—This is Ezekiel's constant refrain. In the day when Israel is completely saved from its enemies, the nation will come to "know Yahweh" in the fullest extent. The miraculous, national resurrection will impress the people with the

reality of God, and cause them to respond accordingly. To "know Yahweh," means more than mere academic knowledge, it implies such an understanding as will find its fruit in action.

VERSE 7

"As I prophesied, there was a noise"—The word "noise" in Hebrew is *koul*. This word literally signifies "to call aloud." It is used of the "trumpet" (Exod. 20:18), and of the noise of war and people (Exod. 32:17) etc. Being expressive of both ideas, the word is most applicable to the verse before us. There will be the noise of confusion and of war accompanying the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:5-7), whilst at the same time the call will go forth to the people of Israel inviting them back home (Zech. 10:8). The use of this word in relation to the political resurrection of Israel, is significant in the light of Paul's words relating to the physical resurrection at Christ's coming: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16).

"Behold a shaking"—A tremendous political earthquake shall take place at Christ's return (Rev. 16:18), which will result in the overthrow of Gentile power, and the elevation of Israel to full glory. Of this, the literal earthquake that shall likewise take place (Ezek. 38:19; Zech. 14:5), will be a type.

VERSE 8

"The sinews and the flesh came up upon them"—The R.V. renders: "There were sinews upon them, and flesh came up, and skin covered them." To appreciate the full drama of this chapter we need to visualise with Ezekiel what takes place. He hears the loud call, he feels the shaking of the earth, he sees bone remarkably drawn to its fellow bone until skeletons are formed. Then upon them the sinews appear to tie the bones together, flesh spreads over the skeletons and, at

last, skin covers them. Now, instead of bleached bones, a multitude of dead bodies fill the valley before the startled eyes of the prophet. But they lacked life!

VERSE 9

"Prophecy unto the wind"—"Wind" in the Hebrew is *ruach*, elsewhere translated "spirit" (see Note v. 5). The word is often rendered "wind" for it is derived from a root signifying "to breathe forth." Both in a literal and a spiritual sense man depends upon the *ruach*, the "breathing forth" of the Almighty Who sustains natural man by His spirit and the spiritual man by His Spirit-Word (Job. 34:14; John 6:63).

"Come from the four winds, O breath"—"Breath" is also *ruach* (cp. v. 5), thus we learn that Spirit in fourfold manifestation will energise the nation of Israel. The "four spirits" here introduced as life-givers are the saints through whom judgments will be poured out upon the Gentiles. Zechariah, in speaking of them as "four chariots" of Yahweh, describes them as "the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth" (Zech. 6:5). The saints, therefore, comprise the four winds of heaven that will energise national Israel in the age to come. They will be the future shepherds of Israel of Whom Yahweh declares: "I will give you pastors (shepherds) according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jer. 3:15). Thus the saints will breathe upon Israel with the Spirit of Yahweh "that they may live." Elijah will be prominent in this work of restoration, assisted by others of the saints who will be deputed for that work.

"These slain"—The word implies that they have been violently put to death. It thus suggests the violent overthrow of Israel such as took place in A.D. 70, and will take place when Gog swoops down upon the land.

VERSE 10

"So I prophesied as he commanded me"—Ezekiel foreshadows the work of the Lord Jesus Christ who through his saints will proclaim the truth of the gospel to the whole house of Israel, both those in the land and those still scattered abroad. Paul declares: "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom. 11:26-27).

"An exceeding great army"—Israel will be organised into a powerful fighting force by the Lord Jesus, and will be used to subdue the nations Zechariah makes reference to this army (Ch. 9:13-15), which, officered by immortal saints, will extend the victories of Christ unto the ends of the earth.

Revival of the whole House of Israel —Vv. 11-14

Ezekiel is given an explanation of the vision, and learns that the whole house of Israel is to be restored, and not merely Judah.

VERSE 11

"These bones are the whole house of Israel"—Throughout his prophecies Ezekiel makes reference to "Israel" in addition to Judah, which indicates that he had been also in contact with people of the ten tribes. Most probably a remnant of them as well as those of the house of Judah had gathered around him in Tel Abib. Nevertheless, his prophecies had primary application to Judah (Ch. 19:1-4, 9). In Ch. 2:3, however, the prophet's message is directed to the two houses of Israel (see margin), and now the angel emphasises that this prophecy of the restoration likewise relates to "the whole house of Israel" (see comments on v. 16). To this we have the confirmatory statement of the apostle Paul who declared that "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26).

"Our hope is lost"—The time of

Jacob's trouble, yet to occur when Gog swarms down into the land, will culminate in a cry of distress from the lips of the Jews (see Jer. 30:7). They will see in the destruction of the Jewish State the end of all their hopes, and they will claim that Yahweh has forgotten them (Isa. 49:14). This humbling of Israel will have a salutary effect. No longer will they manifest confidence in the flesh, but in their despair they will turn to God. They will cry: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:39). And the Lord Jesus will appear to save them.

"We are cut off from our parts"
—Rotherham renders: "We are quite cut off." Destruction will seem absolute, and any possibility of restoration absolutely impossible. The bones will seem completely bleached.

VERSE 12

"I will open your graves"—Hosea, like Ezekiel, also speaks of the political resurrection of Israel in terms which Paul borrows to describe the literal resurrection of the saints in the age to come (Hosea 13:14 with 1 Cor. 15:54-55). In Rom. 11:15 Paul asks the question: "What shall the receiving of them (i.e. Jewry) be?" and answers: "Life from the dead." Whilst this statement has a primary application to the resurrection of the saints, and shows that the present regathering is a clear sign of Christ's coming, and the resurrection, it also can apply to Israel in a national sense. They will experience a political resurrection that will be almost as remarkable as the literal resurrection of the saints.

"Your graves"—The Hebrew word is not *sheol*, but *qeber*. *Sheol* is the general grave into which all descend. *Qeber* signifies a memorial grave, a sepulchre, or a tomb that is more distinctive than a mere grave. The use of this term in this place is significant. It means that whilst many nations might be interred in a political grave and never again come

into remembrance before God (see Ps. 88:5), that is not so with Israel. They, though dead, are held in remembrance, and in due time the graves (memorial tombs) shall be opened that they, like Lazarus, might come forth at the bidding of the Lord. In the LXX the word *mnemeion* is used for *qeber*, and this, likewise signifies a special memorial tomb or sepulchre. It is the word used in John 5:28 where the Lord is reported to have said: "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth". The "all" who shall come forth are those dwelling in the dust who are held in remembrance, and therefore figuratively in God's sight dwell in a *Mnemeion*, or memorial tomb.

The figurative tombs of Israel are held in remembrance and will be opened to effect the political resurrection seen in vision by Ezekiel. Zechariah spoke of the same theme. He, too, showed that the nation would experience a political death, burial and resurrection, for he declared: "I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries, and they shall live with their children, and turn again" (Zech. 10:9). The term "sow" in this place implies a figurative burial (a similar figure is used in 1 Cor. 15). But the prophet Zechariah saw Israel live again, and restored to their former estates.

VERSE 14

"I shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live"—This spirit is the "wind" and "breath" referred to in Vv. 5, 9. Reference to this has also been made in the Notes on Ch. 36:27.

"I shall place you in your own land"—The complete restoration of the nation of Israel in their land will take place after the battle of Armageddon (Ezek. 39:25-26). The partial restoration that has taken place in recent years is only a token of that which is yet to be effected.

"Then shall ye know that I, Yahweh, have spoken it, and performed

it"—Many of those who have today returned do not acknowledge the hand of Yahweh in the partial restoration of Israel to the Land. They imagine that they have built up their resources by their own ingenuity and power. For that purpose they must be humbled and caused to understand that they can do nothing effectively without the support of Yahweh's power. Thus Gog will be permitted to sweep down and destroy all that

they have built up that they might learn: "Except Yahweh build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Ps. 127). After Israel has been humbled by this experience Yahweh will declare: "NOW will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel" (Ezek. 39:25). He will do it after the judgment of Armageddon, when the Jewish people's confidence in self has been so reduced as to make them fit for elevation.

COMMENT ON EDMOM

The following comment appears in the *Amplified Old Testament Bible* as a footnote to Ezekiel 35:9: "The Edomites gave what help they could to Nebuchadnezzar when he captured Judah. Later these cousins of the Israelites were pushed out of their own country into Southern Judea; Hebron was their chief city. When in 70 A.D. the Romans under Titus besieged Jerusalem, Josephus says the Edomites joined the Jews in rebellion against them, and 20,000 were admitted as defenders of the Holy City. But once in, they pillaged the city, raping and killing, and not even sparing the priests, though the traitors themselves had been previously forced to become circumcised and recognised as Jews. The Roman conqueror slew them, and Edom ceased to be. The forecasts of the prophets regarding Edom are in striking contrast to those of their neighbours, Moab and Ammon. The latter two countries were to suffer great and severe judgments, as was Edom; but restoration and renewed prosperity were promised to them "in the latter days," while Edom was never to be rebuilt. This is all obviously nearing fulfilment in the twentieth century. Truly Edom is the scene of "perpetual desolations," with no hint of restoration.

A Transformed Government

Verses 15-28

Having described the political resurrection of the whole house of Israel, the prophet now proceeds to show the purpose of this miracle. The nation is to be brought again into its own land, to be established therein in a united kingdom, "as in the days of old."

They will be converted to the true worship, and will be made subject to the king "whose right it is," even the Lord Jesus Christ, described by God as "David My servant, a prince among them."

Thus there will be one nation, one king, and one worship. The glory of Israel in that day will be such as to draw all nations to Jerusalem for worship.

The Two Sticks—Vv. 15-17

Two dry rods are used to symbolise the two divisions of the nation of Israel, the northern and the southern kingdoms.

VERSE 16

"Moreover, take thee one stick"—In Num. 17:2 Moses was told to take 12 rods representative of the 12 principal men of the twelve tribes of Israel. The Hebrew word there used is *matteh*, and signifies a "staff, as a badge of authority." Those rods were doubtless green, for Aaron's brought forth leaves, buds, and almonds. But here the word "sticks" is from the Hebrew *aitz*, and it signifies "a piece of wood." It was doubtless withered and dry, symbolising the condition of Israel, as expressed by Jeremiah: "It is withered, it is become like a stick" (Lam. 4:8).

"For the children of Israel his companions"—Who were these companions of Judah? The answer is: Benjamin and Levi. They constituted the companions of Judah when the tribes separated.

"For Joseph"—As the birthright was given to Joseph (1 Chron. 5:1), so the northern tribes are represented by his name instead of that of Reuben. Though Reuben was

Jacob's firstborn, he was replaced by Joseph, who in consequence, received "a double portion" in Israel, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh representing him (see Deut. 21:17).

"Of Ephraim"—The principal tribe of the north, but actually the younger son of Joseph, elevated to the position of firstborn (Gen. 48:17-20). In Jer. 31:9 Yahweh refers to the northern kingdom as "Ephraim, His firstborn" whom He declares that He "loves with an everlasting love" (v. 3). Because of that love, He will restore him to the land. What is the reason for that love? Certainly not the character of the people which has been rebellious against God, but rather God's attitude towards and feelings for the fathers of Israel. This is expressed by Paul in Romans 11:28, as "they (Israelites) are beloved for the fathers' sakes." Ephraim is beloved for Abraham, Isaac, Israel and Joseph's sake, and therefore is to be restored to the land. As the principal tribe of the north, Ephraim represents all the tribes of the north who separated in the days of Jeroboam (1 Kgs. 11:31), whilst Judah stands for the tribes of the south.

"All the house of Israel his companions"—All the tribes that associated together to revolt against the House of David in the days of

EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES OF THE RESTORATION

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon.

VERSE 17

"Join them one to another into one stick"—i.e. restore the previous unity again to Israel.

"They shall become one stick in thine hand"—This is a most important statement because Ezekiel, throughout his prophecies, typified the Lord Jesus Christ. Israel will be formed into one nation "in the hand," or through the influence and under the supervision of the Lord Jesus Christ. In v. 19, however, the stick is represented as being in the hand of Yahweh, and the prophet was told: "They shall be made one in mine hand." The Lord Jesus Christ is not merely "Son of Man" (the title of Ezekiel the prophet), but he is also the manifestation of Yahweh. Therefore it can be truly said when he restores Israel to true unity one with the other and with their God, that this has been the work of Yahweh through him.

Ezekiel's Sign to the Children of Israel—Vv. 18-19

Ezekiel is instructed to take this sign and show it to the people of Israel that they might be drawn to understand this wonderful purpose that God has with them in the future.

