

# THE 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL

*Almost the whole Bible refers to the Tribes of Israel. Who are they and what is their importance in prophecy? Did God abandon them? The answers to these questions will have very great significance in the years just ahead.*

**The New International Version used throughout unless otherwise specified.**

## CHAPTER ONE

There is nothing whimsical about anything God has done since the dawn of this creation. Everything has been carefully planned and in complete accord with God's overall objectives. From the very outset, God foresaw the emergence of a great nation that He would predestinate to be **CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON**. Bear this in mind, because this is central to the doctrine that God ordained in the very Garden of Eden. It will be covered in great detail in this article.

After the flood a vast kingdom was established in Babylon in the land of Shinar. This kingdom spread to incorporate all the territory of the four rivers including the Euphrates. The territory also included the lands which would represent another kingdom at a later time, the kingdom of Assyria. This is what the Bible says: **Gen 10:8** *"Cush was the father of Nimrod, who grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; that is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD." The first centres of his kingdom were **BABYLON**, Erech, Akkad and Calneh, in **SHINAR**. From that land he went to **ASSYRIA**, where he built Ninevah, Rehoboth Ir, Calah and Resen, which is between Ninevah and Calah; that is the great city."* Here we find a description of the **LAND OF BABYLON** and its boundaries which extends from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea. This is the territory that is referred to many times in the Bible. At the time of Daniel, the independent nation of Assyria no longer existed. It had already been engulfed by Nebuchednezzar. This is the starting point for all of Daniel's prophecies.

It was from the land of Babylon that God called Abram (later Abraham), and God led him out of that land. It was God's purpose to establish a kingdom and a priesthood and to set the stage for all eternity. And He chose to do it through one man and his wife. This is what God says: **Isa 51:1** *"Listen to me, you who **PURSUE RIGHTEOUSNESS** and who **SEEK** the LORD; Look to the **ROCK** from which you were **CUT** and to the **QUARRY** from which you were **HEWN**; look to **ABRAHAM**, your **FATHER**, and to **SARAH, WHO GAVE YOU BIRTH**. When I **CALLED** him he was but **ONE**, and I blessed him and made him **MANY**." But why is Abraham called the **ROCK**? Surely the One who became the Christ is the **ROCK**, after all, isn't this what the scriptures indicate?*

Let's state at the outset that Christ is the **ROCK**. But let's now examine a description of this **ROCK**: **Dan 2:34** *"While you were watching, a **ROCK WAS CUT OUT**, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the **IRON**, the **CLAY**, the **BRONZE**, the **SILVER** and the **GOLD** were broken to pieces **AT THE SAME TIME** and became like chaff on the threshing-floor in the*

*summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the **ROCK** that struck the statue became a **HUGE MOUNTAIN AND FILLED THE WHOLE EARTH.**"* This **ROCK** is not a random boulder, but a specially prepared **ROCK** that is **CUT OUT** of a quarry - that is, out of a larger mass of rock. **JUST LIKE ABRAHAM!** It should come as no surprise that God established an earthly rock at the beginning of the **HOLY NATION** - the offspring of Abraham and Sarah.

Christ did exactly the same thing (**Matt 16:18**) and called *that* rock **PETER**, or in the Aramaic, **CEPHAS**. Both names mean rock. The important thing to remember is that God traditionally sets a **HUMAN ROCK** as His earthly representative. This was true of Abraham, and it was also true of David who wore the very crown that Christ will inherit. But the ultimate Rock was Christ who was God's representative on earth. And of course, Peter was given the power to loosen things on earth or to make them binding (**Matt 16:18**). Some silly Christians today believe that God gave this power to Paul (which He **DIDN'T!**) in order to do away with all of God's instructions for mankind. As long as the rock Peter was alive, Paul remained low on the pecking order of determining God's will here on earth. (See the article on the **BOOK OF GALATIANS**).

