

The Songs of
ZION

Including a
verse-by-verse exposition
of Psalm 24

by
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Front cover photographs

The main cover photo is a typical tourist view of the City of Jerusalem, taken from the Mount of Olives. The photo has been enlarged so as to show as much as possible of Mount Zion as it is today - the area on the extreme left, sloping away from the wall of the Holy City. The picture of the bougainvillea, which blossoms all over Israel, has nothing to do with this study, but it seems so typical of the beauty of this land "flowing with milk and honey". It reminds us of the Spring evening in the month of Abib when we first set foot on the soil of Israel, to be greeted by the heavy scent of orange blossoms drifting on the evening air. The menorah (7-branched lampstand) has nothing to do with this study either! This is a photograph of the one standing directly across the highway, opposite the gates of the Knesset, or Israeli Parliament. It is beautifully carved in black marble with scenes taken from the Old Testament. The menora, illuminating the darkness of the holy place in the tabernacle, appears so typical of the living Word of God which ought to be to all of us a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths.

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Acknowledgments

This type of book, or set of study notes, is never the result of only one person's work: "there is nothing new under the sun"; we draw always on the writing of others who have gone before, having laid the foundation. And so at the back of these Notes, under *Sources*, we have listed the works of others to whom we are indebted. We in our day, are extremely fortunate in the vast range of reference books, and works of the Truth, which are so readily available to us.

It is a pleasure to thank Bro. Arnold Cheek, of Adelaide, South Australia, for the front cover photo of Jerusalem as it is today.

A trio of Sisters from the Vernon ecclesia have been exceptionally helpful in the writing of these Notes. Sister Christa von Gadenstedt and Sister Pam Fletcher, both relatively new in the Truth and keen Bible students in their own right, have carefully read all the original manuscripts and meticulously checked the exposition. With much prodding and loving criticism they forced the writer to sharpen his wits, to back-track and "get it right!", and they exposed some faulty thinking which might otherwise have ruined the exposition. Sister Lois Bartholomew, the writer's wife, patiently checked all quotations, uncovering a multitude of minor errors, completed the list of scriptural references at the back of the Notes, and assisted with the proof reading.

The writer's son, Brother Brian Bartholomew, provided invaluable advice in the layout of the Notes and in supervising the type-setting. From time to time, other members of the Vernon ecclesia have provided helpful comments on the exposition of various passages and cheerful assistance in the production of the Notes.

Introduction

Every author must have a goal or purpose for writing a book, regardless of the size. There are two reasons for the production of these Notes. The first is because the subject, as all Bible theme studies, is so enjoyable and contains so much exhortation. The second is the hope that the study, set out in the manner in which it is, will encourage others, especially younger members, to continue on and do their own exploration and exposition.

The reader is warned that this is not intended as a book on the Bible which one can sit down and read casually through. These are *study* notes, intended to be used with Bible in hand, to quicken the mind and stimulate the thought process, hopefully thereby causing the reader to peruse the respective passages with an inquisitive attitude that will enrich him spiritually.

The writer freely confesses that this is a rambling study, wandering all over the scriptures of truth in pursuit of his theme - some may even conclude there is extraneous matter which it would have been better to omit. He also is not ashamed to admit that in some sections of these Notes (particularly the verse-by-verse exposition of Psalm 24) he has lavishly followed Brother H.P. Mansfield.

Although the subject is *The Songs of Zion*, considerable space has been devoted to the city itself, some of the Biblical historical events associated with the city, and, more importantly, the reasons God chose Zion for his dwelling place. It was felt that one must have some appreciation of historical facts before one could begin to appreciate why Zion was at the heart of so much of what David wrote in his music.

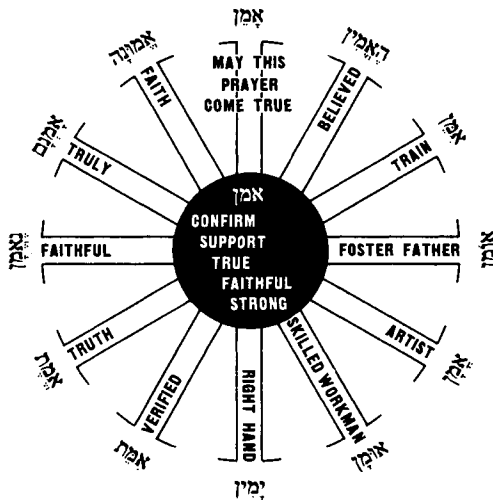
When the writer was relatively new in the Truth, an older brother performed an invaluable service for him by sitting him down for two hours while he went through his own library and advised what study books any Bible student should have. For this reason, and, again, to assist younger readers who do not know how to begin to study (there are many!), under *Sources* and *Study Aids* at the back has been listed all reference books used, most of them standard works used by all serious students of the Bible.

Prime Roots

In the word studies, which are rather profuse, frequent mention is made of the "primitive root". For the benefit of younger people, only just beginning to study the Bible, perhaps it should be explained why these are referred to so often. "Practically all words in Hebrew go back to a root - and this root must have in it three consonants. You can do anything you want to the root: you can use it in any verb form or tense, you can turn it into any one of ten or twenty or more nouns. You can make it an adjective, adverb, preposition, or what you will . . . *No matter what you do* you will always see staring you in the face the three consonants in the root. You can never escape them . . . *No matter what you do* with the root, no matter into what word you turn it - *that word must carry in it something of the meaning of the root.* This is the irresistible logic of all word-building in Hebrew. It is by far the most important and most fundamental law of the Hebrew language."¹ Most of the root meanings in these Notes have been taken from the back of Strong's Concordance.

As an example of the importance of a primitive root, the chart reproduced below has been taken from the same reference work just quoted. In the centre is shown the three Hebrew consonants (reading from right to left) for the prime root, *aman*, from which comes our English word AMEN. *Aman* means to confirm or support; closely related in meaning are the concepts of true, faithful and strength. There are many Hebrew words built from this root. *aman*; the chart simply shows a few of the more fundamental ones.

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¹ *How the Hebrew Language Grew*, by Edward Horowitz: published by Ktav Publishing House Inc., U.S.A.

CHAPTER ONE

The Music and Singing of Israel

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or
who shall stand in his holy place?” Psa. 24:3

Yes, who will be there in that glorious day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns? Who will be accepted and given a spirit-endowed body which will be impervious to sin and the ills of the flesh? Who will be part of that glorious multitude which will sing praises to our Lord upon his throne?

In the opening quote above, “stand” means to rise erect and approved. That is the goal of this study, to establish who will rise erect and approved at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Who will be accepted?

A Psalm of David

In Psalm 24, one of those we have chosen to call the Songs of Zion, we find a sub-heading: A Psalm of David, which also is found in modern versions such as the RSV and NIV. This title is not added by the translators, as is the small type under the chapter headings throughout the Authorised Version, but is part of the inspired record as follows:

PSALM XXIV כד

PSALM 24

1 לְדָוִד מְזֻמָּר לַיהוָה הָאֲרֶץ וּמְלֹאָתָהּ תָּבֵל וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בָּהּ :
 it in those and the the and the (is) To of A
 live who ,world ,it of fulness earth Jehovah .David psalm

Taken literally, we would read from right to left as in the Hebrew: “A psalm of David. To Jehovah is the earth and the fulness of it, the world and those who live in it”. The Hebrew word for “psalm” in this phrase is found only in the titles of the Psalms. We can set out its meaning as follows:

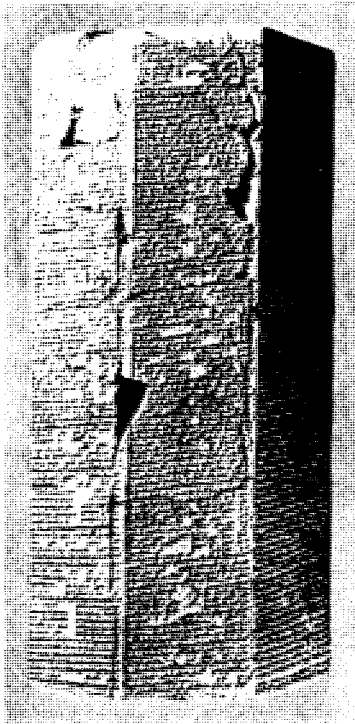
“Psalm” — Heb. *mizmar*; from a prim. root, to strike with the fingers; hence to touch the strings or parts of a musical instrument; i.e.: to play upon it, to make music accompanied by the voice; hence to celebrate in song and music: *a song of praise*.

Therefore, we derived the title for this study: The Songs of Zion.

“Music played a large part in the life and worship of Israel of old. Israel’s singers and the songs of Zion became famous throughout the world”¹ so that, according to Jewish tradition, part of the tribute demanded of Hezekiah by Rabshakeh, representing the king of Assyria, were “male and female musicians”² (see illustration).

Written evidence relevant to the history of music in Erez Israel.

Figure 3a. Hexagonal clay prism of Sennacherib, containing a description of the Assyrian monarch’s campaign against King Hezekiah of Judah, 701 B.C.E. This is almost identical with the copies in the British Museum and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. The list of tribute paid by Hezekiah (c. II Kings, 18:14-16) includes “male and female musicians.” Height 14½ in. (37 cm.). Baghdad Museum.



Taken from *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, published by Keter Publishing House Jerusalem, Ltd. Jerusalem, Israel.

Similarly, when Israel was taken captive in Babylon, “they that carried us away captive required of us a song and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion” (Psa. 137:3). King Solomon was a song writer, “and his songs were a thousand and five” (1 Kgs. 4:32).

¹ *A Handbook to the Psalms*, by Ern Wilson, page 21; published by the Scripture Study Service.

² *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 12, page 574. This quote is not found in the Authorised Version; probably the musicians (singers) were part of the hostages demanded (2 Kgs. 18:23.mg)

For those interested in the actual formation of the Hebrew psalm we add a quote and illustration from the Jewish Encyclopedia:

“In practice, the singer of a psalm verse reaches the ‘recitation note’ through a short initial motion of the voice, dwells on the former for the main part of the text, and concludes the first hemistich with a medial cadence. The second hemistich is performed in the same manner, but concludes with a final cadence. Thus basic psalmodic formula (see Example following) consists of:

initial motion/recitation note/medial cadence/
initial motion/recitation note/final cadence

The simple melodic material of this basic formula can be grasped and reproduced by an average audience after listening to a verse or two. In this respect, psalmody is a truly collective genre of music. Its aesthetic and psychological effect is governed by the recurrent repetition of the same melodic phrase - and element of stability coupled and contrasting with the constantly changing text. The tune, after a few repetitions, loses all interest: the attention automatically turns to the words, which continually offer something new. The accompanying vocal inflections merge and form an acoustical background which infiltrates the subconscious and creates a distinct mood, which eventually becomes associated with a certain feast or time of prayer or with grief and other emotions.”¹

	1st Half-Clause	2nd Half-Clause
	INITIUM · TONE OF RECITATION · MEDIAL CADENCE	INITIUM · TONE OF RECITATION · FINAL CADENCE
Oriental Sephardi		
	2. Hashama-yinmesaperim ke-vod el,	uma' a-seh yadav mag-gid ha-raki--a.
Persia :		
	3. Yom le-yom ya-bi-a o--mer,	we-layla lelay-la ye-ha--ve da'at.
Morocco :		
	4. Eyn o--mer we-eyn devarim	be-li nishma kolam.
Ashkenazi		
	6. We-hu Kehatan yoze me-hu-pato,	ya-sis kegibbor la-ruz o--rah.

EXAMPLE 1. The basic formula of psalmody. Verses of Psalm 19, as chanted in various communities. After Idelsohn, *Melodien*, vol. 4, no. 25 (Oriental Sephardi); *ibid.*, vol. 3, no. 51 (Persia); *ibid.*, vol. 5, no. 17 (Morocco); 1. Lachmann, *Awaudas Yisroel*, vol. 1, 189², no. 154 (Western Ashkenazi).

David's Singers and Instrumentalists

King David was not only a great warrior but a skilled musician and singer. We gain some idea of the influence he had upon the music and singing of Israel in 1 Chron. 23:2-6. Out of 38,000 Levites over the age of thirty, 24,000 were to oversee the work of the temple, and “four thousand praised the LORD with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise therewith”. **4000** instrumentalists - think of that!

¹ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol.12, page 574.

Musical Instruments Developed by King David

DAVID'S HARP—A KINNOR *

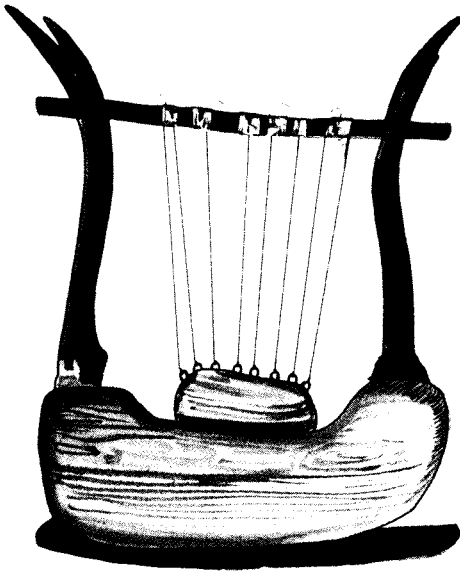
The first musical instrument mentioned in the Bible (Gen. 4:21)

David's Harp was made of fir (cypress or pine) wood (2 Samuel 6:5) Psalm 150:3

* "to twang"



STRINGED INSTRUMENTS



THE PSALTERY—A NEBEL *

Normally of 8 strings
in a larger version of
10 strings (e.g., Psalm 144:9)

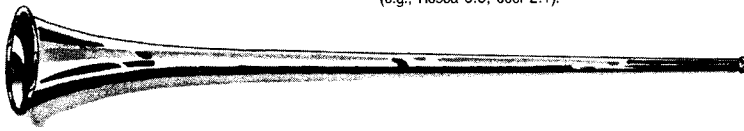
* "a skin bag"

Musical Instruments Developed by King David



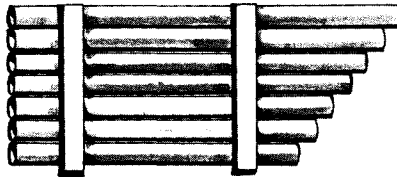
RAM'S HORN (shofar)—used principally by priests (e.g., Joshua 6:6)

A VARIATION OF THE SHOPHAR (AV. Cornet)
—used to sound alarm and in orchestras
(e.g., Hosea 5:8; Joel 2:1).

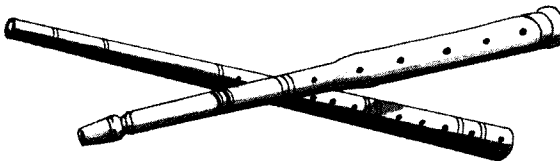


TRUMPET (chatsotserah)—For summoning people and breaking camp
(e.g., Number 10:2)

WIND INSTRUMENTS



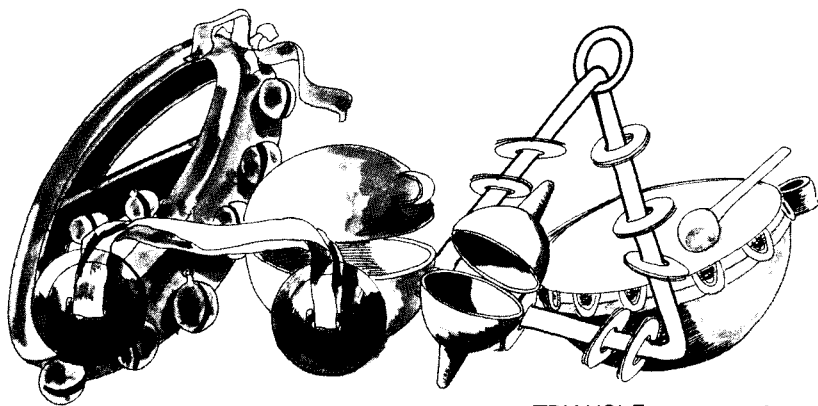
ORGAN (uggab)*—(e.g., Psalm 150:4)



PIPES (chalal)—(e.g., 1 Kings 1:40)

* "a reed instrument of music"

Musical Instruments Developed by King David



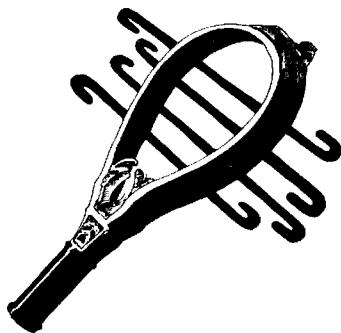
TIMBREL (toph)—(e.g., Psalm 150:4)
(also called tabret)

TRIANGLE **DRUM**

CYMBALS (tselatsal)*—“Loud” or
“high sounding” (e.g., Psalm 150:5)

* “a clatter or clanging noise”

PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS



SISTRUM (menanaim)
(2 Samuel 6:5-cornets)

- jingling instrument of
thin metal frame (shaken)

“**instruments**” — Heb. *kali*: something prepared, any apparatus (of wide meaning).

These particular Levites were divided into courses, or sections, and part of their responsibility was to “stand up every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even” (1 Chron. 23:30). King Hezekiah ordered the worship of Israel in his day “according to the commandment of David” (2 Chron. 29:25) and in

this passage we note that “the Levites stood with instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets” (v.26) and “when the burnt offering began, *the song of the LORD began also* with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David, king of Israel”(v.27). The burnt offering was a sweet savour unto their LORD (Lev.8:21) because it represented the total dedication of the entire nation, offered twenty-four hours a day.

What could be more appropriate than the offering representing total dedication accompanied by innumerable courses of Levites standing to praise their God? Imagine the scene: every day, day and night, week-in and week-out, hundreds upon hundreds of trained singers and musicians beginning and closing the daily life of the nation with songs of praise!

The Levites belonged to God, replacing the firstborn (Num. 3:41,45). Today, we who are a “royal priesthood, an holy nation” (1 Pet. 2:9) and members of “the general assembly and ecclesia of the firstborn” (Heb. 12:23) replace the Levites of old in our service before our God. Do we begin and end the day with songs of praise to our Maker - even in our hearts? We would not expect those of us who cannot carry a tune to burst into song as they climb out of bed in the morning; nor do we think those who cannot read music are suddenly going to lift up their voices in praise at the meetings. But our whole way of life can be a song of praise, as Paul writes: “making melody *in your heart* to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19), and again: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom... singing with grace *in your hearts* to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). Bro. John Thomas wrote somewhere that “each saint is a harp of deity”. Think what a transformation it would make in our lives, and therefore what an influence we would have upon others if our lives were a continual song of praise to our God!

In 1 Chron. 25:1-7 we are given more details about the composition of these courses of David’s. In verse 7 and following we have what one writer has described as “David’s trained choir”: “So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the LORD, even all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight”.

“cunning” — Heb. *bin*: from a prim. root to separate mentally; intelligent, to give the understanding; RV: skilful.

288 intelligent, skilled singers who sang “the songs of the LORD with understanding! 288 = 12 x 24; 24 courses with 12 men each.

Twelve is the number of governmental perfection and to double it simply intensifies its meaning. In the Apocalypse, twelve has reference to perfection of government in the kingdom, by the saints (Rev. 21:14 and 19-20, the twelve precious stones). No wonder in

Revelation 4 and 5 we find the apostle John given his second vision of the Redeemed in the kingdom. They sit on **24** thrones round about the throne of the Lamb and there are **24** elders in number - based on the courses of David. What do they do? They worship the Lamb (Rev.5:8) and they *sing a new song* (v.9). The song is not really a "new" song; it is the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb (Rev. 15:3).

"new" — Gk. *kainos*: not new in time (*neos*), but new in form, quality and *understanding*.

In the kingdom, glorified saints, like David's talented Levites of old, will sing songs of praise to their King and they will sing with understanding the same song that Moses taught the Israelites after they had crossed the Red Sea (Ex. 15) - every word and every phrase filled with new meaning.

Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun

David selected certain highly skilled men to lead these 24 courses, 1 Chron. 25:1: "Moreover David . . . separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals".

"Asaph" — Heb. *collector, gatherer*, from a prim. root: to gather. He was a Gershomite (son of Levi) and was over the service of song: the Choir Director.

"Heman" — Heb. *faithful*, from the same prim. root (*aman*) as the word Amen: the root meaning to build up or support, hence to be firm or faithful, to trust or believe. Heman was a Kohathite, one of the sons of Levi, 1 Chron. 6:1,33,38. He was called "the singer" (i.e. a musician) and to him was entrusted the conduct of the vocal and instrumental music, as we see in a moment.

"Jeduthun" — Heb. *a choir of praise*; probably from a root meaning to use (hold out) the hand; hence to revere or worship (with extended hands), to praise. He was the chief singer or soloist.