VERSE 19

"They shall be one in mine hand"—In his explanation to the people the prophet was instructed to emphasise that the full restoration of Israel will be a work of Yahweh. This is also quite important for us to understand at this present time, because the partial regathering of the people in the land today is not a work of Yahweh in the fullest extent. It must be made abundantly clear to the people of Israel that they can accomplish nothing without His help and guidance. Thus the significance of the drama of the last days.

The Explanation—Vv. 20-28

A complete explanation of the

purpose of Yahweh is now presented to the prophet and he is shown the glorious hope of Israel as it will be manifested toward that nation. The fulfilment of this hope will vindicate Yahweh in the sight of all the nations of the earth, and will cause them to turn to Him.

VERSE 20

"The sticks shall be before their eyes"—Ezekiel was told to prominently exhibit the sign before the people of Israel. In like manner the preaching of the hope of Israel should be prominently set before the world, as the sign of restored Israel will be also.

VERSE 21

"Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen"—The people of Israel will have to fight their way back to the land (Ezek. 20:33-38; Zech. 9:12-17; 10:9-12; Num. 23:24; Mic. 5:8). See previous notes for the circumstances whereby this shall be brought about.

"Will bring them into their own land"—In Isa. 11:11-16; 27:12-13 the prophet shows that the children of Israel will be brought back to the land by two routes; via the north through the Euphrates, or via the south, through the Red Sea. Either route requires that they pass through water, and therefore they will be nationally baptised. There will be, therefore, a repetition of the deliverance that took place under Moses. But on this occasion, instead of being "baptised into Moses" (1 Cor. 10:2), the people will be nationally baptised into the Lord Jesus Christ.

VERSE 22

"I will make them one nation in the land"—Jeremiah likewise refers to this time in his prophecies (Jer. 50:4-5), and shows that the people will return with "weeping", because they will then recognise their past blindness. The knowledge that they crucified their Messiah in the past, will be the main cause of their mourning (Zech. 12:10).

"Upon the mountains of Israel"

—The Jews will not only inhabit the mountainous parts of Israel, but the whole of the land. But the mountains of Israel are more closely identified with Jerusalem, its capital, which is situated in that portion of the land. The prophet uses a similar expression in Ch. 6:2. Thus the nation will be identified with Jerusalem its capital. (See also Isa. 2:2-4).

"One king shall be king to them all"—The king will be the "prince whose right it is" (Ezek. 21:27). This, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified by permission of Pilate on the charge of sedition, because the Jews claimed that he had proclaimed himself king in opposition to Caesar. The claim that he was king, but not then in opposition to Caesar, was a true one, as the Lord admitted to Pilate (John 18:37). The caption over the cross proclaimed this truth and angered the Jews. It should be noted that these words of Ezekiel concerning Israel's king have never yet been fulfilled since they were uttered. Whilst it may be claimed that certain parts of the prophecy did have a primary fulfilment in the days of Zerubbabel's restoration, never, since the days of Ezekiel, has one king had rule over Israel as a united nation.

"They shall be no more two nations"—Israel will constitute a new, rejuvenated, reunited and reformed nation. The territory will be cleansed from sin and idolatry, and the Lord Jesus Christ will be set up over them as king. This is the true Hope of Israel (Acts 28:20).

VERSE 23

"Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols"—(see note on Ch. 36:25). The people will not merely experience political resurrection and restoration in subjection to a righteous king, but they will be spiritually rejuvenated as well, as the influence of God's word is brought to bear upon them.

"Their detestable things"—The *Companion Bible* renders: "abomin-

able things", referring to the grossest form of idolatry and its accompanying immorality and vice (see Rom. 1:26-27).

"Nor with any of their transgressions"—Heb. *pasha* = "rebellion". Israel has been noted for its rebellion against the decrees and commandments of Yahweh from the very beginning. But there will be such a change of heart on the part of the people that they will no longer desire to rebel in that day.

"I will save them out of all their dwelling places"—The dwelling places referred to relate to their settled abodes among the nations. Driven from their own land, the people have tried to become assimilated within those Gentile nations to where they have been scattered, and they have thus made those places their "dwelling places". There, however, they have been in constant tribulation (Isa. 51:23) from which they shall be saved.

"They shall be my people, and I will be their God"—(See Hosea 2:23; Zech. 13:9). Yahweh regards the Jews in the land as "His people" even now (Ezek. 38:16), but unfortunately they do not look upon Yahweh as their God. It is only when they will do this, that in the truest sense they will be esteemed "His people".

VERSE 24

"David my servant shall be king over them"—David, like Ezekiel, is a type of the Lord Jesus. His name means "the Beloved", and points to him whom Yahweh declared to be "My Son, the Beloved" (Matt. 3:17 Diaglott). It will be the Lord Jesus Christ who, as the "Beloved" of Yahweh, and as His servant (Isa. 42:1), shall assume this glorious position of kingship over Israel (see notes on Ch. 34:23). The term "servant" used in this context is most significant, because it implies the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour (Isa. 49:6). So, David my servant, signifies "the beloved servant", whom God hath "exalted to

be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). This one, of whom Ezekiel foretold that he will be both ruler and saviour, will be elevated before the people of Israel. Ezekiel saw him not only as ruler and saviour, but also as shepherd, guiding the people in righteousness.

"They shall walk in my judgments"—See notes on Ch. 36:27.

"And do them"—The fact that they will not merely hearken to the law of Yahweh but also perform it, will lay the foundation for the outpouring of the blessings enumerated in Lev. Ch. 26 (see particularly V. 3), to which reference has been already made.

"They shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant"—This land was promised unto Jacob when he was at Bethel (Gen. 28:13-15), where he rested in distress when fleeing from Esau (Edom). There he saw the vision of the angels of God ascending and descending upon the ladder of God. This taught him that his future would be governed by divine providence, and that all that God had predicted concerning him would surely come to pass. Ezekiel's statement provides an endorsement of that which was promised to Jacob. Such promises are absolute, being confirmed by the Lord Jesus, the covenant victim (Rom. 15:8).

"My servant David shall be their prince for ever"—The words "for ever" are a translation of the word *olam*, signifying "for the age." Jesus Christ shall reign over the people of Israel for a thousand years (Rev. 20:5), which period constitutes the age, or then hidden period, of the future. At the conclusion of that epoch a perfected kingdom shall be given over to God (1 Cor. 15:28), for rulership over mortals will then have been brought to an end in that sin and death will have been destroyed in righteousness and immortality (Rev. 20:13-15; Rev. 21:4).

VERSE 26

"I will make a covenant of peace with them"—The word "peace" is from the Hebrew word *shalom*. It is derived from a root signifying "to be at one." Thus, a covenant of peace is a covenant that unites and brings into fellowship two contracting parties (Rom. 11:23-27). This covenant of peace with Israel will be similar to that which the Lord Jesus Christ made with his disciples when he told them: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27).

"It shall be an everlasting covenant"—The word "everlasting" is the word *olam* (see notes V. 25). Its use here shows that the covenant to be made will be for the duration of the "hidden period" and therefore one that will last throughout the Millennium, or thousand years reign of Christ.

"I will set My sanctuary in the midst of them"—Israel was brought out of Egypt that Yahweh might dwell among them (Exod. 29:46), and this purpose will be fulfilled in the Age to come. His dwelling place in Israel originally was in the tent called the Tabernacle; His sanctuary of the future will constitute the House of Prayer for all nations, described in detail in Ezekiel 40-48. See Ezek. 43:7; Joel 2:27; Zech. 2:11-12. See Moses' anticipation of this future provision—Deut. 33:18-19.

"For evermore" — Heb. *olam*, the hidden period, or millenium. Temple worship with its sacrifices, and priesthood with its mediatorial service on behalf of worshippers, will only be required as long as sin lasts, and therefore the sanctuary will continue only for the millenium or the hidden period of one thousand years. With the final elimination of sin and death as predicted in Rev. 20:14, the need of sacrifice and priesthood will cease. There were no such provisions in Eden before sin entered the world; and there will be none when sin at last is destroyed.

VERSE 27

"My tabernacle also shall be with them"—The Hebrew word is *mishkan*, and it signifies "dwelling place." Yahweh will dwell with His people (see Rev. 21:3), not, however, by personally descending from heaven, but my manifesting Himself in the glorified company of the Redeemed that will be then made one with the Lord Jesus Christ. They will comprise the "people of the name" (Acts 15:14; Isa. 30:27). The Lord declared concerning those who overcome: "I will name upon them the name of my God" (Rev. 3:12). The name Yahweh, therefore, will be named upon the whole family of the redeemed, who though they will comprise a great multitude without number (Rev. 7:9), yet will be completely united as one (John 17:21). Zechariah declares: "Yahweh shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Yahweh, and His name one" (Zech. 14:9). Why the emphasis upon "one"? Because the one family of Yahweh, though comprising a vast multitude

will be completely united as one unit. Ezekiel describes how this great company, possessing the glory (Rom. 5:2), the nature (2 Pet. 1:4), and the name (Rev. 3:12) of God will enter the Temple of the age to come by "way of the east" (Ezek. 43:1-4).

"I will be their God, and they shall be My people"—Moses set this before the people as a promise conditional upon them keeping the Law (Lev. 26:2,3,12), and though Israel has profaned the holy Name throughout the centuries (Ezek. 36:22), in that the people have disobeyed God's Law, their restoration will be both physical and spiritual. They will enter the land and obey God's laws, and be in fact His people.

VERSE 28

"The heathen shall know that I, Yahweh, do sanctify Israel"—The nations will see in Israel a completely changed and regenerated people, and will recognise in this fact, the moulding hand of Yahweh.

COMMENT ON GOG

The *Amplified Old Testament Bible* has this comment to make upon Ezekiel 38: "Gog is a symbolic name, standing for the leader of the world powers antagonistic to God.

"Meshech and Tubal are understood to have been the same as the Moschi and Tibareni of the Greeks — tribes that inhabited regions in the Caucasus. Rosh, which some would identify with Russia, must have been designated a land and people somewhere in the same quarter. And therefore the Gog of Ezekiel must be viewed as in some sense the head of the high regions in the northwest of Asia (Fairbairn's *Imperial Standard Bible Encyclopedia*).

"Gesenius observes that it can scarcely be doubtful that the first trace of the Russians is here given. Hengstenberg (1802-1869) could not bear to see 'the poor Russians' ranged among the enemies of the kingdom of God. But the One who gave Ezekiel this vision of what was to happen 'in the latter days' (v. 16), made no mistake in such a forecast, as all the world would admit today."

The Coming Crisis

Ezekiel 38

Having revealed the purpose of Yahweh to completely restore Israel, the prophet now outlines the means whereby this will be accomplished. The people must be humbled before they will be elevated. They will be subjected to such political pressure as will force them to seek their God. The devastating invasion of the Holy Land, portrayed in the chapter now before us, will accomplish that. Yahweh will use the Russian Gog, as He previously used the Assyrian (Isa. 10) to humble His people and reduce them to a state in which they will be forced to turn to Him Whom they have ignored for so long.

But it will not be only Israel that will be humbled by this crisis, but all nations. The violence of the Russian attack will sweep the Western powers aside, and with Israel prostrate before Gog, it will seem as though the whole world is about to fall before his power. Divine intervention alone will save the world from the ruthless conqueror.

It is very significant to note the contrasts presented between Israel and the Gogian host (representative of Edom) as they are revealed in these chapters on the Restoration.

The Israel slain live (Ezek. 37), but the Gogian living are slain. (Ch. 38).

Israel is "brought back from the sword" (Ch. 38:8), but Gog's host is appointed to the sword (Ch. 38:21).

Israel is brought out of the Valley of death (Ezek. 37); the Gogian host is led into it (Ch. 39:11).

Israel is resurrected out of its graves (Ch. 37:12); the Gogian host is buried in its grave (Ch. 39:11).

The bones of Israel are brought together by a great shaking in the land (Ch. 37:7); the Gogian host is scattered by a great shaking (Ch. 38:19).

The Shepherd Prince of Israel leads Israel to victory (Ch. 37:24); the Gog-prince of Ros leads the nations to disaster (Ezek. 38:2).

Many other points of contrast will be revealed by a careful consideration of the prophecy.

The People — Vv. 1-7

The nations enumerated constitute an Eurasian host comparable to the Image Empire of Dan. 2, being representatives of all nations gathered to Jerusalem for battle (Zech. 14:2).

VERSE 1

"The word of Yahweh"—This is authoritative and will accomplish that which it proclaims—Isa. 55:11.

VERSE 2

"Son of Man"—This is the title

of the Lord Jesus, and he it is who shall fulfil the prophecy by setting his face against Gog, and destroying his power. (Isa. 17:13; Dan. 11:45).

