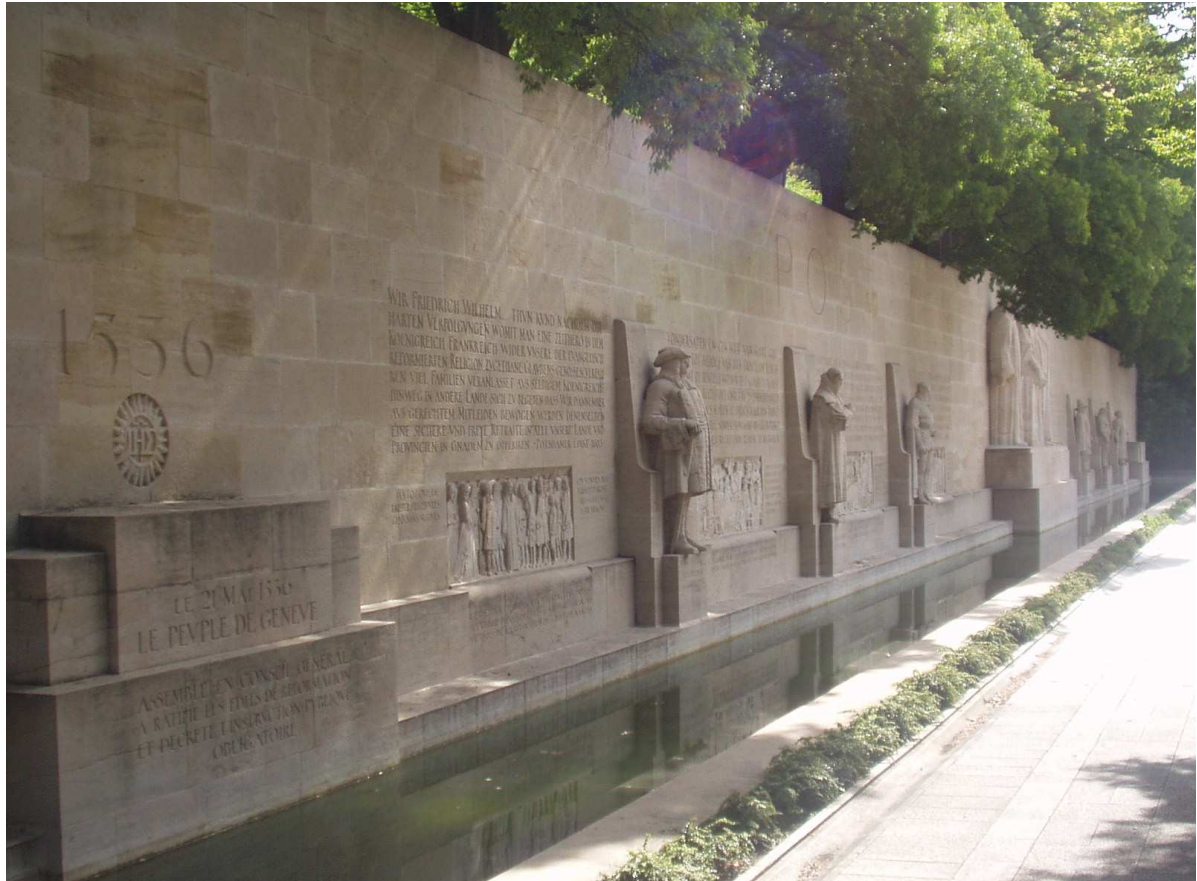


WHITHER PROPHECY?




**THE GENEVA MEMORIAL TO NOTED REFORMED PREACHERS
AUTHOR'S PHOTO**

A NEW CENTURY CALL FOR THE RE-MARRIAGE OF PREACHING & PROPHECY

***A BIBLE COMPANION STUDY BY
BOB COFFEY***

A NEW CENTURY CALL TO BRING BACK THE PROPHETIC MESSAGE AND CLARION

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PREFACE

PROPHECY OUTLIVES THE PROPHET

Never before in all history have we entered an era more deeply bathed in biblical prophecy. For every mention of the First Advent of Jesus Christ our Saviour there are 8 mentions of the “Second Coming” of Jesus Christ as Lord of all. It has been calculated that there are 1,845 references to it in the Old Testament and 17 Old Testament books make considerable mention of it. In 1 in 30 verses of the New Testament the Second Coming is referred to. Twenty three of the twenty seven NT books refer to this important event.

With the establishment of the State of Israel the clock of Prophecy moved toward the midnight call when through the rapture the decided pace of events pertinent to the end times has perceptibly hastened.

With every successive Passover Israel prays for the advent of Elijah and the coming of Messiah. With every passing day the church edges closer to the golden daybreak of the Lord’s coming.

We often sing “O church of God awake” in the light of carrying the gospel to every nation. This process of outreach which begun with the modern missionary movement and William Carey has probed every corner of the known world and written scripture *within one generation* should be available in virtually every language and dialect of humanity.

This is not the hour to be so busy with ecclesiastical life or even outreach that we lose sight of the imminent return of our Lord. Let us treasure both perspectives. Let not the love of his appearing cool for it will affect our devotional life and lessen our zeal.

Now is the hour to speak about bringing back with all possible haste the deeply relevant message of the prophets and speaking about “bringing the King back” as we pray and work for His kingdom’s increase and the dawning of that day when war shall be no more and truth and mercy shall meet on every shore. It is now when *watching the fig tree and all the trees* tells us we need to live soberly in expectation of the Parousia. No longer is the promised glorious return of Christ a distant dream. The last lethal lunge of the serpent against Israel is openly contemplated and in train are what our Lord called the darkest days since man was created upon the earth. Then shall come in its time the most tranquil and felicitous age ever known to mankind when none shall need to say to his neighbour in the land of Israel “Know the Lord” for they shall all know Jesus. In that day as Paul says the impact for all nations shall be “blessing into perpetuity.” No saint with a grain of prophetic intuition could sit comfortably by in these halcyon days like the senators of Rome by the roadside whilst the empire fell to the invader without sounding the advent trumpet.

WHERE IS THE OLD PROPHETIC FIRE?

WHY IS EXPECTATION OF THE LORD’S RETURN DUMMED DOWN?

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fatal lightning of His terrible swift sword:

CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction: prophetic vision
- 2 The *fourfold thrust* of the prophetic message
- 3 To the sceptics prophets ever only were *babblers*
- 4 The Emmaus address and attitude of our Lord
- 5 Where the *cornerstone* fits!
- 6 From Enoch to John the Baptist.
- 7 The earliest evangelists and “the fifth gospel”
- 8 The *Compelling detail* from N.T. composition
- 9 The Spirit of Prophecy moves men onward and forward
- 10 Prophecy on the interface of nations during the last days!
- 11 Christian and Israeli Expectations of Messiah
- 12 Gloom and doom versus joy and peace.

THE HALLMARK OF PROPHETS (AND APOSTLES)

The ancient prophets were minstrels and as they sang (a) *the Spirit of God* caught hold of them and transported them with views of things to come and messages for the hour. They themselves were changed and they were overwhelmed by the Spirit of God (“*Clothed by the Spirit*”) and carried into the presence of Kings in default of right and widows in want of remedy for their need with a mighty word from God and a prescription precisely fitted to the hour. Many of them pointed (b) *the way forward to a golden age* of their people far into the future (c) *and they all laid fundamental stress on repentance and return to like faith of their forefathers in Yahweh their redeemer and Lord*. For the most part these “men of God” were gifted in service. (d) *Mighty acts of healing* were performed through God’s health-giving word under Moses, Elijah, Elisha and later Isaiah and in their time they were instruments for the discipline or *health of nations*. As Peter testifies they were all minded to search diligently concerning the timing of *the gospel of grace* and the timing of *the Glorious kingdom of Messiah*. (1Peter 1 -12). Our Lord Jesus Christ called twelve apostles and their successors to carry the very same credentials as oracles of God to the nations.

(1) INTRODUCTION: THE PROPHETIC VISION

“Where there is no vision the people perish” more fully understood means By the absence of divine vision or oracle (Hebrew נִבְיָא – i.e. “prophecy” and “covenant”) the people will be let loose or “naked”. (Proverbs 29.18)

As the absence of light is darkness and the absence of truth is lies so the absence of the prophetic witness is unbridled immorality marked by a casting off of moral restraint. Today as never before we need men of the stamp of Nathan, Elijah’s and John the Baptist to rein in the bullish stampede of the pleasure mad throng and caution its surly leaders.

It is the profound belief of Israeli rabbis and many Christian bible teachers that prophets will come back from the heavens in the latter day as witnesses to discipline a run-a-way world. That moment is some little way off still-meantime God has you and me in His hands. We are to be witnesses (The New Testament word is “Martyrs”) who take our stand like Bunyan’s “Valiant for Truth” in these halcyon times.

ARE THESE THE DAYS OF ELIJAH?

Our Lord Jesus Christ said “If you will receive it this is that Elijah that is to come!” (Matthew 11.14) He was the herald of the King. The Hebrew and Aramaic “If” is also a “When” so our Lord was plainly saying that the generation was not the receptive generation. ***It would not really dance*** to the prophetic tune of Jesus the Christ ***nor would it truly mourn*** each house apart over the death of Messiah as is prophesied by Zechariah. Thus on two counts (a) failure to accept the atoning death of Christ and (b) failure to accept the herald of the King in His kingdom the generation of which our Lord was part at His first coming did not fulfil the prophecy.

Scripture has more to say about the Elijah that is to come. It tells us “He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” The effect of accepting Elijah and of pursuing the purpose of God in prophecy is to see both the blessing and jeopardy of the generation we live in and to open and soften our hearts to the truth that changes hearts and minds and changes the world. The return to ***the principles of biblical prophecy*** on the part of both the Jewish nation and the worldwide church will re-ignite vital warm caring inter-generational relationships when the world and the church is ostensibly getting more estranged in this area year on year. It will prepare us for the soon coming or Parousia of the Lord and the Kingdom of God in all its fullness. The genuine persuasion that Christ is coming as Lord and King will make us set a value on how we live and those we live alongside in our homes and society.

(2) THE FOURFOLD PROPHETIC MESSAGE

The prophets of the scripture whom God sent are impossible to dismiss or forget for a number of reasons. First, as anointed divine intimates they spoke their “thus says the Lord” of warning to their times and all ages from the mouth of God. Second, they stood for Righteousness and that at severe cost to themselves. Third they brought healing to men and nations. Fourth they searched diligently concerning things to come (a) for the first advent of Messiah and (b) for the Day of the Lord and the Glorious kingdom of Messiah. Their role was to proclaim by life and message:-

(a) ***The baptism of Power and Anointing of the Holy Ghost for servant ministry (modelled by Jesus)*** is the will of God for his church. The prophets alike were clothed and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Neither their mission nor ours could be achieved by the arm of flesh.

(b) ***The proclamation of the way of righteousness and the calling out and teaching of the elect to live in intimacy with God under the anointing of the Holy Ghost***

(c) The wholeness of men is the will of God and ***individual and international health-giving*** is a gospel handmaiden.

(d) ***The Messianic kingdom and the ultimate heavenly kingdom of God*** along with the complete healing of nations is the will of God. Each of these principia is a sine qua non. As I shall show in the first chapter the mission and ministry of the biblical prophet and for that matter of the gospel preacher broadly stated in Matthew 28.19 is ***more particularly stated*** as to its power and teaching in Luke 24.25, Luke 24.44 and 46 with Acts 1.4-7 and Acts 15 16-18 where the four principia outlined above are specifically detailed.

Early Charismatic leaders spoke bravely of the “foursquare gospel” and talked of Jesus Christ as Saviour, baptiser, healer and coming King. It would appear that all who touch the message

and mission of scripture and God's plans cannot duck the four priorities embedded in this well-known slogan; they are the theological marquetry of God.

(3) TO THE SCEPTICS THE PROPHETS WERE ONLY EVER "BABBLERS" UPHOLDING THE HONOUR OF NEBIIM

The so-called babbling prophets of old time are often looked down upon by scholars as "splutterers" but the Nebiim were holy persons who convened to sing to their LORD. They would sing of His grace and glory though their song were never cast in verse or known to the world. (*While there were schools of such godly men before the monarchy and under the watchful eye of Samuel as in 1Samuel 10.11 & 19.10 we find in 1 Chronicles 24 2-4: an official record of 24 such persons under David's monarchy provided by divine prophetic promise*) They were men of God clothed with the Holy Spirit and carried along by His energy and efflatus. In ancient eras of bloody conflict these great men lived aright and saw afar. They were alive in the Spirit, they were overwhelmed or filled with the Spirit and from their number came those whom the Lord was pleased to use in healing and teaching. Like Abraham they looked for a city and envisioned the future Glory connected to the coming king on the throne of David. *The prophets had a baptism of power and praise of the Redeemer God given long before the outpouring of Pentecost. God's purposes always embraced "being lost in wonder love and praise" of His holy name.*

The Nebiim in the schools with which Elijah was familiar were most decidedly modelling their ministry on a Holy Man who was owned of God in healing as was his mentored spiritual heir Elisha. Healing was firmly in the quadrilateral of divine purposes for prophetic ministry.

The Nebiim were successors of their father in the faith, Abraham. While they were Jewish through and through they had a mission to the nations. God ostensibly instructed Elisha to anoint Jehu king of Syria and right up to the time of Agabus prophetic voices from Israel and Judah uttered oracles affecting the entire globe. Theirs was a ministry directed at *the health of nations*.

It is an axiom that the godly prophets shared that personal acquaintance with God which shone out in the life of Jacob from his meeting with the Lord at Peniel. Hence they were prophets of Israel who had power with God and their words did not fall to the ground. Like Samuel *they had come to "know the Lord" intimately and personally*. In this they were spiritual lights to their people.

The Nebiim did not live in a world of their own rather they lived in the realm of the Holy Spirit and the realm of the King of Kings. Their king was Lord of all the earth. They were well acclimatised to the belief that *one coming day the Messiah would rule unrivalled over all the earth*. During the Theocracy they were fully persuaded He was to be regarded as supreme over their judges priests and kings and in lieu of that belief they were to invade palaces for hundreds of years with oracles from the LORD.

Thus the mission of the "prophet" was established from the days of Adam and before the deluge. Enoch was himself a prophet. Noah was a preacher and prophet. Moses was a prophet who desired that the entire nation of several million to a man and woman were all prophets. The former prophets bestrew the narratives of the books of Samuel Kings and Chronicles. The

Psalms and the Song of Solomon and even passages in Job have the ring of true prophecy about them. The Great writing prophets Isaiah Jeremiah and Ezekiel were men from whom we have received many oracles (Jeremiah alone spoke 150 times from the mouth of God). A long line of what we call Minor Prophets graces the tail end of Old Testament revelation.

That great instrument of gospel preaching the Church is commissioned by the Lord and empowered by the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and has long pursued its mission of teaching the whole gospel with its full salvation, ministry of healing and heralding of the coming king. The church is lineal heir to the prophets and based on the foursquare foundation of the prophets which was adopted absolutely by the apostles –Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone of this unique irreplaceable basis of faith hope and covenant love.

One of the great nuances of the NT is the use of the term “prophet” by contemporaries as they assessed the ministry of our Lord. Though His peers failed to see Him as the Christ they did not fail to see that He had an acute God conscious life. They watched in their hundreds as He was baptised of the Holy Spirit and they listened spellbound in their thousands as He prophesied the coming of His earthly kingdom. They watched ecstatically as he healed a myriad ailments in every place (but Nazareth) . They would have crowned him king because they saw something of Messianic proportion in the mighty prophet that had visited them.

In another chapter we shall follow prophecy to its source but suffice it now in appreciation of the Neviim to say that the great forefather of the Jewish people and spiritual forefather of the church Abraham was himself a prophet. In Genesis 20.7 we read that “the man (Abraham) is a prophet” in the eyes of God. As such he spoke of a city to come and of a lamb God would one day provide on Moriah. He was also *a prayerful prophet* who *prayed for the healing* of the servants of Abimelech and his entourage (Genesis 20.17). He was also *a deep believer* in the divine provision- “Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness”. Added to this he was a man fully aware that the Spirit of God would not generally “strive with man beyond 120 years of wandering or erring (ggv) in the flesh” (Genesis 6.3) but the testimony to his *walking in the Spirit* was that he lived a humble testimony waling with God by grace 55 years beyond that time. Besides all this Abraham sought for a city whose builder and maker is God. He sought for *the New Salem* where in his bosom the saints of God enjoy the rest of faith. The Neviim have a glorious ancient model in Abraham.

(4) THE PROFILE OF THE EMMAUS ADDRESS

The profile and moment our Lord accorded to the prophets in his highly significant bidding within the Emmaus address need not surprise us. This is but one of a dozen references which scripture records where the Lord refers to the prophets with high approval. Jesus specifically but gently rebuked the Emmaus travellers with his words “O fools and slow of heart to believe *all that the prophets have written*. Ought not Christ to have suffered *and* enter His glory?”(Luke 24). The death of Christ was specifically registered under many idioms and images in the prophetic scriptures. Let me quote some that are clear and a few that are equally affecting but less well known.

(a) **Isaiah 53** poses the classic statement “He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was on Him and by His stripes we are healed.” This prophet’s message of the death of Christ was so clear that the Ethiopian

focussed on it as of prior interest whilst reading his new scroll. The chapter also has the statement “Who shall declare his generation for He was taken from the land of the living?” The reference is to making known his person and work subsequent to His ascension to Glory.

(b) In Zechariah 12.10 where we read of our Glorious Messiah when he returns referring to the marks in his arms as having been received in the house of His friends.

This glory of Christ would encompass his (as yet unappreciated) *resurrection* and His (well understood) *ascension* to the throne of heaven *where He is Lord of His church triumphant - the faithful righteous ones in glory and auricular sovereign of His church militant on earth* pending the restitution of all things when he joins his people *in the marriage feast and brings in His glorious millennial kingdom*.

The Mount of Transfiguration shows that two ancient prophets in the person of Moses and Elijah fully understood Christ’s death and resurrection. During studies in the Hebrew text I have come across the very strongest evidence that in their time both gained deep understanding of the death of Christ.

(c) For Moses it was the experience of the glorious one in the bush or tree and the deep awareness at Sinai that *the forgiving compassion of God precedes judgment* (Exodus 33.19-21 and by that mercy Moses was hidden in the rock that represents Christ’s saving grace). This great salvation was confirmed to Him through the fiery serpent healings and the Exodus lamb that gave him his concept of the Lord as Saviour.