Jeduthun is also called "Ethan" (meaning "ancient") and was a descendant of Merari (1Chron. 6:44), the third son of Levi.

We see, then, that Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun were each representative of descendants from the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari (1 Chron. 6:1). They were to "prophesy ... with cymbals."

"prophesy" — Heb. *naba*: to flow forth; a prim. root: to speak, or sing, by inspiration.

When David brought up the Ark to Zion, it was Asaph, the chief singer, to whom he gave Psalm 105: "to thank the LORD" (1 Chron. 16:7). This is a significant passage in the light of what we have already said about the Levites chosen by David. In 1 Chron. 16:41 we read of "Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest that were *chosen*, who were expressed by name, to give thanks to the LORD, because his mercy endureth for ever:"

"chosen" — Heb. *barar*; to purify, from a prim. root: to clarify, examine, *select*. Translated "purified" in Dan. 12:10 and "clean" in Isa. 52:11.

The Isaiah passage is quoted by Paul in *the* New Testament passage on the principle of **separation** from the world, 2 Cor. 6:14-18. At verses 17 and 18 we read: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye *separate*, saith the Lord, and touch not the *unclean* thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

"unclean" — Gk. *akatharos*: not free from foreign admixture, whether good or evil. Anything of the world, even though it may seem entirely harmless, which takes us away from our God and our walk in the Truth, is *unclean*.

Heman and Juduthun were "chosen"; they were Levites (replacing the firstborn), cleansed, sanctified, or purified from association with that which is unclean - the world. So they were chosen to praise their God. We combine the instruction from Paul and Isaiah and we find that we who are the firstborn ones today, "an holy priesthood", can only be sons and daughters of our God and therefore fit to praise him if we, too, are sanctified, set apart from all that is unclean in the world.

Heman must have been an unusual father; he had 14 sons and 3 daughters all "in the Truth" as we would express it today. In 1 Chron. 25:6 we read: "All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman". 14 = 2 x 7: *double* the number of completeness or perfection. What a family!

Preparation for the Temple Orchestra

As we shall see later, the removal of the ark from Kirjath-Jearim to Zion was a most significant event in the life of the nation. It was a time of intense, detailed preparation for "sounding by lifting up the voice with joy", 1 Chron. 15:16. This is the sort of passage we may survey in the daily readings and quickly decide it won't hurt if we skip down to verse 25! However, a little patience bears fruit and a few entries in the margin reaps rewarding benefits to the

reader year-in and year-out. Space prohibits analyzing all the names, which would be a revealing exercise, so we will simply pick out a few highlights.

v. 17: Heman, Asaph and Jeduthun (Ethan) are appointed "to be singers, with instruments of musick, psalteries and harps and cymbals" (v.16). Incidentally, in the reading of the Psalms we note there are 12 written by Asaph himself (e.g.: Psa. 50 *title*. A Psalm of Asaph).

v. 19: *The Brass Section*. RV: "with cymbals of brass to sound aloud".

v. 20: *The Sopranos*. RV: with psalteries set to Alamothe.

"Alamothe" — Heb. *sopranos as treble*, the plural of the feminine word for lass; properly *girls*, i.e. the soprano or female voice.

v. 21: *The Stringed Instrument Section*. RV: "with harps set to the Sheminith"; AV margin: "on the eighth to oversee"; RSV: "to lead with lyres according to the Sheminith".

"Sheminith" — Heb. *the eighth, the octave*. Feminine of the cardinal number eight. A musical term from the root eighth, meaning either: a) the pitch of an octave, b) the name of a scale or time, c) the number of strings (8) on a lyre. In contrast with *Alamothe* it means an octave lower.

v. 22: *The Choir Leader*. RV: "Chenaniah . . . was over the song"; RSV: "Chenaniah, leader of the Levites in music, should direct the music, for he understood it". It would appear that his was a lead voice: AV margin: "he was for the carriage". V. 27: "Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers". RSV: "the leader of the music of the singers".

v. 24: *The Wind Instruments*. "the priests, did blow with the trumpets".

I CHRONICLES 15

17 So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel; and of his brethren, A'saph the son of Bēr-ē-chī'-āh; and of the sons of Mēr-rār-i their brethren, Ethan the son of Kū-shāh'-āh;

18 And with them their brethren of the second *degree*, Zēch-ā-rī'-āh, Ben, and Jā-ā-zī-ēl, and Shē-mī-rā-mōth, and Jē-hī'-ēl, and Unni, E-lī'-āb, and Bē-nāh'-āh, and Mā-ā-sēi'-āh, and Māt-tī-thī'-āh, and E-liph'-ē-lēh, and Mik-nēi'-āh, and Obed-edom, and Jē-i'-ēl, the porters.

19 So the singers, Heman, A'saph, and Ethan, were appointed to sound with cymbals of brass;

20 And Zēch-ā-rī'-āh, and A'-zī-ēl, and Shē-mī-rā-mōth, and Jē-hī'-ēl, and Unni, and E-lī'-āb, and Mā-ā-sēi'-āh, and Bē-nāh'-āh, with psalteries on A'-ā-mōth;

21 And Māt-tī-thī'-āh, and E-liph'-ē-lēh, and Mik-nēi'-āh, and Obed-edom, and Jē-i'-ēl, and Az-ā-zī'-āh, with harps on the Shēm'-in-ith to excel.

22 And Chēn-ā-nī'-āh, chief of the Levites, was for song: he instructed about the song, because he was skilful.

23 And Bēr-ē-chī'-āh and E-l-kā-nāh were doorkeepers for the ark.

24 And Shēb-ā-nī'-āh, and Jē-hōsh'-ā-phāt, and Nēth'-ā-nēel, and A-mā'-sai, and Zēch-ā-rī'-āh, and Bē-nāh'-āh, and E-l-i-ē'-zēr, the priests, did blow with the trumpets before the ark of God: and Obed-edom and Jē-hī'-āh were doorkeepers for the ark.

“trumpets” — Heb. *chatsotserah*; the silver trumpet as in Num. 10:2, not the *shophar* (Ex. 19:16) or ram’s horn which would be too loud and piercing.

The priests with their silver trumpets must have provided a striking addition to the temple orchestra and choirs. Led again by Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun “with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets” (2 Chron. 5:12). It is a reasonable assumption that these trumpet players wore white linen (cp 1 Chron. 15:27). Let us visualize 120 priests dressed completely in white, blowing in unison upon their silver trumpets. In fact, we are told “the trumpeters and singers were *as one*, to make *one sound* to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD” (v.13). A great massed choir “lifted up their voice” accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying “For he is good, *for his mercy endureth for ever*” (v.13). This was the dedication of Solomon’s temple, with the induction of the ark into the most holy place. So acceptable and pleasing to God were these sacrifices of praise that the temple was filled with a cloud “so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God” (v.14).

The truth expressed in the phrase “for his mercy endureth for ever” is the key to acceptable worship.

“mercy” — Heb. *chesed*: loving kindness, goodness, faithfulness, steadfast love based on covenant relation (cp Deut. 7:9,12).

The frequency with which “truth” and “mercy” are joined together in the Old Testament is remarkable; not as a standard of comparison, but as a mode of behaviour on the part of God towards those in covenant relationship with him. The steadfast love of our God towards those walking in truth with him is absolutely unbounding. This is expressed by the psalmist as follows:

“I will sing of the mercies (*chesed*) of the LORD for ever, with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness (*emunah* - truth) to all generations. For I have said, Mercy (*chesed*) shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness (*emunah* - truth) shalt thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a *covenant* with my chosen. I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.”

- Psa. 89:1-4

Compare the words truth, faithfulness, mercy and covenant in

verses 5,8,14,24,33-34 and 49. In this psalm we have *chesed* (mercy, loving kindness) and *emunah* (truth) 7 times each - the perfect expression of the completeness of God's love towards us. Similarly, our imagination is stimulated when we read: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psa.8:10). Mercy (*chesed*), here, is the same as "goodness" in the seven characteristics of Yahweh's name revealed to Moses as recorded in Ex. 34:6-7' and truth in both passages is *emeth*. Yahweh, "abundant in goodness and truth" was manifest in the Word made Flesh in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14), in whom we see "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Coming back to that key phrase: "thy mercy endureth for ever", at the commencement of the very beautiful Psalm 118 we see the interplay of the beautiful Victor's Psalm. It was sung at the laying of the foundation of the temple on the return from captivity by Israel: "they sang together *by course* in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD: because he is good, for *his mercy endureth for ever* towards Israel" (Ezra 3:11). Psa. 118 was again sung by the Lord Jesus Christ and his disciples after they celebrated the Passover together: "And when they had sung an hymn (mg. psalm) they went out into the mount of Olives" (Mth. 26:30). How do we know they sang Psa. 118?

Jesus and his followers had just celebrated the Passover together (Luke 22:1,7; Mth. 26:17). The Hallelujah Psalms were part of the

HALLELU-YAH

Passover Songs of Praise

<p>PASSOVER OBSERVANCE Proclaiming Deliverance (Exodus 6:6)</p>	<p>PSALM 113: To Him Who Humbles Himself</p> <p>114: For His Power— (when Israel went out)</p>
<p>PSALM 115: Unto Thy Name— (from Priest, People, Proselyte)</p> <p>116: To Him Who Hears</p> <p>117: Praise From All People</p>	<p>SALVATION— through Faith and suffering through love (Exodus 6:7-8)</p>
<p>THE VICTOR'S PSALM (Matthew 26:26-30)</p>	<p>PSALM 118: To Him Who Saves— V. 1 4—0 give thanks V. 5 13—My Deliverer—Yah V. 14 20—My Strength—Yah V. 21 28—My Salvation—Yah V. 29 —0 give thanks</p>

observance of the Passover as we see by the following: "Psalms 113-118, 'The Hallel' - the Passover Song of Praise, which was sung also at the other great feasts (Pentecost and Tabernacles), as well as at the festival of Dedication and at new moons".¹ Bullinger writes: "The Psalms of this group are called the Hallel Psalms (113-118). Psalms 113,114 were sung before the Paschal meal (but after the second of the four cups of wine); 115-118 after it. The last (118) probably sung by the Lord Jesus (Mth. 26:30)".²

The Hallel Psalms, including Psalm 118, will be sung by the glorified multitudinous body of Christ, the Redeemed, following the overthrow of the apostate Roman Catholic ecclesiastical organization by Christ and the saints: "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia, And her smoke rose up for ever and ever" (Rev. 19:1-3).

The first verses of Psa. 118 can be divided into courses as follows:

- v.1 The whole congregation: "O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good, because *his mercy endureth for ever.*"
- v.2 The people: "Let Israel now say, that *his mercy endureth for ever.*"
- v.3 The priests: "Let the house of Aaron now say, that *his mercy endureth for ever.*"
- v.4 The proselytes: "Let them now that fear the LORD say, that *his mercy endureth for ever.*"
- v.5 Personal: "I called upon the LORD in my distress: the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place."

The psalm closes with that refrain:

- v.29 "O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for *his mercy endureth for ever.*"

In the privacy of our own personal meditation and worship we contemplate our Saviour meditating upon this psalm as he went forward to suffer on our behalf. Key verses would have given him great comfort and strength:

- v.5 YAH, my Deliverer
- v.14 YAH, my Strength
- v.21 YAHWEH, my Salvation.

¹ *A Handbook to the Psalms*, by Ern Wilson, page 178; published by the Scripture Study Service.

² *The Companion Bible*, page 833; published by Samuel Bagster and Sons Limited.

CHAPTER TWO

The Lord Loveth the Gates of Zion

We often do not realize the particular significance of an event, place or character in scripture until we collate the various pieces of information together. If we do this with Zion we end up with something like the following:

- Psa. 2:6 "my holy hill of Zion."
- Psa. 46:4 "the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High."
v.5 "God is in the midst of her;"
- Psa. 48:1 "the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness."
v.2 "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion,"
v.8 "the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God."
- Psa. 50:2 "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined."
- Psa. 68:16 "this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in: yea, the LORD will dwell in it for ever."
- Psa. 78:68 "the mount Zion which he loved."
- Psa. 87:2 "the LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob."
v.3 "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."
- Psa. 125:1 "They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever."
- Psa. 132:13 "For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation."
v.14 "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it."

First of all we note the recurrence of “the LORD” - the Yahweh name, the Memorial name. It would appear our attention is being directed to the fact that Zion, whether associated with natural Israel or spiritual Israel, is representative of those who are in covenant relationship with our God. We will look at this later on in our study. The foregoing list is certainly not exclusive, but does give us a strong indication of how God views *Zion*. Why? Why *Zion*?

In answer to the question: Why did God choose Zion, we will find that he gave special blessings to the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, which involved Zion. But even before this he had already determined that there must be a special place for his people, the seed of Abraham, to meet and worship him. This central place of worship in all ages would be a great unifying factor in the lives of his people. We begin, then, with a consideration of:

A Dwelling Place for His Name

Two passages of Scripture leave no doubt as to God’s decision as to where he would place his name:

“But I have chosen Jerusalem, that *my name might be there*; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.”

- 2 Chron. 6:6

“Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, *to put his name there.*”

- 2 Chron. 12:13

See also 1 Kings 11:32,36 and 1 Kings 14:21. These passages reiterate the purpose of God that, out of all the tribes of Israel, he had selected the city of Jerusalem, in the land given to Judah, in association with Mount Zion which he loved, in order to *put his name there*.

The phrase, “to put his name there”, becomes a theme in certain sections of Deuteronomy, especially chapters 12 to 16 where we read eight times that God “shall choose to place his name there” all in reference to the offerings and sacrifices which Israel were commanded to bring. For example:

“But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to *put his name there*, even unto his *habitation* shall ye seek.”

- Deut. 12:5

The theme recurs at the dedication of Solomon’s temple when the King describes it as “the place of which thou hast said, *My name shall be there.*” (1 Kgs. 8:29). God confirms this selection to Solomon after the latter’s prayer at the dedication: “And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have

heard thy prayer and have *chosen this place to myself* for an house of sacrifice.” (2 Chron. 7:12).

The place where God chose to put his name is the place where he chose to dwell with his people. Once again a word study reveals fascinating clues for our edification. We look closely at the word “habitation” already quoted in Deut. 12:5:

“habitation” — Heb. *shaken*, a residence; from the prim. root *shaken*, to reside or permanently stay, to dwell or tabernacle. Used in Ex. 25:8: “make me a sanctuary that I may *dwell (shakan)* among them.”

Shakan, to dwell or tabernacle, carries with it the idea of permanence, even for eternity, as we see in the following three well-known, beautiful and significant passages:

“this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD *will dwell (shakan)* in it *for ever*”
(a Song of Zion, as the Ark comes to Zion)
- Psa. 68:16

“For thus saith the high and lofty One, that *inhabiteth (shakan) eternity*, whose name is Holy; I *dwell (shakan)* in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.”
- Isa. 57:15

“Son of man, the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I *will dwell (shakan)* in the midst of the children of Israel *for ever*.”
- Ezek. 43:7

With the idea of permanence in mind we return to God’s instructions to Israel through Moses and find that this important root *shakan* constantly recurs to emphasize Yahweh’s determination to have a permanent dwelling place for his name - and this is roughly five hundred years before David’s time:

Deut. 12:11: “Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose *to cause his name to dwell (shakan)* there” *

Deut. 14:23: “And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose *to place (shakan)* his name there.”

Deut. 16:6: “But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose *to place (shakan)* his name in . . .”

Deut. 16:11: “And thou shalt rejoice . . . in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen *to place (shakan)* his name there.”

* Englishman’s Hebrew Concordance makes these passages very clear.

Deut. 26:2: “That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, . . . and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to *place (shakan)* his name there.”

It is most significant, once again, to find this same root word, *shakan*, used twice in one short verse with reference to:

The Blessings Upon Benjamin

“And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall *dwell (shakan)* in safety by him, and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall *dwell (shakan)* between his shoulders.”

- Deut. 33:12

Deuteronomy 33 is the well-known chapter containing Moses blessings upon the twelve tribes, including the tribes of Joseph, but excluding the tribe of Simeon. This chapter begins with the verse which sparks so much discussion: “The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints . . .” Bro. Thomas, and other brethren, have taught us that these blessings are prophetic blessings on Israel which this chapter presupposes are accomplished. In our study of why God chose Zion as his dwelling place we must look closely at verse 12. We have already seen that *shakan*, to dwell, can be in a context suggesting permanence and even eternity. In association with the blessings on Benjamin, this is a Messianic passage and to grasp its full significance we must go back again in history to Abraham’s grandson, Jacob, and his second wife, Rachel, at the time of the birth of Benjamin:

Genesis 35:16-19: “And they journeyed from Beth-el, and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath, and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour . . . And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Beth-lehem.”

Beth-el - the House of God

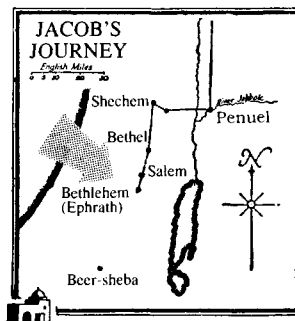
Ephrath - the Place of Fruitfulness

Bethlehem - the House of Bread

Ben-oni - a Son of Sorrow

Benjamin - Son of the Right Hand

In Jacob’s journeyings he moved with his family from Beth-el, past Salem (see map) and just before Ephrath, which is the ancient name for



Bethlehem, six miles south of Salem, Benjamin was born. Benjamin became the only son of Jacob to be born in the land.

The Lord Jesus Christ was also born in "Bethlehem in the land of Judah" (Mth. 2:6, Micah 5:2) as was David who was "the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-judah, whose name was Jesse" (1 Sam. 17:12). Benjamin, David and Christ all born at Bethlehem in the land of Judah. How interesting! - that the *House of Bread*, or *Place of Fruitfulness*, became the birth place for all three.

Rachel has pleaded for children on the grounds that without them she would die (Gen. 30:1), and now, pathetically, on the birth of her second son, she dies. Her death, at the birth of Benjamin, typed the nation at the birth of the King, the Lord Jesus Christ*. As she was in pain to bring forth, so was the nation at the first advent of our Lord. Hence her name for her son, Ben-oni, a *Son of Sorrow*. He was no *Son of Sorrow* to Jacob, but rather the *Son of the Right Hand*, as the name Benjamin means. Though the Lord Jesus was "a man of sorrow" to the nation, he was not so to the Father. Yahweh elevated him to the *Son of the Right Hand* in heaven. (Psa. 110:5).

Bethlehem became the birth place of Jesus, the antitypical Benjamin, or *Son of the Right Hand*; as well as the birthplace of David, the *Beloved*, who was a type of the greater David, the beloved Son who was so pleasing to the Father in heaven.

With this introduction to Deuteronomy chapter 33, we come back to verse 12 which we reproduce again to enable us to more easily analyze it:

"And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall *dwell (shakan) in safety by him, and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell (shakan) between his shoulders.*"

"**beloved**" — Heb. *yadid*: amiable or loved, from the word *dod*; to love, which is used constantly throughout the songs of Solomon and translated there "beloved".

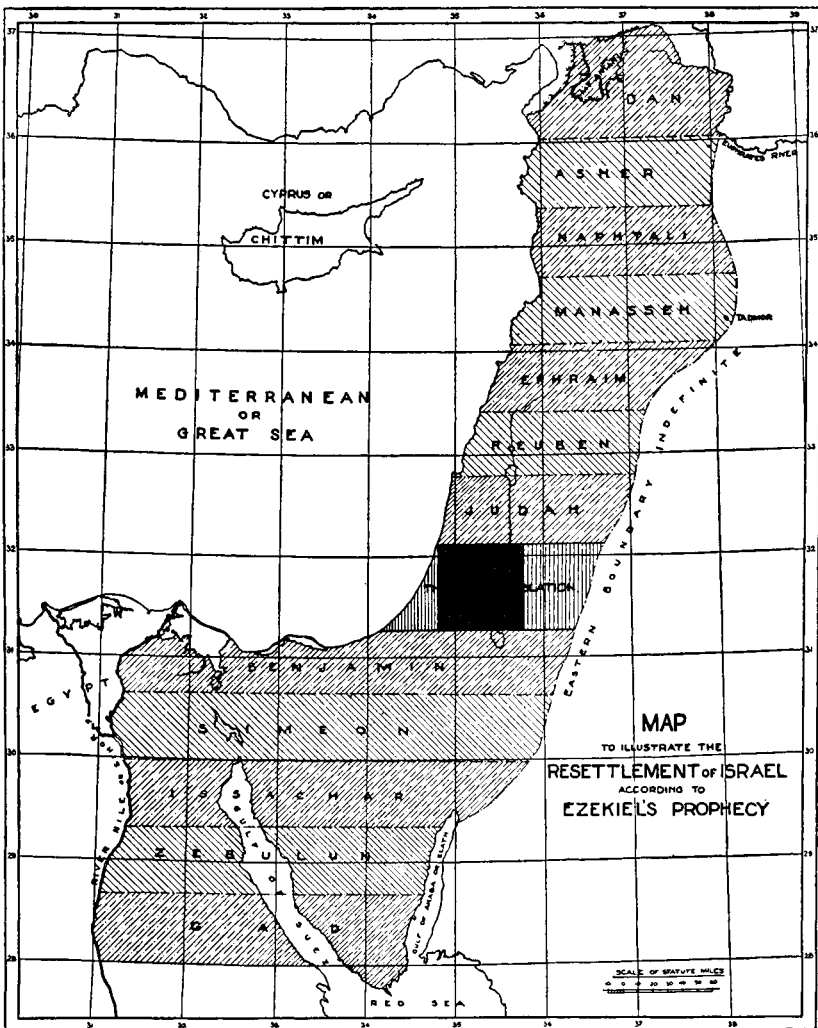
The proper name, David, comes from the same source word, *dod*; hence the conclusion that David means "beloved". The "beloved of the LORD", in the above quote, is the greater David, the "beloved Son" of God (Mth.3:17, etc.).