"Against" — The Hebrew word *el* signifies not merely opposition, but indicates *motion against* the one referred to. The multitudinous Son of Man will move against Gog when he comes into the land (see Isa. 30:27).

"Gog" — *The English and Hebrew Bible Student's Concordance* gives the meaning of this name as "a roof," and that of Haman-gog as "the multitude on the roof." This is interesting in view of the destruction of the Philistines "on the roof" when Samson, with renewed strength, overthrew it. Samson typed Israel, on behalf of whom Gog's host will be destroyed. In Numbers 24:7 Balaam predicted that the future king of Israel "shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted." But in the Septuagint, Agag is rendered as "Gog." Accepting that reading, Balaam prophetically saw the destruction of Gog at the hands of Christ, and the exaltation of the Kingdom of God over that of Edom, or of the flesh. This coming triumph of Israel over Edom was foreshadowed by the victory of Israel over Amalek recorded in Exodus 17:8-16. Amalek was a descendant of Esau (Gen. 36:1, 16), and therefore representative of the flesh in political manifestation. According to Josephus, the army comprised a confederacy of various tribes (or nations) antagonistic to Israel, among whom Amalek was accounted as "the first of the nations" (Num. 24:20), and over which ruled Agag, or Gog. Moses' victory at that time was a victory of faith over flesh, of prayer over fleshly power. He saw it as a foreshadowing of the victory to come, and therefore built an altar (representative of Christ—Heb. 13:10) and called it *Yahweh-nissi*, a title that points to the Lord Jesus in glory as providing the means of personal and national victory (Isa. 11:10-12).

The anti-semitic Haman (described as the "Jews' enemy"—Est. 3:10; 7:6; 8:1; 9:10,24) was an "Agagite" (Esther 3:1) and therefore a descendant of the Amalekite kings (Num. 24:7; 1 Sam. 15:8). He is called an Amalekite by Josephus. In the typology of the book of Esther, he represents sinful flesh which can be manifested in various ways. The Gogian host of the future will be representative of the flesh in political manifestation, and as such is doomed to destruction.

If the definition of the meaning of the name given above is accepted, Gog is a title representative of "the one at the top."

"The land of Magog" — See *Elpis Israel*, 14th edition, p.426. The Magogae are identified by Josephus with the Scythians, who, according to Herodotus, "spread from the River Tanais or Don westward along the banks of the Ister, or Danube," through the area later known as Hungary, Transylvania, and Wallachia. Dion Cassius, who lived 150 years after Josephus, relates how that Pompey, in his return into Europe from Asia, "determined to pass to the Ister, or Danube, through the Scythae; and so to enter Italy." Diodorus Siculus, who lived about a century before Josephus, traces the Scythians (or Magogites) much further into Europe than the Danube; even to the shores of the Baltic.

The land of Magog, therefore, comprises central Europe including Germany, but extending to the Baltic. According to the terms of this prophecy, Gog must dominate in that area. This can only be by conquest or agreement because Gog's title is not Prince of Magog, but Prince of Ros. Gog is three times given this title (v. 3; Ch. 39:1), but only once said to be "of the land of Magog." Later, the punishment on Magog is shown as being independent of that poured out on Gog's forces (Ch. 39:6), showing the two to be different.

"Chief prince" — The Revised Version renders this as "Prince of

Ros." In *Elpis Israel* p.424 the reasons why this word should be treated as a proper noun and not as an appellative are convincingly set forth. Concerning the name Ros, Bochart in his *Sacred Geography*, declares that "Ros is the most ancient form under which history makes mention of the name of Russia." Stanley, in the *Eastern Church* p.280 writes: "The name Russ, Hebrew Roas, LXX Ros, unfortunately translated in the English version 'the chief,' first appears in Ezekiel 38:2 and 39:1. It is the only name of a modern nation that appears in the Old Testament."

Gibbon wrote (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*): "Among the Greeks the national appellation (Russians) has a singular form, Ros."

George Sava, in *Russia Triumphant* points out that the earliest name by which the Russians were known was by the title Rus.

Rosh itself signifies "head," or "poison," and Rosh represents the serpent power politically manifested. The word is translated "poison" in Job 20:16, "venom" in Deut. 32:33, "gall" in Deut. 29:18; 32:32. In these places the idea of poison and gall is derived from a word signifying "head" probably because of the prominent head (seed-pod) of the poppy-plant from which opium is derived.

Moses declared: "Beware lest there be among you man or woman, or family or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from Yahweh our God to serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall (*rosh*) or wormwood." He here likens "gall" or *rosh*, to a poisonous philosophy that will turn men from serving God—a very fit definition of Russian Communism with its Godless philosophy.

The appellation, *Rosh*, therefore, fittingly describes the serpent power politically manifested. The venom of the serpent, the dangerous fangs of its head, are represented by the

dual meanings of Rosh as both "poison" or "head."

"Meshech" — This word is identified with Moscovy from whence is developed the name Moscow. Bochart wrote: "It is credible that from Rhos and Mesech (that is the Rhossi and Moschi), of whom Ezekiel speaks, descended the Russians and Moscovites, nations of the greatest celebrity in European Scythia." "Thus then," writes John Thomas (*Elpis Israel* p.425), "we discern the modern names of Russia and of Moscow, or Moskwa, in the ancient names of Ros and Mosc, or Musc."

"Tubal" — This appellation seems to point to Tobolski, the metropolis of Siberia. Bro. Thomas writes: "It is not difficult to recognise in Tobl, Tubl, or Thobel, a name which naturally connects itself with them; and which, in conjunction with them, tends, in a very remarkable manner, to determine and fix the proper object of the prediction. The river Tobol gives name to the City Tobolium, or Tobolski, the metropolis of the extensive region of Siberia, lying immediately eastward of the territories of Moscovy, or Mosc. Tobol and Mosc are mentioned together by Ezekiel who characterizes them as nations trading copper (Ezek. 27:13), a metal which, it is notorious, abounds in the soil of Siberia." "Thus the three denominations Ros, Mosc, and Tobl, united in prophecy, point out, with equal capacity and conciseness, those widely extended regions, which, at the present day, we denominate collectively THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE."

VERSE 3

"Say, I am against thee, O Gog." — Thus the Son of Man speaks with the authority and in the name of the Father.

"O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal" — The R.V. renders: "Prince of Ros, Meshech and Tubal." Magog is omitted, as it is also in Ch. 39:1. From this it is obvious that Gog is of Ros or

Russia, and only "of the land of Magog" or central and western Europe by extension of his power.

VERSE 4

"I will turn thee back"—The R.V. renders "back" as "about." The Oxford Gesenius renders the word: "lead thee away enticingly", and refers to Isaiah 47:10 mg. Concerning Babylon it is said: "Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted (mg. caused thee to turn away) thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me" (Isa. 47:10). The analogy of this verse is that of a fisherman, having baited his hook, and enticing his catch. Gog will be enticed by God to fulfil His will. Not that Yahweh will directly control the heart of this ruler and then condemn him for what He has forced him to do, but inasmuch as He is responsible for the conditions that will induce Gog to invade Israel, He is represented as inciting him to do so. It is Yahweh who is behind the Jewish restoration: it is He Who formed the world, so that His land is so important strategically; it is He also, who arranged for that most desirable commodity of the modern world to be found beneath the arid sands of the Middle East—oil. Gog will invade Israel because of: anti-semitism which is characteristic of Russia; the wealth of the land itself; its important position in world strategy; the black gold found beneath its soil. Russia produces sufficient oil for her own use, but the western European countries are dependent upon the Middle East for it, and for this source to fall into Russian hands would be a victory of major consequence to that power. These are some of the considerations that will entice Russia into the Middle East.

"Put hooks into thy jaws"—The Hebrew word *chachiy* signifies a ring for the nose or lips, and it was by this method that captives were led away in ancient times. In similar language, Yahweh addressed Sennacherib: "Because thy rage against Me, and thy tumult, is come into Mine ears, therefore will I put My

hook in thy nose, and My bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way which thou camest" (Isa. 37:29). The blasphemous, anti-semitic Assyria was a type of Gog, and the sudden and unexpected destruction of his forces outside of Jerusalem, foreshadowed the destruction yet to come upon the Gogian confederacy outside the walls of the same city. The word *chachiy* can be rendered "curbs", and its use in Ezekiel 38:4 shows that Gog will be controlled by a Power far mightier than himself. A hook in the jaws of Gog indicates that he is Yahweh's prisoner, and must perform His will.

"A great company"—The Hebrew word *qahal* is the Hebrew equivalent for the Greek "ecclesia", and therefore signifies a company gathered together by invitation and for a special purpose. Joel (Ch. 3:9) predicts that a holy war will be proclaimed among the nations, and this will result in the company being gathered unto Gog out of the nations.

"Handling swords"—A great company skilful in war (Joel 3:9-11). The weapons mentioned in this verse and elsewhere are an accommodation of the language of the times to modern use. Though guns might take the place of swords, and defensive weapons be vastly different to the bucklers (or large shields) and shields (smaller shields) of ancient times, their actual purpose is no different. For the purpose of the prophecy before us they indicate that Gog's forces will be well armed when they enter the land.

VERSE 5

"Persia"—Today Persia is pro-west, but circumstances, or conquest, will cause it to come under the domination of Russia.

"Ethiopia and Libya"—Daniel (Chapter 11:40-45) describes how that the king of the north will drive south along the coastal plains of Palestine, to stretch forth his hand upon Egypt. His domination of Egypt (V. 42) will bring the Libyans and the Ethiopians at his steps (V. 43). At that stage, Gog will

have bypassed Jerusalem itself, intent upon dominating the strategically important territory of Egypt, and the Suez Canal. Occupying Egypt, "tidings out of the east and north shall trouble him" (Dan 11:44). The tidings out of the east could well be the remarkable events that will be taking place at Sinai at that time, for the judgment seat of Christ will have there been set up (Deut. 33:1-2; Hab. 3:3; Psalm 68:7-8). The tidings "out of the north" may well relate to Jerusalem (north of Egypt), which the Western powers will doubtless fortify as a base for a possible impending counter-attack against Gog in the Middle East. These predicted events demand some alteration to the present co-operation manifested between Russia and the Arab powers, for the very fact that the latter are described as "escaping" or "not escaping" the attack of the king of the north (Vv. 41, 42), indicates that they will be hostile to Russia when Gog makes his drive south. Daniel 11:40 speaks of the King of the North attacking Constantinople (the "him" of the verse before us—see *Exposition of Daniel or Elpis Israel* by John Thomas), and this invasion of a Moslem country will be viewed with the greatest hostility by the Arab nations, themselves Moslem by religion.

"Gomer"—Josephus (book 1, ch. 6, sec. 1) identifies these with the Galatians, or the Gauls, who migrated west to France, Holland, Belgium etc. See *Elpis Israel* pp. 426-428.

"All his bands"—The RV renders "bands" as "hordes."

"Togarmah of the north quarters"—Togarmah most likely points to Turkey.

"There is little said about Togarmah in history beyond conjecture. He was a son of Gomer, therefore his posterity would migrate originally from the same locality as Gomer's other descendants—namely from the mountains of Taurus and Amanus; but instead of going westward with their brethren, they

diffused themselves over 'the north quarter,' that is relatively to Judea. Ezekiel says, 'The house of Togarmah traded in the Tyrian fairs with horses, and horsemen, and mules, (Ezek. 27:14). Hence doubtless they were a nomadic people, tending flocks and herds in the pasture lands of the north, where nature favored their production with little care and expense. Russian, and Independent Tartary are the countries of Togarmah, from which in former times poured forth the Turcoman cavalry, 'which,' says Gibbon, 'they proudly computed by million.' Georgia and Circassia, probably, are 'bands of Togarmah's house.'" (*Elpis Israel*, p. 429). The *Companion Bible* suggests that by Togarmah, Armenia is meant.

VERSE 7

"Be thou prepared"—The Hebrew word *kuwn* signifies "to be erect, set up, established." Yahweh addresses His adversary in ironical terms, inviting him to set up his power for a contest with God. With the confederated forces of the nations of modern Eurasia behind him, all the might and power of flesh will be concentrated into the hands of Gog.

"Thy company that are assembled unto thee"—The word "assembled" in the Hebrew is *qahal*. See note V. 4.

"Be thou a guard unto them"—The word "guard" is *mishmar* in Hebrew, from a root *shamar*, signifying "to hedge about as by thorns". This is a very significant statement in relation to the Russian Gog, for it is suggestive of the Iron Curtain that today hedges in the nations that are under her control. Other renditions of this word are "to keep watch over", "to provide with a law", "to exercise authority", "to be leader or commander". All these definitions suggest the dominant dictatorial authority that is characteristic of Russia today.