(d) For Elijah there came a very telling similar but dark experience at Sinai when after the earthquake and fire he heard the astonishing quiet voice [hmm] crushed [hq] voice of God. *The words are very tell-tale. It is not the scary nature of the voice that shook Elijah. He was rather shaken by the quietness and the brokenness of the voice-broken “as if when wheat is crushed” – it is as if the LORD is describing his concern in terms that only Calvary could really equal. The LORD was greatly moved.*

And it was so that as he was listening Elijah covered [fw] – veiled] his face in his wide cloak and went and stood at the opening of the cave. *This action suggests Elijah was immediately thrust into sorrow and felt like mourning. It seemed that God Himself was undergoing the pains of death. Everything seemed wrong – the mountains breaking up – the fire of judgment falling – the earth in a terrible commotion – and then God Himself in distress. Elijah was being shown something of which the sequel is his visit to another Mountain-the Mount of Transfiguration. And behold there came to him a voice and He (the LORD) said “What business have you here(literally what is for you?) Elijah?”* (Elijah felt the sorrow of God at the broken law but also through sleeping in the cave tomb and emerging to what seemed a world shaking event and the voice of God he learned of the same compassion and forgiveness as Moses did when God first showed that to him at Sinai. *Now these two stances of Elijah are highly significant. First he was in a cave where he lodged as one staying a few nights – the traditional place of burial. There he heard a voice and then he stood again at the entrance to the cave or tomb. Just then the voice came again. It is plain as day that Elijah was being taught that the LORD would not remain in the tomb. Amid hopelessness and the broken covenant a greater hope was being demonstrated at Sinai – the hope of the Resurrection and with this the divine commissioning.*

There can be little doubt but that our Lord selected many such instances even from David and Daniel, Hosea and Jeremiah that confirmed the purpose of his incarnate suffering was to redeem and “bring many sons to Glory” but we have to note that the Lord laid most emphasis on His Glory which was both our hope and His joy. “The excellent glory” is what nerved the labouring slaves of South America in their darkest hours and it encompasses everything associated with the “Glory He enjoyed with the Father” and all that the LORD God planned from before the foundation of the world for the worldwide heralding of salvation, the bridal feast of the Lamb as Saviour of nations and his Kingdom fully realised throughout the Millennium and then His eternal Shepherding of the Righteous in the New Heaven and Earth when all rule and authority has been put under His feet and God is all in all. When that which is perfect is come Prophecy will give way to loving experience of God Himself in Glory but until then with its handmaid of the prophetic instrument God has determined to use-the preacher-it is here on earth to stay through every age. Heaven and earth shall pass away but the prophetic words of Christ shall stand to be realised and doubtless rehearsed to his honour in Glory.

(5) STUMBLING OVER THE CORNERSTONE

Isaiah the prophet writes “The stone that the builders rejected in become the head of the corner.” This cornerstone is quite plainly Christ and the builders are the Jews who established a very biblical calendar of observances and lived through centuries under the theocracy or rule of God and yet when Christ came as the prophet said they failed to recognise Him. Jesus put it this way “You did not recognise the time or moment in history of your visitation.”(Luke 19.44)

Our Lord told a parable which featured the leadership of the Gentile Church as the “Goodman of the house” who in exactly similar vein failed to recognise the imminence and vital importance of the coming of Christ-pictures in his parable as a break in by a thief.

The problem today is not that we need to be sceptical of prophecy because of the perpetual expectation and hope it raises but rather that we need to address ourselves to its proper understanding and use as we approach the return of Christ lest we become the type of leadership Christ takes to task and lest we use harsh words against our fellows who warn of the glorious soon coming day and join our doomed culture in feasting and drinking whilst losing our compass for the destination the prophets and apostles indicated.

Christ is the cornerstone and Peter tells us expressly that the Church was built on the foundation of “the prophets and apostles Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone”.

(6) FROM ENOCH TO JOHN THE BAPTIST

ENOCH Prophecy proper began with God. The Lord Himself promised that “The seed of the woman would bruise the serpent’s head.” This is the central focus on the coming Saviour from the beginning of the pre-flood era; indeed from the moment of man’s need of a Saviour in Eden (Genesis 3.15). In the seventh generation of that same age there was born an outstanding man of God whose son lived till the very year of the flood. This man Enoch as Jude records prophesied saying “See, the Lord is coming with thousands in the midst of his myriad holy ones *to bring a once for all crisis of judgment* upon all and *to expose and convict* of all their irreverent acts concerning all the obstinate harsh things that disrespectful sinners have glibly spoken against Him.” Now almost a thousand years after Enoch spoke a similar judgment fell

upon mankind but it was not final. Sin and evil has revived in the millennia since and the message of Enoch is relevant to the manner in which this will be visited. I recently read a published doctoral thesis discarded from the library of Martin Luther King House Library which ineffectively tried to suggest that Enoch saw the myriads of his prophecy going to the throne and not coming to the earth. The writer also referred to Daniel but clearly the implications of the exegesis of Daniel 7.13 are glossed. The Son of Man with the Clouds of heaven is the Lord who gathers His saints and then comes before the Father from whence He receives and exercises all authority to judge and rule the subsequent perpetual dominion.

METHUSELAH We do not read of a specific prophecy that Methuselah uttered but his name carried the prophetic warning that the “dark” of judgment was imminent. This name bore that challenge for just under 1000 years and upon his death came the overwhelming waters of the flood.

NOAH Noah was a preacher of righteousness for at least 100 years. His preaching carried the epoch making message that judgment awaited in the wings. His generation gave no credence to his call to faith and the next word they heard was the confirmation that Christ had conquered sin and death and the grave –but alas they had disobeyed and were irreconcilably apostate.

ABRAHAM The entire set of Israel’s fathers was in one way or other prophetic. God told Abimelech that Abraham was a prophet (Genesis 20.7) and knew beforehand that his beautiful wife and cousin would cause jealousy of him to break out. Abraham was a prophet who had the ear of God and could intercede for Abimelech. He was a prophet who could seek and gain healing for others from God.

JACOB Anyone who studies Genesis 49.2-27 cannot but be impressed by the notable prophetic statements of Jacob. Whence such foresight? How could he know that “the sceptre shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh to whom it belongs emerges”? The answer is that Jacob was a man who was enabled to prophecy under the Spirit of God—he was “carried along” into far distant future time.

JOSEPH This notable young visionary never compromised his walk with God and toward the end of his life he prophesied “God will surely come to your aid and you much then carry my bones up from this place!”

MOSES In Deuteronomy 15.18 Moses told Israel that God would raise up a prophet like him and he pleaded with them to listen and obey Him for otherwise they would be cut off. In Acts 3.22 and 7.37 Peter and then Stephen reminded Israel of the danger of disobedience that Moses earlier recognised.

JOSHUA In Joshua 23.16 that leader reminds Israel who had experienced the entire fulfilment of God’s good promises to Moses that they would equally experience the complete fulfilment of the severe promises. Joshua lived by the book Moses wrote and often spoke as a prophet of the prophecies it held. Moses prophecies of the expulsion to Babylon (28.36) and the rise of foreigners (28.43) and the swoop of the Roman “eagle” (28.49) and the dispersion to the world in the latter day (28.64) would be rehearsed by Joshua

SAMUEL Over several hundred years the lamp of prophecy burned low and when it was in danger of being extinguished the prophet Samuel arose. Israel was awakened to God’s will and purpose and God showed the prophet that David was his anointed servant from all the sons of Jesse. A lively school of the prophets emerged under Samuel in this period which even swallowed up the vagrant Saul on one occasion.

DAVID King David prophesied the coming of Christ (Psalm 98 1-3 cf. Luke 1.54), His resurrection & heavenly session(Palm 110) and His future kingdom (Psalm 24).

UNDER THE KINGS Elijah and Elisha prophesied and numerous others as Nathan and Ahijah. A cursory reading of the names given by Alexander Cruden under “Prophets” refers then to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel(Mt 24.15) with the twelve Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai and Zechariah.

AT THE EDGE OF THE NT Simeon prophesied that Jesus was set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.. John the Baptist prophesied. In Luke 7.28 Jesus cast his character in the forefront of all previous prophets. His statement in John 1.30-34 shows the most profound concept of the Triune purpose of God alongside and understanding of the atoning ministry upon which Jesus was embarked (John 1.35). No other prophet had ever been clearer than John concerning Israel’s Messiah.

NEW TESTAMENT Agabus prophesied a world wide famine in the early years of the NT church. At the end of the NT John under the Spirit of Prophecy foretold the detailed judgments of God and the manner of the end of the age, the tribulation and millennium with the beginning of the heavenly kingdom. This deep and thorough work of prophecy brings the story of Revelation and curtain raising on the divine plans to a climactic conclusion.

We are now living cheek by jowl over against the times that our Lord in his mini apocalypse recorded for our learning and so as never before it is vital to inculcate vigilance for now is our redemption nearer than when we believed.

I can almost hear his footfall at the threshold of the door
And my heart my heart is longing to be with Him evermore.

(7) THE EARLY EVANGELISTS AND “THE FIFTH GOSPEL” OF ISAIAH

THE VISION OF ISAIAH

There are 408 NT references to Isaiah – 120 in the gospels. Hezekiah the king was delivered from Sennacherib at an historic time during Isaiah's ministry when Assyrian records show that 46 walled cities fell to the invaders.

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The Oldest known Manuscripts of the Old Testament come from 900BC. As Albright said the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls which came from the late first century predated anything previously held. Their text of Isaiah, for instance, confirmed the existing text in detail -so that we may be strongly confident of its provenance over almost 1000 years on this account.

The prophet Isaiah is widely referred to in the NT. The apostles clearly took their cue from the master who made copious use of the prophet’s oracles.

The full *scroll of Isaiah* was popularly available for sale and was acquired by the Ethiopian Eunuch. The best NT exegesis of Isaiah 53 that we have of its significance is recorded in Acts 8 32-35 in the words of Philip the evangelist.

ISAIAH'S CHRISTOLOGY

1. I will restore your constitution as at the first	34. The LORD and the oil rich nations
2. The mountain of Christ's government	35. The highway of holiness for the Redeemer's people
3. The Lord rises to strike the earth	36. Rabshakeh's fear-"The LORD will deliver"
4. Yeshua's worldwide weight & nuptial huppah	37. The Angel of the LORD strikes the wolf on the fold
5. The Lord will judge his vineyard	38. The LORD did cleave to my soul with great affection
6. The King who atones and forgives	39. Hezekiah's sin-and the grace of the LORD
7. The virgin shall conceive and bear a Son	40. The Shepherd of Israel
8. A sanctuary for both houses of Israel	41. The gospel of Christ in the West
9. The government is upon His shoulder	42. Christ laid up in the treasury of heaven
10. The righteous one sweeps away plans to end Israel	43. Yeshua alone can blot out sin
11. The branch from Judah's fallen tree	44. Kinsman of Jeshurun (the beloved righteous)
12. Great is the Holy One in your midst	45. Cyrus served well, Christ serves forever
13. Yeshua visits and moves heaven and earth	46. The sovereign consultation to hasten
14. Yeshua "saw Satan fall"	47. The Redeemer give notice of Babylon's judgement
15. "My heart cries out for Moab"-a failed nation	48. The Shepherd of Israel
16. The Lamb on David's throne	49. The name of Jesus to be registered early.
17. Syria adopts the LORD'S Sabbath rest	50. Jesus-"He set his face as a flint"
18. Ethiopia's Jubilee gift to the LORD	51. The LORD deals with the "cup" of punishment
19. Egypt will know Yeshua	52. The beautiful feet of the Saviour.
20. How shall we escape?	53. Wounded for our transgressions
21. The LORD'S watchtower	54. Lengthen the cords-your maker is your husband
22. He shuts and no man can open	55. The Divine water seller's call of grace
23. By divine decree the splendour of Tyre is wounded	56. Christ gathers His people
24. Tribulation-the eventide of joy	57. Eternity: The LORD'S silence and sacrifice
25. Resurrection-"Your dead will live with my corpse"	58. The LORD of Glory takes Israel by the hand
26. The Golden era of "The Rock of Ages"	59. The LORD'S arm is not shortened
27. The LORD'S watered vineyard	60. Israel transported home, her household saved
28. Yeshua-the precious Foundation Stone	61. The ministry of Yeshua -and earth's new song
29. Wayward Judah will know the Mediator	62. Jerusalem and Yeshua
30. The LORD waits to bind Himself to show grace!	63. The return of the treader of the winepress
31. The LORD of hosts comes to dwell on earth	64. The Angel who lighted on Jacob
32. The Messiah sends His Spirit	65. Christ and the future of the Gentiles
33. The Passover people take the prey	66. The virgin birth and Israel's rebirth

ISAIAH

Within the New Testament there are **412 references** to the prophet which amounts to one sixth of all NT references to the OT. I will take some sample references from the gospels, some from Acts and the Pauline epistles with further references from Hebrews and the General epistles and finally a number from the Apocalypse to show that in company with the apostles this great evangelical prophet was very often the earliest herald of biblical doctrine. His was **a foursquare proto-gospel testifying to the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the atonement of Christ for salvation, the healing ministry of Christ toward men and nations and the glorious coming kingdom of Christ.** I give it as my judgment that a gospel failing on any of these counts is wanting and has neither the prophetic or apostolic seal.

ISAIAH AND THE FOUR GOSPELS WITH THE FOUR PRINCIPIA

We look first at the prophet's testimony as quoted within the gospels where we have 122 references to Isaiah (Matthew 43, Mark 16, Luke 39, John 24).

The study continues to present *the vital criteria* of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God within the four gospels.

The simplest analysis supports the thesis that the gospel stands on a sure foundation and the four pillars are the work of the Holy Ghost as an instrument of intimacy with God; the work of the cross enabling forgiveness and atonement; the ministry of healing resulting in worship, joy and growth and the expectation of the Kingdom fully realised promoting holiness.

Our Lord Jesus spoke of *His anointing* at the outset of His ministry. He said “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*” and He was have been speaking post Baptism (Luke 3.21). In Luke 4 18-19 the Isaiah scroll speaks of the “anointed” Christ as set to fulfil all the detail Isaiah wrote down about His ministry. As further confirmation of this ministry under the Holy Ghost Jesus testified to John in terms of Isaiah 35.5-6, Isaiah 42.18 and Isaiah 61.1.

Again Christ spoke for the third time in the gospel of Matthew (20.18) ,in Mark 10.33 and in Luke 18.31ff) of His prophesied *atonement death and suffering*. He linked this ostensibly with the “suffering servant” passage of Isaiah 53.3 in Mark 9.12.

Luke, himself a doctor, attests that Jesus sent out his disciples “*proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere*”(Luke 9.6). He further accounts that the Lord sent out seventy with the words “Heal the sick that are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you’.”(Luke 10.9). The gospel of Matthew speaks of 10 occasions when the Lord healed others and both Mark and Luke carry eleven separate occasions when Jesus spoke healing. The Gospel of John records three distinct healings well annotated and the raising of Lazarus. All the actual healings are appended to the instant and perfect benefits conferred through the *salvation health* depending on the earnest of the down-payment of Christ on the Cross who “took our infirmities in His own body on the tree” (Matthew 8.17 with Isaiah 53.4) On account of the acceptance of the atonement and his vicarious work from His baptism and the inception of His ministry Jesus was beloved of the Father and the perfection of the work of Grace was available by the New Birth as the John 3 and John 4 conversations show and the benefits of health-giving under the gospel and as its forever handmaiden were open all.(cf. also Hebrews 4.15 and Luke 5.15, 7,21 and 8.2) . Paul desired that the saints of God should be “in health” as their souls were in health. All over whom Peter’s shadow fell were made well and Paul sent handkerchiefs of cloth to the sick he could not reach trusting to the power that lies in the gospel.(Ac 19.12) The method was extraordinary but the virtue of healing was in the gospel work of Christ and was regularly afforded within the church’s ministry.

As to *His kingdom* our Saviour quoted Isaiah 49.6 in John 8.12 making it emphatic that He was no less than the “Light of the World”. *In Matthew 24* He goes so far as to say “All peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory”. He both proclaimed his Kingdom and the fact that “heaven and earth would pass away” (24.35.) He also clarified that as Noah was spared so the people of God must be ready when He comes as a thief to invade this world’s economy and order in the last times (Matthew 24.43 with the parable of the 10 virgins 25.1-13). This teaching is consolidated by Peter’s echo of Christ’s teaching in Mark 13 where we are told of the first signs of the end of the age as national uprisings become numerous and earthquakes intensify.

He tells us the gospel will go worldwide and Christians would be hated. He speaks of the Abomination in the temple area and of the tribulation which will carry anguish for the last children of the age prior to Christ's glorious return. He then speaks of terrible heavenly signs and within the general context tells of a gathering of saints from all over the earth to the heavens. Peter reminds us of the young fig tree fresh planted and thus of Israel's planting in the land in readiness for the Messiah's coming. He connects the return to the general period of that planting and secures that assurance to the truth of Christ's own word while maintaining that no man knows the exact day or date so daily watching is the proper attitude. He registers Christ's words that "heaven and earth will pass away" and in his Second Letter addresses himself more particularly to that subject. In Luke 21 we have a similar if shorter message about how the Kingdom breaks in during the latter day. Luke avers in adherence to the LORD that Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles till the fulfilment of their era. He testifies to heavenly signs and earthly distress of a Tsunami sort and of "inability to meet debts [APHORIA]with accompanying distress"(21.25). Again Luke counsels that Christians look to the "fig tree" (Israel) and all nations for these signs. Luke finally speaks of an "escape" which brings God's people before the Son of Man and directs believers to prayer and disciplined living. John has no such detail –that is reserved for his massive tome on the last days which is the Apocalypse..

Isaiah qualifies to stand shoulder to shoulder with the apostles. In his oracles the Son of God is worshipped as the one who purifies lip and heart (Isaiah 6. 7 "See this man (Hebrew masculine) has touched your lips" and by *His sacrificial death* atones for the soul. In his oracles *the sevenfold Spirit obtains honour*. In his oracles *the anointing of the Son of God* (Isaiah 61) is witnessed. In his oracles the healing ministry of Christ is set forth in his time through (Isaiah 38). In his oracles the mountain of *the Lord's house rises in the millennium* and nations are that are healed beat their swords into ploughshares and flow toward Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2.1) . In his oracles the healing power of Christ has lucid testimony (Isaiah 53.4). In his oracles the *new heaven and earth* that endure (66.22) are clearly prophesied.