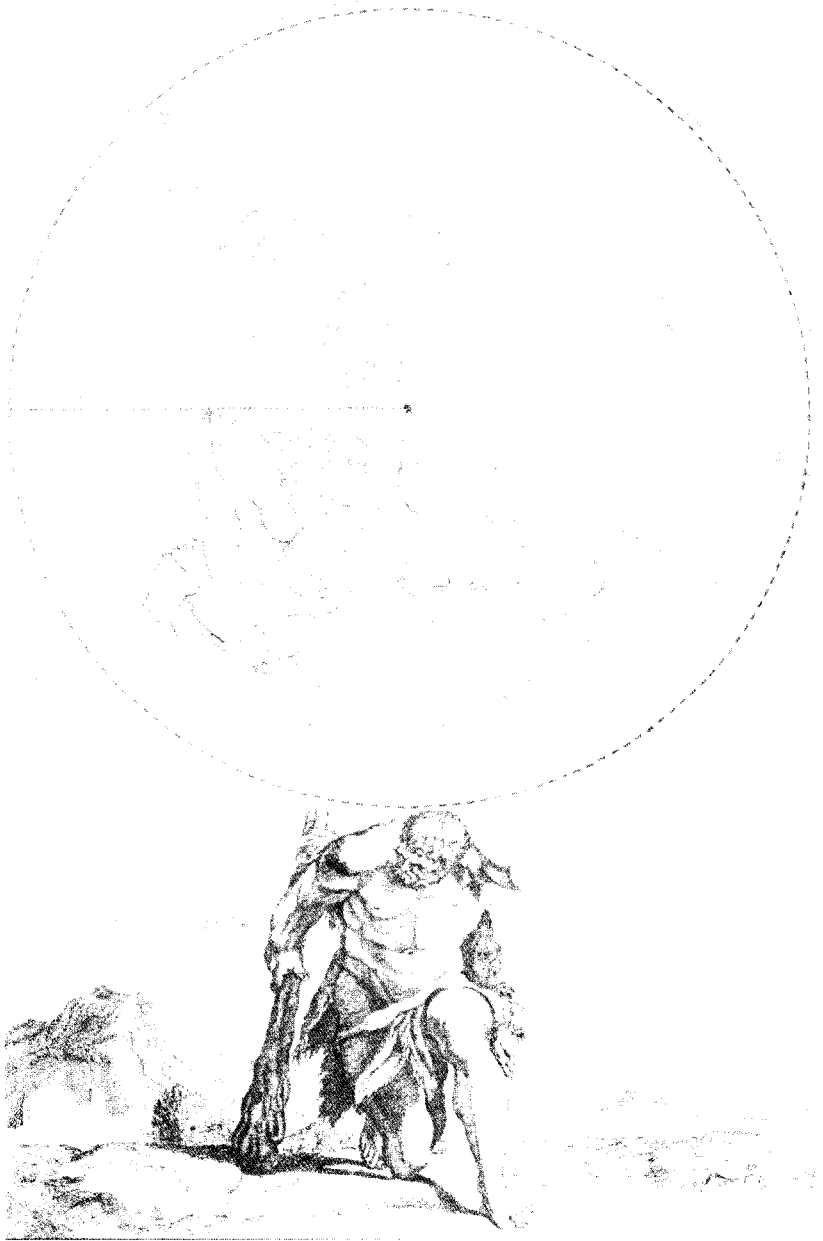
The promise that "the beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety *by him* (Benjamin)" can have fulfilment only in the Kingdom Age. We all know that in the division of the land under Joshua Benjamin's inheritance bordered on Judah. Similarly, in the division of the land under Christ, Benjamin's portion will border on the south of the Holy Oblation (orange, in illustration), which will be an area 56 miles (25,000 reeds) square. With the glory of Yahweh manifest in Christ as Prince of the Holy Oblation, dwelling in the sanctuary in the midst of the Temple, on his south border (if he

* see the excellent exposition on the typology of the Genesis 35 narrative in the *Christadelphian Expositor*, by H.P. Mansfield.

is facing east, on his right-hand) will be Benjamin, thus fulfilling the prophecy. "The beloved of the LORD shall dwell safely *by* him". (In fact, Bro. Sulley shows that the eastern precincts of the Temple city will actually be in Benjamin's portion).

As an aside, while here, we might note that the Holy Oblation approximately covers the area of the kingdom of Judah in the past, according to the prophecy of Zechariah: "The LORD, shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again" (Zech. 2:12).





from *Hammond's World Atlas*, published by C.S. Hammond & Company, New Jersey, U.S.A.

The last phrase of Deut. 33:12 reads “the LORD shall cover him all the day long.”

“cover” — Heb. *chaphaph*: to overlay, protect.

Certainly, Benjamin as a favourite son and a type of the *Son of Sorrow* who became *Son of the Right Hand*, will receive the protection and support of the King-Priest “all the day long”.

And, finally, in Deut. 33:12. “he (Benjamin) shall dwell between his shoulders” where “dwell” means to tabernacle on a permanent basis. The shoulders of a man are where he carries a heavy burden. As a boy, the writer was always impressed by the frontispiece of an old world atlas owned by his parents, depicting Atlas carrying the weight of the globe between his shoulders (reproduced herein). Scripturally, the word for ‘shoulders’ is *katheph*, and we see it used a number of times in Exodus, chapters 28 and 39 to describe the ephod worn by the high priest: “And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulderpieces of the ephod, to be stones of memorial for the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a Memorial” (RV: Ex. 28:12).

The names of the children of Israel were engraved on the stones of the shoulderpieces of the ephod, and these were borne by the high priest upon his shoulders into the presence of Yahweh in the Most Holy. Thus Aaron became a type of Christ as the burden bearer of Israel, for he had to bear “the iniquity of the holy things” (Ex. 28:38), typifying the Lord upon whom there was laid “the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6).

In the Age to come, Benjamin shall rest, or dwell, in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ who will be the burden bearer of all Israel.

In our search for the answer to the question. Why did God choose Zion, we have seen that approximately 500 years before the time of David God revealed through Moses his purpose to choose a place in Israel where he would put his name and dwell with his people. There, they would meet with him in worship. Our search has taken us back to the time of Jacob, with a brief look at God’s promises to Benjamin. Thus far our study has shown how closely the tribes of Benjamin and Judah are associated, both in the past and in the future. The future blessings on Benjamin are inexorably intertwined with those on Judah which we must now review.

The Blessings on Judah

“He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim:

But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.”

- Psa. 78:67-68

“In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel.
In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling
place in Zion.”

- Psa. 76:1-2

“**Salem**” — Heb. *Shalem*: complete, whole, peaceful; from a prim. root *shalam*: to be safe, to be complete. From this root also comes the well-known Hebrew word *shalom* — peace.

Salem is the ancient name for Jerusalem and Salem takes us back to the day of Abraham, where we are introduced to the enigmatical priest-king, Melchizedek, who blessed Abraham and broke bread with him: “And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God” (Gen. 14:18).

“**Melchizedek**” — Heb. *Malkiy-Tsedeq*, from *melek*, a king, and *tsedeq*, the right; from a prim. root to be right or righteous. Hence Paul’s exposition of the meaning of his name: “first being by interpretation *King of righteousness*, and after that also king of Salem, which is *King of peace*” (Heb. 7:2) — the perfect type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Righteousness must inevitably precede peace. The immortal priests of the Age to come will be king-priests and are represented, as we shall see later on in these notes, as “sons of *Zadok*” (Ezek. 44:15), because they are after the order of Melchi-*Zadok* (from the root: *tsadaq*). Melchizedek’s name alone, without his titles, enables us to see clearly in this King-Priest of old, a perfect type of Christ, who is given the same name in Jeremiah’s prophecy of the Branch: “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a *King* shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth . . . this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR *RIGHTEOUSNESS*” (Jer. 23:5-6).

“**King**” — *melek*

“**RIGHTEOUSNESS**” — *tsedeq*.

“After the holocaust of Armageddon, when the House of Prayer for all nations has been erected in Jerusalem (Isa. 56:6-7) the Lord will fulfill the vows he made in the upper room 1900 years ago (Psa. 22:25). He will preside over a Memorial Feast in the city of Jerusalem, then re-named Salem. For the *Vision of Peace* (Jerusalem) will then become the reality: *Peace* (Salem - Haggai 2:9). The bread and wine offered by Melchizedek, was not only refreshing and sustaining to Abram, but represented the tokens of the covenant to be confirmed in the Seed of the Woman (cp John 6:54-58).”¹

¹ *The Christadelphian Expositor*. Genesis, page 178, by H.P. Mansfield, published by Logos. The reader is strongly recommended to read this section of the *Expositor* (pages 178-179) for a full exposition of the typical significance of Melchizedek.

The appearance of Melchizedek on the scene with no antecedent and no introduction marks the intervention of the LORD God into human affairs. We can go no further back in history than Genesis, and here we find Yahweh had already chosen Salem, or Jerusalem, as the dwelling place for the King-Priest of old.

We return, now, to consider the specific blessing upon Judah:

“Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall
praise . . .

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a
lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come:
and unto him shall the gathering of the people
be.”

- Gen. 49:8,10

Students will recognize that we have lifted this quotation out of five verses incorporated in Jacob’s blessings upon his sons. The exposition of this entire blessing upon Judah would take far too much space and has already been done by more capable brethren. Sufficient for our purpose in these Notes is to comment only on the two proper nouns:

“**Shiloh**” — Heb. *Shiyloh*: tranquility, peace, rest; from a prim. root, *shalah*, to be secure; hence tranquil.

“**Judah**” — Heb. *Yehuwdah*: praise, celebrated; from a prim. root, *yadah*: to use or hold out the hand, especially to revere or worship (with extended hands), hence to praise. The word “praise” in verse 8 above is this root word *yadah*.

When have the brethren of Judah praised him? “Only for a very brief period in the past, under David and Solomon, when it is recorded that ‘Judah prevailed above his brethren’ (1 Chron. 5:2). That brief moment was the period of the united Kingdom, which foreshadowed Messiah’s reign (Amos. 9:11). So this prophecy sweeps on to the ‘last days’ of Gentile ascendancy: the time when Messiah shall appear to ‘restore the kingdom to Israel’ (Acts 1:6), and as ‘the Lion of the tribe of Judah’ (Rev. 5:5), to receive the praise of all the tribes (Psa. 65:1).”¹

Regarding Shiloh, Brother Thomas has some apt comments: “The sceptre had departed from Judah before the appearing of Jesus; but neither Jesus, nor the tribe, have promulgated a code of laws to Israel or the Gentiles. Moses was a lawgiver, not of Judah, but of Levi; but when Shiloh comes as the lawgiver of Judah, then ‘the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem’.”²

The blessings upon Benjamin and Judah have obvious fulfilment in the final elevation of Zion, literally and spiritually, to a position of eminence. To conclude this part of our study, we look at the

¹ *The Christadelphian Expositor*, Genesis, page 281, by H.P. Mansfield

² *Elpis Israel*, page 281, by John Thomas.

geographical location of Zion or Jerusalem, and Israel. We can do no better than quote verbatim from Unger's Dictionary:

"The 'Holy City' is located 14 miles W. of the Dead Sea, 33 miles E. of the Mediterranean. Bethlehem lies about five miles to the S.E. The city is situated on a rocky plateau at an elevation of 2,550 feet. It is 3800 feet above the level of the Dead Sea. . . Its location has helped to give it prestige. It was exclusive, with no river frontage like Babylon, Thebes, Rome or Memphis; no harbor like Tyre, Sidon nor Alexandria. It was off the main highways between Asia Minor and Egypt . . . It was centrally located and *ideal for the capital of the united Kingdom of Israel* in the Davidic-Solomonic era (c. 1000-930 B.C.) and of Judah (c. 930 B.C. - 587 B.C.)."³ (italics are the writer's).

We cannot pass by the best-known chapter of Ezekiel (with regard to gospel proclamation), chapter 38, where the purpose of Gog is defined as coming "upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in *the midst of the land*" (Ezek. 38:12).

"**midst**" — Heb. *tabbur*: middle, *navel* (as mg.); RV: "in *the middle of the earth*".

In the middle of the earth! Just as the navel is in the centre of the body, so is Israel in the centre of the earth. One glance at a flat map of our globe, with Africa in the bottom centre, Australia to the lower right, South America to the lower left, the northern part of North America to the top left, and the far reaches of Siberia to the top right shows conclusively that is precisely where Israel is - not only the centre of three continents (Africa, Europe and Asia) but literally the centre of the earth. For the significance of this amongst the peoples of the earth (rather than the land mass) we turn again to Ezekiel: "Thus saith the Lord God:

This is Jerusalem: I have set it
in *the midst of the nations*
and countries that are round about her."

- Ezek. 5:5

Why did God choose Zion, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth" (Psa. 48:2)? Because it was the logical centre from which to identify the kingdom in David's day, because of its strategic and geographical situation as centre of the earth's land mass, and because of his blessings upon Benjamin and Judah - typical of the glorious day when our great King-Priest shall rule and execute judgment and justice in the earth. "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness" (Psa. 48:1).

I Will Dwell in the Midst of Thee

Thus far we have only given brief consideration to passages in

³ Unger's Bible Dictionary, page 576, by Merrill F. Unger, published by Moody Press, Chicago

the psalms concerning God's love for Zion. If we went through the list again we would note constant emphasis that Zion is God's dwelling place; e.g.:

Psa. 46:4: "the holy place of the tabernacles (Heb. *mishkan*: dwelling place) of the most High."

Psa. 68:16: "this is the hill which God desireth to *dwell in*; yea, the LORD will *dwell* in it for ever."

Psa. 132:13: "he hath desired it for his *habitation*."

v. 14: "This is my rest for ever: here will I *dwell*."

We are accustomed to the concept of God "dwelling between the cherubim" (Psa.80:1, Isa. 37:16, etc.) signifying the manifestation of God's presence in the Shekinah glory from which the voice of the angel spoke. But the tabernacle, and Solomon's temple, have long since disappeared from the stage of history. In what sense will the almighty God of the universe dwell in Zion?

Leaving the psalms for a moment, we consider the prophecy of Zechariah:

Zech. 2:10-11: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and *I will dwell in the midst of thee*, saith the LORD. And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee." (see also chap. 8:3).

Following the return of Israel from captivity and the laying of the temple foundation as described in Ezra, there is a fifteen-year period of inactivity by the nation due to the opposition and enmity of the Samaritans. Working together, Haggai and Zechariah exhort and encourage the people to recommence the temple building. Under the leadership of Joshua and Zerubbabel this is done. The theme of Zechariah's prophecy is the hope and joyful expectation of Messiah's ruling in the kingdom of God on earth, Jerusalem at peace, the temple completed, sin vanished and the nations of the earth instructed in righteousness.

In the Second Vision at the end of chapter one, Zechariah has been shown Israel triumphant over her enemies in the work of the Four Carpenters. Chapter two marks the third night vision which can be entitled: "The Future Destiny of Jerusalem". The two verses quoted indicate that Jerusalem, or Zion's future is to have Yahweh dwell in her midst. In what sense will this be true?

Zech. 2:5: "For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her."

A Wall of Fire

In Old Testament times a wall represented refuge and protection. A city without a wall was defenceless and easy prey for an enemy. Nehemiah's first task was to survey Jerusalem's wasted wall, then to exhort the priests, the nobles and the rulers to "build up the wall of Jerusalem" (Neh.2:17). They agreed: "Let us rise up and build" (v. 18). In fifty-two days the magnificent task was completed: "So we built the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work" (4:6).

On entry into the promised land, Joshua faced an impossible task: Jericho, a fortress city, stood in his path, the protective wall seeming impregnable. However, the word spoken by his God was not given in vain: "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Josh. 1:5). The captain of the host of the LORD suddenly appeared in his presence and the divine instructions were given. For seven days they were to encompass the city; then, on the seventh day and the seventh time round, seven priests sounded seven trumpets - and "the wall fell down flat . . . and they took the city" (Josh. 6:20). Without the wall, there was no protection for the city.

When Israel "went into the midst of the sea . . . the waters were a *wall* unto them on their right hand, and on their left" (Ex. 14:22,29). The people were protected from their pursuing enemy.

Figuratively, a man can be an impregnable wall: "And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen *wall* and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee" are the words of the LORD to Jeremiah in Jeremiah 15:20 (see also 1:18). In the Song of Solomon we have the beautiful and expressive figure of a mature and fruitful young maiden who describes her relationship to the Bridegroom: "I am a *wall*, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour (mg. peace)" (Song 8:10). Here is the Bride, described in terms of a wall.

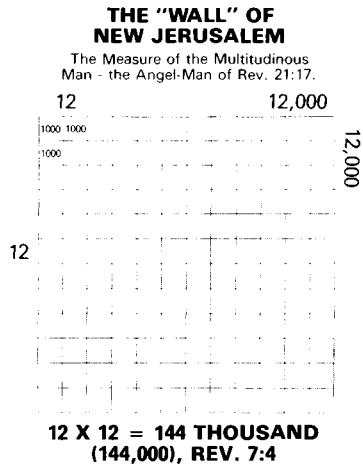
This helps us, as we turn to the prophecy of Isaiah to again see the saints, immortal in the kingdom: "in that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for *walls* and bulwarks. Open ye the gates. . ." (Isa. 26:1-2). The strong city is Zion and the walls the saints. This theme is repeated in a later chapter of Isaiah which surely must be the foundation for the vision given to John, on the isle of Patmos, of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21. Isaiah's glorious passage begins with the glory of Zion as Yahweh is manifest in the Lord Jesus Christ and the saints: "Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. . . the LORD shall rise upon thee and his glory shall be seen upon thee" (Isa. 60:1-2). As in Isaiah's song of chapter 26, Zion's walls in this passage are figurative of the means for redemption of mortal nations in the kingdom: "thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates Praise" (v. 18).

With this introduction to the figurative walls of Zion we turn to the final vision given to the apostle John who “saw the holy city, new Jerusalem . . . prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:2). The angel said to John “Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (v.9). The holy city, the new Jerusalem is a vision, in symbols, of the Redeemed in the kingdom. One of its key features is the wall which occurs five times - the number of grace:

- v. 12: “And had a *wall* great and high.”
- v. 14: “And the *wall* of the city had twelve foundations,”
- v. 15: The angel measured “the *wall* thereof.”
- v. 17: “And he measured the *wall* thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel”.
- v. 18: “And the building of the *wall* of it was of jasper.”

This is not the place for an exposition of Revelation 21 (exhilarating as that would be) but a word about the dimensions of this figurative wall maybe helpful in the light of our study.

The city was a perfect cube: “The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal” (v. 16). In this respect it was a facsimile of the Most Holy place, cubical in shape and as such pointing to the perfect love of God (Eph.3:17-20). Its dimensions were each 12,000 furlongs, but the wall was measured at 144 cubits. How can a city 12,000 furlongs square be encompassed by a wall of 144 cubits, when a furlong is approximately 606 feet and a cubit roughly 18 inches? We must link, also, 144 with its multiple 144,000. Bro. Thomas writes: “The city is therefore a cube, or six-sided, the top, the bottom and the four sides. The measure of the wall is 144 cubits, which includes the length, breadth and height. Now, if the four-square of the city be divided into equal square parts (see illustration) it will be found to contain 144 parts. Each of these gives an area 1000 furlongs long and 1000 furlongs broad; and in the numerical symbol of the city stands for a 1000 citizens; or in the whole ‘broadway’, 144,000.”¹ Bro. H.P.Mansfield writes: “The ground area or surface of such a cube is divisible into 144 equal parts of one thousand furlongs each, pointing to the symbolic



¹ Eureka, Vol. 3, page 693, Dawn publication.

number of its citizens which comprise the component parts of the symbolic city (Rev. 7:4, 14:1)."¹

It is helpful to note that the 144,000 of Rev. 7:4 is comprised of twelve *thousand* from each tribe. This is demonstrated in the illustration where each small square contains 1000; there are 12 small squares on one side of the square (or 12 thousand) and 12 (thousand) on the other. The total is thus 12x12 or 144 thousand. The key to understanding the term "thousand" is found in the Old Testament in the book of Numbers where "thousand" is used over 100 times in the description of the encampment of Israel. Two examples will suffice:

Num. 1:16: "These were the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of *thousands* in Israel."