The Plan—Vv. 9-12

The prophet now outlines the purpose of the gathering together of

EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES OF THE RESTORATION

these nations. It is for war, the focal point of conflict being the land of Israel.

VERSE 8

"After many days"—This indicates that the prophecy was not to be fulfilled for some considerable time. In Verse 16 the time referred to is defined as "the latter days". Thus Ezekiel could see that the prophecy extended far into the future, even to these present times.

"Thou shalt be visited"—Rotherham renders: "Thou shalt muster thy forces".

"In the latter years"—The phrase literally means: "At the end of years", thus pointing to the end of Gentile times.

"Thou shalt come into the land"—Rotherham renders: "Into the land of the remnant", a significant statement in view of the partial restoration of Israel in these latter days.

"Gathered out of many people"—The remnant is described as having been gathered out of "many nations", showing that the restoration from Babylon does not answer to the requirements of this prophecy, as some try to teach. The restoration from Babylon is but a type of this final restoration.

"The mountains of Israel, which have been always waste"—The R.V. renders the statement "always waste", as "a continual waste". The land has not always been waste, because when Abraham entered into it, it was a land flowing with milk and honey. The spies on their return from their investigation of the land likewise reported its great fertility. But since the people of Israel have been driven therefrom it has been a continual waste. However, its restoration is at hand, as previous chapters of Ezekiel have stated.

"That is brought back"—The word in the Hebrew *shuwv* signifies "to turn back", with the implication of "return". The RSV renders it as "restored". It is the remnant who have been restored, or who

have returned from the sword, and not the land, as expressed in the A.V. Rotherham thus renders this sentence as "the land of the remnant brought back from the sword".

"From the sword"—The remnant will be brought back from the sword in that the people will be restored from certain death in the land of the enemy. Earlier, Ezekiel showed how Israel was appointed to the sword (see Ch. 5:12-17; 6:11, 12). In Ezekiel Ch. 12:16 Yahweh, through the prophet, declares that he would leave "a few men of them from the sword". They escaped the sword in order that they might return to the land.

"And is gathered out of many people"—Notice that the words "and is" are in italics, indicating that there are no equivalent words in the original text. These words are better eliminated, so that we read that it is the land of the remnant "brought back from the sword, gathered out of many people" that is in view. To that point the prophet has been dealing with the people of Israel, rather than the land itself. He now considers the land, and speaks of the mountains of Israel which have been a continual waste.

"But it is brought forth out of the nations"—Again this cannot relate to the mountains of Israel, as the construction of the sentence in the A.V. would suggest. Rotherham renders it: "But the same from the peoples have been brought forth", and he thus refers the statement to the remnant, and not to the land. Whilst the mountains of Israel have been a continual waste, the remnant has been brought forth out of the nations.

"They shall dwell safely"—The Hebrew word *behtach* signifies a place of refuge, providing security and confidence. This clearly defines the state of the Jews today in the land of Israel. In the land of Israel they have a place of refuge, a feeling of security and of confidence. But this confidence and security is misplaced for it is based upon the accomplishments of flesh, rather

EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES OF THE RESTORATION

than reliance upon Yahweh in truth. It is not pleasing to God, therefore. In Ezek. Ch. 39:26 the people are indicted for the proud, confident attitude of mind that they manifested when they dwelt safely in their land and none made them afraid. The attack of Gog will force them to recognise that their confidence was misplaced. At that time they will be forced by the very troubles that shall be brought upon them, to turn to their God. And as the Lord Jesus Christ declared in Matth. 23:39, the very reverses that they will experience will force them to say: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord".

VERSE 9

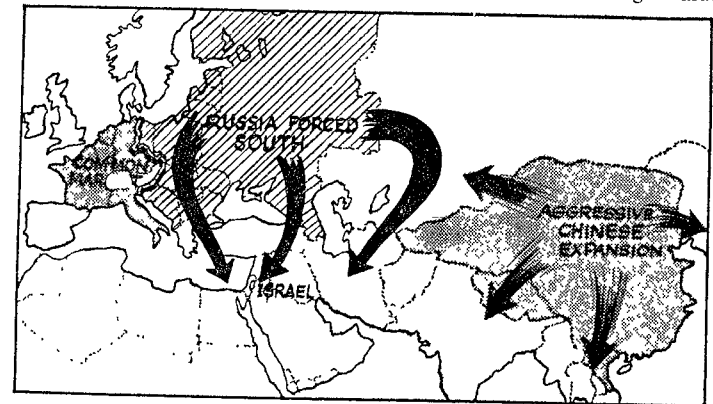
"Thou shalt ascend like a storm ... like a cloud"—The expressions suggest the suddenness and violence of a storm as well as the threatening aspect of heavy clouds over the land. Taken together, these figures suggest that Gog's invasion shall burst forth suddenly, rage violently, spread quickly, alarm greatly, but cease finally. Storms roar and clash, alarm and destroy, but they do not continue indefinitely. Clouds defuse gloom and fear, but ultimately they disperse. So the expressions suggest darkness and gloom over the land of Israel, until finally the storm ceases, and the Sun of Righteousness shines

forth in full power and glory, as is normal for a sun, shining after rain. David prophetically declared: "He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds: as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." (2 Sam. 23:4). The sun always seems to shine brightest when storm and rain have subsided and when clouds of gloom have been driven away. So it will be for Israel and the world after Gog has been turned back.

VERSE 10

"At the same time shall things come into thy mind"—Rotherham renders the word "things" as "thoughts"; the *Companion Bible* has "matters". "Things, thoughts, words, or matters" comprise the policy of the Russian Gog at the time of the end. This policy shall be generated by modern political conditions. The opportunity will seem to be ripe for Gog to attack, and the intentions for doing so shall come into his mind as events become propitious to that end.

"Think an evil thought"—The margin renders: "Conceive a mischievous purpose." The purpose is to desecrate the holy land and people. Though this policy is already in the minds of the men of the Kremlin who realise the strategic value of



Current world national pressures are forcing Russia to look more to the south for possible extension of power.

the Middle East, and recognise the tremendous value of the rich reserves of oil beneath its sands, the circumstances that will cause Gog to ascend north against Israel are outlined in Dan. 11:40-45 (See previous notes).

VERSE 11

"I will go up"—To go "up" is to move northwards. As Gog originally comes "out of the north parts" (v. 15), it is obvious that he must descend south before he ascends again. The prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel are thus shown to be complementary one to the other. As indicated earlier, Gog will sweep south in a lightning attack on Egypt, for the moment bypassing Jerusalem. There he will hear the tidings out of the east and north, and leaving an occupation force in Egypt, he will drive north to the "glorious holy mountain" (Dan. 11:45). Thus "all nations shall be gathered to Jerusalem to battle" (Zech. 14:2).

"The land of unwallled villages"—This is a Hebraism defining rural settlements (See Lev. 25:31). Rotherham renders the term as "hamlets." It clearly points to modern Israel which can be styled a nation of rural settlements.

"At rest"—The word *shaqat* signifies "repose," and here suggests the repose that Jewry in the land enjoys today after restlessly wandering from country to country under threat of persecution, over the centuries.

"Safely"—See note v. 8.

VERSE 12

"To take a spoil, and to take a prey"—The margin renders: "To spoil the spoil" etc. The spoil and prey relate to the people of Israel, who have always been treated as such, but have been "brought back from the sword" (v. 8), only to be again attacked in the land.

"To turn thine hand upon the desolate places"—These places are of the utmost value to the Russian Gog because of their strategical position.

The Middle East unites three continents as one: Europe, Asia and Africa; it drives a wedge into the two great blocks of nations: the west and east; and as is well known in political strategy, the nation that holds the Middle East, can command the world. In addition, the richest oil deposits of all the world are found under the sands of these "desolate places." Russia's command of the Middle East would constitute a strangle-hold on the resources of the West.

"That dwell in the midst of the land"—The margin renders the word "midst" as "navel". Strategically, the land of Israel was in the very centre of the ancient world, a world that was limited to Assyria in the north and Egypt in the south. Even today, with new continents opened up, the Middle East remains the strategic centre. However, the Hebrew word *tabbuwr*, rendered "midst" signifies that which is elevated, such as a height. In Judges 9:37 the word is used in the sense of an elevation; in Ezekiel it points to the mountainous region of the land of Israel, in which is found Jerusalem. It is not without significance, that in Daniel 11:45, the king of the north is said to plant the tents of his power "in the glorious holy mountain." Accepting the term "midst" in this light, we have, in Ezekiel, a prophecy predicting that Israel will occupy the hill country at the time of the end, such as the nation does today.

The Protest—V. 13

Zechariah 14:2 declares that "all nations" will be gathered to Jerusalem (the hill country) to battle; Revelation 16:14-17, and Joel 3 teach similarly. Daniel 11:44 predicts that disquieting tidings will draw the king of the north with his confederated forces there "to make away many." What are the tidings to the north? Ezekiel shows that the Western powers will oppose the challenge of Russia, only to be swept out of the way. This opposition may well comprise the predicted tidings from the north.

VERSE 13

"Sheba"—Sheba was an Arab kingdom adjacent to modern Aden. To the Tyrian merchants with whom the men of Sheba traded (Ezek. 27:22), it was known as the spice country. Archaeologists have uncovered some of the glory of this fabulous kingdom whose queen visited Solomon. A gigantic dam blocked the river Abhanat in Sheba, conserving water for irrigation purposes. Remains of this technical marvel in walls, over 60 feet high, still defy the sands of the desert. Sheba became one vast scented garden of the costliest spices in the world, in the midst of which was the capital Marib. It lies at the southern tip of the Arabian peninsula on the eastern spur of the mountain range that skirts the Red Sea. Inscriptions speak of cities of 1,000,000 inhabitants in the important kingdom. Concerning recent discoveries, W. F. Albright declares:

"They are in process of revolutionising our knowledge of southern Arabia's cultural history and chronology. Up to now the results to hand demonstrate the political and cultural primacy of Sheba in the first centuries after 1000 B.C."

About 542 B.C., the vast dam referred to above burst, and ultimately the desert claimed the spice kingdom of Sheba. In the days of Ezekiel, however, it was an important and powerful Arab kingdom, and representative of the Arabs as a whole. Isaiah speaks of "all they of Sheba" ascending to Jerusalem in the age to come to worship at the House of Prayer for all nations, there to be set up (Isa. 60:6).

If Sheba (i.e. the Arabs) is to protest against the Russian attack, it signifies that the present pro-Russian policy of the Arab nations must undergo a change. This is also obvious from Daniel 11:41-42 where the Arabs east of the Jordan are said to "escape" his attack, but Egypt does not. Once Russia moves into Turkey, thus "drying up" the political Euphrates (Rev. 16:12), all pro-Russian feelings on the part

of the Arab nations will cease, and they will be forced to align themselves with the Western nations, and even with their previous enemy Israel, to make a common cause against the more deadly foe from the north.



..... EUPHRATES (TURKEY) SHALL BE DRIED UP

"Dedan"—Dedan is identified with Muscat on the far eastern tip of Arabia bordering the Arabian sea. Brother Thomas remarks: "The men of Dedan are in the list of the traders in the Tyrian fairs given by Ezekiel (Ch. 27:15). The Dedanim carried thither the ivory and ebony which they procured from 'the many isles' to the eastward, and 'precious cloths for chariots.' . . . The Sultan of Muscat now rules the country of Dedan" (*Elpis Israel* p. 433).

Isaiah 21 identified the Dedanim generally with the bedouin Arabs. Ezekiel 38, therefore, uses two Arab tribes that are elsewhere used in Scripture as representative of Arabs generally. But why select them out of all the Arab tribes? Doubtless because of their geographical position. Sheba is far to the south of the land of Israel, and Dedan to the east, and between them they link the south and north borders of Arabia. In these two titles, therefore, the Arabs generally can be identified. Moreover, if the Western Powers attempt to fortify Jerusalem against the Russian attack (as would be necessary), Sheba (Aden) and Dedan (Muscat) would be convenient points of entry to the Middle East, for the Western powers.