Let's take a moment here to digress. This statue represents four kingdoms that will **EXIST TOGETHER** and will be destroyed **TOGETHER** by the **ROCK**. The **HEAD OF GOLD** will be ruling over them all when they are all struck together, and **AT THE SAME TIME**, and the **WIND** blows them away without trace. This is the **KINGDOM OF BABYLON** whom the arch-rebel of the universe will rule over - **AGAIN!** He began as a serpent in this land, formerly the Garden of Eden, and his rule will come to an end in the land of his birth - as a dragon!

This **ROCK** that was cut out of a larger mass, and who was just like Abraham, and was born from the generations of Abraham, will destroy the subjects, the land, the cities, and the power of the **EMPIRE OF BABYLON**. This is the very territory where disobedience and rebellion first started. But what are the Scriptures **REALLY** telling us?

Most Christians argue strenuously that Jesus Christ is the **ROCK** - which He is! They recognize that He is the **WORD** of God (**John 1:1**) - which He is! They acknowledge that He appeared on earth as a humble carpenter, a man, who fulfilled many of the prophecies relating to Him. In fact, He fulfilled all the prophecies that relate to His appearance as a **MAN**. They should also understand there are many prophecies that Christ didn't fulfil, which relate to a later time. One scripture that Christ Himself said He had fulfilled (**Luke 4:21**) is found in **Isa 61:1-2**. (Be sure to read what Christ **DIDN'T** quote here!) When Christ quoted this, He actually stopped in the middle of a sentence and sat down. Since all scripture and all prophecies must be fulfilled (**Matt 5:17-18**), there remains yet a period of history when all will be fulfilled exactly as God said.

There was wide expectation of a Messiah figure at the time that Christ appeared. Even the Jewish people were expecting a man. Peter spoke of the expectations of the former prophets: **1Pet 1:10** "*Concerning this salvation, the **PROPHETS**, who spoke of this grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the **SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN THEM** was pointing when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.*" In fact, the Jewish people today are still expecting a man who would fulfil the stated role of a Messiah. There is an expectation of a man like David who will establish a human kingdom, who will fight to re-establish the nations of Israel as the dominant kingdom on earth, and who will destroy the enemies of God. Most Jewish people will quickly identify the enemies of God as the Islamic scum who surround the Holy Land and are dedicated to its destruction.

The Jewish expectation of a Davidic Ruler is not without Bible support. In fact, David is to be raised from the dead and set as a king over all the tribes of Israel. But equally, the Bible is very clear on when this resurrection will occur. David did the 'hard yards' as a man (as king over all the 12 tribes of Israel) and established the Kingdom in service to God. The son of David, that is, Solomon, enjoyed relative peace throughout his reign. But even while David still reigned, God told him that ten tribes would be given to a servant of his son Solomon. This was fulfilled in the days of Solomon's son Rehoboam, when the Ephraimite Jeroboam rebelled against the Judean kingdom, and established the northern kingdom of ten tribes.

In 721BC, these ten tribes were conquered and removed from the land as slaves. The nation that conquered them was Assyria. The Assyrians ruled over all the **LAND OF BABYLON**, the very territory that is spoken of again and again in the Bible.

The Assyrians today are the Kurds. They occupy the northern provinces of the land of Babylon, and are scattered from Turkey to Afghanistan in numerous provincial enclaves of Kurdish people. What is more, they know they are the descendants of the Assyrians.

For evidence of this, see the website: <http://www.aina.org/aol/>

At this website they describe a certain town of 10,000 people who all live as Assyrians and retain the culture of this ancient nation. These are the Kurdish people who are ignored by most the world and hated by the

Iraqis - and the ruler of Iraq in particular. Most of them are fiercely Islamic, even though for centuries they have observed a form of Christianity, and they too have a typical hatred for the little nation of Israel. The Kurdish Assyrians will play an active role in the coming Empire of Babylon. Anciently, these people were known as Medes. The Bible consistently links them with the Persians (Iranians). And these people, like the Persians, and in contrast to the rest of Islam, are Shia Moslems.