Num. 10:4: "And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the *thousands* of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee" (see also Numbers 31:5).

"**thousands**" — Heb. *eleph*; from a prime root, to associate with; hence a *family*. In the Hebrew *eleph* was represented by an ox's head, being the first letter of the alphabet and this was eventually used as a numeral: one or a thousand.

"It is significant that the Hebrew word *eleph* does duty numerically for both *one* and a *thousand* (by the addition of vowel points) and in so doing denotes both the *chief* (the meaning of the word) and the *family* derived therefrom."² Hence, Gideon exclaims:

Judges 6:15: "Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my *family* is poor in Manasseh" (mg. my *thousand* is the meanest).

In Revelation 7, then, the 144 thousand represents the full completion of the household (families) of God as the basis of the perfect Israelitish government of the millennial age. Twelve is the number of governmental perfection (the saints ruling in the kingdom), hence twelve is the key number of the new Jerusalem, the Bride, in Revelation 21 where we find twelve gates, twelve angels, twelve tribes, twelve furlongs, twelve precious stones, twelve pearls - the latter two in particular symbols of the immortal saints.

This brings us back to the wall which we have seen is measured out at 144 cubits.

The wall of a house, temple or building represents the building itself. If we turn quickly, for a moment, to one of the Songs of Zion we see this:

Psa. 122:3: "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is *compact* together."

¹ *The Apocalypse Epitomized*, by H.P. Mansfield, page 250. Logos publication.

² *The Apocalypse Epitomized*, by H.P. Mansfield, page 103. Logos publication.

“**compact**” — Heb. *chabar*; a prime root, to *join*.

Chabar is the Old Testament word for fellowship. The city “compact together” in our quote refers to the fact that in the Old Testament times houses were often found built on the walls of the city. There was a common wall between two houses - the houses were wall-to-wall - joined together. An apt figure of families living in close fellowship together.

In the new Jerusalem the wall represents the city and the city represents the saints, the dwelling place of God. Today the ecclesia is the dwelling place of God: “Know ye not that ye (the ecclesia at Corinth) are the temple of God” (1 Cor. 3:16). In the kingdom “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God. . . and I will write upon him . . . the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem” (Rev.3:12).

Before we return to the wall of fire in Zechariah’s prophecy we ought to give brief consideration to the divine description of the wall in Rev. 21:17: “according to the measure of a man, that is of the angel.” The RSV reads: “by a man’s measure, that is, an angel.”

Rotherham translates: “the measure of a man, which is (the measure) of a messenger.” Bro. Thomas gives his usual cogent explanation: “Every child is familiar with thirty millions of British in the person of the figurative John Bull; or the same number of Americans in that of Uncle Sam. If these were measured, they would stand miles high, and be proportionately bulky. Now the man of the golden reed, the Son of a Man, is a cube of 144 cubits; and is representative of ‘a multitude no man can number’, all of whom are incorruptible and deathless, and therefore golden, as it were transparent crystal, and without fault before the throne . . . This cubical man of 144 cubits is the same Paul alludes to in Eph. 4:13, saying to the saints: ‘till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a PERFECT MAN, unto *the measure of the stature* of the fullness of Christ’. From this it may be seen, that the perfect man is constituted of the saints, and that his stature is measured. John gives us his measure in bulk and height, which he attains in the resurrection epoch, when ‘the fullness of the Christ’ is manifested in the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”¹

So the *wall* of the new Jerusalem is a symbol of the NEW MAN in the angelic state (immortalized); the PERFECT MAN of Eph. 4:13, the MULTITUDINOUS MAN of Rev. 1:13-16, the ANGEL-MAN of Rev. 10:1, 14:14, 18:1, 19:17 and 20:1, and in the Apocalypse he stands in opposition to the MAN whose number is 666 (Rev. 13:18). The wall, whose measurements are those of an angel-man, is the Bride who is a 4-square wall of jasper-like spirit encompassing the Holy City. “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb

¹ *Eureka*, Vol. 3, page 693: Dawn publication

is the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23). Yahweh manifest in the Lord Jesus Christ and the Redeemed - Yahweh in multitudinous manifestation - God in multiplicity, become the glory of the city.

This is the New Testament equivalent of "the wall of fire" in Zech. 2:5. The angel of God's presence manifested that presence in "a pillar of fire by night" (Ex. 13:21) to Israel, providing protection and refuge to God's chosen people. Immortal brethren and sisters in Christ will be "a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night" (Isa. 4:5) providing a protective covering to Ezekiel's literal temple.

The Glory in the Midst of Zion

We have already made reference to the physical glory of Yahweh that was manifest between the cherubim (Psa. 80:1). Because of the disobedience of Israel the glory of God's presence left the nation. Ezekiel watched that "glory of the LORD depart from off the threshold of the house, and stand over the cherubim" (Ezek. 10:18). The cherubim, with that glory, moved to "the east gate of the LORD's house" (v.19) and from there "the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (11:23). From there we can be sure that glory returned to God in heaven.

The physical splendour of Yahweh was not seen by man again, with the possible exception of the glorious light that bathed the Lord Jesus Christ on the mount of transfiguration. This incident was so engraved upon the memory of the apostle Peter that he was able to write, many years later: "For he received from God the Father honour and glory when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (2 Pet. 1:17).

"excellent" — Gk. *megaloprepes*; "signifies magnificent, majestic, that which is becoming to a great man (from *megas*, great, and *propo*, to be fitting or becoming)";¹ it means befitting greatness. This is the only New Testament occurrence.

Matthew's account reads: "a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud" (Mth. 17:5).

"bright" — Gk. *photeinos*; from *phos*, to shine or make manifest, especially by rays. Only used 5 times in the New Testament; in the four occurrences other than the transfiguration it is rendered "full of light".

The majestic, physical splendour of Yahweh's glory will once again be manifest on earth when the Lord Jesus Christ and the immortal Redeemed enter into Ezekiel's temple from the east:

¹ *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Vol 2, page 57.

Ezek. 43:2: "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory."

This is the glory of the multitudinous Christ which was manifest to Daniel in "a certain man clothed in linen . . . and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude" (Dan. 10:5-6): and to John on Patmos in "one like unto the Son of man . . . his voice as the sound of many waters" (Rev. 1:13,15). In that day "the LORD, will be unto her (Zion) a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her" (Zech. 2:5). This brings us back to our theme: the Songs of Zion, for Zechariah goes on to proclaim: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD" (v.10).

CHAPTER THREE

The Strong Hold of Zion

The more we know and understand of Zion as it appeared to David, the better grounded we are to appreciate why he composed the Songs of Zion.

“When David finally took control of the nation’s welfare he searched for a capital. Subsequent events reveal to us that he was not yet aware that Jebus was to be the place where Yahweh would dwell and yet he chose Jebus as the capital. What prompted him to seek this city as the nation’s capital? Several points appear relevant. He needed a city with a central location which could dominate approaches from the Philistine coast and from Jordan. And, furthermore, he knew that the city had to be in the territory of Judah (Gen. 49:10). Jebus was the only city which fulfilled these criteria and it possessed the added advantage of lying between Benjamin and Judah which would have lessened the offence to Saul’s tribe and particularly the inhabitants of Gibeah.”¹

In terms of size Zion was insignificant: “the city which David captured was like a huge human footprint (see maps) about 1250 feet long by 400 feet wide. This became the City of David, or Zion.”²

The other name given to the city of David was Ophel as we see in Illustration, page 34. In later times, the young king, Jotham, was responsible for fortifying the cities of Judah:

2 Chron. 27:3: “He built the high gate of the house of the LORD, and on the wall of Ophel (mg. the tower) he built much.”

“**Ophel**” — Heb. *ophel*; from a prim. root meaning to swell; fig. to be elated, to be lifted up; hence, a tower, also a mound, i.e. a fortress. Note the usage in the quote following:

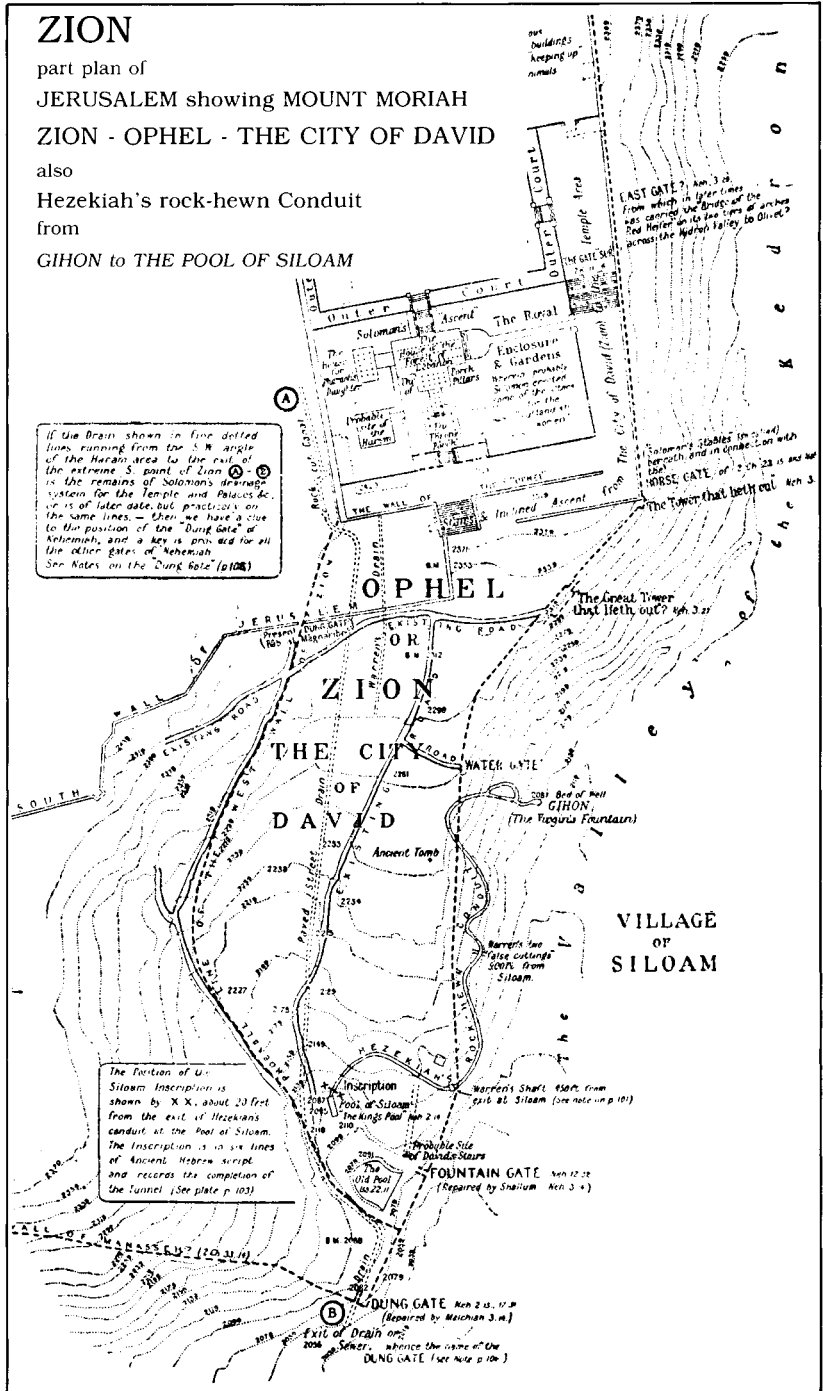
Micah 4:8; “And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold (*ophel*) of the daughter of Zion.”

¹ *Zion. My Chiefest Joy*, page 17; published by the Scripture Study Service.

² *Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, page 1190; published by Moody Press, Chicago.

ZION

part plan of
 JERUSALEM showing MOUNT MORIAH
 ZION - OPEL - THE CITY OF DAVID
 also
 Hezekiah's rock-hewn Conduit
 from
 GIHON to THE POOL OF SILOAM



In the Companion Bible, Bullinger tells us that “Ophel and Zion are equivalent names applied to the highest point or mound of the hill ridge running due south from Mount Moriah . . . Both name and title became in later times ascribed to the whole area of the city of Jerusalem.”

The Assault on Zion

“David was thirty years old when he began to reign,
and he reigned forty years . . .
nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion:
the same is the city of David.
And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth
up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites,
and the lame, and the blind, that are hated of
David’s soul, he shall be chief and captain.”

- 2 Samuel 5:4,7-8

The remarkable achievement of “getting up the gutter” was accomplished by Joab, giving him the right to be chief and captain over David’s forces. The ascent up the gutter was no mean feat of ingenuity, skill and courage; we do well to pause and consider the obstacles.

“**strong hold**” — Heb. *metsudah*; fortress, bulwark. Also translated fort, hold, castle (“the castle of Zion”, 1 Chron. 11:5), the strong place, net, snare.

“ ‘Metsudah’, however, was used by David in his writings to denote that trust, safety and strength which he could find in Yahweh alone in time of trouble. . . Whenever David looked upon the fortress of Zion he saw much more than a fortress. He saw Yahweh his God as a strong and immoveable habitation to which he could continually resort. When he dwelt in the fortress (2 Sam. 5:9) he was dwelling in the refuge God had provided”.¹ We see this in the following psalms where *metsudah* is indicated by the italics.

Psa. 18:2 “The LORD is my rock and my *fortress*.”

Psa. 31:2 “Be thou my strong rock, for an house of *defence* to save me.”

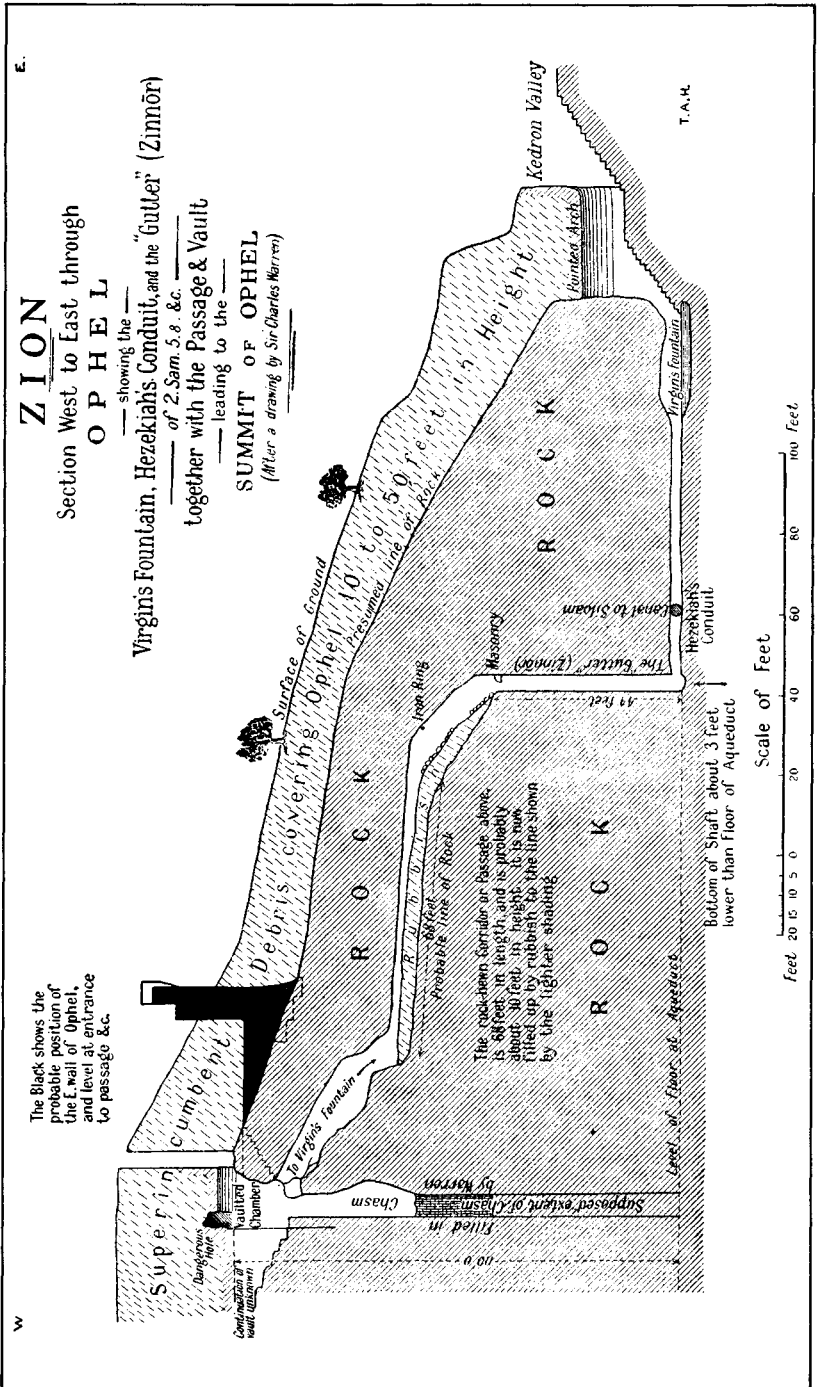
v. 3 “For thou art my rock and my *fortress*.”

Psa. 71:3 “Be thou my strong habitation . . . for thou art my rock and my *fortress*.”

Psa. 91:2 “I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my *fortress*: my God, in him will I trust.”

Psa. 144:2 “My goodness, and my *fortress*, my high tower, and my deliverer.”

¹ Zion, My Chiefest Joy, page 21: published by Scripture Study Service.



“**Zion**” — Heb. *Tsiyown*: fortress; that which is conspicuous, from root meaning sign, waymark. *Gesenius*: a sunny place or sunny mountain.

“**gutter**” — Heb. *tsinnar*; waterspout, a culvert; RV: watercourse, RSV: water shaft.

The fortress of Zion was so situated as to appear impregnable, causing the Jebusites to taunt David with: “You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off” (NIV).

Bullinger gives an excellent description of the rock-cut passage or water shaft through which Joab was able to gain entrance inside the citadel walls. We can do no better than quote it verbatim, under the heading:

The Jebusite Water Supply

“The rock-hewn conduit from Gihon (or the Virgin’s Fount) is shown with remarkable accuracy on the Ordnance survey maps. If, as it is confidently asserted, Gihon (or the well-spring or Fount of the Virgin) is the only *spring* in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem, then Melchizedec, King of Salem, and, later, the Jebusites, would be in possession of the only unfailing water-supply of the district. That the Jebusites had access to this well or spring from *within* their wall and fortress is clear: but, in the end, it proved their undoing, for David’s men obtained possession of Jebus by means of the *zinnor* (AV “gutter”), i.e. the channel and shaft leading from the well into their citadel.

The spring is intermittent, overflowing periodically, thus pointing to the existence of either a natural chasm or reservoir, or a *made* reservoir, whose site is at present unknown. Possibly it is under Mount Moriah itself. Tradition has much to say as to a deep well with an unfailing water-supply beneath the Temple area. (Cp. also Psa.46:4).

The fortress or citadel of Zion was immediately above this well-spring, and its defenders could thus command their water-supply from within, and also the security of the source without.

Before the time of Hezekiah, ‘the city of David’ was dependent upon *this source* for its water-supply in times of danger threatened from without, in the same manner that the Jebusites were, viz. they descended from Ophel by means of rock-hewn passages, with steps and slopes (still in existence) till they reached the top of Warren’s Shaft, and by means of buckets drew their water from the unfailing well-spring some 40 to 50 feet below. At the top of this shaft is still to be seen the iron ring employed for this purpose.”¹ (see Illustration).

¹ *The Companion Bible*, page 101 (of Appendix 68): published by Samuel Bagster and Sons limited

The divine record does not tell us how many men went with Joab: only that “Joab, the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief” (1 Chron. 11:6). If Joab was first, there must have been others who followed, in particular the man who carried his weapons: “Naharai the Berothite, the armour-bearer of Joab” (1Chron. 11:39). In any event, a perusal of the diagram on page 36 shows, at the lower centre, the 44 foot vertical shaft they had to ascend. The light of torches would have given them away so it must have been done in near total darkness.

One’s curiosity is piqued as to how in the world Joab ascended that 44 foot vertical shaft! He had already demonstrated himself a hardened soldier - he must have been an extremely formidable foe.