"The merchants of Tarshish"—Despite all that has been said against the identification of Tarshish with Britain in *Elpis Israel*, an unbiassed consideration of the evidence will only fortify the conviction that Brother Thomas was correct in his exposition. That is surely obvious from the remarkable predictions of then future moves that he was able to make based upon the word, and which time has vindicated. Consider for example, his statement made in 1848 that the partial restoration of Jews to the land would be sponsored by Britain (see *Elpis Israel* pp. 441-446). He wrote: "As I have said elsewhere, the Lion-power will not interest itself on behalf of the subjects of God's kingdom, from pure generosity, piety towards God, or love of Israel, but upon the principles which actuate all the governments of the world — upon those namely, of the lust of dominion, self-preservation, and self-aggrandisement. God, who rules the world, and marks out the bounds of habitation for the nations, will make Britain a gainer by the transaction. He will bring her rulers to see the desirableness of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sheba, which they will be induced, by the force of circumstances, probably, to take possession of. They will, however, before the battle of Armageddon, be compelled to retreat from Egypt and Ethiopia . . ."

Britain's power was established upon trade. She is a merchant power, such as the prophecy of Ezekiel requires. And though she has recently suffered decline in her mercantile marine power and prestige, she maintained dominance in those avenues sufficiently long enough to accomplish the purpose that Yahweh had marked out for her.

Tarshish, as a proper name, occurs first in Gen. 10:4 as the name of the second son of Javan, who was the fourth son of Japhet, eldest son of Noah. The Javanese settled the coasts of the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, and the Atlantic region above the Straits of Gibraltar. The

Mediterranean was named the Sea of Tarshish because, it is probable, the settlements of Tarshish were more commercial and enterprising than those of his other brethren. "The southern coast of Spain, abutting both on the Atlantic and Mediterranean, is considered as peculiarly his. One of his Atlantic settlements was called Tartessus, or, as it occurs in Polybius and Stephanus Byzantinus, *Tarseion*. Tartessus is probably a contraction of *Tarsou nasos*, Tarshish's Island, for Tartessus was originally an island formed by the two mouths of the Boetis, or Guadalquivir, and the Atlantic; one of the channels is dried up, so that it is now part of the peninsular." (J. Thomas, *Herald of the Coming Age*, 1858).

It is significant that Britain has occupied Gibraltar (ancient Tarshish) for so long.

Ezekiel 27:12-13, declares that "Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all riches; with silver, iron, tin and lead, they traded in thy fairs." These are products of the mines of Spain and Britain, which were brought to Tyre in "the ships of Tarshish."

Chambers Encyclopaedia in an article on Phoenicia declares: "From Tartessus in Spain, outside the Straits, the Atlantic and Bay of Biscay were explored, and a trade with Cornwall and the Scilly Islands was established, and the Baltic Sea possibly was entered in the search for amber."

Dickens, in *A Child's History of England* remarks: "It is supposed that the Phoenicians, who were ancient people famous for carrying on trade, came in ships to these islands, and found that they produced tin and lead, both very useful things and both produced to this very hour upon the sea coast. The Phoenicians coasting about the islands would come without much difficulty to where the tin and lead were. They traded with the islanders for these metals."

It is claimed that a block of tin,

bearing Phoenician trade marks was fished up at the mouth of Falmouth Harbour, England, and is now in the Royal Institution of Cornwall at Truro.

It is further claimed that Britain was once known as the Tin Island. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* declares: "There can be no doubt that Cornwall and Devonshire are referred to under the general name of Cassiterides, or the 'Tin Islands.'" Coote's *History of England* states: "Bochart is of the opinion that the Phoenicians called the island by the name of Baratanac, i.e., *The Land of Tin*, an appellation which the Greeks softened into *Bretania*, and whence arose the Roman *Britannia*."

In the remarkable prophecy concerning Tyre (Phoenicia) contained in Isaiah 23, the decline of Tyre as a mercantile marine power is predicted, at which time her maritime dominance would "pass over to Tarshish" (Isa. 23:6). Later, in the same chapter, the ships of Tarshish are likewise called upon to howl, "for your strength is laid waste" (v. 14). The prophecy thus anticipates the decline of sea power of both Tyre and Tarshish.

The Scriptures indicate two places called Tarshish, both of which have been linked by trade in the past. They are Britain and India. As to the former, Ezekiel 27:12 shows that Tarshish was noted for tin, and the Book of Jonah 1:3 shows that it lay in a far westerly direction from Palestine. Jonah took ship at Joppa for Tarshish, the furthest country to which he could travel. Leaving Joppa, there was only one direction towards which he could sail: a westerly course down the Mediterranean.

On the other hand, Solomon built a fleet to sail to Tarshish (1 Kings 9:26; 10:22), which sailed from Ebionezer, a port on the Red Sea. Those ships could only sail south and east towards the Straits of Babelmandeb from whence they might proceed east or north for India. The produce they obtained point to India as the eastern Tar-

shish (2 Chron. 9:21), and it is a remarkable confirmation of the prophetic picture that British commercial strength developed largely out of the Anglo-Indian Company.

The Phoenicians also sailed east to India. F. C. Hershaw, writing in *Sea-Power and Empire* shows how the mantle of Tyre fell upon Britain, declaring: "The Phoenicians vastly improved the art of ship-building, and in their more seaworthy vessels they were able, on the one hand, to venture past the Pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar and Ceuta) and traffic in tin with the British. On the other hand, in the opinion of some authorities, from the Red Sea they traversed the Indian Ocean . . ."

To summarise what the Scriptures reveal concerning Tarshish:

Tarshish was a son of Javan with whom Phoenicians were identified (Gen. 10:4).

He gave his name to a country identified at the extremity of the then known world (2 Chron. 9:21; 20:36,37).

Tarshish will be identified as a nation at Christ's return (Ps. 72:10).

Its military, political and naval power will be humbled (Ps. 48:7; Isa. 2:16).

Its people will be converted to Christ at his coming (Isa. 66:19).

Its resources will be placed at Christ's disposal at that time (Isa. 60:9).

A consideration of many of the arguments urged against the exposition contained in *Elpis Israel* relating to Tarshish indicates that their authors have failed to take into consideration all these points of identification.

"All the young lions"—Here is a further identification with the English speaking world. The RSV renders this as "villages," but, in fact, the Hebrew word *kephiyir*, with but one exception, has been invariably rendered "lions." As Ezekiel elsewhere uses the word for nations (Ezek. 32:2; 19:3), it seems most

EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES OF THE RESTORATION

appropriate to use it here in spite of the RSV. As such it points to the heraldic symbol of Britain.

But who are the "young lions"? It seems an apt reference to the British Commonwealth of Nations, plus America. A "young lion" is not necessarily a cub, but a powerful, virile animal in full strength and vigor of life. This aptly describes those nations that have come into existence through the Mother Country.

"Shall say unto thee"—The prophecy thus demands that each of the nations so defined should independently raise a voice of protest against the attack from the north. Here, again, there is a remarkable fulfilment of prophecy in recent years. Originally, a declaration of war on the part of Britain would automatically involve the colonies, but Ezekiel's prophecy requires independent declarations on the part of each of the powers there referred to, including each of the "young lions." This has been brought about in recent years, for whereas America gained her independence by war, the colonies gained it by legislation. The *Statute of Westminster* in 1931 granted autonomy to such "young lions" as Australia, Canada and South Africa. An attack by Russia will call for an independent protest from each, as the prophecy demands.

"Art thou come..." — This threatening voice of protest implies the presence of British and American troops in the Middle East at the time indicated. Despite present indications, events at the time of the end will bring this about.

The Period — Vv. 14-16

Christ's first work is to raise the dead (1 Thess. 4:16) and judge them (1 Pet. 4:17), in order that the glorified and immortal saints might assist him in the judging of the nations (Psalm 149). As the judgment of the household might well occupy some years, and Armageddon takes place subsequent

to this, so the period of the judgment on Gog is still some time in the future, though Christ's return could be at any moment. As there is a set day to favor Zion (Psalm 102:13), so there is a set time to judge the nations (Acts 17:26), and "that day" is appointed of Yahweh (Acts 17:31).

VERSE 14

"In that day"—This is the period appointed of Yahweh (Acts 17:31).

"My people of Israel"—Here, again, is a wonderful confirmation of the prophecy. Ezekiel speaks of Israel as a people or nation: an event that took place in May 1948. Until then Israel was not a national nor a geographical term; today it is both. Those in the land are described as "My people" on a national, not a spiritual, basis. Later (Ch. 39:26) they are condemned because of their trespasses at the very time here indicated. However, Jews today who have returned to the land, have in part obeyed the Divine will, even though unknowingly.

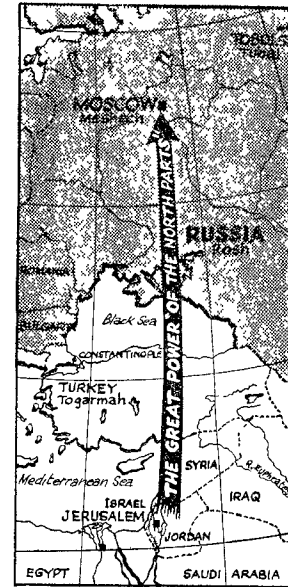
"Shalt thou not know it?"—The A.V. suggests that Gog will recognize the vulnerability of the Middle East at that time. Israel will be dwelling safely and unsuspectingly. The "peace and safety" cry will have resounded throughout Europe (1 Thess. 5:3), when "sudden destruction" shall overtake the nations. As this takes place after Christ's return and whilst the household is being judged, there is ample time for any further political developments such as may be required in regard to Israel. See also notes on vv. 8,11. The LXX, however, renders the question as, "Wilt thou not rouse thyself?" It thus draws attention to the sudden attack that will be launched by the Russian Gog.

VERSE 15

"Thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts"—The RV renders: "Out of the uttermost parts of the north." From Israel, Russia

EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES OF THE RESTORATION

is the most northerly country, occupying the "uttermost parts" thereof. Moscow is almost directly north of Jerusalem!



VERSE 16

"In the latter days"—There may have been a partial fulfilment of the prophecy of the Scythians in times contemporary with Ezekiel, but here the declaration is clear and certain that it is to be fulfilled at the time of the end, the period in which Daniel 11:40-45 also will be fulfilled.

"My land"—The land of Israel belongs to Yahweh (Deut. 11:12), and not to Israel after the flesh (Lev. 25:23). He has promised it to Abraham and his spiritual seed "for ever" (Genesis 13:15). It is therefore a desecration of that which is holy, or separated unto Yahweh's use, for Gog to stretch forth his unhallowed hands to grasp it. This is the ground of the controversy between Gog and Yahweh (cf. Joel 3:2).

"When I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes"—

Yahweh will bring Gog against the land, in that He will develop conditions that will appear to Gog as propitious for the attempt and will permit Gog to attempt to take possession of it. He will be "sanctified" in Gog, by taking vengeance upon him for assailing Israel. This will reveal that He is holy, righteous and not unmindful of the welfare of His people. Yahweh's intervention will show beyond all doubt that He is the God of Israel. It will reveal how real is the Hope of Israel, and will show that He will not tolerate the blasphemy of Gentilism.

All this will be exemplified in the Divine judgments to be poured out, and it will play a part in causing the nations to ultimately submit to His demands. Thus the judgment of Armageddon, and the national salvation that God will bring to Israel will cause others to accept the Truth that will then be proclaimed in His name through Christ and the saints. The nations shall "know" Him in the sense of John 17:3, in a way that will be reflected in action. All nations will be humbled at that time: Israel by the invasion of Russia; The Western World by its incompetence to stop the Russian onslaught; and Russia, by the outpouring of Divine judgment.

"Before their eyes"—The amazing overthrow of Gog on the very eve of apparent victory will reveal the supernatural means by which it will have been accomplished. This will be displayed "before the eyes" of all nations, for they shall all learn of it.

The Purpose — Vv. 17-23

There is mercy in Divine judgment, for only through such means will the virtues of serving God be brought home to the people (Isa. 26:9-10). Apart from Divine intervention, the nations, with the terrifying weapons of destruction they possess, could well nigh destroy each other in the struggle for survival.

VERSE 17

"Art thou he of whom I have

spoken in old time by my servants the prophets"—The theme of Armageddon is found in all the prophets, though presented in different ways and diverse manner. The judgment poured out is a bruising on the head (*Ros*) of the serpent power in political manifestation, and as such it is a fulfilment of the covenant in Eden (Gen. 3:15). The final crushing of the serpent power, of course, awaits the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:2,10,14).