LET ISAIAH BE ISAIAH

Isaiah counter to much fuzzy thinking on the part of a group of biblical scholars of the critical school is not the work of three prophets where 56-66 is cut loose to attach to "Trito-Isaiah" neither is it divided between two authors responsible for Chapter 1-39 and 40-66. – the second part being attributed to one called "Deutero- Isaiah" The trouble for scholars is that Matthew in Matthew 8.17 from Isaiah 55.4 quotes Isaiah with approval on Christ "taking our infirmities". Christ also Himself refers to Isaiah by name in his Mark 7.6-7 reference to "hypocrisy" and lip-service. Luke further compounds the difficulty for sceptical scholarship by stating that Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah quoting the famous lines from Isaiah 58.6 and 61.1-2. The "scroll" of Isaiah is another proof patent of the integrity of this book. A 1st century BC-1st C.AD scroll equivalent to that opened in Nazareth for Jesus was found in 1947 at Qumran. It was consisted of 17 leaves of prepared leather sewn together to make a roll of 7.34 metres long (26cm high). It was written in 54 columns with an average of 29 lines of script 12 centimetres wide and contained the entire prophecy of Isaiah as we find it in our bibles today. This a priori fact of history should chase away the literary nit-pickers who would carve up the scriptures.

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS WITH THE ISAIAH CONNECTION

Alt	Alk	Lk	In	Ac	Ro	1C	2C	Ga	Ep	Ph	Co	1T	2T	He	Ja	1P	2P	1J	Ju	R
43	16	39	24	30	28	15	8	3	17	4	2	1	5	19	5	23	4	2	1	123

THE IMPORTANCE OF ISAIAH (THE FIFTH GOSPEL) WITHIN THE NEW TESTAMENT

(1) MATTHEW

Matthew gives us five discourses and overall uses 128 OT references. His first discourse includes the birth *Holy Spirit* (& water) *baptism*, temptation and great sermon of our Lord on *the manner of righteousness* and how to be “known of God”. *The second discourse* is largely devoted to the prophetic insignia of healing and 8 parables of the Kingdom. *The third discourse* is drawn on a wider canvas and includes foreshadowing of His death and of national rejection with luminous evidence of Christ’s world mission as Saviour in His feeding miracles Transfiguration and Shepherd care. The fourth section opens with vital statements on marriage and children and proceeds via teaching on Christ’s rejection death and resurrection to considerations concerning the end of days of the coming long Church era in between. *The final discourse* details the final rejection and death of Christ by Jewish and Gentile consent and the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ. A strong element of prophecy attends the first discourse particularly enhancing the facts of the incarnation.

The second discourse on healing kicks off with 4 quotes from Isaiah on healing including that significant quote from Isaiah 53.4 on Christ carrying our infirmities.

The third discourse featuring world mission is thin on OT references (there are but 22 in all and 3 from the prophets. These three predict (i) The rejection of Christ by the generation (ii)The Gates of Death or *persecution and the resilience of the Church* and (iii) the Lord’s consent to the expectation of the latter day Elijah.

The fourth discourse has a plethora of quotes with Chapter 24 where *our Lord sets out His eschatology* in short compass presenting us with no less than 21 prophetic references(Daniel 8, Joel 4, Isaiah 4, Zechariah 2, Haggai, Ezekiel and Zephaniah one apiece). In Chapter 25 the glorious return and earthly gathering of all nations with *the happy age of the righteous* is annotated from Zechariah 14.5 and Daniel 12.2

The final discourse on the death of Christ presents 21 references with two further references from Daniel and Haggai on the Lord’s authority in the end times.

(2) MARK WITH FIRST AND SECOND PETER

MARK

Peter is the oracle behind Mark’s pen. Peter gives us *40 stories of Jesus* and takes us to Jordan, Nazareth, Capernaum, Caesarea Mount Hermon, Perea and hence to Jerusalem in the company of Jesus with 5 sets of stories. (i) At Jordan the Baptism of Christ occurs followed by the call of disciples, parabolic teaching and a spate of healings at Capernaum.(1-5) (ii)The Nazareth rejection (6) is followed by a short ministry in the borders of Tyre & Sidon (7). (iii)Then comes Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration (8-9) and the Perea ministry (10) leading to the Jerusalem triumph and stories of increased opposition (11-12). Set in prior to(v)

the passion narrative of (14-15) and the Resurrection account is teaching (iv) we call the Mini Apocalypse of chapter (13).

Peter uses several OT texts (including Isaiah 42.1) of prophetic character to introduce Jesus as “*Son of God*” at His *baptism* and he makes interesting use of Ezekiel 17.23 & 31.6 with Daniel 12.21 as prophecies of the church and of Joel 3.13 on the *rapture-cum-harvest* in *Chapter 4*.

In the second section Peter alludes to Ezekiel 34.8 and Zechariah 10.2 as he highlights Jesus as “The Shepherd”. Like Matthew Peter emphasises the messianic and prophetic in *the healing ministry* of Christ referring in Chapter 7 to Isaiah 35.5-6. Tucked away amid these stories (Mark 7.37) is Jesus watchword”He hath done all things well”.

The third section throws up thoughts of Elijah in Malachi 4 5-6 on account of his transfiguration appearance. Christ emphasised in His answer on Elijah the “restitution” that is prelude to *the Millennial kingdom* (Mk 9.11-12). The second cleansing of the temple is related here and occasions a quote prophetic of the millennial temple from Isaiah 56.7 strengthened by that from Jeremiah 7.11.

The fourth section in Chapter 13 bristles with references to the prophets-15 in all. Our Lord in the context of the more immediate fall of Jerusalem predicts worldwide gospel proclamation, the Antichrist abomination, unprecedented tribulation, the palpable end time darkening of the sun, the gathering of the elect and *the glorious return of Christ in his kingdom*.

The final section on *Christ’s death* is set against a backcloth of seven prophetic quotations from Zechariah, Jonah, Daniel and Isaiah together with a dozen fulfilments of the psalms.

1 PETER

The letter breathes encouragement into the hearts and minds of Christians in trial. It begins with our living hope in *God’s salvation* revealed in this late but right point in God’s plan (for it had been preached since Noah and before)-a salvation the timing of which prophets of grace searched for with precision. They knew there would be dark suffering and then *glory*. Peter calls the saints for whom this vision became reality to live holy. Five prophets and ten prophecies are referred to - besides 5 prophetic references from the psalms. As Peter encourages the elect in the word of the OT scripture he further refers to 20 prophetic scriptures. His **favourite prophet is Isaiah** and he makes 15 references out of a total 25 in the book to texts that relate to the Gentile joy and the Jewish-Christian Hosea “Ammi” fulfilment in the church. Peter then puts iron in the soul of saints from **Isaiah 8.12-13** reminding them that the Lord heralded his victory to the disobedient in Sheol (whilst leading the obedient out to paradise) and He is now sat at God’s right hand. He reminds Christians that insult is nothing at all for the sevenfold Spirit of **Isaiah 11.2** rests upon them. The icing on the cake of Peter’s exhortation is that Christ is coming and will give those who suffer the crown of glory. Let them cast all anxious thought on Him for he cares and we are headed for *the eternal glory*.

2 PETER

The second letter calls the church to let God make them people of great character through trial. The apostle reminds believers of *the voice of the Father at the Baptism of Jesus* when like him they think of their death. He appears to have been reading in his favourite prophet

Isaiah 52 about the awakening of Zion and *the Sovereign Lord* for he refers directly in 2 Peter 2.2 to Isaiah 52.5 and with Isaiah he rejoices to know “the name” of Jesus. Peter speaks of the “morning star” or “light-bringer” in the heart till the day of Christ bursts forth in all its glory. *There is not any prophetic scripture that came to one* man aloof. Scripture came by many holy men under the Holy Spirit so it is to be untied and explained. In this our bible differs from the Koran quite sharply. Peter is galvanising the church against those who deny the divine sovereignty showing that the Tartarus of angels, the deluge and the judgment of Sodom serve well enough to show how God can and will implement ‘judgment against heresy. Peter in his stunning third chapter sets out the parade of history in seven days and differentiates *the day of the Lord and the day of God* (vv10 & 12) and the day of Eternity in 3. 10-17. He gives three references from his favourite Isaiah in 3.13 speaking of an utterly new earth and heaven (cf. Isaiah 60.21, 65.17 and 66.22 where *the millennial earth and the new and eternal heaven and earth* are spoken of in fairly involved Hebrew Text.

(3) **LUKE-ACTS** (a) Luke records Mary’s reference to Isaiah on “Servant Israel” with the long term covenant promises in mind and with references from Isaiah 9.2 & 58.8 points to the bright dawn of gospel light and the glorious high noon of millennial dawning. In a stream of references to Isaiah’s “consolation” to Israel the gospel writer makes no less than ten references *all of which bear upon the gospel for the nations* though several extend to the full ingathering of Israel (Luke 2 25-38). The outstanding mission statement of Christ in Luke 4 comes right out of Isaiah 58.6 & 61.1-2. The mission entails “anointing”, “gospel presentation”, “freedom”(from demons and illness “ but notably leaves for the future that vengeance of judgment which appertains to the second advent. A highly significant quote is made in Luke 5.21 from Isaiah 43.25 when the Pharisees urge that only “God” can forgive they fall into the trap of Isaiah who makes the Saviour and creator one and the same with God. Again in Luke 7.22 the preaching, teaching and healing ministry of Christ is affirmed from Isaiah 35.5 & 61.1. It is Luke that records Jesus’ vision His kingdom’s rise and of the corresponding defeat of Satan of which His earthly ministry was a foretaste (Isaiah 14 13-16 & Luke 10.15-18). Israel’s spiritual stupor and the vineyard parable in Luke 19.42 & 20.9ff are references from Isaiah 5 & 6 and the gospel follows these with reference to the carrying away of Jerusalem and the latter day signs on earth and in heaven and the worldwide snare of judgment on earth (Luke 21.25 with Isaiah 13.10, 24.19 & 24.17). Luke has three other references the first of which is most beautiful and sad. Jesus said “It is scripturally essential for me to have a purpose and end and to be reckoned with sinners. “(Luke 22.37 & Isaiah 53.12) Then our Lord reassuringly said “For the matters that concern me have also a purpose!” Luke stays with the great 53rd of Isaiah in “3.33-34 and 24.27 & 46. This purpose Christ himself expounds to the Emmaus travellers.

(b) The “far-off” thrust of the gospel is emphatic in Peter’s sermon (Ac.2.39 & Isa. 57.19. Peter specifically refers to Jesus as the *παις Θεου* or the “servant of God glorified in Ac. 3.13 (Isa.52.13) giving us a choice between the opposing views of the apostle and the Professor of Bible theology in New York’s rabbinic college. Peter also claims that the healing of this paralysed man issued from the risen Jesus. Again in 4.27 Peter refers to Jesus as the *παις Θεου*. Such statements put clear water between Jewish views and Christian doctrine. Stephen brought the ultimate charge of grieving the Holy Spirit by “slaying the just one” against the Sanhedrin-a context where the prophet Isaiah kindly says “May He (the Lord) recall the days when He brought Israel through the sea” (Ac. 7 49-50 with Isa. 63.11 2010

NIV marginal reading). Further reference to the *παις θεου* is made by Philip in Ac.8 32-33. By now it is transparently clear that Jesus Christ is in His very person the “servant” who alone can fulfil the prophecies of Isaiah 52-53. Peter further confirms Jesus as Adonai and victor over Satan (Ac.10.36 & 38 with Isa.52.7 & 61.1). Thus we have the clear cut Simon Peter with his clarion “Thou art the Christ the son of the living God” teaching the early church as Luke records.

When Luke introduces his companion Paul he is stressing the Messianic credentials of Jesus and His prophesied ministry to the Gentiles from Isaiah 11.1 & 49.6 in Chapter 13 of the Acts. Luke shows how Paul at Athens made copious use of Isaiah to show Christ is creator of the sphere of the world who affords grace and reconciliation and calls for shame of face (Isaiah 42.5, 55.6, 40.18-20 & 44 10-17). At Corinth the Lord himself appeared to Paul and brought him the comforting “Fear not” of Isaiah 41.10. Finally Luke gives Agrippa the exact words of Jesus who spoke to him on the Damascus Road and designated Himself after the style of Isaiah 35.5, 42.6-7 & 16, 49.6 & 61.1 as Israel’s God come down, as the *παις θεου* who would keep his covenant with Israel and be a light to the Gentiles”; as the *παις θεου* to restore Israel and enlighten the Gentiles and as the anointed one proclaiming God’s favour or grace at the appointed time.

(4) (a) JOHN (b) THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES AND (c) THE APOCALYPSE

(a) John opens his gospel account (1.14) with a reference to the “*incarnation of the Son of God*” drawn from Isaiah’s coming of the “shining light” of the Lord in Isaiah 60.1-2. This he immediately follows by a reference in v.29 to Isaiah’s 53rd on Christ as “the lamb of God and to consolidate the Messianic chain of reference he alludes in 1.45 to Isaiah 7.14 & 9.6 “unto us a son is born” referring to Philip’s statement to Nathaniel about the one prophets foretold. Again in 8.12 John picks up the theme of Christ as “the light of the world” or the light of the Gentiles” (Isaiah 49.6)(cf. also 9.5)

When it comes to dealing with *sin in its seriousness* as destructive of the relationship with God Jesus debated with *Jews who believed in Him* on Isaiah 63.16 and 64.8 where the claim to be “Abraham’s children” is negated by “continuing to sin” and the “filthy rages” of righteousness not sourced in the new nature and the failure to lay hold on Christ and call on His name. Christ as “the good shepherd” brings John’s contemplation to Isaiah 40.11 in 10.11 and the wider gathering of Isaiah 56.8. John adapts the glorious vision of God granted to Isaiah and the failure of the people to accept Isaiah’s account of it to the great “lifting up”(John 12.34 & 38) of Calvary and the resurrection-cum-ascension which the Jews of Jesus day did not believe. The operative atonement action of Isaiah’s vision is “This (man) has couched your lips, your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for” [It is vital to note that the “this” in Isaiah 53.7 is masculine gender whereas the “coal” is feminine”.] In the 16th of John another flurry of texts from Isaiah are cited. The subject is the grief over the cross and the joy when afterward its significance is truly understood and experienced. John never forgot Jesus beautiful way of preparing his disciples for what lay ahead. Jesus refers to the writhing distress of His disciples who would be like women in labour when a mere banner on a hilltop stands against the foe and the lonely cross of Golgotha stood before their tearful eyes and tore at their broken hearts and then our Lord caps it with reference to Isaiah 13.8 and God’s future good news for Daniel and Jerusalem as Persian forces claim absolute victory over banqueting drunken Babylon (Isaiah 21.3) and then the Lord reflects on the wonderful joy that comes from

“peace with God” that his disciples will share when He rises: it will be exactly as the “Shalom” of future Jerusalem. (Isaiah 66. 12-12).

When peace like a river attendeth my soul
And sorrows like sea billows roll
Whatever my lot thou hast taught me to know
It is well it is well with my soul.

(b) 1JOHN

John (1.7) writes with Isaiah 2.5 in mind “Come, descendants of Jacob let us walk in *the light* of the Lord”. His only other reference is in 1John 3.5 where we read “We know that *that man* appeared that He might take away sin” – a reference to Isaiah 53.8-9 which reads “For the transgression of my people He was punished”.

(c) THE APOCALYPSE

The apocalypse with 123 references exceeds all other NT books in respect of drawing on Isaiah’s prophetic insight as the Spirit of God brings older revelation into focus. In Chapter 1.4 & 8 John introduces the “*One who is first and last (1)*” from Isaiah 41.4 and then the apostle focuses *His tender love* that speaks on the heart and frees us from our sins (Isaiah 40.2 with 1.5). The prediction of a priesthood of believers comes into focus from Isaiah 61.6 (1.6) and the distinctive of the *παῖς θεοῦ* in Isaiah 49.2 (1.16) is that from his mouth comes the sharp sword of truth and justice. From yet another classic description of the Redeemer as “*the first and last (2)*” (Isaiah 44.6 & 1.17) comes confirmation that *Adonai* Himself is *the redeemer*. John accesses a third source for his “*first and last (3)*” in Isaiah 48.12 and here the first and last is described as “*the creator*”. Thus John has established the essential criteria of Christ’s authority person and work and prerogative to finish the work of revelation and history from the prophet Isaiah. John proceeds in Chapters 2-4 to view Christ walking with His church. To the early Church in Smyrna (there is still a church in Izmir) the Lord speaks as the “first and last” and to that in Pergamum the Lord speaks of His vindication against evil nations. (2.8 & 17 with Isaiah 44.6 & 62.2) Today Pergamum where the altar of Satan stood is dead. Philadelphia (the last great missionary church of the church era) is spoken to in the language of the latter day latter bringing the millennium blessings reserved for Israel into view viz. the “key of David” (authority of Israel), “the produce of nations” (helping Israel) and the “honour of many kings or leaders” (respecting Israel); also the title “city of God” (Zion in Israeli hands) and the name of the Lord (renewed Jewish worship and favour) [Isaiah 22.22, 45.14, 49.23, 60.14 62.2 & 65.15]. The vision of Isaiah 6 featuring the wounded Holy One lifted high and touching man with pardon is focused three times in John’s fourth chapter when John portrays Christ in heaven with his church.

John in his 5th chapter on the heavenly throne refers to Isaiah 11.1 & 10 which describe the Lord Jesus in His first advent teaching and in His second advent working out the world’s sealed history as *the Lamb (1-2)* (Isaiah 53.7 with 5.6 & 12) The two further references to the “*Lamb (3-4)*” of Isaiah 53 demonstrate in the warp and woof of the Apocalypse the love of John for Jesus and Jesus for John and the church. In his 6th chapter on seals John brings into focus the darkening of the stars and of the sun and moon (Isaiah 13.10 & 34.4 with vv.12-14).

The seventh of John moves between the 6th and 7th seals and focuses again on the atoning Shepherd **Lamb (5)** who “swallows up death” and leads His martyred witnesses where the sun no longer annoys and joy is supernal. In the 8th of John where one third of humanity die during the trumpets phase of the Heptad confirming the darkening of earth by a third (Isaiah 13.10 nuclear night?)