Zion, Beautiful for Situation

Before we leave our consideration of the literal city of Zion we must just consider its future, as the capital of the world.

Psa. 48:2 “Beautiful for *situation*, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.”

“**situation**” — Heb. *noph*: elevation (RV, RSV). This is the only occurrence in the Old Testament. In the light of what follows with regard to the earthquake, it surely must be significant that it comes from a prim. root meaning to quiver (i.e.: vibrate up and down, or rock to and fro)! The prim. root is translated *lift up*.

The ancient hill of Zion was and still is surrounded by valleys on three sides: east (the Kidron River valley, separating the Mount of Olives from Mount Moriah on which Jerusalem is built), west (the Valley of Gihon) and south (the Valley of Hinnom), see Illustration, page 32. Today, all three valleys are partially filled by superimposed material and rubble. “On the north the hill of Zion is divided from the northern slope by a ravine which passes through the Haram area”¹ (see A Map page 34). Bro. Sulley quotes a Professor Hill who states that Jerusalem is surrounded by four faults.

The great earthquake of Zechariah 14:4 and Ezekiel 38:19 will separate the hill of Zion on all four sides and “it shall be lifted up” (Zech. 14:10) 1000 feet. “The hill of Zion will be remodelled so as to accord with necessities of construction involved in the Temple of Ezekiel’s prophecy. Indeed it is difficult to see how suitable frontage lines, *one mile in extent*, can be otherwise provided for the Temple, so that the entrance to the house can be conveniently approached. While the hill in the centre will be raised, the valley, or territory on the north-west probably will be depressed.”²

¹ *The Temple of Ezekiel’s Prophecy* by Henry Sulley, page 300.

² *Ibid.*, page 300.

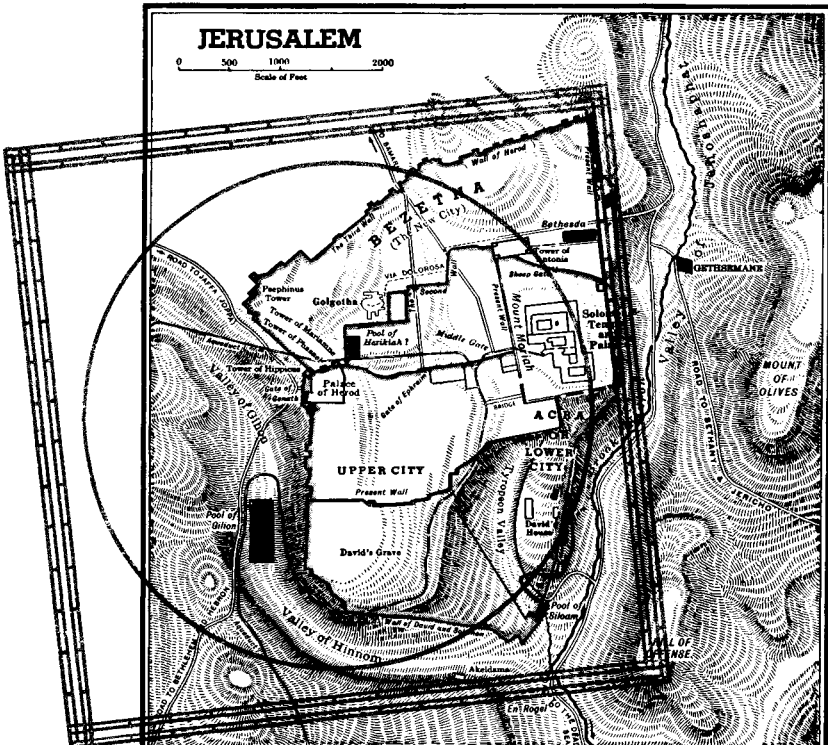
Under divine inspiration the prophet Jeremiah provides the guide lines enabling us to position Ezekiel's Temple over the old city - following the earthquake and the elevation of Mount Zion:

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner.

And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath.

And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.”

- Jer. 31:38-40



Authorities differ as to the location of the tower of Hananeel, Gareb and Goath, etc., but if we follow Bro. Sulley's conclusions we establish a base "measuring line" along the east side of the old wall overlooking the Kidron Valley and run it out to the Hill of Offense (Gareb?). The Illustration on page 39 shows, then, the area which will be covered by the Temple.

With Mount Zion raised, the territory of the north-west depressed, Zion will be standing 3800 feet above the Mediterranean. Zion, the city of God, will be seen towering in majestic splendour above the valley.

CHAPTER FOUR

Zion, Married to the Lord

Our understanding of the joy with which David viewed Zion, prompting him to burst forth with the songs of Zion, will be greatly furthered if we now consider the figurative relationship which Zion enjoyed with Yahweh. We remember always that Zion represented firstly natural Israel, and then spiritual Israel.

Long after David's day, God's love towards Zion or Jerusalem is detailed in the prophecy of Ezekiel:

“Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.” - Ezekiel 16:8

(The whole passage: verses 6-14, should be read)

“**skirt**” — Heb. *kanaph*: an edge or extremity, a wing.

The wing represents a protective covering, as in Psa. 61: “I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings (*kanaph*)” (v.4); and again: “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings (*kanaph*) shalt thou trust” (Psa. 91:4).

For a man to spread the skirt (extremity or wing) of his garment over a maiden was to invite her to come into covenant relationship with him by marriage. Hence the request of Ruth to Boaz as he lay on the threshing floor: “I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt (*kanaph*) over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman” (Ruth 3:9). Both Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, had lost their husbands. Their great misfortune in Israel was to have no name and no son whereby they could have seed. They stood to lose their inheritance (see verses 5, 10, 12 and 13 of Ruth 4). Under the law of Moses they needed “a near kinsman” or “any that is nigh of kin” (Lev. 25:49) to redeem them from their unfortunate plight.

Only one with a blood relationship to them could be their redeemer. Hence the play upon words which we find in Ruth 4:4 and the significance of the verses in this chapter to which we have already drawn the reader's attention. Boaz's injunction to one who was a closer relation than he, follows:

Ruth 4:4: “. . . If thou wilt *redeem* it (the land), *redeem* it: but if thou wilt not *redeem* it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to *redeem* it beside thee: and I am after thee. And he said, I will *redeem* it.”

“**redeem**” — Heb. *gaal*; a prim. root; to redeem (according to the Oriental law of kinship), i.e. to be the next of kin (and as such to buy back a relative's property, marry his widow, etc.)

This word “redeem” (*gaal*) occurs 5 times in the verse we have before us - five being the number of grace; and a full 15 times in chapter 4 of Ruth, causing us to entitle this short, yet so meaningful chapter as THE Old Testament chapter on redemption.

The reader may be thinking that we have strayed a long way from the Songs of Zion. But consider the significance of what we have just seen in Ruth, to that which we read of regarding Yahweh's relationship to Zion.

In Ezekiel 16 we have the record of Yahweh performing the part of the Redeemer to Zion. She was naked and lost. He spread his skirt over her, bringing her into covenant relation with himself; a covenant of marriage. Hence, long before Ezekiel's time, Isaiah could exclaim:

“For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts
is his name; and thy Redeemer (*gaal*), the Holy
One of Israel.”
- Isa. 54:5

We now have Zion, representing natural Israel, in covenant relationship with Yahweh, through marriage.

But Zion committed adultery, forsaking her God for other gods: “And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare” (Ezek. 16:22). “Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh” (v.26). “Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable” (v.28). The judgment of God came upon Zion because of her great sin: “Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered . . . I will judge thee, as women that *break wedlock* and shed blood are judged” (vs.36,38).

“**break wedlock**” — Geb. *naaph*: commit adultery; fig. to apostatize.

We pause to ask the question: Did God dissolve his marriage covenant with Israel (Zion) because of her adultery; or did he

temporarily put her away? Let us set out the answer in the following form:

God's Relationship with Zion:

Zion Married to Yahweh: "For thy Maker is *thine husband*; the LORD of hosts is his name" - Isa. 54:5 (Ezek. 16:8)

Forsaken because of Adultery: "But Zion said, the LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me" - Isa. 49:14

"For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God" - Isa. 54:6

The Marriage Re-established: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet *will I not forget thee*."

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." - Isa. 49:15-16

"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD: for *I am married unto you*." - Jer. 3:14

"And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi (mg. my husband):" - Hos. 2:16

Mercy Extended by Yahweh: "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee."

In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer." - Isa. 54:7-8

The Promise of Gentile Children: "Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold . . . The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other. . . Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate. . . who hath brought up these? . . . Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles."

- Isa. 49:18-22

"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD . . . thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles." - Isa. 54:1-3; Gal. 4:27

In this last passage, "the married wife" is Zion of old representing natural Israel; while "the desolate one" is Zion ("Jerusalem - the mother of us all", Gal. 4:26), following her temporary putting away, experiencing the promise of a multitude of children taken from among the Gentiles. The apostle Paul concludes from this Isaiah passage: "Now *we*, brethren, as Isaac was, *are the children of promise*" (Gal. 4:28).

The Marriage Covenant an Everlasting Covenant

“Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will *establish* unto thee an *everlasting covenant*”

- Ezek. 16:60

As an admitted digression from our theme, it is worthwhile to pause for a moment to consider the significance of this statement. Many today believe that because of Israel's unfaithfulness, God divorced her, dissolving forever the marriage covenant and then turned to the Gentiles with a new covenant in Christ. Because of an improper understanding of God's relationship with Zion they deduce that adultery cancels the marriage covenant, leaving the so-called “innocent” party free to remarry. *Nothing could be further from the scriptural truth.*

One of the keys is the word “establish” in the Ezekiel passage on the everlasting covenant:

“establish” — Heb. *qum*; a prim. root (very common); to rise, arise. Also translated to lift up (again), raise (up), rear (up) (again), rouse up, set (up), stand (up), continue, confirm, perform.

The point is that many, many times it has reference to **that which existed before**. A few sample references will illustrate:

Isa. 58:12 “they . . . shall build the old waste places: thou shalt *raise up* the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach.”

Isa. 61:4 “And they shall build the old wastes, they shall *raise up* the former desolations.”

Isa. 49:8 “I will . . . give thee for a covenant of the people, to *establish* (mg. raise up) the earth (Israel).”

Jer. 23:5 “I will *raise* unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper.”

Finally:

Gen. 26:3 “unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will *perform* the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father.”

The oath had already been given to Abraham as recorded in Genesis 22:17-18. God would *continue* (establish) it as a guarantee of the everlasting covenant of Gen. 17:7.

The significance and importance of the Ezekiel 16:60 passage is confirmed in the book of Leviticus where, at the close of a long passage covering part of the law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai (Lev. 25:2-26,46), we find precisely the same emphasis by God on his covenant with Israel:

Lev. 26:42: "Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember, and I will remember the land.

v. 44: "And yet, for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, *I will not cast them away, neither* will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to *break my covenant with them*: for I am the LORD their God."

Verse 46 of this passage reads: "These are the statutes and judgments and laws, which the LORD made between him and the children of Israel *in Mount Sinai* by the hand of Moses." Clearly, then, in the giving of the Law through Moses at Sinai, Israel was reminded of the Abrahamic Covenant and of the fact that God would *never* break that covenant with them. (see also Deut. 4:31, Judges 2:1, Psa. 89:34, Rom. 11:2). Bro. Thomas expresses it succinctly in *The Mystery of the Covenant of the Holy Land Explained*: "But the holy seed of Abraham was the substance in the nation's loins, on account of whom, and the things affirmed respecting him, it was *not consumed but carefully preserved . . .*" Again, in *Eureka*, he wrote: "'Yahweh', however, will not cast off his people: neither will he forsake his inheritance' (Psa. 94:14). He has only broken off a dry branch from the Hebrew Cedar Tree. *The tree remains, though in a very sapless condition.*"¹

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Many today who believe adultery severs the marriage covenant, allowing an innocent party freedom to remarry, completely overlook the principle that is of paramount importance in the example we have considered with Yahweh and Israel. That is of forgiveness. The only acceptable attitude in the eyes of the heavenly Father, by the offended

¹*Eureka* (1959 Edition), Vol. 1, page 305

partner whose spouse has committed adultery, is a patient waiting for repentance and return so that forgiveness might be extended and reconciliation effected.

This is the Old Testament lesson we learn from Yahweh's treatment of Israel.

Consider Psalm 78:

“For their heart was not right with him,
neither were they steadfast in his covenant. But he, being full of compassion,
forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he
his anger away, and did not stir up all
his wrath.”

- Psa.78:37-38

CHAPTER FIVE

The Ark to Zion

“Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of
my house, nor go up into my bed;
I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber
to mine eyelids,
Until I find out a place for the LORD, an
habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.”

Psa. 132:3-5

David had just been anointed King over Israel (2 Sam. 5:3, 1 Chron. 11:3); he had taken the strong hold of Zion, the city of David, from the Jebusites; had twice defeated the Philistines in battle, after seeking the counsel of Yahweh; and now, he desired that Yahweh, his God, should dwell with him.

After its return by the Philistines, the Ark had been left in the house of Abinadab in Kirjath-jearim, for twenty years (1 Sam. 7:2), although one writer suggests it had been there a period of forty years, throughout the reign of Saul.¹

The verses quoted at the head of this chapter give us a deep insight into the heart of this man who bore the name of the Beloved. Here was a man with his priorities right. He had risen from the sheep cotes on the hills of Bethlehem, the House of Bread, to the throne of Israel. Where Saul, king of Israel, and all his army had been fearful of Goliath, the giant of flesh, David had slain him with a sling and a stone. As a young warrior, the women of Israel had come out to greet him singing: “Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands”. As a relatively young man he had accomplished much. His wives and sons had multiplied. He occupied a magnificent house of cedar and “his kingdom was lifted up on high”. What more could any man ask for? But this man was a man of God. He was not satisfied. Over and above his wealth, power, position and family he wanted one thing: he wanted his God to

¹*The Man David*, by H. Tennant, page 112; published by the Christadelphian

dwelt with him. He would give himself no rest until he had found "a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

How many of us are like that? Most of us, with families to support and jobs to hold down, with children to educate and provide for, with a multitude of material things to strive for (because our Society leads us to believe that they are essential to a minimum standard of living) forget that much of this is a result of the curse: "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread". So engrossed do we become in the struggle for material prosperity and financial security that we have no time, nor energy, left for the Lord. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" said the Lord Jesus Christ, "and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mth. 6:33).

Why was David so anxious to have the Ark with him in Zion? "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony" (Ex. 25:22). The following quotation is most appropriate:

"The life of Israel had a divine centre. A secret heart unseen by the eye of king and people, a wooden chest covered with gold, with a golden rim and a cover of solid gold, known as the mercy seat, which was in one piece with twin cherubim rising above it. The faces of the cherubim gazed inwards and downwards upon the blood-sprinkled place of divine acceptance. God was unseen, but the whole arrangement of the tabernacle and its service was designed to guide the mind of the true worshipper to the hidden glory, the promise and prospect of great things to come. From the vacant space between cherubim and mercy seat the Voice spoke, and the divine glory shone to illumine with unbearable brilliance the gold of the most holy place. In the fullness of time the Word would become flesh, and the grace and the truth would shine forth on earth in a living person whose likeness would be that of the Father. Meanwhile, the Lord God journeyed with the ark."¹

David's greatest desire was to have the throne of the LORD in Zion. He arranged for transport of the Ark to a place of honour on Mount Zion.

The Death of Uzza

We are all familiar with the dreadful incident of the sudden death of Uzza. His death was partially - perhaps entirely, due to David's failure to comprehend a fundamental principle in our approach unto God. We shall return to this in a moment. Uzza had done what any man would have done in an instinctive, sincere act of concern for the Ark of God - any uninstructed man, that is. He had put out his hand to steady the Ark as the oxen stumbled. In anger, God struck him down for his error or rashness (2 Sam. 6:7, mg.).

In one powerful lesson we see that good intentions are not

¹ *The Man David*, by H. Tennant, page 110, published by the Christadelphian

enough, that sincerity alone cannot commend a man to God, that a man must be instructed in the ways of God before he can know and serve him. The church today teaches that a loving and merciful heavenly Father will accept any Christian witness that is motivated by a sincere heart. How far that is from the truth.

In the incident of Uzza the principle of separation had been violated. "I will be *sanctified* in them that come nigh me" (Lev. 10:3) had been the pronouncement of the LORD when once before he had struck down two priests, sons of Aaron. "I am the LORD your God; ye shall therefore *sanctify* yourselves, and *ye shall be holy; for I am holy*" (Lev. 11:44); echoed by Peter in his writings: "Because it is written: *Be ye holy, for I am holy* (1 Peter 1:16). For those who wish to sing the songs of Zion in truth and fulness of heart it will be instructive to briefly consider three key words in these quotations:

"**sanctify**" — Heb. *qadesh*; to separate, set apart; to be clean (ceremonially or morally). Hence *qadesh*: holiness.

"**holy**" (O.T.) — Heb. *qadosh* — from the above; translated also *a saint* (holy one).

"**holy**" (N.T.) — Gk. *hagios*; sacred, pure, "in its moral and spiritual significance, *separated from sin* and therefore consecrated to God"², a saint. Hence: *hagiosmos*: holiness.

It will be seen from both Old and New Testament that a saint is a holy one; one who is separate from sin and consecrated to God. Brethren and sisters of Christ are, then, holy ones. "This sainthood is not an attainment, it is *a state* into which God in grace calls men."³

If there is any principle, in the household of faith today, in danger of constant violation by brethren and sisters in Christ, it is this principle of holiness or separation.

The Principle of Holiness

In one of the most powerful passages on the principle of separation in the New Testament the apostle Paul warns of any relationship whatsoever with the world:

"Do not be mismatched with unbelievers.

For what partnership has righteousness and iniquity?

Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

What accord has Christ with Belial (cult worship)?

Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

² *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, Vol. 2, page 226; published by Fleming H. Revell Company

³ *Ibid.*, page 226.

What agreement has the temple of God with idols?"

- 2 Cor. 6:14-16, RSV

He concludes with his call to separation:

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the *unclean* thing; and I will receive you."

- verse 17.

"unclean" - Gk. *akatharos*: impure; the opposite to "clean" (*katharos*) or pure: free from foreign admixture, *whether good or evil*.

This is important in the life of the saint. A simple analogy will suffice. Suppose one has a glass of the purest water, together with a glass of the purest apple juice. If one drop of the apple juice is added to the glass of water, then the water is no longer "clean" (pure). It is *unclean*. Or again: if an artist has a palette containing the purest white pigment and, separately, the purest yellow pigment. If he takes the smallest part of the yellow pigment, adding it to the white - then the white is *akatharos*, unclean, impure.

So in our walk in Christ. There are many activities in the world which, in themselves, are harmless; e.g.: membership in a garden club, or in a lawn-bowling club, or in a community chorus (the writer would love to sing in a barbershop quartette!). What could be possibly wrong with these? The answer is: nothing! *But*, they take the time of the saint; time which has been and ought to be, consecrated to his Lord. Time used in his service, to visit the sick, propagate the gospel, assist in youth activities, or simply time to study.

Paul's argument is fortified by his source of quotation, the prophet Isaiah:

"Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, *ye that bear the vessels of the LORD.*"

- Isa. 52:11 RV

Time spent on a word study of this one verse is illuminating, stimulating and instructive. We shall take space to deal only with:

"vessels" — Heb. *keli*; something prepared, i.e.: any apparatus (as an implement, utensil, vessel or weapon). e.g.:

Judges 18:11: "six hundred men appointed with *weapons* of war".

1 Chron. 12:33: "(David's armies) of Zebulon, such as went forth to battle . . . with all *instruments (keli)* of war . . . they were not of *double heart*."

“double-heart” — Heb. *leb-va-leb*; mg. without a heart and a heart. Literally, heart and heart. Only occurs twice in the Old Testament.

These soldiers in the service of David had only one heart! They were not double-hearted, but single-minded (cp James 1:8) in the service of their king. They did not have one foot in the world and one foot in the truth. They were prepared for the warfare of the truth and were “clean” - their allegiance was not contaminated with activities in the world which would steal time owing to their master.

Our walk is a warfare. The weapon we bear is the sword of the Spirit and our allegiance is given to the greater David, the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot afford the luxury of worldly activities which in themselves are harmless. “Thou therefore endure hardness (suffer trouble) as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life . . .” (2 Tim. 2:3-4).

David's Failure

We return to the incident of David's failure in his preparations to bring the Ark to Zion. His lack of understanding resulted in Uzza's death. But this does not absolve Uzza from responsibility for his own error. If it is correct that Uzza was the son of a Levite (see page 55) then he ought to have known how the Ark should be transported. Later in these Notes we see that another Levite, Obededom, could very well have been most helpful to David in the latter's search to learn the solution to his tragic mistake in the transport of the Ark.