VERSE 18

"My fury shall come up in my face"—The word "fury" is from the root *yacham*, "to be hot, to flush up red." Rotherham renders the word as "indignation." This fury, or indignation, will be seen in the face of Yahweh. Such an expression however, relates not to Yahweh as a person, but to His manifestation in Christ and the saints. The use of the term "Yahweh's face" for His manifestation in His agents is common throughout the Word. For example, Cain declared to Yahweh's representative: "From Thy (Yahweh's) face shall I be hid," meaning from the faces of those angels who represented Him at that time (Gen. 4:14,15). Isaiah, speaking of the future Divine intervention at Armageddon, declared: "Behold, the name of Yahweh cometh from far, burning with His anger . . ." (Isa. 30:27). By "the name of Yahweh" is meant the manifestation of Yahweh in the glorified saints who are today being "taken out of the nations, a people for His name" (Acts 15:14). They will manifest His glory unto the world, and at the epoch of Gog's destruction, the world will see the Divine fury and anger manifested through them, for they will be the instruments of the judgment to be poured out (see Psalm 149).

VERSE 19

"In my jealousy"—The same word is elsewhere translated "zeal." The desecration of His land and people is hateful to Yahweh, and

will cause His zeal to be extended in their cause. It will be manifested in preserving the remnant of Israel (Isa. 37:32), in arming His warriors (Isa. 59:17), in going forth to war (Isa. 42:13; Zech. 8:2), in gathering the nations for judgment (Zeph. 3:8); and finally in extending the influence of David's throne throughout the world (Isa. 9:7). None can touch the things of Yahweh with impunity (Joel 2:18). His zeal will protect and preserve them.

"In the fire of My wrath"—See Ezek. 36:5. The RSV renders this "My blazing wrath." The judgment upon the nations will be frightening (Isa. 30:27-33; Jer. 25:30-33; Dan. 12:1; Joel 3:16, etc.).

"A great shaking in the land of Israel"—Contrast Ezek. 37:7. Israel will be shaken together, but Gog's forces will be shaken apart. There will be tremendous seismographic upheavals and convulsions of nature at Christ's return, as there were at his death (Matt. 27:50-54), and these will cause great fear and dismay throughout the world. In the land of Israel, the heterogeneous forces gathered together under the banner of Gog will turn their weapons on one another in superstitious dread at the unaccountable events. Thus they will destroy one another.

VERSE 20

"So that the fishes," etc.—The earthquake that will shatter the confidence of Gog's forces will be universal in its effect, and will cause fear and dismay throughout all creation (see Zech. 14:4; Isa. 2:19; 30:25, etc.).

"At my presence"—The Hebrew word *paniyim* signifies "faces" (cp. Gen. 4:14), and these "faces" relate to Christ and the saints which shall then burn with righteous anger. The same faces that bring dread and destruction to the wicked, will illuminate the world with Divine light and glory (Rev. 10:1). The Lord declared that "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). Elsewhere we learn that

the Sun is a symbol of Yahweh (Psalm 84:11), and as the Sun destroys darkness, so the faces of Yahweh "shall be against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them in the earth" (Ps. 34:16).

The "faces" here described by Ezekiel should be linked with his vision of the Cherubim in Chapter 1, for the Cherubim had "four faces" (v. 6), that shone forth with Divine glory. The appearance of the Cherubim was "the likeness of the glory of Yahweh" (v. 28). In his earlier chapters, the prophet described how that glory was withdrawn from Israel, but now in these prophecies of the restoration he predicts that the glory will return. It will return, however, not as the Shekinah glory in the Temple, but manifested in a multitude of glorified ones united as one with Christ Jesus. This is the "presence" or "faces" of Yahweh in the earth. Later (Ch. 43:2-3) Ezekiel described how the "glory" will enter the restored Temple that he saw in vision, and he relates how he heard "His voice," as the "noise of many waters" (or proclaimed through a multitude of agents), and "the earth shined with his glory." It will be this manifestation of Divine glory shining forth belligerently in the multitude of resurrected and immortalised saints that will cause the nations gathered together for war to "shake."

"The mountains shall be thrown down"—Rotherham renders this as "torn asunder." Zechariah 14:4 shows that the Mt. of Olives shall be torn apart, showing conclusively that Zechariah 14 and Ezekiel 38 relate to the same incident. The tremendous earthquake will split the Mount of Olives, elevate Zion, and cause great changes throughout the Land. See notes on Zechariah.

"The steep places shall fall"—Zechariah 14:10 shows how the earthquake that will split the Mount of Olives will turn the mountainous parts adjacent to Jerusalem into a plain. See the verse by verse exposition of Zechariah.

"Every wall shall fall to the ground"—A wall is a human form of protection and defence, and this expression indicates that all forms of such will be completely overwhelmed. But the language is reminiscent of the remarkable overthrow of Jericho which is thus set forth as a type of the coming judgment.

VERSE 21

"I will call for a sword against him"—There is perfect justice in this, because earlier Gog has announced his intention of attacking a people "called back from the sword" (v. 8). Now the sword of Divine justice and wrath is issued against Gog. In addition to Gog's own mutually antagonistic forces, the remnants of Judah in the land shall also take up weapons and regroup their forces to fight the invader (Zech. 14:14).

"Every man's sword shall be against his brother"—In panic and fear at the unexpected and inexplicable antagonist, the confederated forces shall turn their weapons one upon another (Hab. 3:14), and like the host opposed by Gideon they shall largely encompass their own destruction (Judges 7:21-22). The victory of the future has thus been typed in the past by the courage and faith of Gideon's 300 men, and by the faith of Jehoshaphat at a similar time of crisis (2 Chron. 20:23).

VERSE 22

"I will plead"—Rotherham renders this as "contend" which certainly expresses the thought better.

"With pestilence and with blood"—This is what Israel experienced in the past (Ezek. 5:17; 14:19). The form of pestilence is described by Zechariah (Ch. 14:12), and is suggestive of the effect of the spirit in belligerent manifestation. This will be used by Christ and the saints as a weapon of aggression against the enemy. "Pleading with blood" suggests the internecine warfare that will break out between the forces of Gog.

"I will rain upon him"—The very elements of nature will be used against Gog, as Yahweh goes forth to fight "as in the days of old" (Zech. 14:3-cp. Josh. 5:14; 10:14; 23:3; Jud. 4:15).

"An overflowing rain"—This describes a rain of such intensity as to completely submerge its victims in destruction. The same expression is used in relation to the judgment on Jerusalem (Ezek. 13:11), and implied in the judgment on Sisera's forces (Judg. 5:21). These are typical of the coming destruction of Gog.

"Great hailstones" — Hailstones are literally *stones of ice*. This suggests a repetition of the victory of Joshua at Bethhoron against the confederacy of nations (Josh. 10:11). The account declares that there was "no day like it" (v. 14). The future will exceed the wonder of that day, however, as both Ezekiel and Habakkuk indicate (cp. Hab. 3:11).

"Fire and brimstone"—This suggests the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19), and the warning words of the Lord Jesus (Luke 17:28-29).

VERSE 23

"Thus"—This chapter has outlined the great crisis of the last days in which the Lord Jesus with the glorified elect will dramatically introduce himself to a startled world. The last time the world saw the Lord was when he hung lifeless from the stake of shame; but he will return as Lion of the tribe of Judah and powerfully subdue the nations and assert his authority in the earth; first at Jerusalem and then throughout the world.

The imagery brought together in these verses is borrowed from notable victories of the past when the judgment of Yahweh was poured out upon flesh, which are now shown as typical of the coming great judgment of the future. Thus the overthrow of the walls of Jericho foreshadows the coming crisis when all human forms of defence

will be thrown down (v. 20); the destruction of the confederated forces by Gideon and his 300 faithful warriors, is seen as a type of the end of the Gogian confederacy (v. 21); the victory of Barak against overwhelming odds, anticipates that of the Lord Jesus against the might of flesh in this chapter (v. 22); the overwhelming fire of judgment on Sodom likewise overwhelms these Gentiles who desecrate God's holy land and people (v. 22). Thus the coming day of Yahweh, described in this chapter as "that day" (v. 14), and by Isaiah as the Day for which Yahweh waits (Isa. 30:18) will witness flesh thoroughly humbled in the land. The outstanding victory and judgment will combine all those of the past in a tremendous and awe-inspiring outpouring of Divine power in belligerent manifestation to the glory of the Name of Yahweh. It will commence "a time of trouble such as never was" for the nations (Dan. 12:1). And though, even after this time, the Catholic countries of Europe regroup their forces to resist the rising power of Zion (Rev. 17:12-14), the Lord Jesus, through his Israelitish army (both mortal and immortal. Ps. 149:7-9; Zech. 9:13-14) will invade their territories to bring them successively under his power. Thus the Kingdom of God, like the stone cut out of the mountains without hand (Dan. 2:34) will gradually extend its control, until all nations are subject to the Lord Jesus (Rev. 11:15).

"I will magnify Myself"—Yahweh will be magnified before flesh through the remarkable victory that will be won. It will be apparent to the Jews in the land that it will have been brought about by Divine power. The outpouring of Divine judgment will compel the wicked to acknowledge this (Isa. 26:9), though saints always recognise His omnipotence (Ps. 34:3; 69:30).

"Sanctify Myself"—Yahweh will reveal that He is entirely different to flesh, and as this is recognised by mankind, so the nations will gradually be won over to His cause.

The Humbling of Flesh and Vindication of Yahweh

Chapter 39

This last chapter of Ezekiel's Prophecies of the Restoration provides the wonderful sequel. The judgment first kindled in the Land of Israel will extend to Europe where Divine fire will purge the nations. Meanwhile the land will be cleansed of the pollution caused by Gog's forces, and a great Tomb or Mausoleum described as a city of the dead, will be erected to commemorate the triumph of Yahweh over flesh. It will provide a permanent warning to the mortals of the millenium pointing to the form of punishment that will inevitably follow revolt against the Divine authority. On a basis of faith, manifested in the acknowledgment of Yahweh's right to execute such judgment, the nations will be invited to enter into covenant relationship with the new Government set up in Jerusalem. The Gentiles will come to understand fully the Divine purpose in Israel, and will be incorporated in the Kingdom to be set up by Christ. At the same time, the full regathering of Israel shall take place, and they, changed in heart, shall be granted the first dominion in the Empire then established.

The Complete Humiliation of Gog —Vv. 1-5

Gog's forces will be completely destroyed, as a sign to all nations of the presence of Christ in the earth.

VERSE 1

"O Gog, the chief prince of Mesh-ech and Tubal"—See notes on Ch. 38:2. Again Gog is described as prince of Rosh, Mosc, and Tubal, and Magog is not mentioned, but is dealt with separately (v. 6).

VERSE 2

"I will turn thee back"—This is merely a repetition of Ch. 38:4, and does not relate to a further "turning back."

"Leave but a sixth part of thee"—The RV renders this: "I will lead thee on," the RSV: "I will drive you forward." The *Companion Bible* states that the root is *shasha*, to lead, and not *shesh*, six. The statement, therefore, is really explanatory of Ch. 38:4, and does not denote

that a sixth of Gog will remain after the holocaust. Few, if any, will escape the Divine judgment that shall be poured out upon these forces.

VERSE 3

"I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand"—The bow is held in the left hand, and the arrows in the right. The language is therefore symbolic of the utter destruction of Gogian power. Gog's influence will be completely overthrown, but not the nations with him. They will be subjected to Divine judgment in their own lands if they do not obey Christ's ultimatum which shall issue forth to all nations commanding them to submit to his rule (Psalm 2:10-12; Isa. 14:32; Rev. 14:6-7).

VERSE 4

"I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort"—Isaiah uses this expression as symbolic of a man "from the east" who does the will of Yahweh (Isa. 46:11). Applying it in similar fashion here, it can be related to the "kings of the east" or

those who are manifested "out of the Sun's rising," on whose behalf these things will take place (Rev. 16:12). The "ravenous birds" therefore constitute the glorified saints, the royal priesthood of the age to come, called out of all nations to reign with Christ (Rev. 5:9-10).

"The beasts of the field"—The word *chay*, life, here rendered "beasts" is translated "living creatures" in Ezekiel 1, and there identified with the Cherubim. The resurrected and immortalised saints will comprise the "ravenous birds" (or kings of the east) and beasts (or Cherubic living creatures) who will overthrow Gog's forces.

VERSE 5

"Thou shalt fall upon the open field; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Yahweh"—In Yahweh's word there is power, and it will accomplish what it proclaims (Isa. 55:11). This fact is constantly affirmed throughout Ezekiel's writings.

The Western World Humbled—Vv. 6-7

The overthrow of Gog will bring Russian domination to an end. But then the Catholic countries of Europe will confederate to defeat the rising power of Zion, lending their power "unto the beast" (the Germanic power of Central Europe) to that end (Rev. 17:13-14). After issuing the ultimatum calling upon all nations to submit, and accepting the homage of those who do so (Isa. 18:3; 60:9), Christ will commence his plan of campaign and conquest against those who do not (Rev. 14:6-8). Israel, officered by the saints will be used for that purpose (Zech. 9:13-14; 10:5), and by this means, supplemented by the outpouring of Divine power, the Lord Jesus Christ will "rebuke strong nations afar off" (Isa. 2:2-4).