The 9th and 10th of John contain no references to Isaiah but feature the 5th & 6th trumpets the mysterious 7 thunders and the mid air gospel proclamation when the Daniel 8 & 12 allusions come into play. At this point we stand at the mid point of the Heptad in the Apocalypse (see 11.2 ...the Gentile period and 12.6...Jacob’s trouble and flight).

In the 12th of John Israel (whose nationhood has been established) is described as the moon of the OT and as becoming radiant as the sun and in childbirth focusing our thoughts on Isaiah 66.7 where a “country is born in a day”. The fall of Lucifer is quoted in this context (Isaiah 14.12 with 12.9) amid a massive spread of 18 references to the “morning and evening vision of Daniel and his last 3 chapter. Whilst the “beast” takes authority over many the **Lamb (6)** [Isaiah 53.7 with 13.8] continues on the throne.

John’s 14th notes that the saints persecuted by the beast spoke the truth like the **Lamb (7)** and suffered for it (14.5 with Isa. 53.9). The fall of latter day Babylon and the war against Jerusalem (Isaiah 21.9 and 63 1-3) bring into focus Isaiah’s ancient prophecy regarding the Lord in bloodstained garments. John’s 15th refers to the bowls or vials which Isaiah foretold would be taken out of Israel’s hands by the Lord (Isaiah 51.22 with 15.8) as He conducts His judgments. So in John’s 16th the six bowls are poured out bringing the prophecies of Isaiah 66.6 and 49.26 into modern focus. Isaiah’s prediction is that latter day spiritualist consultation will lead to great distress and great fear and literal darkness will befall mankind (16.10 & 8.22) and as Isaiah predicted the Euphrates will become seven fordable streams (Isa. 11.15 with 1.12). Again John quotes Isaiah 66.6 & 51 17&22 (16.17 & 19) over against the end of the world’s cities, the fall of Babylon and the breaking of Jerusalem in three parts under the seventh bowl of divine wrath. The Lord is to act on behalf of Israel in the latter day.

John’s 18th opens with reference to the end of a latter day Babylon and its desert creatures (Isaiah 13.21 & 21.9). Its belief that it would stand forever (Isa. 47 7-8 with 18.7-8) ended. It is instructive that Old Babylon survived 70 years (606-536BC). **The EEC was established in 1957 and survives today 2012(55 years on) as the common market with undisguised pretensions to become an absolute political union. It is a good question whether or not it will survive another 15 years?** The fall of the last world system is to create joy in heaven much as the fall of Babylon rejoiced Israel. John’s 19th covers heaven’s ecstasy and the glorious return of Christ. The justice of Jesse’s rod comes into focus from Isaiah 11.4 (19.11). The Lord’s treading of the winepress of wrath is also focused in 19.15

The 20th focuses the judgment of nations from Isaiah 59.18 and the glorious joining of east and west to fear the Lord’s name. The 21st introduces a series of seven references to Isaiah which speak both of Jerusalem under Messiah and of the New Heaven and Earth that follows (Isaiah 65.17, 66.22, 52.1, 61.10, 11.10 & 55.1). John’s final references to Isaiah in his 22nd speak of the heavenly Zion which needs neither moon nor sun (Isaiah 60 19-20 & 22.5. His

last references are to Christ's return & judgment and His "Alpha and Omega" eternal being (Isaiah 59.18, **62.11**, 44.6 & 48.12)

(5) THE PAULINE CORPUS ROMANS

Of the 83 references to Isaiah in Paul's writings 23 appear in **Romans**. What then are the main themes picked up and focused by Paul from the evangelical prophet in this book? In Rom.2.24 he claims support from Isaiah to show that God's name from 700 years back was blasphemed among the nations on account of Israel's disobedience (2.24 with Isaiah 52.5)..He cites Isaiah in support of the doctrine of world-wide sin (Isaiah59 7-8 with Rom.3.15-17) and God's creating word (4.17 with Isaiah 48.13). His joyous reference to Isaiah 53.11 in 5.19 the "justification chapter" is to the obedience of Christ as God's "righteous servant". In 8.33 Paul refers to the "vindication of Christ" on our behalf. Paul's argument is that in Christ God was so rejected as to be the proper basis of our condemnation for it was our sin delivered Him to the cross but gloriously He is interceding for us at the throne! Thus His resurrection affording peace is our anchor chain of certainty of salvation.

It is in the section on the homecoming of Israel that Paul stands so firm shoulder to shoulder with Isaiah. First, in *arguing the doctrine of Sovereignty on the story of Israel past and future* Paul with Isaiah affirms God is the Potter we are the clay(Isa.29.16 &45.9). He then affirms the absolute right of God to reduce Israel (or mankind) to a remnant (Isa.10.22-23 with 9.27-8.) He shows that within sovereignty mercy abides over against judgment (Isaiah1.9 with 9.29) and then sets forth faith and rejection or acceptance of the cornerstone as the crux (Isa.8.14 &28.16 with 9.32-33).

From Isaiah28.16 (10.11) Paul argues that the death and resurrection of Christ are God's foundation for faith. He argues from Isaiah 52.7 & Nahum1.15 for the necessity of preaching or heralding and distinctly from Isaiah53.1 for the vital necessity of accepting the gospel to be saved (Isa. 53.1 with 10.16 and concluding his argument on the interlacing of sovereignty mercy intercession faith preaching and the gospel he quotes Isaiah specifically on the two prophesied effects of unbelief among Jews and belief among Gentiles (10.20-21 with Isaiah 65.1-2) which he elsewhere puts down to Israel's hardness twinned with divine cutting and grafting on account of unfruitfulness. Paul notes the 700 year long spiritual dullness of Israel (11.7-8 with Isaiah29.10) but holds out his and Isaiah's profound hope that "all Israel will be saved" and along the Generations the Spirit will abide with Israel in a measure. The ultimate fruitful vineyard of Jacob will fill the world with spiritual fruit as Isaiah prophesied and the Redeemer will come to a repentant nation (Isa.45.15 & 55.8 with 11.26-27). In face of all this Paul concludes "Who can fathom God's mind?" (11.34, Isaiah. 40.13). Finally Paul stands with Isaiah to say "every knee shall bow." My own translation of Isaiah 45.23 is **"Face me and be saved all you ends of the earth for I am God and there is none other. By myself I have sworn; the righteous word has gone out of my mouth and will not return, To me every knee shall bow"** Hebrew [rk "bow as in prayer" and every tongue will confess Hebrew [bv as in "swear worship" or allegiance. **This will be just as true when we meet Christ as judge as when He judged the nations at his return.** That this latter vision is in Paul's mind is seen from his return to Isaiah 11.10 in Romans 15.12 when he says "The root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in Him." In concert with the mission of Christ put in Isaiah's words "He shall sprinkle many nations and kings shall shut their mouths because of him" (Isaiah52.15 with Romans 15.21).

Paul concludes this great letter to Rome as he expresses his hope and mission to take the gospel to the utmost bounds

1 CORINTHIANS

Isaiah 19.12 states that no natural capability could predict the final fate of Egypt and Isaiah 29.12 as I have rendered it reads **“The wisdom of the wise will perish the understanding of those who understand themselves will be under a veil”**. With Isaiah Paul asks “Where are the leading lights?” For Isaiah *when the king appears in his beauty in glory* mankind will be amazed that God’s world is without arrogant authorities as the first minister of revenue and the leading commander. Paul asks *in the light of the gospel* where the philosopher and sophist have gone?(Isaiah 3.18 with 1Cor.1.20). Thus Paul eases the early church out of Philosophy and into Christian truth. In 2.9 Paul presents the biblical alternative –which that which Isaiah calls the unheard of that men will see in Christ and the gospel (Isaiah 52.15 with 1.9) and the revelation and power of the Spirit of God (Isaiah 40.13 & 2.16) will replace powerless thinking. Beyond all wisdom is God’s foundation stone Christ Jesus (Isaiah 28.16 & 3.11).

Paul expresses his pleasure in prophecy or preaching by which God would in the NT speak to Israel (Isaiah 28 11-12) and Paul with Isaiah prophesies that unbelievers through preaching like the Ethiopians of Isaiah would come over to the gospel and acknowledgment that Israel’s God alone is God.(Isaiah 45.14 & 14.25). Paul finishes by clearly stating the gospel message (Isaiah 53.8-9 with 15.1) and presents Isaiah’s great Resurrection oracle “I will swallow up death forever”(Isa.25.8 with 15.54)) alongside his own words “When this (my perishable body) has been clothed with the imperishable and this(my)mortal has been clothed with immortality then shall be realised the fact that is written “Death is swallowed up in victory”.

2CORINTHIANS

The gospel light promised in Isaiah 9.2 that was to appear in Naphtali of Galilee is declared by Paul to be none other than Jesus of Nazareth in whose face and teachings we behold **“the” light**. Corinthians would be aware that Paul’s reference to light is to an “outstanding teacher”. Isaiah’s “new thing”(Isa.43.18 & 5.17) that would lead to forgetting the ancient Passover Paul brings into focus as the “New Birth” built on the Lord’s Passover at Calvary.

This proclamation of salvation he presents as Isaiah’s “beautiful feet” with the associated message of the one who took our sin (Isaiah 52.7 & 53). The rich grace of God that Paul preached is but of Isaiah’s words “In the time of my favour (חַסְדִּי –a king’s favour and benefits) I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you” (Isa. 49.8 with 6.1).The “separation unto the Lord” that is called for by Isaiah in 52.11 (6.17) translates into the holiness of Christians whose new life in Christ began at Mt Zion at Pentecost. Paul quite deliberately applies the language of Isaiah 43.6 to the Corinthian believers because they like the ingathered Israel of the end times are the ingathered Church of the gospel times “from afar” as today others from the “ends of the earth” are the Father’s children. In Chapter 7 Paul explicitly refers to Isaiah 49.13 in 2 Cor.7.1 in telling the Corinthians of God’s comfort to him when he was downcast in Macedonia. Clearly at the time of writing Paul had been (not uncharacteristically) pouring over his Isaiah scroll. Paul writes to the Corinthians of God’s grace and providing in terms of Isaiah 55.10 both through natural food in its season and through His word (2Corinthians 9.10). In doing so the apostle is encouraging them to launch

out on initiatives of giving and of gospel outreach in the knowledge that “God is able to make all grace abound toward them”.

GALATIANS

Paul testifies that just like the prophet Isaiah he was chosen before he was born. This great doctrine of divine election is argues from Isaiah (Isaiah49.1 with Galatians 1.17). Thus the prophecy is vital as the source of high doctrinal principles. Paul refers to Hezekiah’s Prayer in Galatians 4.8 and to the kindred danger of the Assyrian imposing idolatry on Israel just as Galatia might fall again into the slavery of fetishes.

In words of encouragement Paul quotes Isaiah 54.1 as he applies the “joy of Zion”(the way of Christ enabled by the coming of the Holy Spirit as opposed to Judaism) the Church’s metropolis to the growing strength of the Gentile church with the associated hope the apostle conveys of the stretching of the curtains and the lengthening of cords and strengthening of tent poles as the church grows(Isaiah52.2). Shortly thereafter the Galatian country was known as the land of “a thousand churches”.

EPHESIANS

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation* that you may know Him better. Paul is praying for another level of personal awareness of God among the born again saints of Ephesus. He allies this with Isaiah’s seven-fold Spirit that issued in the “fruitful” life of Christ (Isaiah11.1 & 1.17. Paul clearly states that the Ephesian believers were included in Christ when they first believed and were then sealed with the Holy Spirit and came “nigh” to God though “far off” gentiles. This intimacy was enabled by the blood of Jesus.

The Lord of the heights of heaven lives with the lowly to revive their hearts. For those who are contrite and mourn there is peace. I have translated Isaiah 57.19 thus I create the increased productivity of the lips. "Peace, peace to him who is afar and to him who is near ", says the LORD, "and I will heal him" . Thus the Lord brings in a new relationship with a new means of sustaining it-prayer. Christ, the peace source, is the “Warrior God and everlasting priest” at the heart of the church’s prayers. The apostle reminds himself and his hearers of Isaiah 52.7 & 57.19 which tell of commissioned messengers like him and later John whose feet were esteemed beautiful that brought the message the wounded Lamb of God and of peace.

The apostle counsels believers against grieving the Holy Spirit by bitterness of heart and slander of speech for which reason the ancient Jews rebelled and lost the presence of the “angel” because they grieved the Holy Spirit (Isa.63.10) The malady Isaiah and Paul were both concerned about was “No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold on you for you have hidden your face and given us over to our sins”. There can be little doubt but that intimacy with God like a flickering lamp can go out. Paul commends “goodness righteousness and truth” and that Christians should be “wide awake” not only risen from the dead in conversion but spiritually diligent too. My translation of Isa.26.19 runs “**Your dead will live; they will rise with my corpse. The inhabitants of the dust must arise from death's slumber and sing for the dew of lights**” (*Literally the "life-giving dew" like that which causes grass to grow gives life to the dead. The idea here is "dew that abides longest with the long rays of the morning light or heat. The life giving power of Christ "endures" and is associated especially with the dawn of His return*). Again Isaiah 51.17 says “Awake awake...and speaks of God’s people as “made drunk but not with wine (rather troubles)” **in**

what way am I to comfort you for continually? The Lord says this as Isaiah goes on to set forth the atoning work of Christ.

In Isaiah 52.1 the renewed cry to awake is repeated once more in the light of the garments of righteousness and salvation which might as easily be glorious armour-“a clothing of strength” that Paul details in Ephesians 6. Finally in Isaiah 60.1 the call to “arise” and reflect the radiant glory of the LORD rings out. The church is the first sign of the age to come when whole nations will come to God. So Paul moves to the “armour” he has hinted shall be worn. He again quotes Isaiah on “Truth”, “the gospel” and “the Helmet of Salvation” and the “sword of the Spirit”. Isaiah says “Righteousness will be his belt”(11.5); “He put on righteousness as his breastplate and the helmet of salvation on his head”(59.17); “How beautiful are the feet of those that bring good news of peace”(52.7); “with righteousness He will judge the poor”(11.4); “He made my mouth as a sharpened sword - a polished arrow”(49.2) (Ephesians 6.14,15,17). The evangelical prophet saw the saints of God clothed in armour that spoke of righteousness and Paul saw like Isaiah saw the wearing of this armour as the sign of a Christianity that was wide awake to the fiery darts of the evil one.

PHILIPPIANS

The doctrine of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ is clear from Isaiah. Isaiah 53 denotes the full surrender of the cross and Isaiah 45.23 (Phi.2.10-11) denotes the full exaltation of Christ to whom “every knee shall bow”. Isaiah like Christ might seem “to have spent his strength for nothing” but when the Messiah comes no longer will children “be doomed to misfortune” and so Paul in making these references calls on the Philippians to shine like stars so that in the day of the Lord He will not have run in vain.

The believers of the city of Philippi could reverberate to the words of Isaiah “You will keep in *perfect peace* those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you”(Isa.26.13 & Phil.4.7) as they rejoice without anxiety and pray in faith.

COLOSSIANS

Colossae was landlocked but in a beautiful rural setting. Paul reminded them that “in Christ all the treasures of wisdom & knowledge were hidden” Just as Cyrus of old gained many treasures the best of which was “knowing the Lord the God of Israel” so Colossae is reminded Christ is her great treasure(Isa.45.3 with Col.2.3) The ideas “Do not handle taste or touch”(Col.2.22 & Isa.29.13) are human rules . The Lord desires true worship and distastes the hidden ways secrets of man. The Colossian heresy of mysterious intermediaries was displeasing to God.

1 THESSALONIANS

This epistle carries much teaching concerning the end times but Paul returns to a theme he set out for the Ephesians from Isaiah-namely the need to be armed and awake in the light of Christ’s coming. The Thessalonians should have on their armour of faith and love (Isa. 59.17 with 1Thes 5.8) and above all *the helmet of the hope of salvation* as they await the coming of Christ.

2 THESSALONIANS

In his second letter Paul makes 6 references to Isaiah. He speaks solemnly of the punishment of those who do not obey the gospel in terms of being “shut out” from the kingdom.(Isaiah 66.15 & 1.8) This reflects Isaiah 66.15 when he comes to be glorified among His people(Isaiah

49.3 & 1.10). Paul calls for the Thessalonians who lived in the West to glorify the Lord in accordance with Isa24.14 and as a foretaste of the great and glorious coming of Isaiah 66.5. Thus Paul's first epistles to the church were full of the hope of Christ's coming and the glory of His kingdom.

(6) BARNABAS JAMES AND JUDE

HEBREWS

The *doctrine of the humanity of our Lord Jesus* is presented by the writer to the Hebrews (Barnabas) from the Septuagint and couched in idiom from Isaiah. The writer quotes Isaiah8.18 "Here I am and the children the Lord has given me; we are signs in Israel from the Lord Almighty". (Isa. 8.18 with 2.13) He further refers to "the descendants of Abraham (my friend) Isaiah 41.8. The argument is that Isaiah's words are apt as a reference to the Messiah and His disciples as solidarity of flesh and blood much as Isaiah is alongside his prophetic band that shares his testimony. The testimony of prophecy is focused in the NT centring on Jesus Christ.

When it comes to *the doctrine of scripture* the Hebrew writer resorts again to Isaiah and says "The word of God is living and active sharper than a two edged sword". He is referring to the prophecy of Christ God's word incarnate of which Isaiah says "He made my mouth like a sharpened sword...a polished arrow." (Isaiah 49.2 with 4.12)

The writer goes on in 5.9 to refer to Christ as author of an *eternal salvation* focusing that eternal salvation Isaiah applies to Israel in the coming kingdom (Isaiah45.17) but recognising it is being experienced by the Hebrews through the gospel.

The right of Christ to rule from David's throne was made clear by the writer referring to Isaiah 11.1(7.14) "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit"

Isaiah's *prediction of judgment* by consuming fire on those "who would not learn righteousness and in a land of uprightness when men go on doing evil" is taken up as a warning in the context of the "approaching" Day of the Lord (Isaiah 26.11 with Hebrews 10.27)

There are two further references in the letter to Isaiah. The writer encourages the church to live disciplined lives and strengthen the feeble and fearful as we contemplate those gone to *glory* who witness the Gospel marathon and as we live in the light of the coming global quake (Hebrews 12.26 with Haggai 2.6) and (Isaiah35.3 with 12.12). The ultimate prize is to see the Glory of the Lord and to live holy in view of the coming Highway of holiness and everlasting joy of Zion-the age of Gold. Finally in 13.17 & 20 the writer refers to "*watchmen on the walls of Israel*" who pray day and night for the Messiah's coming and calls the Hebrews to pray and be ready to give account to the coming Lord((Isa.62.6). He signs off with reference to the "everlasting covenant and sure mercies of David" in Isaiah55.3 which will attract multitudes of Gentiles and ensure the great day of peace which will garner in the seekers of many generations who forsake their evil ways and turn to the Lord.