And just so there is no mistaking which 'Babylon' this is speaking of, the prophet Micah detailed a series of prophecies for the **LAST DAYS** (see **Mic 4:1**). Here he speaks of a Ruler who would emerge from Bethlehem, and who is described as coming from the '**DAYS OF ETERNITY**' (**Mic 5:2 - see margin**). In the next verse, we find another prophecy: **V3** "*Therefore Israel will be abandoned UNTIL the time when SHE WHO IS IN LABOUR GIVES BIRTH and the rest of HIS brothers return to join the Israelites.*" The **ONE WHO GIVES BIRTH** is the one who wore the **CROWN OF 12 STARS** (**Rev 12:1-2**). And now we come to the verses about the Assyrians: **V5** "*When the Assyrian invades our land and marches through our fortresses, we will raise against him SEVEN SHEPHERDS, even EIGHT LEADERS OF MEN. They will rule the LAND OF ASSYRIA with the sword, the LAND OF NIMROD with drawn sword. He will deliver us from the Assyrians when he invades our land and marches into our borders.*" The Kurdish people (anciently the Assyrians) will align themselves with the Persians (the Iranians today) against their foe - the ruler of Iraq who has dedicated himself to killing them all (and has already killed tens of thousands of them!). The ruler of all the territory of Babylon is also called the **KING OF ASSYRIA** in matters of prophecy (**Ezra 6:22**).

Some of you may be wondering about the seven shepherds, the eight leaders of men. There is no doubt that your spiritual mentors will invent or fabricate an answer for you that slots in nicely with their doctrine. But let's just stick to what the Bible says! Here it is in the next verse: **V7** "*The REMNANT OF JACOB will be in the midst of many peoples like DEW from the LORD, like showers on the grass, which do NOT WAIT FOR MAN or LINGER FOR MANKIND. The REMNANT OF JACOB will be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, like a LION among the BEASTS OF THE FOREST, like a YOUNG LION among flocks of sheep, which mauls and mangles as it goes, and no-one can rescue. Your hand will be lifted up in triumph over your enemies, and ALL YOUR FOES WILL BE DESTROYED.*" Be sure you understand that it's the **REMNANT OF JACOB** that will be like a **LION** among their foes and they will tear them apart and destroy them - so says Almighty God!

This **REMNANT OF JACOB** will be gathered to the Holy Land to a place prepared by God in the desert (**Rev 12:13-14**) and here they will become an invincible force. The rest of this woman's offspring will then be pursued by the Dragon (**V17**). In these verses, the one who gives birth is the one who wore the 12 crowns. The Churches of God have always taught that their Church is the woman - which borders on blasphemy! To imagine themselves to be the woman that gave birth to Christ is utterly preposterous. To even suggest it, shows the mentality of those who teach this. At least the Catholic Church made the claim of worshiping Mary who did give birth to Christ, and called her *blessed* in accordance with the prophecy (**Luke 1:48**). But Mary never wore the 12 crowns. The Churches of God ridiculed this idea, but still made the claim of being the woman that gave birth to Christ. They felt compelled to do this in order to create the illusion that they alone would lead the flock to a place of safety. In fact it became a central platform of their doctrine. It proved to be a real money-spinner, and what is more, it had the effect of tearing off the hooves of the flock disabling them from going anywhere else (**Zech 11:16**). It was in fact a master stroke of deception. This obsequious lie bound the flock to their organization. This lie is still being powerfully used by the leaders of the Churches. **AND THEY KNOW IT'S A LIE!**

Not quite the scenario you have always heard is it? Take for instance the interpretations of the Churches of God and their offshoots. They would have you believe that God intends to take them to a 'place of safety' to be layabouts for 3½ years, enjoying a right-royal nosh-up at God's expense, while He is out dealing with the 'Laodiceans'. Can you just imagine the 'evangelists' in these organizations parading themselves around, lording it over everyone, and putting their own super-righteous spin on even the most elementary of scriptures. Some of you who still fawn over these men are in for a very rude awakening. If you had the faith of a grain of mustard seed you would see them for what they are! Can you imagine these weak, lily-livered cowards ever standing up like a **LION** to protect God's flock? At the first sign of real trouble, and just as Herbert Armstrong did (**Zech 11:17**), they would run for their lives and hide. Is this the type of shepherd that God calls to protect His flock? Did Jesus Christ run away when the mob came to arrest Him, even though He knew they would kill Him? And we learn a little more about the greatness of Christ's mind when He said: **John 18:8** "*If you are looking for me, then let these men go.*" His concern was for those for whom He was about to lay down His life (**John 15:13**).