Like Uzza of old, we are responsible for our own actions before our God. We cannot leave the work of the ecclesia to other brethren, regardless of how capable they may be. We must each work out his own salvation, we must each earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints. The downfall of the church in the world around us is that, over the years, leadership was left in the hands of a few professionals who became false shepherds leading the flock astray. We must each, brother and sister, search the scriptures daily “whether those things were so”. Paul, Peter, John and Jude all warn against false brethren arising from within the ecclesia in the time of the end in which we live. A false brother does not believe he is providing false leadership. He does not wear a sign on his chest proclaiming, “I am a false brother”. He believes he is teaching truth. The tragic aspect of Christadelphia today is that we have very capable brethren teaching and publishing new ideas (which often are not new) which are inimical to the Truth and have been adopted from the writings of the apostasy. These brethren are often tolerated - even followed - because of their stature in our

community and because they are manifestly intelligent men. Not all of us are students, but all of us can read.

Recently, in re-reading Elpis Israel in preparation for a class, the writer was surprised to find how cogent and pertinent were the remarks of Bro. Thomas with respect to current problems within the brotherhood. It is said of Bro. John Carter, when he was Editor of the *Christadelphian*, that he made it a practice to read Elpis Israel once a year! We seldom go outside the scriptures or the household for example, but it is known of Martin Luther that in the great crises of his life (when first combatting the errors of his church) he read the whole of the book of Romans *every week* in order to preserve a sound and scripturally-balanced judgment. No wonder Joshua was instructed that "this book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night" (Josh. 1:8). We do not all have the responsibility of Joshua in leadership but we all do have the responsibility to preserve the ancient landmarks.

It is sometimes only in adversity or trouble that we really appreciate the truth. Hence Paul's exhortation: "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). This is how the great Potter moulds us and perfects our character by external pressure. So even King David had to learn something about a proper approach unto his God.

In the two accounts in Samuel and Chronicles of the bringing of the Ark to Zion, we are not told what thought process David went through in order to realize his error. His first reaction to Uzza's death was an instant blaze of anger against God. This is not clearly revealed in the Authorised Version where we read:

2 Sam. 6:7: "And the anger of the LORD *was kindled* against Uzza" (also 1 Chron. 13:10).

v.8: "And David was *displeased* because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza." (also 1 Chron. 13:11).

"was kindled", "displeased" — Heb. *charah*; a prim. root: to glow or grow warm; fig. to blaze up, of anger, zeal, jealousy.

When David was confronted by Nathan concerning his sin with Bathsheba and before David realized that Nathan had set a trap for him, the record tells us that after Nathan's story of the rich man's action in taking the poor man's lamb, "David's anger *was greatly kindled* against the man" (2 Sam. 12:5) - the same Hebrew word is translated "displeased" in the passage under consideration. This is an aside, but it would almost appear that the King James and Revised Version translators were reluctant to attribute anger by David against his God - a reservation not shared by the translators of modern versions.

It is a source of conjecture as to what led David to realize the reason for his failure: placing the Ark on an ox-drawn cart instead of being carried on the shoulders of the Levites. One would have thought that this outstanding king of Israel would have understood perfectly the principle of separation and sanctification of the Levites for their particular responsibility.

In the Chronicles passage we are given three clues which suggest the source of David's illumination.

The first, and obvious one, is David's own words when he instructs the priests and Levites as how to bring up the ark:

1 Chron. 15:12: "Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: *sanctify* yourselves, both ye and your brethren," and verse 14: "So the priests and the Levites *sanctified* themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD." - **Sanctification.**

The second clue is contained in the name given to the threshing floor of Nachon (2 Sam. 6:6) where Uzza died. In 1 Chron 13:9 it is called Chidon.

"**Chidon**" — Heb. *kidhon*; something to strike with; i.e. a dart or javelin. With Nachon meaning "stroke" we have, then, the stroke of a dart or **javelin.**

The third clue in understanding the striking down of Uzza, and David's perplexity is found in the expression: "the LORD made a breach upon Uzza" (2 Sam. 6:8, 1 Chron. 13:11) which David repeats to describe the disaster in 1 Chron. 15:13: "For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us."

"**made a breach upon**" — Heb. *perets*: a break; from a prim. root: **to break out.**

These three clues are combined in one passage of the Old Testament, although one is hidden. The Revised Version, a little more consistent in translation even than the Authorized, leads us to Exodus 19 where Israel comes into covenant relationship with Yahweh.

2 Sam. 6:8: "And David was displeased because the LORD had *broken forth* upon Uzza."

1 Chron. 13:11: "And David was displeased because the LORD had *broken forth* upon Uzza."

Ex. 19:22: "And let the priests also, which, come near to the LORD, *sanctify* themselves, lest the LORD *break forth* upon them."*

The Exodus passage contains the two obvious clues: **sanctification** to prevent the judgment of Yahweh **breaking forth** upon

* Note: Young people, beginning in Bible study, will find Englishman's Concordance invaluable in tracking down the use of the same Hebrew or Greek word(s) in companion passages: something which neither Strong's nor Young's provides.

them. The details of *how* that breaking forth would be accomplished are given in verses 12 and 13, where we find the third, hidden clue:

Ex. 19:12: "Take heed to yourselves . . . whosoever toucheth the mount shall surely be put to death:

v. 13: "There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or *shot* through;"

Paul's quotation of this in Hebrews gives us the explanation:

Heb. 12:20: "And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or *thrust through with a dart* (or **javelin**)".

The people of Israel went out of the camp "to meet with God" (Ex. 19:17). When Yahweh "came down upon mount Sinai" (verse 20), no doubt in the form of the Angel who bore his name, (Ex. 23:20-21), the mountain was sanctified by his presence, just as, previously, the ground had been declared holy when the angel spoke to Moses at the burning bush; or, later, when the angel of the host spoke to Joshua (Josh. 5:15). *Sanctification* was the prime requisite for approach unto the Almighty. *Sanctification*, or the LORD would *break forth* upon them and whoever touched the mountain would have been struck down by the unseen thrust of the *javelin*.

Perhaps, as David "did his daily readings" (Deut. 17:19), or even as he wrote out his own copy of the law, the principle of sanctification was forcibly borne in upon his consciousness as he read how Moses acted as a mediator between God and his people. This instruction would be confirmed again as he reviewed the duties of the Levites as recorded in our Bibles in Numbers 4. The Ark was "a holy thing" - it had been consecrated to God. The will of the Father had been expressed: "but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die" (Num. 4:15). That was David's error - for which Uzza died.

How easy it is for flesh to forget the commandments of Yahweh. How essential it is that we daily peruse the holy scriptures of truth so that our minds be refreshed again and again as to what he expects of us - and so that we never forget that "man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live." (Deut. 8:3).

The House of Obed-edom

Before we give our attention to the songs of Zion that David wrote in his preparation for transport and final enthronement of the Ark to Zion, we must satisfy our curiosity about two other men involved in the arrangements concerning the Ark.

Uzza was the son of Abinadab (2 Sam. 6:3) and the Ark had rested in the house of Abinadab for twenty years or more, as we noted previously. Abinadab lived in Kirjath - jearim "which belonged to Judah" (1 Chr. 13:6) and yet, although the evidence is not conclusive, it is quite possible that Abinadab was a Levite. As we have just seen, the Levites should have known all about carrying the Ark. Yet the Ark remained twenty years in a Levite's home - and as soon as the Ark was moved, one son of the Levite was struck dead!

What a marked contrast to God's dealings with the house of Obed-edom, after David "Carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite" (1 Chr. 13:13):

"And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. *And the LORD blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.*"

- 1 Chron. 13:14.

One man is responsible for the Ark in his house for twenty years, yet his son is struck dead. The other, for only three months, but he and his family and descendants are blessed beyond measure! Why the difference?

We remember the Ark, the dwelling place of Yahweh, is on its way to Zion. In honour of the occasion the man David wrote several songs of Zion. You and I, brethren and sisters of the Beloved, have the glorious hope, epitomized in these songs, that we might "ascend into the hill of the LORD ... and stand in his holy place" (Psa. 24:3). We, also, are on our way to Zion. What can we learn from Obed-edom, the Gittite?

"Obed" — from a prim. root, *abad*; to work, serve, till, enslave.

"Edom" — from a prim. root, *adam*; to show blood (in the face), i.e. flush or turn rosy; hence red (cp Gen. 25:30, 36:1). The flesh!

"Gittite" — an inhabitant of Gath.

"We learn from the Book of Joshua, that *Gath* (distinguished from other towns of the same name, by the addition of Rimmon, Josh. 21:24) was one of the cities of the *Levites*; not of the Levites only, but of the Kohathites, the very family specially set apart from the Levites, that 'they should bear the Ark upon their shoulders'."¹

The type and the lesson are remarkable. The name Obed-edom is Gentile in origin: The servant of *Edom*, but he was an Israelite indeed. After the first attempt to bring the Ark to Zion, which can be likened to Christ's first advent, its presence was found in a household bearing a Gentile name, but which claimed to be of the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). Surely in this there is a fore-shadowing of Gentiles called to the hope of Israel, and of the description of Ezekiel 44:15 relating to those who shall receive the blessing from

¹ *Undesigned Scriptural Coincidences* by J.J. Blunt, page 140; published by The Christadelphian Office

Yahweh in the age to come, and who in consequence, shall be permitted to ascend into his hill.

We are not specifically told why one Levite, associated with the Ark, was cursed and another blessed; but surely our heavenly Father expects us to use our faculties of thought and imagination. The Ark in Abinadab's home must have been an object of little significance. No doubt, in today's parlance, it was set aside in a corner of the basement or attic, covered with a cloth and forgotten. No daily reading of the Scriptures of truth was done in this household, hence, when it came time to move the Ark no adult in the family knew of the divine provision for its movement.

In contrast, the Ark in Obed-edom's house was possibly the centre of *family* worship: "it remained with *the family* of Obed-edom". He "considered its presence in his house as a great privilege and encouraged the family to view it similarly. Consequently the whole family was united together in guarding and caring for the Ark, rejoicing in the privilege that was theirs".² It could have been placed in a prominent place in the living room (where many today have their TV!) so that the family could gather round it for the daily readings. How inspirational would the reading from Exodus 25:22 have been with the Ark before their very eyes: "there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat". Imagine the conversations around the meal table, with the Ark right before them in the same room. After three months the children would know all the details of its revelation to Moses, its construction and materials, its significance and perhaps even its typology. So lasting was the effect of this Ark in Obed-edom's family that God "blessed . . . all his household" (2 Sam. 6:11) even to the third generation, giving Obed-edom eight sons who were "mighty men of valour" (1 Chron. 26:6) "for God blessed him" (v.5). "All these of the sons of Obed-edom: they and their sons and their brethren, *able men for strength for the service*, were threescore and two of Obed-edom"(v.8). Sixty-two male offspring over two generations - every one "able for strength" meaning they were men of valour, virtue, strength or wealth because each one was blessed by God. What a family! Imagine having those brethren in your ecclesia! What a God-fearing, genuine, devoted brother in Christ Obed-edom must have been - father and grandfather of such outstanding sons.

We conclude this brief aside on Obed-edom by noting that he was probably not a speaking brother, because in 1 Chronicles 15:24 we are told he was a "doorkeeper for the ark"; no doubt a very humble brother.

² Logos magazine.

CHAPTER SIX

The Processional Hymns

“Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;

I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids,

Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob”. - Psa. 132:3-5

“Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.” - v.8

For the LORD hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation.

This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell: for I have desired it.” - v. 13-14

There are at least seven psalms associated with David’s movement of the Ark to Zion: Psalms 15, 24, 68, 87, 96, 105, and 132. Psalm 24 is the only one of these we will look at in detail. A brief note on each, however, or simply the choice of a verse or two, will show why these have been selected in our list of the songs of Zion and their significance in the removal of the Ark.

Psalm 15

Translator’s notes: “David describeth a citizen of Zion”. The opening verses are very similar to those of Psalm 24:

Psalm 15

1. “LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
2. He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.”

Psalm 24

3. “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?
4. He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”

This Psalm has been described as the basis for the Sermon on the Mount.

Psalm 132

The excerpts from this psalm at the beginning of this chapter illustrate its beauty and its significance. It is indeed an inspirational - even thrilling psalm, written by David as the procession commenced from the house of Obed-edom (1 Chron.15:25).

“David had vivid recollections of the tragic failure of his first attempt to remove the ark, and it is not surprising to note his prayer, ‘LORD, remember David, and see his afflictions’. See 1 Chron. 13. He asks that his good intentions (2 Sam. 7:1-2) should be brought to remembrance, and that God would be merciful to him and grant his prayer.”¹ In a comparison of David’s requests in verses 1-10 and Yahweh’s answers in verse 11-18, Bro. Wilson has some very helpful comments in the light of this present study.

Psalm 68

“The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an
high hill as the hill of Bashan.

Why leap ye, ye high hills? *this is the hill
which God desireth to dwell in;* yea, the LORD
will dwell in it for ever.” - v. 15-16

“The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.” - v. 25

Superscription: “A prayer at the removing of the ark . . . A Psalm or *Song* of David”; apparently composed by David for the singers and musicians as the march progressed. “Probably the most majestic psalm of all. One of several composed by David to celebrate the carrying of the ark from the region of Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem . . . David reaches back into the past (Israel’s deliverance and march from Egypt to Canaan) . . . to glorify the events of his own day, and to foretell the march of the Christ-Ark from Sinai to Zion, and the establishment of his kingdom.”²

Psalm 87

“His foundation is in the holy mountains. The
LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the
dwellings of Jacob.

Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God.
Selah” - v. 1-3

“As well the singers as the players on instruments
shall be there: all my springs (fountains) are in
thee” - v. 7

¹ *A Handbook to the Psalms* by E. Wilson, page 196, published by the Christadelphian Scripture Study Service.

² *Ibid.*, page 132

Sung by the procession as the walls of Jerusalem came into sight. Superscription: "A Psalm or *Song* for the sons of Korah". This is also repeated in the sub-superscription after verse 7 (found, incorrectly, in the Authorized Version in the superscription to Psalm 88). Perhaps David had Obed-edom the Kohathite in mind as a fitting example of a true brother-in-Christ, of whom the Psalmist writes: "And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her" (LXX: "A man shall say Zion is my mother, and such a man was born in her"), verse 5; and again in verse 6: "The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there". Although Bro. Wilson notes that Bro. Thomas gives a wider view of verse 6: "The man, even *THE* man, was developed there" (i.e. the *WHOLE* man - Christ and his body).

Psalm 96

This psalm and Psalm 105:1-15, were written by David after he had fulfilled his goal of bringing the dwelling place of his God to the holy city of Zion. We find them recorded in 1 Chronicles 16:1-33.

"So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God." - 1 Chron. 16:1

The theme of both psalms is: The LORD reigneth over all the earth. From Psalm 96 in particular it is easy to see that David and the Ark in Zion became a type of the Lord Jesus Christ ruling from Jerusalem and manifesting the power of Yahweh over all nations:

- v. 1: ". . . sing unto the LORD, *all the earth*"
- v. 3: "declare his glory among the *heathen*"
- v. 9: "fear before him, *all the earth*"
- v.10: "Say *among the heathen* that the LORD reigneth"
- v.13: "for he cometh to judge *the earth*: he shall judge *the world* with righteousness and the people with his truth."

In the Beauty of Holiness

We cannot pass by this psalm without noting verse 9 (quoted from 1 Chron. 16:29, rather than Psalm 96:8-9):

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in *the beauty of holiness*."

In Psalm 96:9 the AV margin "in the glorious sanctuary" is incorrect; and the RV margin and RSV "in holy array" is not as good

a translation as the King James.¹ For a phrase which has half a dozen different interpretations in different versions, the Authorized translators have, in fact, given it its proper meaning: "in the beauty of holiness". The phrase occurs five times in the Old Testament (no accident - the number of grace) and always refers to the attitude of mind, or state of holiness, of those who come to worship before Yahweh. A quick example for the interested reader will be found in 2 Chronicles 20 where the Ammonites come against King Jehoshaphat to battle. Instead of organizing the army, Jehoshaphat leads the congregation in a beautiful prayer. In answer the Spirit of the LORD comes upon Jahaziel with the message "the battle is not your's, but God's . . . Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still (compare Israel at the Red sea, under Moses leadership, Exodus 14:13) and see the salvation of the LORD with you" (vs. 15-17). Jehoshaphat continues in leading the nation in "worshipping the LORD" and the Levites "stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high" (v.19). The next morning when they go forth to meet the enemy the only instructions the king gives the people are described as follows: "And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed *singers* unto the LORD, and that should *praise IN (RVm) the beauty of holiness*, as they went out before the army, and to say, *Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever*" (v. 21). "When they began to *sing and to praise*" their God, the enemy destroyed itself! If ever there was a man that understood the spirit of David in the songs of Zion it was Jehoshaphat. He himself set the example and he ensured that the whole nation as well as the army were properly prepared to worship God in a state of holiness. Throughout the whole incident they sing praises unto their God "in the beauty of holiness". What a power-filled example to brethren and sisters today as to how to cope with our problems!

We might say that *beauty of holiness* is a condition of acceptable worship in praise and song. By the use of this phrase in Psalm 96, David acknowledges his understanding of the principle of holiness and separation, as we have seen in the last chapter. The beauty, before Yahweh, is inherent in holiness itself on the part of the worshippers. Holiness of character is a beautiful thing in God's sight. It describes, in terms of moral and spiritual splendour, one who is separate from sin and the world.

"The beauty of holiness must, like holiness itself, be spiritual, inward. Yet also manifest; for beauty is something we can behold, if not with the eyes, with the mind. Not the beauty we confer, by clothing, adorning . . . but *a beauty it confers on us*, by purifying and exalting. If the heart is consecrated, the life that flows from it will be beautiful."

- The Pulpit Commentary

¹ see *Behold the Man Whose Name is the Branch*, pgs 27-31, by the writer

CHAPTER SEVEN

Psalm 24

Note: Much of the following verse-by-verse study of this psalm is based on the Logos magazine Bible Marking Project for the months of June, July and August, 1980; from Bro. Ern Wilson's "A Handbook to the Psalms", pages 85-87 and from the writer's own study. For a thorough and pains-taking exposition of this passage of scripture the reader is referred to Logos of the foregoing months, and for a quick, illuminating summary, to Bro. Wilson's work. What follows lies somewhere in between.

As the procession moves slowly up the winding road from the house of Obed-edom to Zion, it traversed the valley and mountains round Jerusalem and came ultimately to the east gate of the city. Special rejoicings climaxed the occasion. Even the gates of the city were called upon to "lift up themselves" to receive the emblem of divine glory.

This is a Messianic Psalm. The glory of David's day when he danced before the Ark and led the way in triumph to the city of Jerusalem and to Mount Zion, will be repeated and exceeded when the Lord shall enter "his city". Jerusalem was described as "David's city" when the Jebusite fortress on Mount Zion had fallen to his armies; but it will be described as "the city of the great King" when the Lord in triumph and surrounded by his armies, the glorified elect, will enter the city in the age to come.



photo of Kirjath-jearim, with the walls of Jerusalem on the horizon.

A Trilogy

Psalm 24 is the third of a trilogy that sets forth Messiah as Sacrifice (Psalm 22), Shepherd (Psalm 23) and Sovereign (Psalm 24). This can be set out as follows:

Psalm 22 speaks prophetically of Christ as a Sacrifice - his Sufferings and his Victory.

Psalm 23 speaks prophetically of Christ as the Good Shepherd, leading his flock through all life's vicissitudes to final peace and safety.

Psalm 24 speaks prophetically of Christ as Yahweh's Ark, Yahweh Tzvaoth, entering the City of His Glory to be the King over all the earth.

As will be noted, each appointment builds upon its predecessor: the sacrifice becomes the shepherd (the example to follow) and the shepherd becomes the sovereign (the attainment of hope). The order presented teaches that the cross must come before the crown; and that sacrifice is only valid when the example of the Lord is followed.

Sung in Parts

Those who have studied the construction of the Psalm suggest that it was sung in parts, which certainly conforms to what we have seen, in chapter one of these Notes, of David's divinely given ability in the composition of music and songs for both orchestra and choir.

v. 1-2: *The King's universal power.*

- a section of singers.

v. 3-6: *Those who shall ascend into His presence:*

v. 3 - the voice of a soloist.

v. 4-6: - the full chorus.

v. 7-10: *The Ceremonial Entrance of the King in Glory*

v. 7 - the lead singer demands entry.

v. 8 - the gate-keepers' challenge.

v. 8-9 - the chorus answers.

v. 10 - the gate-keepers repeat the challenge.

v. 10 - the chorus answers.