The writer's last reference is to Isaiah 63.11 to the Great Shepherd who led Moses –the one who in his people's distresses was Him distressed. Isaiah calls for God to look down anew upon his people and to return. This reference is linked to three other prophetic references (a) Ezekiel 37.26 which speaks of David as Prince forever and the Lord's dwelling place being with His people so that the nations will know God made Israel holy. (b) Jeremiah 32.40 where God promised to gather Israel from all lands give them singleness of heart and make an

everlasting covenant with them and never stop doing them good. (c)Zechariah 9.11 where Christ's coming on a donkey at His first advent and His Second Advent rule from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth are associated with His proclamation of peace to the nations.

JAMES

Our Lord's brother has four references to Isaiah.

- (i) James 1 10-11 with Isaiah 40 6-7 where James along with Isaiah compares *the fragility and brevity of life* with that of grass and the flower of the field. James wants us to appreciate the brevity of life and the importance of opportunity and time.
- (ii) James 2.23 with Isaiah 41.8 James highlights *Abraham's righteousness by faith* alongside his other reference to Genesis 15.6 and shows that faith made deep demands-to take Isaac to the altar pyre where he raised his knife and then learned from the Lord that there was another sacrifice hidden in the future which was to be seen in the mount-that of Christ on Calvary.
- (iii) James 4.8 with Isaiah 1.16 where our Lord's brother commends **"drawing near to God" (prayer) and cleansing the hands**. James was a man of prayer.. James himself apparently was permitted to approach the holy place in prayer in Jerusalem and he takes to task the worldly and double-minded of his day. His words to those with blood on their hands are especially acute when one considers the reference context in Isaiah 1.14-16. James is addressing the corruption that dealt in blood and bayed for the death of Christ. He is contemplating the words of Isaiah "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow though red as crimson they shall be as wool (Isaiah 1.18)
- (iv) James 5.4 with Isaiah 5.9 James again speaks of wages unpaid and of the murder of the innocent. He refers to Isaiah 5.9 and the "Song of the Vineyard". **He focuses on the inevitable coming judgment of Judea**. He is well aware that Jesus used this passage from Isaiah and told his own vineyard parable of the owners who ill treated the Son of the owner. . James foresaw the "wasteland" of Judea-the ruin of the vineyard. The Long song of Isaiah extends to 30 verses in translation and encompasses the carrying away of Israel following their gross evil amid scene of dead bodies in the streets. The song also cites the end time advance on Jerusalem and the roaring in the skies like the waves of the sea with a darkening of the sun by clouds.

IN SUMMARY

This treatment provides a large scale map of the value and contribution of one prophet to the doctrine and understanding of the New Testament. A similar mapping could be done for Daniel and Jeremiah and indeed other of the prophets. What I have striven to show is that the NT did not appear in a vacuum but the truth we believe as Christians is built on God's revelation to the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

(8) COMPELLING DETAIL OF OVERALL PROPHETIC INPUT TO NEW TESTAMENT COMPOSITION DEMONSTRATES THE VALUE OF GRAMMATICAL NUANCE.

(A)NOTE ON THE SCHOLARLY BASIS OF INTER-TESTAMENTAL REFERENCE

Whereas there are 212 references to the prophet Isaiah in the NT there are 826 from the prophets in their entirety. These statistics I derived mathematically from the textual apparatus of the International Bible Society Greek NT edited by Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Bruce Metzger and Allen Wikgren (first edition). While the society has now published 4 editions and these scholars all endured from 1966 to 1983 through 3 editions in their work expanding the

original 23 pages 3 column pages of 2573 “quotations” to three and a half of “quotations” and ten and a half allusions and verbal parallels in four column pages with 15 more references in each column. In effect this reduces the references designated as “quotations” to 677 instead of the original 2573 and designates a new large but less precisely defined roster of 2334 references as “allusions.” Clearly an additional 239 allusions perhaps including some new quotations have resulted but I have stuck with the earlier edition results for simplicity and I believe they offer quite safe grounds as I have worked over them through the years. By the way this system is simply a highly technical and sophisticated presentation like that you had in your old reference bibles and all new reference systems derive their excellence from this work. I set down my numerical work in tabular fashion to help the reader appreciate the value of the prophets. I do this basically to offset the idea that prophetic ideas are “private notions” and to illustrate one of the vital tools of a biblical interpreter. Thought “context” and language is important to understanding scripture the Old Testament background stands there constantly a little like the umpire to be consulted where detail is vital. I believe it is important to parry criticism by stating that in understanding the meaning of scripture I have bought into the method of the apostles who followed the revelation of truth from its misty dawning in the law through the illumination of the prophets until the high noon of Christ teaching His doctrine and his kingdom shone most brightly upon it. The method compared more to gold-mining than gold panning and to pearl diving than shopping at the jewellers but the “big finds” and “most precious nuggets” don’t present in any other way. More importantly whilst a thorough-going biblical theology may be one of the spin offs the prize of a deeply satisfying knowledge of God is for those who love the word of the Lord and make it their portion day and night. Thus from these tables below I will immediately turn to afford the reader some of the delights of prophetic scripture amongst which I have moved in commenting on scripture.

(B)THE TABLES

A NT GRAPH OF OT REFERENCES FROM THE APOCALYPSE-PART OF A SET COMPILED BY THE AUTHOR IN THE 1971-2

Matthew’s use of the prophets

MATTHEW	1 1.1-7.28	2 7.29-13.52	3 13.53-18.35	4 19.1-26.1	5 26.2-28.20
128	25	36	3	41	23

Mark’s use of the prophets

MARK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
48	3(Is)	1(Is)	0	5(1 Is)	5 (f)	2	2(1 Is)	2	3(2 Is)	1	2(1Is)	2^(1Is)	14	5	1&6 psa	0

Luke’s use of the prophets (1) Gospel

LK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
84	14	10	1	2	1	4	4	1	1	7	0	2	3	0	2	0	0	0	3	1	17	5	3	3
	Is																							

AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
58	0	3	1	1	0	1	8	2	0	6	0	3	6	1	1	0	6	3	0	0
AC	21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28					
	2	1	0	1	0	8	2	2												

John’s use of the prophets

JOHN	1-3.21	3.21-4.54	5.1-5.47	6.1-6.71	7.1-19.37	19.38-20.31	21.1-25
41	7	1	2	1	30	0	0

1 JOHN	1	2	3	4	5
2	1	1	0	0	0
2 JOHN	1				
0	0				
3 JOHN	1				
0	0				

Paul's use of the prophets

ROM	1 COR	2 COR	GAL	EPH	PHIL	COL	THES	TIM	TIT	PHIL
59	30	21	7	22	5	2	19	5	2	0

Barnabas' use of the prophets

HEB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
28	0	3	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	5	5	2	8

Peter's use of the prophets

1 PETER	34
2 PETER	5

Jude's use of the prophets

JUDE	1
7	7

James' use of the prophets

JAMES	1	2	3	4	5
13	1	1	1	3	7

The apocalyptic writer's use of the prophets

REV	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
347	26	12	10	21	16	25	15	6	7	13	24	14	13	16	9	19	9	44	26	15	7	0

Grand total 826 of 2573 NT references –just short of one third of all references.

(C) ANALYSIS OF PROPHETIC ORACLES

The tables I have set out above are designed simply to show the general relevance of prophetic oracles for our understanding of the NT. They tell us that there is an appreciable weight of prophetic thought within the NT.

For the purposes of this chapter we will limit our scope to the main concentrations of prophetic reference within the Pauline and Johannine corpus and 9 other NT books. Unlike the former chapter whilst I shall do an analysis I shall not pursue a detailed analysis examination of the body of quotations. The task is too large for present purposes.

MATTHEW

A very general observation is that in the third set of speeches selected from our Lord's teaching there are but 3 references to the prophets and two of these come from Isaiah—that concerning "lip-service and heart affection"(Isa29.13) and that concerning the "gates of Sheol" which is a technical term used for death—deferred for Hezekiah and defeated as an adversary of the church by Christ(Isa.38.10 2with Mt.16.18). The third is prophetically significant for it refers to a solid prophetic event of the future—the coming of Elijah and shows ground why John is not the ultimate fulfilment of Malachi's words (Mal4 5-6 with 17.10-11)

Matthew's weightiest use of the prophets is over *chapters 19-25 where there are 41 references* in a section with 4 parables of the end times and the mini apocalypse of Chapter 24. I pick out Christ's specific reference to Daniel 7 9-10 in 19.28 when he states precisely that when Christ returns "disciples who have followed Him" will judge Israel and receive reward for service (now 2000 years gone by). In Chapter 21 Matthew reminds us of Christ's understanding of His rejection and warns in terms of the vineyard parable (Isa.5) and Daniel 2 on the stone that falls on the unbelieving that rejecting Christ will be visited upon those who despised the gospel. Our Lord speaks again of His rejection in terms of Jeremiah's words (23.38 & Jer. 12.7 & 22.5) before speaking of *the end of the age with a massive volley of 21 OT references* that Matthew has no doubt retained (8 from Daniel, 4 from Isaiah, 4 from Joel, 2 from Zechariah and one each from Ezekiel Haggai and Zephaniah. The first set of speeches (Logia 1 comprise chapters 1-7 where there are 12 prophetic references to the incarnation & early ministry of Jesus. The final set of speeches (Logia 5 Matthew 26-28 yield *18 prophecies concerning our Lord's death*.

MARK

By far and away the weight of prophetic reference in Mark is found in Chapter 13 where we have the Mini-apocalypse with 14 prophetic connections.

LUKE

We can take 5 points along the line of his history where Luke strengthens his narrative by prophetic allusions. In Chapter 1 the references of Zechariah and Mary are littered with the prophetic realised before their eyes. Then in Chapter 2 the appearance of Jesus before Symeon alone provokes 8 prophetic references. This is highly significant because Symeon was the father of Gamaliel who taught Paul. The language of Christ in Luke 10 is steeped in dire prophetic warning in which terms our Lord expressed His message to the privileged towns of Galilee. Then in Luke 21 there are 17 prophetic references when our Lord spells out the events of the end of the age. Finally in Luke 23-24 the writer makes three references to Isaiah 53 in the context of Jesus death burial and resurrection.

JOHN

John divides his material into seven sequences (for John's gospel alone holds to historical order) and the first and fifth contain most prophetic material. In John 1-3 (the first) the apostle opens with 5 references of Isaiah to Jesus and in Chapter 3 quotes Malachi 3.1 concerning John the Baptist. In his fifth sequence (Chapters 7-19 where there are no fewer than 30 references) presenting the prophetic Christ as the "Light, the eternal son of Daniel, the Shepherd of Ezekiel the key to the resurrection, the uplifted one of Isaiah and the stricken one of Zechariah 13.7. It appears plain that John sees the Lord as the one who fulfils a plethora of prophecies in his wonderful person and work.

ACTS

(D) LINGUISTIC NUANCE

- (i) ABRAHAM'S HONEST ANSWER
- (ii) MOSES ON "DIGESTING"
- (iii) MOSES' PLURAL OF DEVOTION
- (iv) SOLOMON'S HEBREW

- (v) ELIJAH ON GOD'S WHISPER
- (vi) DANIEL'S PERSIAN MAHDI
- (vii) ISAIAH'S COAL
- (viii) EZEKIEL AT THE RIVER OF GOD
- (ix) ZECHARIAH ON GOD'S "WHISPERS"
- (x) GOD'S "IF'S"
- (xi) PETER'S POTTED HISTORY
- (xii) PAUL'S PERFECT FUTURE
- (xiii) JOHN'S LINGUISTIC DEVICE OF SEQUENCE

(9) THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY MOVES MEN ONWARD & FORWARD

We can all live in the past. History has indeed much to teach but all of us to live hopefully must look to the future. "Today is the tomorrow you thought about yesterday". The world around us is not standing still. I love that old hymn used at the passing of the great British statesman Winston Churchill:

**Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.
He hath loosed the fatal lightning of His terrible swift sword,
His truth is marching on.**

**He is coming like the glory of the morning on the wave;
He is wisdom to the mighty; He is succour to the brave;
So the world shall be his footstool, and the soul of time His slave
Our God is marching on.**

The apostle Peter made a highly significant statement concerning prophecy when he said "Holy men spoke (*λαλεω*) as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1.21) He remarks that they virtually murmured in a kind of musical or poetic manner and in this manner they were being inspired by the Holy Ghost. The experience he sought to explain was not dissimilar to that he himself experienced at Pentecost and the same terminology is used of the manner of inspired speech.

The apostle adds another dimension to our understanding of prophecy when he tells us that the mighty wind of God's holiness (also present at Pentecost) in the case of the prophets carried or bore them along on its wings involuntarily and at great speed. In exactly this sense of *φερω* Homer speaks of people being carried away by wind or by waves. In the first sense they were "swept away" as we would say "blown away" by what they saw. But there is more to the expression than an ecstasy and an awe of their vision; there is the specialist meaning of the middle voice equivalent to the Latin "sors" by which usage persons were said to be "prophetically guided" with the general accompaniment of "success" and "events turning out right."

To put the technicalities very simply the two vital facts to bear in mind is that ancient prophets were *borne along into far distant eras and set amid events they found strange* and very different-yet they recorded the vision they were afforded accurately with the experience

they had and we do well to remember that the Lord chose each prophet with the intelligence and capability he had to describe what he saw.

Secondly, biblical prophets were given important guidance and the events they registered were in their time sure to turn out in the manner they saw and faithfully set in writing.

The majesty behind all of this was of course the Holy Spirit of the Living God who searches all things.

Now let us take one example each from a number of biblical prophets to illustrate this remarkable corroborative method of *the Spirit of Prophecy* in confirming the will of God the Father and in other cases confirming the work of the Son of God at His first and second advents.

1. **Enoch** “The Lord is coming with ten thousand of His saints” (Jude 14). Enoch lived 1600 years after the world was created and shortly before it was destroyed. He predicted some 6000 and more years ago that the Lord is coming from heaven with his saints in his kingdom. The vision he saw carried him thousands of years into the future.
2. **Hosea** Come let us get us back to the LORD for HE has torn us[prf "to pull to pieces"] and HE will heal us[apv "stitch together"] HE has smitten us and HE will bind us up [vbj "bind with a bandage"]. HE will revive or give us life during part of two days onwards and in the third day HE will raise or resurrect us and we shall live before HIS face or IN HIS PRESENCE. Hosea foresees the passage of the OT and the NT eras and then predicts the advent of the Messianic Kingdom.
3. **Isaiah** “He was wounded for our transgressions” (53.5) –a prediction of the cross 700 years before. Also “**Thus says Adonai Yahweh 'Behold I will lift my hand to the Gentiles and I will perform the lifting up of my flag or sign to the nations and they will bring your sons in their bosoms and lift your daughters on their shoulders. Kings shall foster you faithfully and queens suckle you. Angry faces Hebrew *piia* to the ground they shall bow to you and lick the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am Yahweh. They who wait on me will not be ashamed**”. *The national flag of Israel is a prayer shawl with a Star of David.* The prediction 2700 years ago of the emergence of the state of Israel in the latter day can certainly be described as “having turned out right”
4. **Jeremiah** 31.33 (writing of Israel) “I will put my laws in their minds and write it on their hearts...they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest” *This prophecy is guaranteed to continue while the sun moon and stars shine and by the continued immeasurability of the heavens! Christian scholars have correctly taken this prophecy to infer that the NT gospel message preached among Gentile nations worldwide is the same Covenant made available to us by our Lord Jesus Christ.*
5. **Ezekiel 25 1-7** So say to the sons of Ammon ‘Hear the word of Adonai Yahweh ...thus says Adonai Yahweh; “Because you said “Aha” against my holy place when it was profaned and against the fertile land of Israel when it was laid waste and against the house of Judah when they marched off in captivity. Behold for this basic reason **I am handing you to the sons of the east for a permanent inheritance and they shall establish their castles or buildings in you and provide their dwellings in you and eat your fruit and drink your milk.**” The Arabisation of Jordan was predicted by Ezekiel circa 597 BC.