Just to inject a personal note here. Recently, one of these 'evangelists' wrote an article declaring 'new truth!' It concerned the word 'barbeque' which he announced, with some degree of sensationalism, was of pagan

origins. The intent was to warn against its use because of its (presumed) pagan overtones. This same man is not averse to using the pagan days of the week or the pagan months of the year, but in his supercilious and self-righteous delusion, he sought to project himself as the bringer of new truth. The man has been spiritually dead for years! Spiritually speaking he doesn't even have a pulse. Last week's pot-roast has more life than him. He still clings to the Garner Ted Armstrong delusion that identified words like 'lucky' and 'fortunate' as anathema to true Christians. These silly people would strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

It's a little different too from the **ROCK** which was **ABRAHAM!** When Abraham learned that five mighty kings had conquered the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and taken his nephew Lot captive, he set out with a force of 318 men (**Gen 14:14**), and like the 'Charge of the Light Brigade' he mounted a full-scale assault and defeated them. Abraham and his men cut down this mighty force leaving them mutilated and dying and continued to pursue the rest for many miles. Was God angry at Abraham for this? Quite the opposite! **GOD COMMENDED HIM, AND HONOURED HIM.** What is more, a special Being makes His first appearance and even brought out bread and wine for them, and blessed Abraham. He confirmed to Abraham that it was God who delivered the enemy into his hand (**Gen 14:20**). This Being, called here the **KING of SALEM**, was Melchizedek, the **PRIEST** of the Almighty God from the **DAWN OF ETERNITY.** And just so there is no mistake, this **KING and PRIEST** has been empowered to this office forever. And in the context of all that was written concerning Abraham and his battle, and the appearance of Melchizedek, notice what David wrote, but notice that David wrote this a thousand years later, and referred to a *future* time: **Ps 110:1** "*The **LORD** said to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for My feet." The **LORD** WILL EXTEND Your mighty sceptre from Zion; You will **RULE** in the midst of Your **ENEMIES.** Your **TROOPS** will be willing on the day of battle. Arrayed in holy majesty, from the **WOMB OF THE DAWN** You will receive the **DEW** of Your youth [or, 'Your young men will come to You like **DEW**']. The **LORD** has sworn and will not change His mind: "You are a **PRIEST FOR EVER**, in the **ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.**" The Lord (not the **LORD** - see **V1**) is at your right hand; He will crush kings on the day of His wrath. He will judge nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the **RULERS** of the **WHOLE EARTH**".*

Christ Himself confirmed what David said concerning two **LORDS** (**Mark 12:36**). The greater (LORD) and the lesser (Lord). Since the Jewish religious leaders of that time had chosen to expect a son of David as a mere man but with all the qualities of a general of armies, they would only accept Jesus if He conformed to their expectations. The Jewish people faithfully preserved the Scriptures - as they were required to (**Rom 3:2**) - **BUT THEY HAVE NEVER UNDERSTOOD THEM!** Christ said they erred, not knowing the Scriptures. But before anyone gets too swollen with pride, **NEITHER HAS CHRISTIANITY EVER UNDERSTOOD THEM!** Since the days of the Apostles Christianity has slumbered and slept. Nearly two thousand years of Gentile dominance of Christianity has generated an unrecognizable 'gospel'. During this period, nations and empires have arisen and brought destruction and mayhem on many people, but in this same period, the **BABYLON OF THE BIBLE** has been almost silent in the annals of historic events - until the latter part of the twentieth century! And now we see the emergence of a madman whose total objectives are world conquest and the destruction of the fledgling nation of Israel and Jerusalem, and the United States of America. But this man is merely a bit-player in the overall scheme of Bible prophecy. He's a no-account nobody in comparison with the one who will arise. Saddam Hussein will pale in comparison to the **BEAST** (also called the King of the North) who will soon enter the world stage.