The King's Universal Power, vs. 1-2

vs. 1: *The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*

The apostle Paul quotes the first half of the verse in 1 Cor. 10:26, to teach the universality of Yahweh's influence. This is a theme

well appreciated by Christadelphians and beautifully rendered by the Psalmist: "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined . . . Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice . . . For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills . . . If I were hungry I would not tell thee: for *the world is mine and the fulness thereof*" (Psa. 50:2-12).

In Psalm 24, the Hebrew places Yahweh's name first: "To Yahweh (is) the earth and its fulness"; hence attention is first directed to Him. He should be in the forefront of all our considerations. If we place Him first in our lives, how different they might be! And how much more likely would it be that we would be among those who are for ever his children in the age to come when "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament *sheweth* His handywork." (Psa. 19:1).

v s. 2: "*For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.*"

It is not literally true that the earth rests "upon" the seas, nor is it literally true that it is established "upon" the floods - which is our key to search more fully the meaning of this brief verse.

"**upon**" - Heb. *al*, which can also mean *by the side of, against*.

In the creation the waters were gathered together in order that the dry land might appear (Gen. 1:9), thus permitting the creation of man from the dust of the ground.

"**founded**" - When God challenged Job, He demanded to know where Job was "when I laid the *foundations* of the earth" and when He said to the seas, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job. 38:4,11).

Allowing our minds to be directed by the principle of first the natural, then the spiritual, we see in the primary creation God in control, limiting the bounds of the sea and thereby enabling the earth to exist - the earth out of which comes man. Symbolically, the "earth" represents Israel and the "seas" the Gentiles:

"**the earth**" - Israel.

Moses teaches "all the congregation of Israel" the words of his song, beginning ". . . hear, O *earth*, the words of my mouth" (Deut. 31:30, 32:1). God speaks through Isaiah to his people, ". . . hearken, ye people: let the *earth* hear" (Isa. 34:1) and again in Isaiah we read: "The vision of Isaiah . . . concerning Judah . . . give ear, O *earth*" (Isa. 1:1,2). In Haggai 2:6 Yahweh declares, "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the *earth*" which Paul interprets as applying to the nation of Israel (Heb. 12:26-28).

“**the seas**” - Gentiles: “the wicked are like the troubled sea” (Isa. 57:20).

After the Millenium, the mortal nations will cease to exist: “there was no more sea” (Rev. 21:1), for Gentilism as we know it today will be no more. Waters, or seas, can represent all Gentile nations as we see in Rev. 17:15, “The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.”

The “earth”, or Israel, has been so established in relation to the “sea”, the Gentiles, that despite the raging of political storms the former will never be overcome of the latter. The Gentiles have stormed against Israel, and in the terms of Psalm 24:1,2, have lifted up their waves against the earth, but after a time, in obedience to divine laws those waves have receded, the storm has subsided and the earth has remained. The sovereignty of Yahweh is witnessed in the fact that today Israel lies a nation once again in the earth.

“**the floods**” - Heb. *nahar*—river, particularly applied in Scripture to the rivers Nile and Euphrates.

For example, we read of Abraham, “dwelling on the other side of the flood (*nahar* - river)”, Josh. 24:2 and again, “I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood (*nahar* - river)”, vs. 3, where the “flood” is obviously the river Euphrates. In Isaiah 27:12 we read, “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river (*nahar*) unto the stream of Egypt (the Nile) . . .”. Here, *nahar* is the Euphrates representing the power of Assyria. Similarly, in Isa. 8:7 the river (*nahar*) is again the Euphrates, representing Assyria. “the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks”. In Rev. 9:14 the Turkish power is likened to “the great river Euphrates” flooding over its banks, whilst in Rev. 16:12 there is the familiar reference to the drying up of the river Euphrates - again, the Turkish power.

In Daniel 10:4 where the prophet is given the vision of the multitudinous Christ (comparable to John’s vision of the same in Rev. 1:13-15), we read, “I was by the side of the great river (*nahar*), which is Hiddekel”. The Hiddekel (*Tigra* in Old Persian) is the ancient name of the Tigris, on the banks of which were located Nineveh and the ancient Assyrian city of Ashur. Daniel, in vision, saw the multiple man of the One (representative of the saints in glory) standing above the river (cp Dan. 12:5-7) as to control the source of its waters.

With these thoughts in mind, Psalm 24 teaches, not merely that nature is governed by divine laws but on the same principle, the Israelitish earth will never be overcome by the tides of the Gentile

seas, nor the raging of their storms. Moreover, the flowing of political rivers, or the policies of the nations, are governed by His purpose with Israel spiritual and natural.

“**and established it**” — Heb. “*will establish it*”, future tense.

The raging of the nations, or the flooding course of political rivers, are governed by the Most High who “ruleth in the kingdoms of men” (Dan. 4:17). The nations are all limited in their power and influence by the contour of the “earth” that rises above them - figuratively God’s purpose with Israel. Hence Isaiah declares: “Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. And behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he (Gog) is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.”, Isa. 17:12-14.

Those Who Shall Ascend Into His Presence: vs. 3-6

3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?

4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 This is the generation of them that seek him that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.

vs. 3: “*Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD?*”

David had endeavoured to ascend into the “hill of Yahweh” with the Ark of the covenant and the attempt had been marked by failure. Uzzah had been struck dead. David learned a fundamental lesson in regard to divine worship: “they that worship him must worship him in spirit and *in truth*,” John 4:24. The desire to worship must be followed by *the way* to worship. The bringing of the Ark to Zion taught a tremendous and fundamental lesson to all true Israelites: it was that Yahweh is a sovereign Power who must be respected and obeyed.

“**the hill**” - compare Psa. 2:6: “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion”, or as the A.V. margin renders it: “upon Zion, the hill of my holiness.”

“**set**” — Heb. *nasah*: to pour out, anoint.

David was anointed as king three times: once at Bethlehem (1 Sam. 16:13), and twice at Hebron (2 Sam. 2:4, 5:3). He was never anointed as king on Zion, giving us conclusive proof that this Psalm is Messianic, pointing to the great day when Christ shall reign as King from Jerusalem.

One of the other Psalms we have arbitrarily designated as a Song of Zion commences with the same question as the verse under consideration in Psalm 24: "LORD who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in *thy holy hill*?" (Psa. 15:1). The answer is found in the prophecy concerning Ezekiel's temple in the Age to come.

The Sons of Zadok

"This is the law of the house: Upon the *top of the mountain*, the whole limit thereof round about shall be most *holy*. Behold, this is the law of the house." - Ezek. 43:12

"And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord God." - Ezek. 43:19

"But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me." - Ezek. 44:15

CHAPTER 6

Here we see the royal priesthood of the Age to come, true Israelites drawn out of all nations. But why are they designated as "the sons of Zadok"?

On the right we highlight the genealogy of Zadok, descendant from Levi, taken from 1 Chron. 6:1-8. These are all names of illustrious men of Scripture - why does Ezekiel, under divine inspiration, single out Zadok, and his seed?

"Zadok" — Heb. *Tsadowq*: just or righteous; from a prim. root to be right in a moral sense.

THE sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Mě-râr'-i.

2 And the sons of Kohath; Amram, Izhar, and Hebron, and Ūz'-zī-ěl.

3 And the children of Amram; Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam. The sons also of Aaron; Nadab, and A-bī'-hū, Ēl-ē-ā'-zār, and Ith'-ā-mār.

4 ¶ Ēl-ē-ā'-zār begat Phīn'-ē-hās, Phinehas begat A-bī'-shū-ā,

5 And A-bī'-shū-ā begat Būk'-kī, and Bukki begat Uzzi,

6 And Uzzi begat Zēr-ā-hī'-āh, and Zerariah begat Mě-rāi'-ōth,

7 Mě-rāi'-ōth begat Am-ā-rī'-āh, and Amariah begat A-hī'-tūb,

8 And A-hī'-tūb begat Zadok, and Zadok begat A-hī'-mā-āz,

Zadok was a high priest in the time of David and was unwavering in his loyalty to David. For his fidelity Solomon replaced Abiathar from being high priest and put Zadok in his stead (1 Kgs. 2:27, 35). The marginal references in the Oxford wide-margin of the Authorised text at 1 Kgs. 2:35 are most helpful and give us the clues we need.

When Israel committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab who, following the counsel of Balaam, "called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods" and caused Israel to "join himself unto Baal-peor" (Num. 25:1-3) it was Zadok's ancestor, Phinehas, "the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron" (v. 11) who stayed the plague by thrusting through the man of Israel and his Midianitish woman. For this act of courage and fidelity Yahweh commanded Moses concerning Phinehas: "Behold, I give unto him my *covenant of peace*: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an *everlasting priesthood*: because he was zealous for his God, and *made an atonement* for the children of Israel" (vs. 12-13). The psalmist's commentary on this event reads as follows: "then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed. And that was counted unto him for righteousness *unto all generations for evermore*" (Psa. 106:30-31).

In Numbers we see clearly Phinehas' "seed after him", Zadok, given "the covenant of an everlasting priesthood"! Surely Phinehas, in this instance, is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ who "made an atonement for Israel" and is given "a covenant of peace". It is, therefore, most appropriate in the divine scheme of things that Zadok and his sons, the seed of Phinehas, become typical of the saints ruling as king-priests in the kingdom, as we see exhibited in Ezekiel's prophecy.

This is confirmed in 1 Sam. 2:35 where we read: "I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house: and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever" - fulfilled literally in the appointment of Zadok as high priest (1 Kgs. 2:35) and typically in Zadok and his sons in the kingdom.

Psalm 24:3: "*or who shall stand in his holy place?*"

"**stand**" — Heb. *qum*, a prim. root: to arise, rise up, stand firm; to rise erect and approved as in Psalm 1:5 (the only other place in the Psalms where *qum* is translated "stand"); "Therefore the ungodly shall not *stand* in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."

Clean Hands and a Pure Heart

vs. 4: "*He that hath clean hands and a pure heart*"

Now we see the qualifications that enable faithful brethren and

sisters in Christ to be constituted in the Kingdom age as the sons of Zadok. The Hebrews used the term "heart" as we would "mind". In view of that fact, the answer denotes those who walk in righteousness before Yahweh and whose minds are given to the truth.

"**clean**" — Heb. *naqi*: innocent, blameless, guiltless; generally translated "innocent".

"Clean hands" are indicative of the acts or works of a righteous, or *innocent* person. For example, the instructions from Yahweh through Jeremiah to the king on David's throne: "execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and *do* no wrong, *do* no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent (*naqi*) blood in this place". Jer. 22:3.

"Clean hands", then, are hands of righteousness. Hands ready and willing to do the works of righteousness. They denote "a doer" of the Word as well as a hearer (James 4:8). Pilate washed his hands to rid himself of the guilt of condemning the Lord, but that kind of water could not cleanse his sin. Hands that labour in the things of God are "clean hands", and such work will be the external manifestation of a pure heart, which cannot be seen. Our hands stand for our work, our feet stand for our walk, and our heart stands for our motivation; "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he", Prov. 23:7.

We see these principles in the companion psalm to Psalm 24, Psalm 15, which we have already referred to: "Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that *walketh* uprightly, and *worketh* righteousness (with his hands), and speaketh the truth in his *heart*", Psalm 15:1-2.

"a **pure** heart" — Heb. *bar*: quality of moral purity; from root *barar*: to purge, purify, cleanse, or make bright; to examine, select, choose, with a single mind towards God (cp James 4:8).

The following passages demonstrate clearly the usage of the word *bar*: Psa. 73:1: "Truly, God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a *clean (bar)* heart", Job 11:4: "For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am *clean (bar)* in thine eyes", Psa. 19:8: "the commandment of the LORD is *pure (bar)*, enlightening the eyes", Psa. 2:12: "kiss the *Son (bar)*, lest he be angry."

The last quote in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ leads us back to the root *barar*, a study of which is so helpful in determining the meaning of the derivative. The beautiful passage of Isaiah, where the prophet speaks with the Spirit of Christ, reads: "The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like

a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a *polished (barar)* shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (Isa. 49:1-3). Again, the same prophet declares that those who bear the vessels of the LORD should be *clean (barar)* or purified (Isa. 52:11), a passage which we have already considered on page 50. Finally, our ultimate perfection at the judgment seat, if the Lord so wills, is highlighted in Daniel 12:10: "Many shall be *purified (barar)*, and made white, and tried."

vs. 4: "*who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity.*"

To "lift up the soul" is to direct the mind towards, or earnestly desire, or set one's mind on. This is illustrated in the first verse of the next psalm; "Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul" (Psa. 25:1).

"**vanity**" — Heb. *shav*: from a word, the root of which signifies to rush over as a tempest; by implication, devastation and, figuratively, as idolatry (that which is false, cp Ex. 23:1: "Thou shalt not raise a *false (shav)* report). Rotherham renders *shav* as "falsehood" in Psalm 24:4.

We can but quote verbatim from Bro. H.P. Mansfield's verse-by-verse notes in Logos: "As a mighty storm may sweep the land, and for a moment, draw the attention of all, it soon passes away with its noise and tumult and is no more. There are many things that may draw the wandering mind for a time, but which, when compared to the eternal things of Yahweh are but temporary. The opportunities of this life today are in that category, and we may be attracted to them, and be tempted to be drawn to them; but the spiritual man knows that they are but temporary. Yet they are brought prominently before us, and represented to us as most desirous and permanent. The Godly man will not be taken in by their speciousness; he will not desire the things of vanity. He will bear in mind the exhortation of Ecclesiastes that sees the vanity of all such mundane strivings, and sets before its readers the whole man: he that feareth God and keepeth His commandments. (Ecc. 12:13)."

Vanity expresses that which is transitory. It has the idea of desolation and evil. It relates to that which is false and unreal as in Psa. 12:2: "(the children of men) speak *vanity (shav)* every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak". He who has a pure heart will be single-minded in his service before Yahweh, whereas he who lifts up his soul unto vanity will be "double-minded and unstable in all his ways" (Jms. 1:8) - he will have one foot in the world and one foot in the Truth - an impossible balancing act.

vs. 4: "*nor sworn deceitfully*"

“sworn” — Heb. *shaba*, a prim. root: to be complete (from which comes the very common Hebrew word, *shibah*, or “seven”, a prime cardinal number), to *seven* oneself, i.e. swear an oath (as if by repeating a declaration seven times).

To swear deceitfully, in the context of Psalm 24, is to live a lie to the Truth. He who has not sworn deceitfully is one who has endeavoured to live the principles of the Truth, manifesting love to God and love to his neighbour. The principle is expressed by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, where he writes, concerning those who have the mind of Christ, “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, *speak every man truth* with his neighbour: for we are members one of another” (Eph. 4:24-25).

It isn't “true holiness” as the AV has it, but as the margin reads, “holiness of truth” which is confirmed by the Diaglott¹ and Nestle Greek;² or we may choose “created after the likeness of God in *true righteousness and holiness*” as the RSV reads, supported by the NIV and Rotherham. The latter translates the commencement of verse 25 with: “Wherefore stripping off *what is false*” which gives us our link to the passage in Psalm 24, where we considered “vanity” and found it meant “falsehood”, and “nor sworn deceitfully” suggesting one living a lie to the truth. But the significance of the Ephesian passage is that the phrase “speak every man truth” (cp v. 15, “speaking the truth in love” - literally, “trusting the truth” - to deal faithfully with anyone) is a direct quotation from Zechariah who, in turn, alludes to Psalm 15, one of the psalms we have selected as a Song of Zion.

We don't normally think of Zechariah as a source for moral teaching today and yet part of the theme of Zechariah's prophecy is the hope and joyful expectation of Messiah ruling in the Kingdom of God on earth, and the nations instructed in righteousness. Zechariah 8 is his third parable, one of encouragement and divine blessing upon Jerusalem. He has these words of instruction: “These are the things that ye shall *do*, Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour, execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour: and *love no false oath*: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD” (Zech. 8:16-17). We could compare also his second parable, Chapter 7, the nation instructed in the principles of godliness: “Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart” (Zech. 7:9,10). Zechariah emphasizes the three bases of the moral world: Truth, Justice and Peace and he teaches that both the Jew of old and the saints today are to *speak, do* and *think* truth. This takes us back, for the third time in this study, to Psalm 15: “Who shall dwell in

¹ *The Emphatic Diaglott* by Benjamin Wilson

² *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* by Rev. A. Marshall

thy holy hill? He that *walketh* uprightly, and *worketh* righteousness, and *speaketh the truth* in his heart” (Psalm 15:2).

This individual has clean hands and a pure heart, he has not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully . . .

vs. 5: “*He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*”

“**righteousness**” — Heb. *tsedeq*: to be right, or justified before God.

The first usage of a very closely related Hebrew word is in relation to that great man of faith, Abraham: “So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for *righteousness (tsedaqah)*” Gen. 15:5-6. Here, Abraham’s trust in God’s promise was accounted to him for righteousness. “The word, *tsedeq*, describes the righteous standing of God’s heirs to salvation, with no charge to be laid against them, this righteousness actually possessed by Messiah (Jer. 23:6) is bestowed by him, thus pointing towards the New Testament doctrine of Christ, our righteousness. The righteousness of God’s heirs of salvation is the righteousness of the Messiah attributed to them by God through faith in the redemptive work of Messiah in which God declares them righteous only because of grace provided through that redemptive work.”¹

The action of Obed-edom was justified in the sight of Israel and David, by the blessing he and his family and descendants received from God. This foreshadowed the gift of justification unto life eternal, at the second coming of Christ, to all those who at that time will be constituted as the sons of Zadok.

The blessing of justification to the pure in heart in Psalm 24 continues in association with clean hands in David’s song of thanksgiving after the LORD delivered him from his enemies and from the hands of Saul:

“The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness (*tsedeq*); according to the cleanness (*bor*) of my hands hath he recompensed me.

For I have kept the way of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.

I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.

Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness (*tsedeq*), according to the cleanness (*bor*) of my hands in his eyesight.

With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful;
with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.

¹ *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. II, page 754, by Harris, Archer, Waltke, published by Moody Press, Chicago.

With the pure (*barar*) thou wilt shew thyself pure (*barar*); and with the froward thy wilt shew thyself froward."

- Psalm 18:20-26 (2 Samuel 22:21-27)

vs. 6: "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah."

"generation" — Heb. *dor*: a revolution of time, i.e.: an age or generation; from a prime root to gyrate or move in a circle; an order of mankind.

In the context of Psalm 24, which we have already examined, a generation relates to the saints, a peculiar, or purchased people. We see this in Psalm 14:5: "God is in the *generation* of the righteous;" Psalm 22:30: "A seed shall serve him: it shall be accounted to the LORD for a *generation*;" and Psalm 112:1,2: "Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD . . . His seed shall be mighty upon the earth: the *generation* of the upright shall be blessed."

"that **seek** him" — Heb. *darash*: a prim. root, to tread or frequent, to follow (for pursuit or search); by implication to *seek* or *ask*, to search out.

No finer example in Scripture could be found than Ezra the priest: "For Ezra had prepared his heart to *seek* (*darash*) the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7:10). Ezra had "set his heart" (RV) to search out the *torah* (teaching, direction, instruction) of Yahweh and to *do* it. We are given a further insight into the character of this holy man of God in verse 6: "he was a *ready* scribe in the law of Moses", RSV: "a scribe skilled". The same word (which is only used four times in the Old Testament) is found in Isaiah of him who will sit on the throne of David, "judging, and seeking judgment and *hasting* righteousness" (Isa. 16:5); where the RV reads "and *swift* to do righteousness,"

So Ezra had set his heart to search out and understand the teaching of the Truth of his day, and was prepared to put that teaching into effect in his personal witness and to be "swift to do" it.

He, no doubt, will be among the generation of them that seek God and shall ascend into the hill of the LORD, and stand in his holy place. We today have the promise of God that "he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6), giving us also hope that we too might join in the glorious throng of the Redeemed on Mount Zion.

"that **seek** thy face" — Heb. *baqash*; also a prim. root: to search out, to strive after, especially through worship and prayer.

This word is a common one in the Old Testament, generally used of the *actions* of men. Hence the first word, to seek, in the verse we are considering, implies to *learn*, the second to the *application* of that learning. As we have seen, Ezra set his heart to *seek* the law of God and then to *do* it.

The generation of worshippers acceptable to our Lord are those who are doers of the word, not hearers only (James 1:22).