6. **Daniel i** “**You** O Great King looked and behold "you were become" [*tywh* Chaldee *Peal* 2nd person singular] a sharply delineated or single statue-a precise likeness or of great gloom and darkness.” *The statue because of its head had frightened NEBUCHADNEZZAR-for it delineated his features exactly in its face. The greatness of the statue is of a dynamic or growing sort. [Chaldee *aygc*] The effect seems to be something shining with great luminosity.* “And this immense great image was beautiful healthy shining [*hhz*] Besides it had arisen in front of you or to meet you or it has arisen on account of you and its appearance is terrifying [Chaldee *lhd* "that which made one creep away"] He was a great statue or likeness. His head was of good gold. His breasts [*yhw[dj]*] and his arms [*yhw[rd]*] of silver; his belly [*yhw[m]* A plural-"bowels" or "bellies"] **and his thigh(s)** [*nhnm* Chaldee singular-so "thigh" Dec. 5b alternative to "thighs" dual construct which translators wisely prefer] were brass.” *To take the translators position is to take the "upper leg" as brass-since *qmv* details from "knee to foot"(cf. Jud.15.8) and this agrees more easily with the syntax (i.e. the verb). The "singular" fails in face of "the dual construct" and is unsatisfactory because it leaves the character of the other upper leg unexplained]. His "legs" [from **knee to ankle**] [*yhwqv*] of iron; his feet [*yhw[gr]*] a proportion of iron and a proportion of earthenware [*psj*]... And there will be a fourth kingdom oppressive-obstinate [Chaldee *pqt*]-mighty as iron. Because that which is iron breaks or beats small [*qqd*] and pounds or enfeebles [*lvj*] everything so as iron it will loudly shatter all these to pieces it will keep grinding small and continually break do evil or hurt. When(41) you saw the feet and the toes were from proportioned or weighed out earthen ware sherds of the potter and from a proportion of iron; it will be a kingdom divided from its pedestal or fixed standing place that belongs to it which is iron. The description of the clay is complex. It is a rather ad hoc cementing of sherds which came from one pot or another that was broken. Because [Chaldee *l bk l k*] you saw the iron come apart from "the mix"[Chaldee *br* [or "intermeddling" or "surety" or "Arab"] with (or) in the earthen ware of potter's clay. As the toes and feet were weighed or proportioned of iron and clay -**at the extreme end or limit** of the vast kingdom it will be powerful or strong and authoritative and from its allotment or (weak) part of the whole it has been brittle or fragile. When you were looking at the iron as part of the "mixed" pottery "sherds"[the phrase might equally well read "Arabized" or "intermingled"] of potter's clay their companion mix was purposed to have continued by the seed of man or the common people but they will not relate as constantly adhering one to another-this with that; look just like a bulk of iron will not companion in a mix (or Arabize) with mass earthenware. The point being made is that the "big battalions" of the latter day would not gel or integrate as one society. This description of ultra modern developments within the Euro-Roman world theatre was predicted by Daniel (625-536) who held high rank and lived through all 70 years of the Babylonian Empire.*
7. **Daniel ii** **A thousand thousands or million(s) will have served him and 100,000,000 [hundred(s)] of millions will stand before HIM.** [*nmwqy* is definitely a future of the word *mwq* "to rise"] *The immense scale of the "rising" to judgment appears in the numbers. The court of judgment sits or the One who was judged and who made defence sits and the books have been opened. For those hundreds of millions who rise again and face the Lamb is the most solemn sight in the whole universe. This judgment is linked with the time of the Antichrist speaking upon earth and it would appear to be the closing session of a tribunal which may run contemporaneous with the*

*life of the Church as part of Christ's high priestly work completing its work in the seven years prior to the final Advent of Christ. The aggregate "millions" who serve Christ (whatever their order or class) are a distinct group from those who later appear before Christ. **At that time I was there I had been watching** [Peal indicative of past action- this indicates a time before the judgment event that preceded] **because of the voice of numerous or showers of mandates which the horn had been speaking** [Peal participle hl lmm]. It is apparent that Daniel had been fascinated by the last world **PRINCE** and that before the particular judgment he spoke of this prince had been in full flight. At this juncture of time the saints of God are "before him in myriads and books are opened for the reward. of his beloved ones. The narrative of Daniel in vision runs on to the final judgment and the punishment of the Antichrist at this point. This prophecy gives testimony 2500 years ago to the immense population of the earth that would stand before Christ at the last. Daniel was an accurate and highly trained minister of the Babylonian court and he is able to understand immense numbers which were not used of populations in those days. His testimony shows the wonder of Grace and its vast outreach to millions among nations in the future and that huge earthly populations would develop and would ultimately be arraigned before Christ in judgment.*

The range of matters chosen in this small if esoteric collection of prophecies could be multiplied beyond the paper I can afford for there are hundreds of prophecies in scripture already validated in the history of the common era.

(10) NATIONS IN PROPHECY– ORACLES OF THE LAST DAYS!

God said to Jeremiah “I have appointed you as a prophet to the nations”(Jer.1.5) That is not to say that Jeremiah was the international prophet par excellence but it is to say that in his era he was not merely an oracle for Israel or Judah. Because the Lord is God of all the earth and the Kingdom of Christ was to encircle and comprehend all nations the same can be said of the majority of Jewish prophets. However, numerous prophecies are spent-they foretold the Babylonian captivity and Israel’s return and then marked out the glorious first advent of our Lord –His death and resurrection –fundamental events that are now confirmed as history in the unfolding of God’s will. Nevertheless an agreeable spread of extant prophecies in respect of events still future lie within the writings of the major Old Testament prophets and not a few within the minor prophetic writings. The book of Revelation also affords key understandings of the stance and impact of the reconstituted empire of iron (Europe) in the day of the iron and clay feet and it makes some references to an world power characterised as a stealthy panther with eagle like capability.

I will content myself with general observations made in respect of the following fourteen nations: Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Russia, China, Italy, Greece, Saudi & the Arab states, Turkey, Britain, America, Europe and Israel.

I do not propose to deal with each nation in isolation but to follow what would seem to be the future course of political and economic development and its accompanying polymathy using scripture to designate what patterns are becoming apparent by doing what our Lord told us to do, namely to “Watch the fig tree and all the trees!” Thus what is in prospect for each nation can be adduced to a degree of accuracy whilst considerable elements remain opaque on account of the overturning of present day systems and gruelling events that lie just ahead of mankind.

Today the world is patently consolidated under the United Nations charter although an appreciable number of nations unite under the Non-aligned (NAM) organisation. The Organisation of African Unity and the convention of Islamic nations together with the European Union (NATO), the Russian Federation and the mega economy of China constitute very powerful blocks within UNO and one example of this growing power of emergent nations is Egypt's current chairmanship of the group looking to reorganise the high powered Security Council.

A live issue now presenting within international affairs is the growing power of Iran in the context of her implacable enmity towards Israel and threat to that country. This issue will not go away and is set to become more critical as something like a power vacuum develops with the withdrawal of American and British forces from Iraq. One asks in this context if we are not then propelled substantially toward the time when the "way of the rulers of the east is prepared." The Israeli-Iran stand-off exists within the context of the two other mighty and swift moving settings. The first is the "Arab Spring" with its latest twist in the Syrian struggle of Mr. Assad and internal militant forces who seek to topple his administration and the second is the current push for a world Caliphate within a democratic setting being led by Mr Erdogan of Turkey.

(1) EGYPT. Egypt who chooses to ally with Egypt during this future final stand against Israel has just passed through a revolution of her own. She is a Moslem democracy currently balancing Sharia law and international rights. Her future is quite bleak within the near term. It is Daniel that explores the uttermost limits of Egypt's future history and he tells of a thrust Egypt makes against *the godless militarist ruler* ensconced in Jerusalem through the help of a people worshipping a "foreign God" who will establish a new mid east federal empire ruled by his minions and allot the land of Israel on financial considerations. It is precisely at this time that the sudden Northern Rosh led alliance carves its way through with an armada and sets up HQ between the mountains belonging to the beautiful holy hill. He delivers a knock out blow to Egyptian aspirations and his nemesis comes when the Mount of Olives opens and he is cut off.(Zechariah 14.4 & Daniel 11.45) The prophetic prospective for the nation after 40 years is upbeat and includes humble new beginnings forecast in scripture. Five re-established cities on her northern borders will worship the Lord and in the midst of her land an altar to Yahweh will outshine the glory of her world famous pyramids (Isaiah 19 18-19). During over a generation Egypt will be a desolate waste *from Migdol by the coast to Aswan* and her inhabitants will be dispersed among the nations. No foot or animal will pass through the land. It will take 40 years before her evacuated population returns in any numbers.(Ezekiel 39.11). The long term prospective for Egypt is blessing "Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork and Israel my inheritance" (19.25).

Today a fine Anglican cathedral with an excellent leadership is a truly bright light in Cairo.

(2) IRAQ. For 60 and more years this scriptural land of Babylon ruled the Middle East. Jonah the prophet successfully brought his message to Nineveh and a large minority of Medes (present day Kurds) from the days of Darius settled its eastern fringes. Now for many years this ancient land lying between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers has been trailed into the 21st century exchanging its Sunni leadership for a Shiite government with a democratic colour. A highly significant statement of John the divine has to be factored in to the last mention of the land in scripture. John says "The sixth angel poured his vial on the great river Euphrates and *its water was dried up* to prepare the way of the kings from the East."(Apocalypse 16.12) This

occurs in tandem with intense diplomacy in favour of a world struggle to establish false prophecy and earth-wide dominion concerted by Satan. John the divine gives fair warning that Christ's thief like arrival related to this period of the drying up of the Euphrates; he writes "Behold I come as a thief" (Apocalypse 16.15). We need to ask "what does the sixth angels' vial entail?" First a vial is a "sacrificial cup involving both "human ashes" and that which "must be drunk". It would appear to be the bitter cup that has been presented through modern Iraqi history under Saddam Hussein and since involving the sacrifice of many lives. The result was that the "water of the river" had been thoroughly dried up.

The not inconsiderable minority of Christians in Mosul (Ancient Nineveh) has been decimated by strife and voluntary evacuation. Whilst many fled to Syria the oil rich Kurdish North West is the best haven for those who follow Christ though their witness is dissipated by friction within the small church body. That said, the fearless witness of the gallant Canon Andrew White (The man who is loved by children) in the capitol's Anglican Church inspires the country's Christians and the Lord has seen fit to exceedingly bless its mission so that it has run short of Alpha literature on account of numbers seeking to learn of Jesus.

(3) IRAN. The *one sent in Daniel 10* reports an engagement involving Persian Kings which involves the "*prince of Persia*" (an adjutant of Satan) and "One of the princes-*Michael*" and Himself. The chapter opens with a Hebrew expression "the war was a struggle-it is true or it was a real thing!" We are introduced most vividly to the way in which history is layered. There is the battle for the minds of men-the battle on history's stage itself and the spiritual battle waged by mighty angelic forces above and beyond what we can see. This reality is being repeated in these last days and the emissaries of Apocalypse 16.13 and the sudden end of days scheme of Russia and Iran recorded in Ezekiel 38 1-5 show the hideous depth of evil behind the anti-Semitism of the last days. The final result of this epoch and the Armageddon is that the nations 'will be very aware that Yeshua is Lord.

The irony is that a militant and progressive regime has contributed to a wider quest for hope and sizable numbers of Iranians are finding new life in Christ.

(4) SYRIA. It is in the oracle of Isaiah against Damascus that we read "Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins". As I write its Defence ministry nerve centre was attacked by a large explosion and widespread civil war has taken hold of Aleppo and the Damascus environs. "The remnant of Syria will be the glory of Israel", whispers the Lord. The irony is that however repressive the Assad family has historically been a large degree of religious freedom has been notably maintained in the country and both Christians and Kurds have been able to live fairly comfortably under the rule of law.

(5) RUSSIA. The nation long recognised as the Bear which appears to place its "feet" or lower eastern states within the European Union (Apocalypse 13.2) is known in scripture as "Rosh". My studies in the dispersion of Jews to Russia show that about 960 of the Common Era *Joseph king of the Khazars laid claim to his lineage. "We are" he said 'the posterity of Japhet and descendants of his son Togarma. We read in the genealogical books of our forefathers that king Torarma had 10 sons. We are the issue of Khazar the seventh son.'*" A descendant of Khazar King Bulan drove away Soothsayers and purified the country of idolatry. He chose Israelite religion before that of Edom (Christian) and Ishmael (Mohammedanism). In those days Jewish life flowered in Kiev the mother of Russian cities. It was in 1016 that Vladimir vanquished this ancient Khazar pro-Israelite kingdom. By various

stages Jewish profile declined. In 1113 there was an all out attack on Jews. Ivan the 3rd as Grand Duke of Moscow found that 20% of his priests converted to Judaism. Sigismund of Finland demanded that Russia admit Lithuanian Jews. Then in 1727 All Ukrainian Jews were expelled but after the Crimean war Alexander II opened his borders to Jews. So the early picture is a land at first deeply sympathetic to Jews that became progressively less so as Orthodoxy took hold. Militarily Russia has long dreamed of breaking out toward the south and warmer waters to realise her long held dream of seaports to the south. Nowadays she can slip through the Bosphorus and into the Mediterranean. Her marriage of interest with Syria for naval facilities in part fulfils her long treasured ambition accounting for the stubborn (2012) resistance of Russia to destabilising the Assad regime UN negotiations over the Syrian crisis remain a total stalemate and the prophetic declaration that Damascus will be a “heap of rubble” look like becoming a reality sooner rather than later.. Russia in the period immediately ahead is set to attempt to extend her sphere of interest even at the cost of conflict further to the south.

We read in Ezekiel 36 that Gog the chief “Rosh” of Meshech and Tubal will strike south heavily armed in company with *Persia and Egypt*-cum-North African allies assisted by *Togarmah* and this strike will centre on Israel. Gomer which drove the Cimmerians from the steppes of Russia is within this confederacy. It was Chuck Missler that unearthed from Amos 7.1 the meaning of “Gog” is “king-ruler”. So Gog is the leader of this move against Israel. Ezekiel tells us that the Lord puts “hooks in the jaws of Gog.” This is the ultimate war of our era and Apollyon-Gog is in its vanguard.

The approach of the northern armies is when Israel dwells secure and is resettled from the nations (i.e. subsequent to 1948 Ezekiel 38.12). Scripture portrays this sudden military assault as a “computer directed” scheme or operation (bch 38.10). The Lord reminds us that this modern foray was prophesied by Israel’s prophets long ago. Then He tells us that by a mighty earthquake He will destroy the invading forces. This final defence of Israel will be divine. The wider theatre of this war will involve fire (nuclear?) reaching Russia and the distant coasts of the West (Ezekiel 39). This Armageddon conflict ends with the utter defeat of the northern foe. The near prospect for Russia is bleak. Her religion ill prepares her for the rapture and her politics set her in a collision course with Almighty God with the direst of consequences. The war is described briefly also in the Apocalypse 16. 12-14. The war is promoted by Satan in the latter day of the power of the Beast and the false prophet. Interposing before it is the Lord’s coming as a thief (Apocalypse 16.15) and along with this war comes the final irretrievable collapse of cities everywhere; the overwhelming of islands and the end of world trade.

(6) CHINA. The mystic east in its remarkable mandarin language houses vital elements of world history that the book of Genesis records. The story of the “Garden” is there and that of Noah and eight persons saved by boat is depicted in the Chinese word for “boat”. China which in 1820 already produced 1/3rd of the world’s GDP has been the sleeping giant of the east. At this point in the 21st century China supplies utilities and micro electronics to the entire earth and is being relied upon to back up the finance of the United States and the staggering European economy.

What then is the future of this colossus amongst nations? Has scripture anything to say about the ultimate role of China will play in the latter day? The prophet Malachi proclaimed “My

name will be great from where the sun rises to where it sets.” From Shanghai to Los Angeles this is true today. Chinese Christianity is experiencing exponential growth. On the darker side we read in the Apocalypse of an army of multiple millions advancing over the Euphrates river-bed and driving for Har Megiddo and the final conflict of the third world war (Apocalypse 16.12). This army strength is 200,000,000 (Apocalypse 9.16) The lethal power of this army was unleashed on a particular hour of a day of a given month and year and it destroyed a third of humanity. This largest ever loss of human life runs to several thousand millions and by a deduction from eastern population figures and the strength of armies in the orient confirmed by the plain statistics and army base to which scripture testifies China has to be implicated. This is not strange because China is known to have an alliance with the Arab nations which will doubtless prove of material significance in the inevitable mid-east conflict that must happen sooner than later. The huge mortality figure this final catastrophe brings may well entail the end of American world domination and indeed a huge loss of life should China open an Eastern front as Japan did in the Second World War. Even that would not come near accounting for the loss of life that scripture entails. It would appear that China itself would suffer grave loss simultaneously. It would also appear that this ghastly hurricane of human death could only be executed by nuclear war. The prospects for the Chinese Christians is bright as the promises of Christ who will receive His people to Himself but the covenant of the this great communist empire with Apollyon and “the” dragon is set to issue in an unprecedented death toll for mankind.

China’s academy of social sciences puts the number of Chinese Christians at over 29 million. Unofficial estimates quote 70 million. China has one of the largest Christian church families in the entire world and its “back to Jerusalem” vision shows that it is taking the commission of Christ most seriously and set to make its contribution to telling the world of Jesus. It has not lost its vision of the kingdom of God and of Christ. Today it is rumoured that 1 in 10 of the Chinese people follows Christ and the rising generation of young Chinese in Beijing has opportunity officially to study the Life of Jesus in university bible study groups. The hierarchy of the Communist Party has shown courage in respect of bringing to task the leader responsible for the murder of a British businessman and Christians have shown patience and fortitude in serving under the powers that be for the welfare of all. The grave abiding blot on China’s escutcheon is the unacceptable complicity of the state in the infant death of so many baby girls. Neither in the free west nor autocratic orient is the preventable death of infants allowable under God without divine intervention. To do violence against life is to stand under the Damocles sword of divine disfavour and to displease the Almighty as surely as Noah’s peers did by continual violence in the days preceding the flood. China is at the crossroads and neither her housing boom nor her industrial might can be relied upon to save her-she must swallow greater change and accept the openness of truth (and Christ’s way) now knocking at her lintel if she is to emerge out of hiddenness. The alternative is a surly defiance which is mirrored in the dragon symbol that sketches a future in concert with the great dragon of the Apocalypse.

(7) GREECE. I have to confess a natural affection and concern for the Greeks amongst whom I have found some most beautiful people and well instructed Christians as the late Thanos Karbonis (The then leader of the Greek Evangelical Church). During our Lord’s earthly ministry some Greeks came to Judea and asked to see Jesus. It was Andrew who introduced them to the Lord and who later ministered in Greece dying as a martyr in Patras.

The nation anciently known as Javan is spoken of as “the isles” in several prophetic contexts. It appears to be subject among other European nations to punishment in the context of the latter day northern invasion of Israel. (Ezekiel 39.6 and Zechariah 9.13) By some turn of events Israel acts against Greece and God’s lightning arrow smites Greece within the context of “storms or war-clouds of the south”.

The fact that Greece appears to become implicated in such strife suggests she chooses a new destiny in the near future. The residual service of Eros and dim religious light of her land laden with incense but sparse in saving relationship with Christ all too easily delivers its people into deepening crisis and a war torn end(cf. Ezekiel 39.6). The Ghost of Communism has not been fully exorcised though the rise of right wing extremism is now a more serious danger. The Greek Orthodox Church would do well to take heed to the Greek scriptures to avoid what I sadly discovered when a fine physician (himself Orthodox from childhood) whilst treating me asked what was in the bible? The Greek Evangelical Church is an exciting development. In the south it is expectant of Christ but ageing. In the north it has youth on its side from its viewpoint it is a Herculean task to impact the nation.