It is significant that the King and Priest Melchizedek first appeared to Abraham when, as a general of a fledgling army, Abraham led his 318 men into battle against the **KING OF BABYLON** (Shinar - **Gen 14:1**) and the other kings of the region. And it was these 318 men who spearheaded the attack with Abraham at their head, even though Abraham was allied with three other families; that of Aner, Eshcol and Mamre. But even more significantly, Paul (and Barnabas the Levite, who co-wrote the Book of Hebrews) confirmed that Melchizedek was the lesser Lord, the One who appeared as the Christ or Messenger of the Covenant. This Messenger is the second one described in **Mal 3:1**, and is also called the Desire of Ages. Now in fulfilment of the prophecy, Christ did appear at His Temple - when He was just 12 years old. He astounded the priesthood with His vast knowledge of Scripture. But it's clear that the Scriptures were speaking of another day when Christ would appear at His Temple. In the very next verse the Bible says this: **V2** "*But who can **ENDURE** the **DAY OF HIS COMING?** Who can **STAND** when **HE APPEARS?**" Clearly, we find this Day is completely different to His first appearance, and this Day is further described in **Mal 4:5** "*See, I will send you the prophet **Elijah** before **THAT** Great and Dreadful Day of the **LORD** comes.*" It's not difficult to see how the Jewish people at Christ's first appearance failed to recognize Him. Their perceptions and expectations were magnitudes greater than the appearance of a mere carpenter from Galilee. They were aware of the many Scriptures that spoke of this Messenger. They also held John the Baptist to be a prophet, and they listened intently to what he said. And John said all the right things.*

Significantly, John the Baptist began to preach from **Isa 40:3** "a voice of one calling: "In the **DESERT** prepare the way for the lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our god. **EVERY VALLEY SHALL BE RAISED UP, EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL MADE LOW; THE ROUGH GROUND SHALL BECOME LEVEL, THE RUGGED PLACES A PLAIN.** And the glory of the lord will be revealed, and **ALL MANKIND TOGETHER WILL SEE IT.** For the mouth of the lord has spoken it." And again, we see a minor fulfilment of this at the death of Christ when geological phenomena occurred and also a minor resurrection of the dead: **Matt 27:51** "At that moment the curtain of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. **THE EARTH SHOOK AND THE ROCKS SPLIT.** The tombs broke open and the bodies of **MANY HOLY PEOPLE** who had died **WERE RAISED TO LIFE.** They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the Holy City and appeared to many people." This was a minor fulfilment of these words, and total fulfilment did not occur at that time. When the words of Isaiah (and John the Baptist) are fulfilled **ALL MANKIND TOGETHER WILL SEE IT.**

And neither did the Jewish people at the time of Christ fail to see the significance of this description of the re-sculpturing of the earth. They were aware of **Zech 14** which says the Mount of Olives will split in two, and all territory to the north and south will become a **VAST PLAIN (V4)** and Jerusalem would be raised above the nations and remain in its place (**V10**), and even more significantly, the **RIVER OF LIFE** will flow from Jerusalem at that time (**V8**). And let's be very clear on this: the Mount of Olives has not split in two, and the **RIVER OF LIFE** is not yet flowing from Jerusalem. The **RIVER OF LIFE** flows **AFTER** God's Temple is built (**Eze 47:1, Joel 3:18, Rev 22:1, Ps 46:4**).