“**O Jacob**” - Of ten versions checked by the writer, every one, plus the Septuagint, renders this “O God of Jacob”; but most show a footnote acknowledging that the Hebrew reads “thy face, O Jacob” - that “God” is not in the original text. One concludes that the translators did not know what to do with this text so followed the lead of the Greek translation! It would appear that the AV is the only one correct and Bro. Mansfield confirms this in his Logos notes. He writes: “The margin inserts the word ‘God’, but there is no such word in the Hebrew, and it seems most unlikely that such an important word should be overlooked by scribes who copied the text. H. Leupold renders the phrase: ‘They that seek thy face *are* Jacob’. This makes very good sense. Those who seek the face of Yahweh, that is, those who seek his approval, are as Jacob. They are conscious of their imperfections, but are like Jacob in that they submit to the moulding influence of Yahweh. That great man, as a young shepherd in the house of Isaac, and employee of the scheming Laban, and as a returning exile facing Esau his brother, never lost sight of the hope of his calling, always had before him the high and lofty vision of the future. Jacob was pliable to the moulding of Yahweh, and became a man remade, justifying the change of name granted him: Israel. The supplanter (Jacob) becomes the Prince with God (Israel). He sought and found the face and favour of the ‘God of his salvation’. All who will ascend into the hill of Yahweh, therefore, will be ‘as Jacob’. Because of that, the Temple of the Age to come is given the title *The House of the God of Jacob*. All those who find a place there, will have been remade under the moulding pressure of Yahweh.”

“**Selah**” — Heb. *celah*: suspension (of music), to pause.

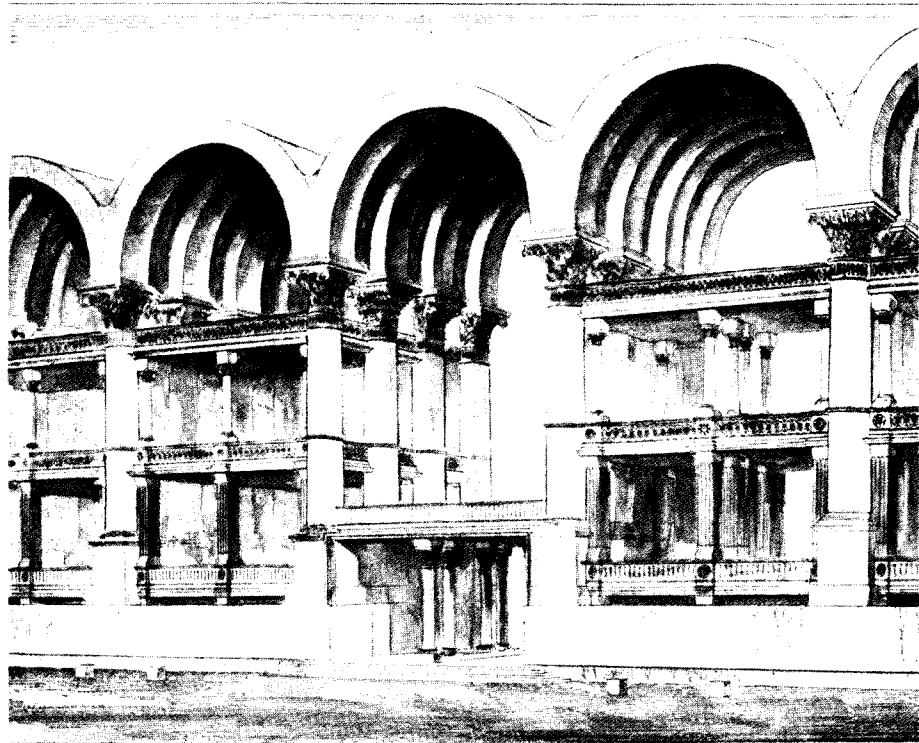
The word is more than a musical notation; it is a thought-link bidding the reader to pause and consider what has already been stated with that which follows. This brings us to the third section of Psalm 24:

The Ceremonial Entrance of the King in Glory: vs. 7-10.

7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

THE ARABESQUES OR "NARROW WINDOWS"



PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF GATE AND CHIEF.
(N.B. *Arches and columns omitted to show construction.*)

Artist's concept of the Gates of Ezekiel's Temple,
from *The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy*, published by Logos Publications, Adelaide,
Australia

9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of Glory. Selah.

The grand consummation of the Psalm is now reached. Based upon the triumphant entrance of the Ark through the gates of Jerusalem, to mount Zion, with the rejoicing David preceding it, there is foreshadowed an epoch of greater joy, glory and celebration when the Lord Jesus Christ with his faithful redeemed shall enter that same city in majesty to the rejoicing plaudits of all who will witness it. The successful conveyance of the Ark to Jerusalem by David was the greatest moment of his life; but it will be superceded by his joy in participating in the greater glory of the future, such as his meditative mind took hold of as he composed this Psalm.

The lead singer now demands entry:

vs. 7: *"Lift up your heads, O ye gates"*

In a literal sense the gates of Ezekiel's temple city will be "lifted up", and its entrances widened, to provide ample space for the crowds of worshippers who shall throng its courts (see illustrations).¹

The city is to be built to Yahweh: the centre of his rule on the earth: "The place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile." (Ezek. 43:7).

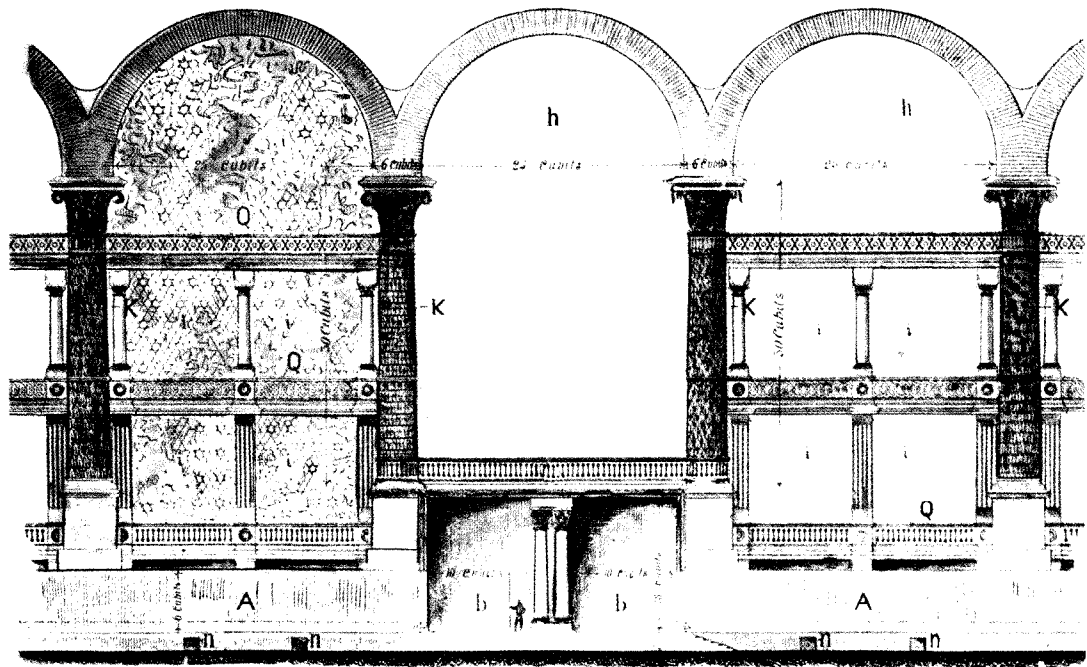
In the day of Solomon's reign the king had a special gate described as "the king's gate eastward" (1 Chron. 9:18); this gate was elevated to his glory and hence called "the high gate" as in 2 Chron. 23:20: "They came through the high gate into the king's house, and set the king upon the throne of the kingdom." This gate Jotham made even higher to add to his glory, as we read in 2 Kings 15:35: "He built the higher gate of the house of the LORD". *

The eastern gate in the temple of the Age to come is to be reserved exclusively for the King and no mortal will be permitted into it (Ezek. 44:1-3). Only the immortal multitudinous Christ will enter that eastern gate along with their Lord: "Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory" (Ezek. 43:1-2).

In the scripture of truth, gates, especially the gates of Zion, carry more than simply a literal meaning, as we see from the following well-known and beautiful passages:

* The RV in both passages quoted has "upper gate", which may suggest position rather than elevation. However, the Hebrew is *elyon* and has regard to eminence of position, as "the Most High" in Deut. 32:8. Num. 24:16. or very often "most high" as in Psa. 83:18, or "highest" in Psa. 87:5.

¹ Illustrations from *The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy*, Sixth Edition, published by Logos Publications, June 1984



PROBABLE ELEVATION OF GATES AND UPPER GALLERY

Artist's concept of the Gates of Ezekiel's Temple, from *The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy*, published by Logos Publications, Adelaide, Australia

- A.A.** Wall, 6 cubits broad and 6 cubits high.
K.K. Posts, of Palm Trees.
Q. Parapet to Galleries, 20 cubits high.
h.h. Arches 25 cubits long by 7 cubits wide.

- l.l.** Arabesques.
n.n. Stone, 15 cubits on 41 cubit square.
b.b. Entry of Gate, 12 cubits wide, 12 cubits high.

Developed from Ezekiel's Specifications, by Henry Salter, Architect, Nottingham.

THE GATES OF ZION

Psa. 87:1-2: "His foundation is in the holy mountains.
The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all
the dwellings of Jacob."

Psa. 100:4: "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his
courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless
his name."

Psa. 118:19-20: "Open to me the gates of righteousness. I will
go into them, and I will praise the LORD.

This gate of the LORD into which the righteous
shall enter."

Psa. 122:1-2,7: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go
into the house of the LORD.

Our feet shall stand within thy gates,
O Jerusalem . . .

Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within
thy palaces."

Isa. 26:1-3: "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of
Judah . . .

Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which
keepeth the truth may enter in.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace (*shalom
shalom*), whose mind is stayed on thee: because
he trusteth in thee."

Isa. 60:18: "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land . . . but
thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates
Praise."

Earlier in these Notes we have seen that the walls of Zion, in prophetic passages, represent the saints in glory. Now we have mention of the gates.

In the first verse of this 60th chapter of Isaiah we read: "Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee." In this whole passage we see Zion, "The mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26), representing the glory of Yahweh manifest in the Lord Jesus Christ and the saints, who are now depicted as her gates of Praise.

vs. 7: "and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors."

"**everlasting**" — Heb. *olam*; from a prim. root to veil from sight, to conceal; that hidden in the distant future or in the distant past; the hidden period.

The word *olam* does not contain the idea of endlessness, and its usage in the Old Testament in reference to the past rarely if ever refers to a limitless past. In the context of Psalm 24, *olam* is the hidden period of the future, or the Millennium. The whole world will be united in divine worship at that time, and by the "everlasting doors" will find entrance to the enjoyment of millennial blessings.

vs. 7: "and the King of glory shall come in."

"King of **glory**" — Heb. *kabod*: splendour, honour; associated with the stunning quality of God's holiness.

Over against the transcendence of human and earthly glory stands the unchanging beauty of David's God as expressed in his psalms: "I will extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever . . . I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty and thy wondrous works" (Psa. 145:1,5). Here, "glorious" is *kabod*, and "honour" is *hadar*. Perhaps no Old Testament word study is so illuminating and inspirational as this word "*hadar*" - but not the scope of these Notes. In passing, we note that it is found once in its masculine form and four times in its feminine form, for a total of five times (the number of grace!) in the phrase "the beauty of holiness", with respect to the character of the saints. (see page 60)

When the Ark was taken captive by the Philistines, a grandson was born to Eli who did not live to see him. His mother named him Ichabod (*I-kabod*) meaning, Where is the glory, or, There is no glory, for she said: "The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken", which she repeated: "The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken" (1 Sam. 4:21-22).

But that glory is to return, not as it was in the past, but as the antitypical Ark and Cherubim: the Lord Jesus Christ with the elect. It will be then that the prophetic words of the apostle Paul will be fulfilled: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the *glory* of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11).

We see, then, that the Ark was the symbol of the presence of the King of glory in the past. "David arose, and went with all the people . . . to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts, that dwelleth between the cherubims" (2 Sam. 6:2).

The gatekeeper's challenge:

vs. 8: "Who is this King of glory?"

When David was successful in bringing the Ark up to Jerusalem he would have been greeted by Obed-edom who, along with Jehiah, was in charge of the entrance: "Obed-edom and Jehiah were doorkeepers for the ark" (1 Chron. 15:24).

“**doorkeepers**” — Heb. *shoer*: from a root to split open; gatekeeper, guard, *porter*.

The gate was, of course, the means of controlled access to a walled city. There was always one main gate which often consisted of an outer and an inner gate (2 Sam. 18:24) and sometimes three or four doors, secured by great bars, often of iron. The gate complex had rooms at the sides for the guards. Towers were also built to strengthen the defense of the gate (2 Chron. 26:9).

The city gate was extremely important in the life of the people, for social, administrative and business intercourse took place there. For example, “The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, were sitting on their thrones, arrayed in their robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria” (RSV, 1 Kgs. 22:10).

The gatekeepers, or porters, then, carried positions of great responsibility: “And the singers the sons of Asaph were in their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the King’s seer; and the porters (*shoer*) waited at every gate: they might not depart from their service: for their brethren the Levites prepared for them” (2 Chron. 35:15). In tune with our title, The Songs of Zion, we note that out of ten occurrences of porters in Nehemiah’s account of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, six of them are in association with the singers! -not a world-shaking revelation but one of those interesting little tidbits of information which bind the scriptures together. We can imagine that Obed-edom would have greeted David with great joy as he ushered the Ark through the gate into Jerusalem.

The porters at the gates of Ezekiel’s Temple will be “mortal descendants of the house of Levi, who are restored to the land of their fathers, with the rest of the Israelitish nation”.¹ “Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, *having charge at the gates* of the house, and ministering to the house” (Ezek. 44:11).

Perhaps the fact of mortal members of the Jewish nation acting as gatekeepers accounts for the challenge: “Who is this King of glory?” We are reminded of the question: “What are these wounds in thine hands?” and the answer: “Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends” (Zech. 13:6). The prophet likewise declares: “they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son” (Zech. 12:10). The reader will note we have capitalized “Me” following the lead of Young’s Literal translation and the Companion Bible. Some manuscripts capitalize the “M” - some read “him”.

The Jewish people must recognise the true identity of the Lord: that he is Yahweh in manifestation: “without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God (RV, RSV, Nestle Greek: “He who was”) manifest (*phaneroo*) in the flesh” (1Tim.3:16). In crucify-

¹ *The Temple of Ezekiel’s Prophecy* by Henry Sulley. 6th Edition. pg. 148

ing the Lord Jesus Christ they had virtually crucified their God, on the same principle that Christ declared that any who rejected his disciples rejected him (Math. 10:40).

Therefore the Jewish people will first have to comprehend the truth of God manifestation. All their sufferings stem from their rejection of the King of glory. The nation was brought to political death because it did not understand, even as Uzzah died when he tried in his fleshly zeal to steady the Ark, whereas he should have hearkened to the voice of Yahweh in His word.

The chorus answers the challenge (vs. 8 and 9).

vs. 8: “*The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle*”

“**strong**” — Heb. *izzuz* (used only twice: once “power”, once “strong”); forcible, powerful; collective, as an army.

There are about twenty-five different words in the Hebrew of the Old Testament for “strong”. It is significant that this word, *izzuz*, is only used twice, once in Psalm 24 and once in Isa.43: “I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King . . . Which bringeth forth the chariot and the horse, the army and the power (*izzuz*)” (vs 15,17). So it is a word used exclusively to describe the power of God’s *armies*.

“**mighty**” — (2x) Heb. *gibbor*: powerful, by implication warrior; translated “champion”, mighty” (man), “strong” (man), “valiant man”.

The angel Gabriel’s name is derived from *gibbor* and *el*, meaning strength and power. The archangel’s name, therefore, carries the implication of the strength or power of the mighty one. This is the name given prophetically to Christ in Isaiah’s prophecy: “his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God (*El gibbor*), The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6, see also Isa. 10:21). This identifies the coming King of glory. Yahweh strong and mighty in battle manifest in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We see this theme maintained in the New Testament in the “Revelation of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:1) where he speaks to John who was in exile “for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (v.9). The latter reveals to John: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith *the Lord*, which is, and which was, and which is to come, *the Almighty*” (v.8). Lord in the Greek is *Kurios* and Almighty is *Pantokrator* = *Kurios Pantokrator*. The RV and RSV read “Lord God” instead of “Lord”, giving us the full title of Christ in this passage as the Lord God, the Almighty: *Kurios Theos Pantokrator*. The RV margin gives an alternate rendering of “the Lord, the God”, which would then read: The Lord, the God, the Almighty.

In Rev. 19:6 *pantokrator* is translated “omnipotent” in “the Lord

God omnipotent", a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ ruling on God's throne in the Kingdom as David did in the past. The RV reads here: "for the Lord, our God, the almighty reigneth" (God's title transferred to Christ). The title *Pantokrator* is used in the Septuagint (the Greek Translation of the Old Testament) as equivalent to Sabaoth, "hosts" or "armies" in names of Deity such as "Lord (or God) of hosts" (Amos 4:13, Jer. 5:14)¹ which, in the Hebrew, of course, is Yahweh Elohim Sabaoth - He Who Shall Be Mighty Ones of Armies, the militant title of God demonstrating His ability to accomplish his purpose despite the opposition of flesh: "Of the increase of his government (the "mighty God" of the previous verse) and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. *The zeal of the LORD of hosts (Yahweh Sabaoth) will perform this*" (Isa. 9:7) - through Christ. This brings us back full circle to Psalm 24:8.

In that day of David, Zion had been wrested from the Jebusites, and great victories had been won by the King. But David disclaimed any personal worth for this. He saw in Yahweh Sabaoth the great deliverer and sustainer of Israel: "as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrhah" (Rom.9:29). So it will be at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, when he will go forth with the armies of his power. He will assume the status of Commander of the people: "Behold I have given him (David as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ) for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people" (Isa. 55:4), while the Redeemed, following their marriage to the Lamb, will form the members of his army: "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Rev. 19:14).

vs. 9: "*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors.*"

Again, with enthusiasm, the call is made that the divine purpose may be consummated in the earth. There is a great desire in David for the fulfilment of his hope, expressed with great earnest in his psalm: "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple . . . therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD . . . I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD" (Psa. 27:4,6,13,14).

vs. 9: "*And the King of glory shall come in*"

The King of glory, as we have seen, is David's seed whom we call David's *greater* son, and whom David himself styled Lord:

¹ *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, by W. E. Vine.

“He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him, Lord, saying,

The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

- Mth. 22:43-44

In the language of Psalm 110 from which verse 44 is a quotation, we would read: *Yahweh* said unto my *Adon*, Sit thou at my right hand . . .”, where *Adon* expresses the sovereignty of Christ as King. In God’s purpose Christ was David’s son as well as Lord - a thought unanswerable to Jewish minds, placing the Pharisees who confronted Christ in an untenable position.

The gatekeeper repeats the challenge:

vs. 10: “*Who is this King of glory?*”

In the Hebrew there is a slight variation from the question as stated in verse 8. Rotherham renders it: “Who *then* is the King of glory” or, as a marginal note, “Who is he, then, the King of glory?”. And the answer is amended by the addition of “LORD of hosts”.

The chorus gives the final answer:

vs. 10: “*The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.*” *Selah.*

“**LORD of hosts**” — Heb. *Yahweh tsaba*: Yahweh of armies; in the Greek: Lord of Sabaoth (Rom 9:29, James 5:4).

We have already seen this is the militant title of Yahweh. So the answer describes Yahweh as manifested in the glorious company of the redeemed who shall be organised into armies to overthrow the forces of darkness, and to establish the glory of the Kingdom on earth.

“**Selah**” — Heb. *celah*: to pause and consider.

Consider what is required of those who shall share in Christ’s glory:

Cleanness of hands: An outward manifestation of a changed life.

Purity of heart: An inward manifestation of a changed life.

Has not lifted up his soul unto vanity: Has not set his mind on that which is temporal, fleeting or unreal; but on the things of God.

Nor sworn deceitfully: Has endeavoured to live the truth, manifesting love for his brethren and love for his neighbour.

This faithful brother or sister in Christ will search out the Truth, being a keen student of the Word, and will apply these principles

of Truth in a life of worship and prayer. Like Obed-edom of old, each will instruct his family in the things of God.

These characteristics shall ensure that we will ascend into the hill of the LORD, standing in the holy place and receiving the blessing from Christ in the day of his glory, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

“I have set watchmen upon thy walls,
O Jerusalem, which shall never hold
their peace day or night: ye that make
mention of the LORD, keep not silence.

And give him no rest, till he establish,
and till he make Jerusalem a praise
in the earth.

- Isaiah 62:6-7.

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Abbreviations

- Diaglott — The Emphatic Diaglott, by Benjamin Wilson.
- LXX — The Septuagint, Greek Translation of the Old Testament.
- Nestle Greek — The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, by Alfred Marshall.
- NIV — New International Version.
- Rotherham — The Emphasized Bible, by Rotherham.
- RV — Revised Version.
- RSV — Revised Standard Version.
- Strong's — The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, by James Strong.

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