(8) ITALY. The city on seven hills has since her founding in 753BC played an important part in the history of the world. Under the Roman emperors 10 persecutions of Christians took place. Rome as mistress of the world incorporated Christianity into her system in a manner that brought aggrandisement and lent state power to bishops. Shortly thereafter *Augustine deflected the Church from its expectation of the millennial kingdom of Christ upon David’s throne exchanging it for present glory and the Roman establishment.* In modern time the treaty of Rome combined nations of the old empire which began to work together despite their bitter 16th century division into traditional Catholic and Protestant groupings. The issues they faced had changed and after the devastation of the Second World War and the holocaust the EEC served to unite former foes in a bid for a better slice of the cake in the setting of a fiercely competitive world. Slimmed down or stabilised this appears to be the form which Europe maintains until the period of the tribulation. At this point the mysterious clash between the beast and the woman on the scarlet beast (Apocalypse 17-18) appears to lend credence to the ascendancy of the secular but it is quickly followed by the doom of the economic glory of Europe. This all takes place after the greatest earthquake or shaking ever known and the collapse of the cities of the nations (Apocalypse 16.19) and results in *the end of commercialism and the expiry of the European dream.* “The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more”...they will say “All your riches and splendour have vanished never to be recovered.” It appears that Rome after 2770 and more years will go up in flames. (Apocalypse 17.18). The mistress of the world pays the price for choosing a worldly manmade facsimile of the thoroughgoing gospel. Her world comes tumbling down with many souls of men in her train. She is almost oblivious to the coming day of visitation. The adoption of Alpha in a progressive mission strategy of the Italian Church is encouraging. The small congregation in the Chapel of Garibaldi in Rome represents pockets of the Reformation tradition which inherit the old Waldensian *sola scriptura* approach to worship. Sadly Italy is sliding more deeply into recession and with some exceptions is grossly unprepared for the Parousia of Christ.

(9) SAUDI AND THE ARAB STATES (INCLUDING LIBYA) Though it might seem implausible the Saudis defy the trend of the last days, abhor links with Russia and Iran and

alongside Western European nations (and prominently Britain) challenge the ultimate Russian invasion of Israel, Egypt and the south in the last days (Ezekiel 38.13). The reference to Dedan in Ezekiel 38.13 is to a people of Cushite origin (with a possible mix from the Keturah line of Abraham) that settled in Southern Arabia in ancient Dadana and were the ancient travelling merchants of the Arabian peninsula. Sheba for her part was the associated ancient Yemenite people.

The Arab world has over the last decade or so been able to receive Western satellite broadcasting and I understand even in Arad at night multiple dishes are mounted and many tune into the Christian message broadcast largely by interviews in their language.

It would appear that the Saudi oil wealth will continue and whilst world austerity continues this is a seduction to the other great energy hungry nations and (with or without the rapture) it may well be the inducement along with hatred for Israel that promotes the final drastic adventure of Russia and her allies that scripture forecasts.

(10) TURKEY. Let us then move to Turkey. This nation is a key player alongside NATO and yet has recently broken relationships with Israel with whom for years it was friendly. Turkey since Attaturk has sought to improve its democratic credentials and enter Europe as a full-blown member state but it would appear that Europe which has long demurred is somewhat cool towards Turkish participation and the incorporation of the concept of the worldwide Caliphate as supported by prime-minister Erdogan within the agenda of European nations used to Christian traditions is a matter leading to great unease. There remains a liberal tradition in Turkey which I have sampled and especially around ancient Smyrna people are turning to Christ with growing confidence.

(11) BRITAIN During the third war of the world in Ezekiel 38.13 (Hebrew) scripture reads “The merchant travellers of Tarshish” (a nation or nations of “large trading ships”) and all her “young ravens” [rpk as opposed to “whelps” rmg] (Wigram, Brown Driver & Briggs, Armstrong Busby & Carr) say to the Russian led confederacy that attacks Israel and Egypt “Have you come to draw off spoil?” This is on several counts a direct reference to Great Britain and her continuing role into the final Heptad of the present era.

The British nation was known in Rome by the time of Paul for her King and his family were accorded a palace by the Senate after the fall of the Britannic islands. The NT reference to Linus and Claudia would seem to confirm that the apostle was aware of the coming of this family to Rome.

The reference in Matthew 21.43 to “a nation that brings forth fruit” of righteousness is generally taken to be the nation of “Christianity” but just as it may have relevance for many peoples under the Christian auspice equally it may have similar significance for peoples under the Empire-Commonwealth of Britain. Britain does stand within the general “fruit-bearing” peoples of the society to which our Lord referred through her lead role in the modern spread of Christianity. Britain has been notably outward looking since the third century and the English Reformation moved ahead the concept of a church guided by the bible. Besides this the English Bible and its good news spread over the Empire and the modern missionary movement began in Britain. The early Christians were called “a tribe” and Peter calls the society of believers (1 Peter 2.9) a “holy nation” through which reference we are spared from thinking of any nation in and of itself alone as fulfilling this, Christ’s calling.

Britain politically now stands committed to the Treaty of Rome under Article 240 of that treaty which makes no provision for withdrawal. In our nation's second attempt to join in 1967 Britain stated "We are aiming at something far more than material prosperity. We see this leading to greater political purpose for Western Europe. And if that purpose is to be realised, Britain must share it. During the earlier 1961-63 negotiations Mr Harold MacMillan the then PM said "political unity is the central aim of these European countries and we would naturally accept that ultimate goal...and a the pooling of sovereignty by all concerned" Notably on May 16 1960 a Parliamentary White Paper stated that H.M Government was prepared to surrender its full sovereignty to a world government to be formed. That very day both U.S.A and Italy made similar declarations!

Britain will also be represented amongst the shipping "merchants" plying the Mediterranean in the days when the last great Euro empire collapses (Apocalypse 18.1 ff) but the better news to this day is that from multiple churches on British soil the gospel allied to practical help goes out to all the world.

Great Britain has just celebrated the diamond Jubilee of our esteemed monarch, Queen Elizabeth the Second, daughter of George VI and Elizabeth Boaz Lion and beloved wife of Philip Mountbatten. Whilst British prospects lie alongside those of Europe the Church in these islands has joyous prospect as it awaits the coming of our Lord. Our wise queen in her 2011 Christmas day message said "God sent into the world a unique person-neither a philosopher nor a general, important though they are, but a Saviour, with the power to forgive. Forgiveness lies at the heart of the Christian faith. It can heal broken families, it can restore friendships and it can reconcile divided communities. It is in forgiveness that we feel the power of God's love." This truly Christian monarch concluded "It is my prayer that on this Christmas day we might all find room in our lives for the message of the angels and for the love of God through Christ our Lord."

(12) AMERICA Many American prophetic teachers believe a mega tragedy will conclude the role of their country on the earth. The "twin towers" attack may well have served to confirm this thinking. Despite this negativity essentially based on the fact that little is explicitly stated in scripture about the United States I believe America continues to play a key role in the end times.

There are three instances in the unveiling of the judgments of the last Heptad in the Apocalypse that crave the name of America and in view although she clearly yields her authority for practical and economic purposes ultimately to the beast she retains control of her great military power and protective role over Israel even after the fall of cities and into what scripture calls the final 1260 days before the Lord's advent. (Apocalypse 12.6)

(1) Surveillance. Though it is passing difficult to cast into clear relief the international order that will prevail after the Parousia it would appear from the three characteristics of the "beast" that rises in the Mediterranean basin - namely it was like a female hunting panther or leopard, it had the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion. The New Schofield looks back to Greece Persia and Babylon in explanation of these marks. I rather think they answer to much nearer contributions namely, the surveillance co-operation of the United States as it stalks world developments panther-like with the addition of the lower eastern states of the former Soviet Union already incorporated and speaking like Babylon the military and political lingua franca or world language of its day - English. The writ of the "beast" as it is described as holding

power over all peoples expressly in matters of business must be conceived to run as widely as the United States.

(2) Enlightenment. It is unwise to make the assumption that when the Church is raptured truth is gone. Scripture attests that thousands of Jews in the last days receive and broadcast the gospel.(Apocalypse 14.1-5) Taking the a priori position that America continues to be a shield to world Jewry when the serpent seeks to extinguish the vestige of truth they enshrine (Apocalypse 12.15) it would be entirely impossible that a considerable percentage of these witnesses were not found in the continuing United States of America. The close association within the story of the Heptad of the witnesses (Apocalypse 7.1-8 with Apocalypse 14.1-5) and the “(angel) **messenger** flying in mid-air” with the everlasting gospel and the two associated angel messengers proclaiming the “Fall of Great Babylon” and warning against the “mark of the beast and eternal judgment and the coming of the Lamb and His angels”. This proclamation and witness appears to straddle the time of the seals and trumpets and bowls. It’s mid air character and world coverage virtually equates to a satellite presentation of the good news and warnings of God and the nation best equipped to afford this ministry in association with the messengers of God would be America. Thus through great tribulation God does not leave Himself without a witness-indeed two ancient prophetic figures combine with this proclamation in Israel itself over part of this short era(Apocalypse 11.1-14). Scripture is precise about the rise of the beast telling us three times that it rises from the Abyss Apocalypse 11.7 and Apocalypsec9.11 with Apocalypse 17.8.

(3) Shielding. We come now to the most obvious reference to America in scripture. In two distinct places we read of a divine providence that shields the Jewish people. First in Apocalypse 12.6 we read of Israel as “the woman that fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1260days”. This is not a traditional account of Jewish residency in congenial society. This is an escape at the last by which means the remnant of the nation is preserved by a sympathetic power in the end times under the general care of the angel Michael to whose faithful care in the end times the Lord has committed Israel (Daniel12.1).

A more precise description of this exodus from the active sovereignty of the beast is given in Apocalypse 12.13-17 where we read “When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child (Christ). The woman was given *the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared* for her in the wilderness, where she would be cared for during a time times and half a time out of the serpent’s reach. Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman an sweep her away with the torrent. But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon spewed out. Then the dragon raged and set off to stir war against the rest of her offspring who keep God’s commands and hold firm their testimony of Jesus.” (a reference to the Messianic 144,000). The American church remains strong and remains the largest agency of worldwide mission for Christ. Its gospel by satellite goes out in the most widely spoken languages and covers the majority of the world’s people.



(4) MILITARY INVOLVEMENT

There is no reason to believe that America is militarily paralysed or totally knocked out by the events of the latter day wars. Under the fifth angel's war trumpet of Apocalypse 9.1-11 the first Woe occurs. The "star" that had fallen (Satan whom the Lord so described) held the key to the "shaft of the depths" or the oil wells of the world. The oil wealth of the world is heavily used to produce armaments for land sea and air deployment. In this instance John the divine is describing aeroplanes in biblical language-down to the camouflage netting that covers them. The locust like ruin that results from war brings nations to their knees. The first woe features a strategic use of air power. During five months of action the thundering planes of the first woe delivered a sting to nations that had not the seal of God. They took offensive action and delivered devastation but avoided bloodshed and civilian targets. This action appears to be simultaneous with a significant change in the Euphrates peace-keeping operation (Apocalypse 9.14) and it would appear wholly possible that American engagement in the aerial action. The second woe takes us beyond containment to the "bitter" stage of latter day warfare. The mysterious "seven thunder peals" ring out; the mystery prophets forecast is imminent. There are four references to Ezekiel who records the detail of the third world war and three to Daniel who records the victory of the returning Christ. The airlift of Israelis to which I have referred is a second military operation of notable proportions but the third and most vital circumstance is the playing out of the Armageddon when *a third of mankind* were killed (Apocalypse 9.18) by the sophisticated tanks and rockets described in Apocalypse 9.17-19. Now even with the commitment of 200,000,000 oriental troops and multi-millions of opposing forces there is no way one third of mankind might die unless a mighty military power was effectively countering the Chinese assault. It seems clear that only all out Russian Chinese Iranian and *American* military engagement could account for the death of so many souls. Together with this the fall of the cities of the world (including those in Europe, Russia, China and America) would further immensely increase the death toll of war. Besides this the collapse of mountains and the submergence of islands would add to the immense loss of life. In the light of the above implications of apocalyptic material it is inescapable that a nation unknown to the prophets is fully implicated in the events of their narrative and her insignia and forces are well described by John the Divine under the guidance of the angel who had presumably lived as long as man was upon earth.

(13) EUROPE. However is already a very cosmopolitan union with a substantial Moslem minority established over two generations in the cities of modern Europe. The attendant issue always is integration. Eastern Europeans integrate well. Chinese despite building Chinatowns generally adopt a western lifestyle. Indian and Pakistani communities retain their distinctives but integrate well in politics. The long resident West Indians and many newcomers from

North and West Africa also settle easily and adapt well. There remains a rump from nations of the commonwealth and elsewhere that have no inspiration to live by the trusty idiom “When in Rome do as the Romans do”. Learning the lingua franca and suiting dress codes to climate and adapting them for safety and political involvement with established forms of representation do not affect issues of the heart or religion vitally but they aid integration immensely. Where failure to integrate grows Europe is bound to become more and more a continent of iron and clay. Arguably this issue will become more pertinent with the adherence of Turkey within the constitution. It is the more vital that the Attaturk leaning toward westernisation is not swallowed by a commandeered Taliban style dress code for women accompanying militancy and a ghetto mentality that would render integration a thing impossible. Europe has a massive educational and sociological challenge at its doorstep as it seeks to integrate sizeable immigration quotas.

Europe is also juggling a long running sovereign debt crisis with other issues. Scripture says that in the last days there will be “distress of nations with lack of revenue to resolve debt (*απορία*) [Luke 21.25]. That the debt issue has already touched Ireland, Greece, Spain, Portugal and is stalking Italy gives grave cause for continued alarm. Europe finds its long sought leader in a 10 horns multi-national power bloc propped up (by the Dragon which may entail China) but with the hideous consequence for its religion runs to all out blasphemy and its face is set against Israel. In its last form Europe is a composite power bloc (“beast” Apocalypse 11.7, 13.1, 16.10, 17.7 & 12 & 16, 19.9 & 20 where we observe that the Beast has a tyrannical leadership) sustained by the dragon empire with a lamb like façade and in those days the “mark of the beast” governs every act of trade. Twelve angels and the gospel (satellite?) messenger of the mid-air evangelise and chastise mankind in this last short time of wrath until Europa after its 2700 year existence under eight types of government and its seat in Rome finally falls despised by the nations. (Apocalypse 13-17).

(14) ISRAEL. Israel registers larger mention in scripture than any other nation for obvious reasons. Israel is the apple of God’s eye and is dear to God for the Patriarch’s sake. Israel’s capital as enlarged under Messiah is to be the centre of world glory.

In these days Israel features so prominently in the news columns of our daily newspapers that it becomes patently evident she is at the heart of modern political developments and on account of eschatological considerations she is the focus of prophecy and will continue to be at the eye of the storm as world events move towards the great divine event of the return of Christ.

As Alex Jacob states in his book “Enlarged Theology” “God’s covenant with the Jewish people is eternal and not static. The Gentiles are fully within the covenant which was reshaped but not replaced by Christ. The covenant is to be embraced by Jews and Gentiles by faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The ongoing progress of God is outworked through the story of Jews Meshiachim and Christians and the Tri-unitarian model of our understanding of God is the creative link between the three.”

To state the axiomatic biblical facts concerning Israel in the period of prophetic history introduced by her coming of age in 1948 we should observe:-

- (1) That God has set Israel under the charge of Michael the arch-angel (Daniel 12.1)
- (2) That the Lord has promised to send Elijah before the dreadful day of the Lord (Mal 4.5)
- (3) That as Jeremiah prophesied (30.7) Israel will enter Part 2 of the Heptad in a time of Jacob’s trouble

- (4) The fig tree (Israel) would put forth branches and leaves before Messiah came (Mt24.32ff)
- (5) The abomination of desolation (It nauseates God and brings no hope) will stand in the temple area (Mark13.14)
- (6) After the Armageddon (3rd world conflict) those in the town of Israel will gout and use weapons for fuel (Ezek.39.9; God will be buried on the east of the Dead Sea(39.11); this the sovereign Lord says “I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have compassion on all my people Israel”(39.25ff)(Paul says “All Israel shall be saved”-Romans 25.26). gentile bible scholars demur, deny, debate and bring into disrepute the sovereignty of God with the prophetic and apostolic testimony in this matter.
- (7) The great city of Jerusalem will be split in 3 parts (Apocalypse 16.19)
- (8) The sceptre shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh comes nor a ruler from between his feet (Genesis49.10) Israel retains her own government until this hour.
- (9) The mountain of the Lord’s house shall rise above the hills
- (10) They shall beat their swords into ploughshares etc.
- (11) Nations will come to your Light; foreigners rebuild your walls; oppressors will bow before you; I will make you an everlasting pride; you will know that I, the Lord, am your Saviour, your Redeemer, the Mighty one of Jacob Isaiah 603ff.
- (12) I will rejoice in Jerusalem; never again will there be an infant that lives but a few days Isa. 65.20
- (13) They will look on me the one they pierced Zechariah 12.10.
- (14) Living water will flow east to the Dead Sea and west to the Mediterranean Zech.14.8 and the Lord will be king over all the earth.
- (15) Survivors of nations will go up year by year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles.

(11) CHRISTIAN AND ISRAELI MESSIANIC EXPECTATION

There is essentially strong correspondence between Christian and Jewish expectation concerning the coming of Messiah but there are also divergences of viewpoint largely on account of the sharpening and filling out of Old Testament prophecy by our Lord and the apostles.

Jewish expectations include:-

- (a) The return of Elijah
- (b) The glorious coming of Messiah
- (c) The building of the fourth temple
- (d) The establishment of a theocratic Messianic Kingdom

Christian expectations include:-

- (a) The Parousia of our Lord and gathering of his church
- (b) The bridal feast during the time of Jacob’s trouble (&) the world Tribulation
- (c) The ministry on earth of two witnesses during the Heptad (cf. (a) above)
- (d) The glorious return of Christ
- (e) The judgment of nations (Matthew 25 31-46)
- (f) The millennial reign of Christ (cf. b-d above)

A broad-brush understanding of Scripture does not need to dismiss any of the elements in these two sets of expectations and either party would do well to study and treat with respect the viewpoint of the other.

From the Jewish perspective the Christian assumption of a first Advent is not accepted. **Henry Orlinsky** Professor of Bible Hebrew Union College New York has to be representative of world Judaism on this matter. He urges

- (1) That there are *strikingly few* NT references to Isaiah 53 and $\pi\alpha\iota\varsigma \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$
- (2) He *admits* that Jeremias argues that Jesus recognised Himself as $\pi\alpha\iota\varsigma \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$
- (3) He criticises Jeremias for eisegesis-reading into the text.
- (4) He points out that the Hebrew of Isaiah 52.13 is לִקְוֵי not דָּבָר so not vicarious
- (5) He recognises Albright's take that Jesus is vicarious victor, prophet & full Messiah
- (6) He suggests that reflection on Job's second wind could have suggested to Isaiah Jesus' regeneration or "resurrection"
- (7) He distinguishes the "vicarious" and the "atoning". Christian NT scholars err to go beyond the "vicarious nation" concept of the text to "atonement for the world".
- (8) He gives it as his opinion that if it is understood there is a person who fulfils Isaiah 53 it is Deutero-Isaiah himself. He argues that not till Jesus died did the "suffering servant" in "the person of Jesus" eisegesis or erroneous interpretation enter.