VERSE 6

"I will send a fire on Magog"—See note, Ch. 38:2. The Catholic countries of Central Europe are par-

ticularly singled out in this verse, probably because of their past brutality against the Jewish people, and long heritage of anti-semitism.

"Among them that dwell carelessly in the isles"—This can be literally rendered, "securely in the coastlands." The expression relates to people who are so remote from the centre of conflict (like Australia) as to believe that their very insularity will provide them with immunity from judgment. However, none will be exempt; "strong nations afar off" will be rebuked (Micah 4:3).

"They shall know that I am Yahweh"—Their conversion shall follow the judgment poured out.

VERSE 7

"I will make my holy Name known in the midst of my people Israel"—The full meaning and power of the name of Yahweh will be revealed by these judgments and succeeding acts of mercy, and it will be acknowledged on all sides. Yet some imagine that the Divine Name is already completely fulfilled, and never to be used! See the notes on Ch. 36:23. Yahweh will reveal His purpose, character and power unto all men, and by this they will come to appreciate what is incorporated in His name (Ps. 20:1). This will be centred in the "midst of Israel" because there the "house of prayer for all nations" will be erected, and to it those nations once gathered to Jerusalem for war will ascend for worship (Zech. 14:16).

"I will not let them pollute My holy name any more"—To "pollute" the Name is to profane it by denying it its due (see Ezek. 20:39). This Israel has done in the past (Ezek. 36:22), but such profanation will not be permitted in the future because vigorous methods will be adopted to preserve the truth in its purity. See Zech. 13:1-4.

"The heathen shall know that I am Yahweh, the Holy One in Israel"—All nations will come to recognise

the significance of the Name in relation to Israel (Jer. 33:6), and shall see the Plantation to the Name in the midst thereof—the multitude of the Redeemed whose family name is Yahweh Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exod. 3:15). See Ezek. 34:29, and notes thereon.

Yahweh Honored—V. 8

The Day of Yahweh will ultimately see Him honored in all the earth.

VERSE 8

"Behold it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord Yahweh"—Rotherham renders this: "Lo, it is coming, and it is brought to pass." For nearly six thousand years Yahweh's purpose has been plainly set before mankind, but how many have heeded? The majority has mocked and derided it; but to the faithful, the certainty of its fulfilment is beyond all doubt. The day that shall usher it in will be welcomed with relief and joy by all who are on His side.

"This is the day"—It is described elsewhere (Isa. 2:12; Zech. 14) as the Day of Yahweh; the Day when He will be vindicated in the sight of all people, and His glorious purpose will be brought to pass. When that day comes, Israel will be caused to recognise that everything that He has brought to pass has been for their good (Ezek. 14:23),—and this will apply also to the true Israel of God.

Gog's Weapons Destroyed—Vv. 9-10

The weapons of Gog, the symbols of fleshly power, will be completely destroyed.

VERSE 9

"They shall set on fire and burn the weapons"—The symbols of war shall be destroyed in the land of Israel (Ps. 46:9; Ps. 96). It was an ordinance of the Law of Moses that everything taken as spoil in war be subjected to fire, and those metals that stood the test should be cleansed and used (Num. 31:21-23). The

weapons of Gog will likewise be subjected to fire. The destruction of the weapons of war in which man today places his trust will serve as a token of Yahweh's power and man's inadequacy, and will indicate that no longer will confidence be placed in fleshly power. Isaiah says, "they will learn war no more" (Isa. 2:4). The ceremonial and national burning of weapons will testify that there is no further need of such, so that lasting peace will ensue.

"Seven years"—Seven is the number of the covenant, and seems here to point to that covenant that ensures a millennium of peace. In preparation for it, seven years will be occupied in repairing the ravages of war. During this period of time, probably, Christ will consolidate his power in Israel, and issue the ultimatum to the nations to voluntarily submit to his rule, or take the consequences.

VERSE 10

"They shall take no wood out of the field"—The language of these verses is figurative, the ancient weapons representing modern arms of war. In previous ages such wooden weapons would have been used as fuel for the benefit of the people, and in a sense the same principle will apply in the future. The weapons will be fed to the flames, but anything that can be profitably used will be converted to the use of Israel.

"They shall spoil those that robbed them"—See Isa. 51:22-52:3. Israel will become the "first dominion" dominating all others (Mic. 4:8), and the wealth of the world will flow towards Jerusalem (Isa. 60:5, 9 mg).

The City Of The Dead—Vv. 11-16

After the land has been thoroughly cleansed of the polluting presence of the Gentile invader, a great monument will be erected therein to commemorate the victory of Yahweh over flesh. It will stand as a permanent warning to the people of

the folly of revolt against God's authority and law.

VERSE 11

"I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel"—The Hebrew word for "graves" is not *sheol* which signifies the general grave, but *qeber*, a memorial. A mausoleum is a memorial, or a *qeber*. Houbigant translates the passage: "an illustrious place for sepulchre"; Rotherham renders it: "A place of memorial for burial." A memorial will be set up commemorating the complete overthrow of Gog.

"The valley of the passengers on the east of the sea"—This is the valley route east of the Jordan. Possibly the remnant of Gog's host shall retreat north and east across the Jordan. Be that as it may, those who shall "go up from year to year to worship in Jerusalem" (Zech. 14:16), will ascend by such a route, east of the Jordan, and will turn west along the valley of Achor to enter the Temple city of Jerusalem. To them, as they ascend for worship, and turn into the valley of Achor, it will be "as a door of hope" (Hosea 2:15). There, herds will be found grazing, doubtless to be used for sacrificial purposes in the Temple to be erected in Zion (Isa. 65:10). But before they come west into the valley to reach this Temple, they will pass by the Memorial to Gog, and will thus be graphically reminded of the dramatic overthrow of the flesh in political manifestation. It will be a most salutary warning against following the flesh in revolt against God. Isaiah declares that these "passengers" or visitors to the land, "shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (Isa. 66:24). Their "worm will not die" in the sense that their judicial overthrow will be constantly commemorated. The visitors to the Temple (v. 23) will not literally see the carcasses of the slain, but they will see this

Memorial to Gog on the eastern side of the Jordan, and will recall the lesson of the judicial judgment thus meted out.

"It shall stop the noses of the passengers"—The Hebrew word for "stop" is *khosam* and signifies "to muzzle." The word *noses* being in italics is not in the text. Thus the statement does not mean that the dead bodies of Gog's host shall be so imperfectly buried that the stench shall stop the noses of visitors in the land, but rather, that when the pilgrims (passengers) ascend north to worship at Jerusalem they shall see the Memorial built to commemorate Gog's overthrow, and shall see in it a token of Yahweh's might and righteousness, and the folly and futility of the flesh in political rebellion against His authority. Thus their mouths will be stopped or muzzled from speaking against God. They will recognise the righteousness of Yahweh's judgment, and will not dare speak in opposition to His decrees.

"They shall call it, The valley of Hamon-gog"—The margin gives the meaning as "The multitude of Gog." The Memorial itself is called a city in v. 16.

VERSE 12

"Seven months shall the house of Israel be burying them"—The object of this close scrutiny and complete burial is that the land might be thoroughly cleansed from the defilement of death (Num. 19:11,22). The long period of time thus occupied is a necessary requirement to ensure the thoroughness of the cleansing, for every bone must be gathered for burial (v. 15).

VERSE 13

"It shall be to them a renown in the day that I shall be glorified"—With enthusiasm the people of Israel shall engage upon the cleansing of the land and this attitude will reflect to their credit. It will be "to them a renown," for they will do it in full recognition of the fact that Yahweh has been glorified in the victory.

VERSE 14

"Men of continual employment"—To cleanse the land thoroughly, men shall be employed to collect and bury any bones of the slain that may remain.

"With the passengers"—These "passengers" are visitors to the land. But what are they doing there? Those of v. 11 doubtless relate to those Gentile visitors who shall enter the land to worship as shown in Zechariah 14:16. But that will be after the Temple has been built and will be a considerable period after the destruction of Gog. It is assessed that the Temple will not be ready for worship, until probably fifty years after Christ's return (Ezek. 40:1). See *The Temple Of Ezekiel's Prophecy*, by H. Sulley. The "passengers" referred to in the verse before us, however, apply to Gentiles in the land during the interim period, following the destruction of Gog, but before the Temple is erected. Isaiah 60:10 declares that "the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls," and the "passengers" of this verse could relate to these "strangers" who will pass to and fro through the land as directed, building the cities as well as the Temple. These "passengers" shall co-operate with those men employed to search for the bones, in the way suggested in v. 15. If they see a bone anywhere, they will set up a sign by it, that those employed for the purpose may take it away for burial. Thus the land will be thoroughly cleansed of all defilement, to become to all mankind the Land of the Holy Place as exhibited in the prophecies of the glory.

"After the end of seven months"—The date of their employment shall commence from after the completion of the main burying.

VERSE 16

"And the name of the city shall be Hamonah"—This "city" is Gog's tomb or Mausoleum, and is called Hamonah, or The Multitude, because of the multitude of the slain buried therein. Therefore, it will be

a city of the dead (Ps. 9:17), and in Ezekiel's prophecy is contrasted with the city of the living, to be erected south of Jerusalem, and to be named Yahweh Shammah (Ezek. 48:35).

The Nations Invited to Yahweh's Sacrifice—Vv. 17-20

Christ's ultimatum to the nations shall demand that they submit to his rule. Those who do so will be invited to join with him in a millennial covenant based upon accepting Gog's destruction as just punishment on rebellious flesh. The slain army of Gog is represented as the covenant victim, and they, as the contracting parties, are represented as figuratively eating thereof.

VERSE 17

"Thou, son of man, speak"—Ezekiel, again typing Christ, is requested to make proclamation to the nations calling upon them to acknowledge the justice of Yahweh's action in overthrowing Gog (Rev. 14:6; Isa. 60:12). This is set forth in highly symbolic language.

"Unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field"—These are used elsewhere as symbols of the nations (Dan. 4:12; Jer. 12:9). Thus the proclamation goes forth to all nations.

"Gather yourselves to My sacrifice"—The invitation is to Yahweh's sacrifice, not that of flesh offered as an atonement for sin. The sacrifice in question is a sacrificial feast which will confirm the millennial covenant into which the nations will enter. It is made on the basis of the punishment of sin, that man may recognise the consequences of his folly and repent (Isa. 34:6; Jer. 46:10; Zeph. 1:7-8). Such a sacrificial meal, partaken of in confirmation of a covenant, joins two parties together in fellowship or mutual agreement. Nations partaking of the sacrifice thus offered by Yahweh, would have to acknowledge that the punishment inflicted on Gog was just. Upon acknowledging that fact, they will be invited to figuratively

"eat" the offering. This implies that they also accept the principle that they would be deserving of similar punishment if they manifest a like guilt. The sacrifice suggested in this verse, therefore, is different to an individual sacrifice for sin, for in that case man offers an unblemished animal for slaughter, to acknowledge that the seat of sin is flesh, and as a token of his intention to crucify the flesh by striving to obey God.

"For you"—There is mercy in Divine judgment. Armageddon will be sacrificial in its character, and will be for the benefit of humanity. If Yahweh did not intervene in the way indicated to vindicate Himself in the face of flesh in such manifestation, mankind would destroy itself through its own folly. Yahweh's judgment is ever designed to redeem those who are redeemable.

"Ye may eat flesh and drink blood"—The Lord Jesus declared that if his disciples did not eat his flesh and drink his blood they would have no life in themselves (John 6:53). There will be no continued existence for the nations in the Kingdom of God unless they accept the principle set forth in the sacrifice of Gog. By acknowledging His righteousness to inflict such punishment, and by submitting to the reign of Christ they will be permitted continued existence in the Kingdom he will set up.

VERSE 18

"Of rams, lambs, goats, all fatlings of Bashan"—These animals are symbolic of the rulers and trained men of Gog's forces, all likened to the well-fed, powerful fatlings of Bashan. The term is used elsewhere for men of the flesh (Ps. 22:12).

VERSE- 19

"Ye shall eat fat till ye be full"—It was a command under the law that the fat should not be eaten (Lev. 3:17). That command related to the specified fat of sacrifices (Exod. 29:13). Here, however, the term is used for the well-fed, fattened flesh

of the slain that is to be figuratively eaten. They shall eat "till they be full," in other words, they will be satiated with that which shall be offered, and of it there shall be plenty for all.