I am in no way concerned to answer these points in any detail but take note of them as a series of opinions combined with a partial reading of Isaiah 52.13 which does refer to the דָּבָר and indeed speaks of several prophecies of Christ as "His appearance was disfigured beyond that of any human" and "his form marred beyond human likeness" which prophecies were fulfilled by crucifixion. Also the one and only Isaiah who never set himself up as a vicarious figure said that this "servant Messiah" would "startle (or) sprinkle many nations". Christ fulfils both as His redemption and cleansing has atoning value for all peoples and both by His resurrection and return he startles the world. My purpose in quoting Orlinsky is to be fair to the best of current orthodox Jewish interpretation which is easily rectified by revelation of the Holy Spirit and will be reversed to the considerable discomposure of Israelis at the coming of Messiah (cf. Zechariah 12 10-14)

My purpose now is to show that whereas there may be undigested truth in the Jewish biblical position on prophecy concerning the Messiah the eschatological message of Jewish biblical scholars leaving aside the rapture is not too different from that of Christian Messianic and the Pre-millennial school of Evangelical New Testament scholarship.

I am bound to say that there are four hurdles for NT scholars and these to a good extent involve our understanding of the book of Revelation.

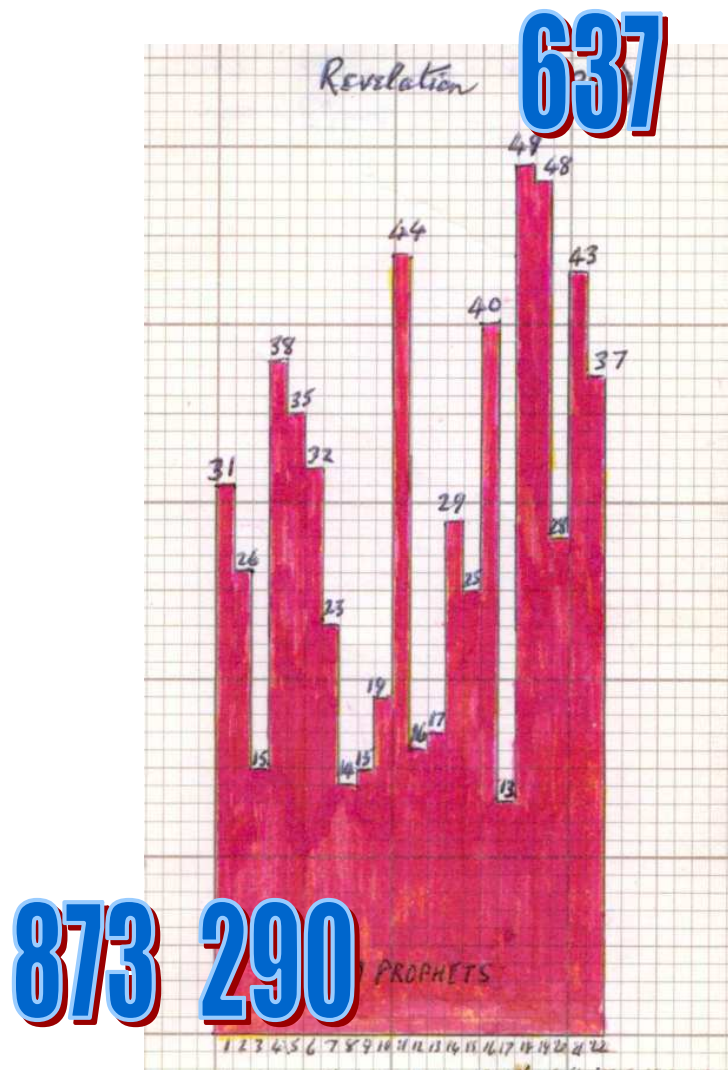
- (1) John Calvin was shy of commenting on the Apocalypse because he believed the events were a long distance ahead and proceeded on Augustine's church model which attracted to itself all the promises specific to Israel. Calvin faltered on his doctrine of the Sovereignty of God when he elided Israel with her biblical and prophetic expectation of the Golden age.
- (2) Christendom reckons on a "day of judgment" but de-selects "the judgment of the nations" at the opening of the Messianic era from God's agenda.
- (3) Evangelical preachers major on the first 4 chapters and the epilogue of the Apocalypse but flounder in the body of the book often trying to match its content to past events
- (4) The main body of Christian scholarship operates without awareness of the Legend of composition of the Apocalypse and of the Gospel of John. By setting out the books in their short term fast moving kaleidoscope of 8 sets of events each we arrive at an understanding that they represent "the brief ministry of Jesus"(in sowing and grace) and "the swift ministry of Christ"(in harvest and judgment). Cf. Apocalypse 1.1, 4.1, 7.1, 7.9, 9.12, 15.5, 18.1 & 19.1

(5) *The Apocalypse by my count contains 697 references to the OT of which 290 are from the prophets.* The so called symbolic caste of the book deflects from the reality the prophets forecast and John elucidated because it approaches the book as an art gallery rather than as an indexed library of future history confirmed by the prophets and presented by the angel to John.

NOTE ON THE HEPTAD

The criticism of *guilt by association* has been laid at the door of “Parousia” teaching. It is associated with J. N. Darby or the Schofield bible or even Edward Irving or the Montanists. Such superficiality sets aside the plain meaning of *Pauline instruction* on the kingdom realised and *specifics of Jesus teaching*, despises the learned fathers Justyn Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Ephraem the Syrian, Hippolytus *et alii*. Its most serious problems remains “What to do with Revelation 4-19”. Its scholars generally bungle the historical setting of this teasing section of the bible while unsuccessfully and often quite comically trying to pass it off as a pre-figurement of developments during the whole course of the Common Era since Christ. *The internal μετα ταυτα device John uses both in the Gospel and in the Apocalypse pins the seven part sequence of the gospel to a short period of just over 3 years of Christ’s Gracious ministry just as exactly the same device has the same conscious purpose in the Apocalypse of pinning the cyclone of the Lord’s judgments on the earth together as a series of events completing the Heptad or 70th week of Daniel. It is precisely because the a-millennial approach is as uneasy with the prophetic scriptures and in particular the Apocalypse as orthodox Judaism with Isaiah 53 that I have set my face steadfastly against this approach.* It is not acceptable to reduce the serious warnings of scripture to “mystery” and “symbol” and to fight shy of “reality” and “revelation” in the ultimate judgments by which this era like that of Noah gives way to the better hope of Christ’s kingdom. No amount of crying wolf about “date-setters” or playing fun at those who recognise strategic development in God’s economy of grace and judgment beyond the simple OT/NT divide of history can justify ignoring the Jerusalem based millennial golden era at the centre of which God has placed the salvation of the Jewish people.

It is all too easy to persecute and vilify the so called Millennarian heretics but far less easy to impede or divert God’s declared sovereign purposes. The godless “old world” fell under the judgment of the deluge; the Jewish state of Jesus era suffered the worldwide carrying away predicted since Moses and made emphatic in the teaching of Christ. The modern world careless of God’s grace will suffer the heptad judgments of Revelation 6-19 and in scale these bear comparison with those of Noah’s day. As God lives this is about to befall our race and to give men fair warning is now a vital issue. Modern preachers need the fire of Elijah and the message of Enoch and Noah recognising as is vital what Augustine once wisely remarked the “era or dispensation of which we are part.”



(12) GLOOM AND DOOM VERSUS JOY AND PEACE

I will first give you the gross bad news of the tribulation and then the glorious good news of the millennium.

The Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ will endure beyond the tribulation during which Gethsemane experience of humanity there will be witnesses galvanised by some mighty men returned from the heavenly city.(Apocalypse 11.3) Satan's last and sorest onslaught on the human race will diminish mankind. Our Lord spoke of his glorious return on two occasions with awesome words. The first context is that of latter day intercession for **ultimate earthly justice** when the adversary of God is rampant in which context the Lord said "When the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?"(Luke 18.8) The second context is **the tribulation** concerning which the Lord said "Except those days should be shortened **no flesh** should be saved!"

This seems to present a picture of wholesale gloom and give us to understand the coming doom of myriads of men and terror for nations that forget God and men who would not repent. I commend to you for wider reading my Study No.7 "The Last Things" or the Westgate eschatological trilogy "Rapture Tribulation and Millennium" (The Kingdom Realised).

To select three contexts within the Apocalypse (a) the Rapture will account for the evacuation of what is now reckoned to be one in 10 of all humanity who trust Christ-something

approaching a billion persons. Then under the six seals of Apocalypse 6 when war famine and plague and instant death strike the earth a huge death toll results commencing with the days of the “bowman”(likened to the ancient Persian power). This diminution of mankind may well account for approaching a quarter of the race (cf. 6.8 alone) leaving about 4.5 billion alive (c) Under trumpet 2 Revelation 8 6-12 one third of living creatures die. This accounts under present statistics for the loss of a further 1.5 billion lives leaving an earth population of 3 billion should the rapture occur in the not too distant future, that is within the first part of this century.

There is no way to precisely measure the grave loss of life ahead of mankind. In more sense than one it will be like the days of Noah. The circumstances are compounded by darkness and ***the fall of the cities of the nations with their teeming millions and turbulence of the seas which washes away “every island”***. Life on earth would have negotiated these awesome events remarkably if the resulting population were anything like half its current size. It is the intervention of the Lord in response to the heavenly call for the justice and righteousness of Christ’s glorious Messianic kingdom that “shortens the days” and brings this devilish dance of death to an end.

I have no joy in extrapolating the implications of scripture as to the final impact of the reign of sin and death but it has to be awesome. There is yet (d) a fourth issue to be faced by humanity in free moral and spiritual freefall and this is the wrath of the Lamb. The doom of rebellious man is incalculably awful and the callousness and inhumanity of this last age of man is characterised in Apocalypse 9.20-21. It is also brought to light by the Saviour’s “inasmuch” principle which comes into play especially in the tribulation period of wholesale persecution within the prevailing anti-Christian ethos. It cannot end without arraignment of nations before the face of the returning Lord and the division by parallel with “the Shepherd’s separation of sheep and goats” (Matthew 25.32) amongst all nations must result in the final critical loss of numbers by the judgment of those of humanity who followed the devil and his angels for “these shall go away to age-long punishment but the righteous to age-long life”. It appears to me that the whole of righteous humanity that remains is small indeed. The persecution of that future era would take a heavy toll. Truly when the Son of man cometh will He find faith upon the earth. We may have to understand that the new humanity of righteous ones begins not in billions or millions but in the hundreds of thousands at most.

Over against this gloom and doom let us sketch in the outline of the millennium from relevant scripture under our four guiding principia which remain valid while man lives on earth—namely the anointed intimacy with God enabled by the Holy Spirit, the glorious gospel of salvation through Christ’s atoning death, the health giving of God to man and to nations and the Kingdom of God first heralded as within and coming nigh and now in the millennium fully realised.

- (a) The Spirit broods over the waters
- (b) The Atoning Lamb has all the glory—they shall all know the Lord
- (c) The Healing of man and nations proceeds unabated
- (d) Glorious organisation in the kingdom prepared before the world’s foundation

Our Lord Jesus issues an invitation to the remaining righteous at the inception of His Messianic Kingdom to enter “an inheritance prepared for them from the laying down of the foundations of the world or cosmos.” (Matthew 25.34) The middle of the verb for “prepare” suggests that the whole nature of change on earth hastens toward this moment and the present entire tectonic plate arrangement in the earth’s crust vitally changes from the shaky slippage we see today to a new stability. Besides the hydrological system we so much concern ourselves about under the heading of global warming will revert to something parallel with that existing before Noah when men like Methuselah could live for virtually a thousand years.

As in previous eras death and sin will not be absent from the earth. In fact in the restructured and lovely world Isaiah testifies to both the existence of the curse and of death. “He who dies at a hundred will be considered accursed”. The Kingdom of Christ is not heaven but it will be heaven on earth and though man will be subject to the law of sin and death and the continuous exercise of the gospel in home and community yet sins effects will be greatly abated by the reign of righteousness and the new environment will weaken the power and progress of death. In the absence of Satanic deceptions the thoroughgoing and all pervading power of the gospel unhindered and unchallenged will mean that at the centre of this kingdom (Israel) “they shall all know the Lord from the greatest to the least” and more widely all nations shall live in felicity with peace with God as their mainstay for the Lord has determined “that ***the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea***” (Isaiah 11.9 & Habakkuk 2.14). This prophecy first made by Isaiah and made emphatic by Habakkuk a century later tells us that ***teaching on personal acquaintance with God will be full and deep*** and that ***regular spiritual tides and waves of spiritual truth will touch every shore and refresh every land***. Jeremiah also prophesied “This is my covenant with the house of Israel. After that time I will put my laws in their minds and write them in their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour or a man his brother saying “Know the Lord” because they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest” declares the Lord.

As to the health that shall characterise these later times we have to observe from prophecy that “The sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings”(Malachi 4.2). Water will flow from Jerusalem to revive the Dead Sea and a large section of it will become as prolific for fish as the Galilee. Fruit will grow in abundance and evergreen trees along the margins of the new river will produce abundant fruit and ***leaves which will be used for healing***. A quite intrepid friend of our own along with others is involved in a project which has placed research into the leaves of the Marengo tree with a Swedish university. Properties already shown are an immense milk yield in the leaves which can substantially improve nutrition of man and animals, antidote properties effective against arthritis and research is still at an early stage. In the healthful days of Christ’s kingdom it will be as if there are two heavens-one on earth and the other in the Glory where at the nerve centre of the universe Christ gathers His own. On earth martyrs/witnesses will reign with the Lord (Apocalypse 20.4) Saints will experience that for which many ages have prayed saying “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth”.

**Thy kingdom come O God
Thy rule O Christ begin
Break with Thine iron rod
The tyrannies of sin.**

**Where is thy reign of peace
And purity and love?
When shall all hatred cease,
As in the realms above?**

**When comes the promised time
That war shall be no more,
And lust oppression crime,
Shall flee thy face before.
(Lewis Hensley)**

ⲧo return to the nature of the Lord's invitation to those righteous ones at His coming is to notice that he says "Come you blessed ones of my Father inherit the kingdom". This statement alongside the final remark "The Righteous are *for age-long life*" (extending of course to the heavenly kingdom after this age) appears clearly to mean that from Zion or Jerusalem and its renewed temple and much larger restructured urban area(Ezekiel 45.5) the rod of His authority as David prophecies reaches out to the glorious renewed earth(Psalm 110.2). Jerusalem itself will be renamed "The Lord is there"(Ezekiel 48.35)

ⲧhis Kingdom shall be glorious. As the prophet says the "Mountain of the Lord will be established above the mountains" (Isaiah2.2 & Micah4.1).

**Behold the mountain of the Lord in latter days shall rise
On mountain tops above the hills and draw the wondering eyes.**

**To this the joyful nations round, all tribes and tongues shall flow;
Up to the hill of God, they'll say and to His house we'll go.**

**The beam that shines from Zion hill shall lighten every land;
The King who reigns in Salem's towers shall all the world command.**

**No strife shall rage, or hostile feuds disturb those peaceful years;
To ploughshares men shall beat their swords to pruning hooks their spears.**

**No longer hosts encountering hosts shall crowds of slain deplore;
They hang the trumpet in the hall, and study war no more.**

ⲧhe sovereign Adonai asserts that Zion's festivals will owe nothing to paganism or secularism but the annual Jewish festivals of Passover, Harvest or first fruits, Pentecost, Atonement and Tabernacles will be celebrated with Christo-centric significance (Ezekiel 45.17 & 46.9) The hospitality of the time will be promoted by a colossal harvesting of earth in her most productive fruit and grain crops ever known.(Ezekiel35 29-30) The newly populated central continental landmass will house, I believe, the entire population which will be keen to live near the place of His abode and be given regular access to the immense joy and unparalleled worship of those great days yet ahead of the righteous.

MILLENNIAL WORK

The scripture tells us that there will be a massive change after long centuries of war and the fearful Armageddon. Men will *beat their swords into ploughshares* (Isa2.4 and his contemporary Micah 4.3) and the academies of war will close. Thus work on iron and steel will continue and a huge development of the arable economy is clearly envisaged.

MILLENNIAL FAMILY LIFE

The millennium will doubtless be a total counter culture to our sex crazed society and that society will be gloriously familial and deeply spiritual as well. Its energies will be directed aright to the Glory of God and the integration of man and animal life will be felicitous.

“The” prophet Isaiah as Matthew calls him states “*The infant* shall play by the cobra’s den and *the young child* put his hand into the viper’s next. They will neither harm nor destroy in all my holy mountain (Kingdom).” Again we read “The wolf shall lie down with the lamb. The leopard will lie down with the goat. The calf and the lion and the yearling will lie down together and *a little child* will lead them.” The picture is of a felicitous union of what originally was nature red in tooth and claw but subdued before the Lord of the earth. Death by misadventure poisoning or being bitten and savaged will be no more. *Single children* are envisaged enjoying the creation around them.

Late in the millennium when those who draw away from the central intimacy with God grow sufficiently strong they will mount a challenge to settled happiness of the saints and march from their nefarious counter civilisation over the “broad earth” and surround *the camp of God’s people the city He* loves. This prophesied end to the thousand years is due to the release of Satan who now walks as it were a second time into the Garden of Eden unbowed and undeterred by the discipline of God from his desire to deceive. He levies a sinister evil choice of rebellion on mankind but this time the saints are taken to the New Jerusalem and the earth and heavens pass away whilst Satan who deceived mankind is cast into the lake of fire and all the dead(without Christ) are called to the judgment of the Great White Throne.

In the early heady days of the church established at Jerusalem preachers traced the origin and axioms of their message to the Old Testament prophets. God as Paul says subjected the creation to suffering in hope and as Peterson says “The created world itself can hardly wait for what’s coming next!”(*The Message* Romans 8 20) The fulcrum of preaching & prophecy is Jesus Christ. The climax is the Kingdom of God realised. Toward this the whole creation moves with markedly increased speed as end time prophecy unfolds.

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY MARANATHA

Bob Coffey
A Bible Companion