VERSE 20

"Thus shall ye be filled"—They shall eat heartily of the covenant sacrifice, thus showing their complete acceptance of its principles. Thus the nations shall concede Yahweh's right to pour out such judgments. On the grounds of this endorsement of His righteousness, they will enter into national covenant with Him.

"My table"—The altar is referred to as Yahweh's table (Mal. 1:7), and He will figuratively eat with His guests, by entering into covenant with them.

"With horses and chariots, with men of war," etc.—The covenant will incorporate the cessation of all war, those entering into it agreeing to "learn war no more" (Isa. 2:4).

Yahweh's Glory Among The Nations —Vv. 21-23

The Divine glory will be manifested in the company of the Redeemed with Christ at their head. They will dwell in the Temple to be erected in Jerusalem (Ezek. 43:1-3), or will be found among the nations ruling over those cities that shall be placed in their care (cp. Luke 19:17 etc. Rev. 2:26).

VERSE 21

"I will set My glory among the heathen"—In the Most Holy of the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple, the glory of Yahweh was manifested by a glowing light shining above the Mercy seat between the Cherubim. Ezekiel, however, saw the glory of Yahweh depart from the Temple and City (Ezek. 8:4; 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:23), and the people left to their own resources. But he also predicted the return of the Glory at the second advent of the Lord, when the Temple will be again erected as a House of Prayer for all nations. The glory

of the future will take a different form to that of the past, however, for it will comprise the manifestation of Yahweh in the great company of the redeemed, the chief of whom declared that he was the "light of the world" (John 8:12). Ezekiel declared: "The glory of the Elohim (mighty ones) of Israel came from the way of the east (the direction in which it had departed —Ezek. 11:23); and his voice was like the noise of many waters (the noise of a multitude) and the earth shined with his glory" (Ezek. 43:2). Saints are called to that glory (see Rom. 5:2), for they comprise a people taken out of the nations for the Name of Yahweh (Acts 15:14). Isaiah declares that "every one that is called by My name (saith Yahweh), I have created for My glory" (Isa. 43:7). See also Isa. 40:5; 66:

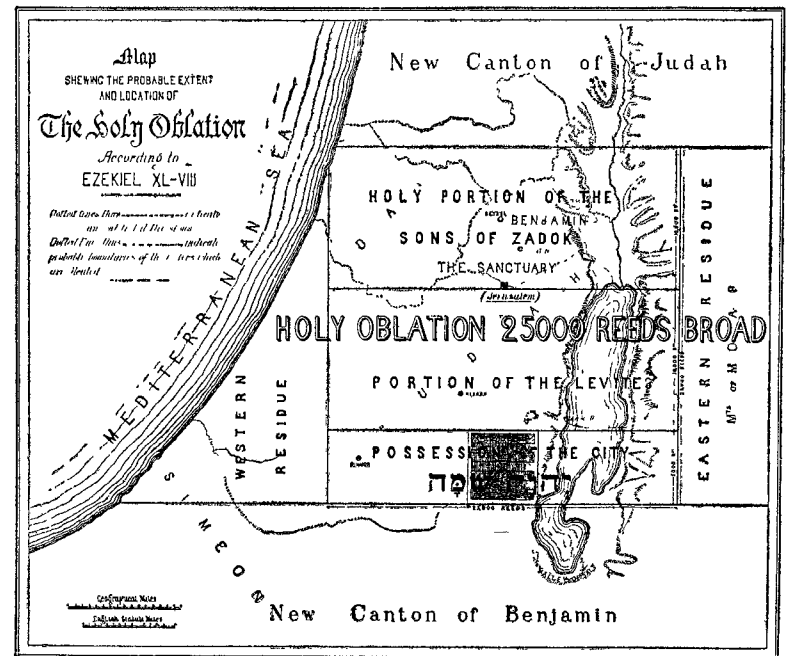
18-19. This glory, manifested in a multitude, will have its headquarters in Jerusalem, but will also be found among the nations (Mal. 1:11).

"They shall see My judgment"—Not merely in the destruction of Gog, but also in the glorification of the Redeemed.

VERSE 22

"The house of Israel shall know that I am Yahweh"—They shall know the full implications of that Name proclaimed when Moses called them out of Egypt, and shall accept the principles of it. See notes Ezek. 36:22.

"From that day and forward"—This shows that Israel will not understand these principles when dwelling "safely" in the land as



The Division Of The Land Providing for A Holy Oblation. This portion of the land will be given over entirely to Divine worship in the Age to Come. See Ezekiel 48.

EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES OF THE RESTORATION

described in Ezek. 38:11. See further comments on v. 26.

The Nations Accept The Hope Of Israel—Vv. 23-24

The nations will be taught Divine principles including the purpose of God in Israel. Accepting this, they will "take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8:23).

VERSE 23

"The heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity"—The Gentiles shall be made to realise that the people of Israel were not carried into captivity because Yahweh lacked the power to protect or deliver them, but as a just punishment for their sins. They will recognise that Yahweh "hid His face from them," and "gave them into the hand of their enemies" as He had warned He would do (Deut.

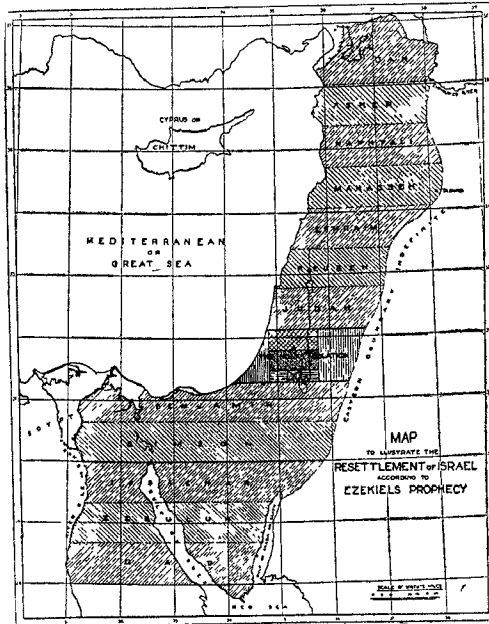
31:17; Lev. 26:25) because they broke their covenant with Him. Thus they will see that His ways and His laws are vindicated in His righteous judgments, and will learn the need to keep the covenant into which they will have entered.

VERSE 24

"I hid my face from them"—God caused His face to shine upon Israel in times of obedience (Num. 6:25), but hid it from them on other occasions (Ps. 80:1).

Final Restoration Of Israel—Vv. 25-29

The final and complete restoration of the people of Israel is now outlined. Having recognised their past blindness, and submitted themselves in humility to their King, the nation will be restored in its completeness. Thus, though Elijah shall be sent forth to the dispersion before the great and dreadful day of Yahweh (Mal. 4), it will not be until after the destruction of Gog that the



EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES OF THE RESTORATION

people will enter the land and the restoration will be completed.

VERSE 25

"Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob"—Literally this signifies: "I will bring back them of the captivity . . ." After the destruction of Gog, the fulness of Israel's restoration will be brought about. The prophet thus emphasises that the full restoration of Israel will take place after the destruction of Gog. "Now" will I do it.

"Have mercy upon the whole house of Israel"—The twelve tribes will be restored to the land. See notes—Ch. 37:22. Ezekiel 48 describes how the twelve tribes will be restored, and outlines the new borders and positions of the tribal territories to be given to them.

"Will be jealous for My Holy Name"—The Name will be thoroughly vindicated and will enjoy full respect and prominence in the Age to come.

VERSE 26

"After that they have borne their shame"—The invasion of Gog, comprising part of "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7) will be part of this "shame". It will help to humble them in readiness to accept their Messiah and King, who will come in the name of Yahweh (Matt. 23:39).

"When they dwell safely in their land"—The time indicated is that referred to in Ch. 38:8. Israel today feels secure in its own personal

power and ability to achieve success, and does not acknowledge its dependence upon Yahweh. Thus the people "curse their God and their king and look upwards" (Isa. 8:21).

VERSE 27

"When I have . . ."—When the people of Israel shall see and recognise Yahweh's goodness towards them, they shall become completely converted, and will accept Him in truth, to be again graft into the good olive (Rom. 11:23-26).

VERSE 28

"They shall know that I caused them to be led into captivity"—They will come to recognise their history from the Divine standpoint, instead of viewing it from the standpoint of flesh. This great revelation will cause them to appreciate that Yahweh "has not done without cause all that He has done" (Ezek. 14:23), and they shall come to "loathe themselves in their sight" (Ezek. 36:31).

VERSE 29

"Neither will I hide My face any more from them"—Their restoration will be complete, and their reformation lasting.

"I have poured out My spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord Yahweh"—By "His spirit" is meant His spirit-word, as in Ch. 36:26. It will be this that will move the people to understand and acknowledge Yahweh in truth, and recognise the full significance of His glorious name.

Summary

This completes our treatment of the prophecies of the Restoration. The next chapter commences the prophet's detailed account of the wonderful vision granted him of the Temple of the Age to come. For a detailed exposition of this most significant prophecy we recommend to the reader, "*The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy*," by H. Sulley. It remains for us to give but a brief summary of Ezekiel's message which we do by adapting some words from *Eureka* slightly altered for our purpose.

Ezekiel prophesied that the Dry Tree of Israel would be made to flourish in the mountain of the heights of Israel; where it shall shoot forth boughs, and bear fruit; and that under its branching foliage shall dwell all fowl of every wing (Ch. 17:22-24). He tells us concerning that epoch, that the kingdom of Israel shall be given to a man of low station whose right it is; that he shall be a Plant of Renown; that he shall be a David; that he shall be a Prince, or High Priest, of Israel for an Aion; that he shall be immortal; that the Holy Land shall be as the Garden of Eden, or Paradise; that the twelve tribes of Israel shall be a united nation, and form one kingdom in the land; that a magnificent Temple shall be built in Jerusalem differing from that of Solomon; that the Dead Sea shall be healed, and become as productive of fish as the Mediterranean; and that from the time of the establishment of these things, great changes shall be brought about in the land. In that day that name of the city shall be changed for it shall no longer be *Yeru* "they shall see," *shalaim*, "peace," but *Salem*, or Peace (Ps. 76:2), for Peace itself will have come. And to the south of the Temple city of Zion, will be found another mighty city where those who desire to worship will be accommodated awaiting the time when they shall be called to the Holy Mount for that purpose. That city shall be called *Yahweh-shammah*, He who shall be is there, for in the persons of the Redeemed, with Christ as their chief, there will be seen the glory of Yahweh apocalypsed on the earth (Ch. 21:26, 27; 34:29, 23; 37:25, 22; 36:35; 47:8-10; 48:35).

In its chequered history, Jerusalem will have had three names. Known first as *Jebus*, *treading down*, it has experienced that among the Gentiles (Luke 21:24); but to the elect its honored name is Jerusalem: *the vision of peace* for their hopes rest upon the glorious future of Jerusalem. But ultimately hope itself will give way to realisation, and then the name of the city will be *Salem*, or *peace* itself (Psalm 76:2).

May that peace be ours, for Christ offers it to us now (John 14:27), and may the glorious vision presented in these thrilling

EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES OF THE RESTORATION

prophecies of the restoration move us to more plainly see the "joy set before us". If we allow them to so affect us we will provide ourselves with the antidote to the trials and frustrations of the present, and with the example of the Lord Jesus before us, will be able to "endure the cross and despise the shame" with eyes steadily centred on the glory yet to be revealed. On all sides there are seen obvious signs of Christ's coming at which time faith will find substance in fact, and the visions of the prophets will become the reality in the earth. These are things of substance, the realities of life even now, though flesh despises such things. "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," declared Paul (2 Cor. 4:18), "for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

All the fleshly symbols of seeming permanence about us — the pulsating cities with their mighty buildings; the possession of land and houses and business; the pomp and pride of nations — are but shadows, matters of but transient importance, soon to pass away. The real substance, the genuine reality, is in the things of Christ. Those things are eternal. And even today, those things of real substance that the future is to reveal in their fulness are casting their shadows. They are seen in the return of the Jews to Palestine, in the growing importance of the Middle East in the councils of the nations, in the division between East and West, in the growth of Russian power. Soon Christ will be in the earth, and the time of our pilgrimage will be over. Let the Prophecies of the Restoration so move us with the facts of faith that we shall not be found wanting in that great day of judgment and glory soon to be revealed in the earth.

"God hath appointed a day" and a man. Both stand at the door. The door will open, and both will enter to the astonishment, affright, affliction, but ultimate blessedness and peace of all mankind. Christ has warned: "Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth." Let us heed his message.