We shouldn't judge the Jewish people too harshly for failing to recognize the Messiah at His first appearance. In many respects, they were more righteous than most of Christianity today. They believed God and His Word - they just **DIDN'T UNDERSTAND IT.** To them, the Messiah had to fulfill all that was spoken of Him. But they missed one important point! They **KNEW** that the **SIX DAYS** were allotted to Satan, and they knew also, that the first **SIX DAYS** had not passed, but only **FOUR** of them. The Jewish people have long had millennial aspirations for the **SEVENTH DAY.** Perhaps they realized that Christ appeared at the end of the **FOURTH** day, in the middle of the week of seven thousand years. Perhaps they also linked this to the **FOURTH** commandment as a perpetual reminder of the meaning of the **WEEKLY SABBATH.**

One thing is certain, the prophets searched long and hard to determine the exact time of Christ's arrival: **1Pet 1:10** "Concerning this salvation, the **PROPHETS,** who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, **SEARCHED INTENTLY AND WITH GREATEST CARE,** trying to find out the **TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCES** to which the **SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN THEM** was pointing when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. **IT WAS REVEALED TO THEM** that they were not serving themselves but you, when **THEY SPOKE OF THE THINGS THAT HAVE NOW BEEN TOLD YOU** by those who have preached the Gospel to you by the **HOLY SPIRIT SENT FROM HEAVEN.** Even angels long to look into these things." These were prophets who preceded Christ and who predicted the exact time and circumstances of His appearance and they revealed it. And what they revealed was later told to all those who believed Christ was the Messiah. When Herod learnt that a prophesied King was about to arise he had all the male children under two years old killed. He absolutely believed the prophets who spoke to him of these things. Herod was familiar with these prophets from the east (that is east of Jerusalem). As a small boy playing in the streets, a man approached him and told him he would be king (**Josephus, Antiquities 15.10.5**). Herod recognised the Essenes as true prophets. The name 'Essene' is derived from the breastplate worn by Aaron which had the 12 stones representing the 12 Tribes of Israel, and which also incorporated the Urim and Thummin.

Notice also, that these prophets who predicted the time of Christ's arrival also had the **SPIRIT OF CHRIST!** This is not quite what Christianity believes today, is it? Most of them believe and teach that only by them laying hands on another can they impart the **HOLY SPIRIT SENT FROM HEAVEN.** It would be humorous if it wasn't so tragic that these lying frauds imagine themselves to be the distributors of God's Holy Spirit. If you stick around for awhile you'll see many things that will shock and amaze you. One man couldn't believe this writer unless it was proved to him that an anointing had taken place by a 'qualified' minister. I wonder which minister he had in mind?

You may recall that during Christ's ministry that lasted 3½ years the Twelve saw many miracles, wonders and signs. Additionally, they saw Christ walk on water, curse a fig tree and see it die in one day. Later on the shores of Galilee they saw the miracle of a huge haul of fish. Yet during Christ's ministry they were constantly besieged with haunting questions about the meaning of all that Christ spoke. They rarely understood the meaning at all, except when Christ specifically explained it to them - privately! Does anyone imagine that the thousands that listened to Him understood? They didn't! Christ spoke in parables so they wouldn't understand: **Luke 8:10** "He said, "The **KNOWLEDGE** of the **SECRETS** of the **KINGDOM OF GOD** has been

given to you, but to others I speak in **PARABLES**, so that, *'though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.'*" Even after 3½ years, and immediately after Christ's death, the Twelve still did **NOT** understand the **KNOWLEDGE OF THE SECRETS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD (Luke 24:21)**. But they did understand that the **KINGDOM OF GOD** is about **REDEEMING ISRAEL (same V21)**. They did not understand, however, that Israel was **NOT** to be redeemed at that time. Today, with the benefit of hindsight, we see that nearly 2,000 years have passed, and the Kingdom of God has not been established. Obviously, and at that time, Christ was speaking of the distant future. The Tribes of Israel were not redeemed at that time, and neither has God established them in the Holy Land in accordance with the requirements of the establishment of the Kingdom.

Christ was sent only to the 12 Tribes of Israel: **Matt 15:24** *"He answered, "I am sent **ONLY** to the **LOST SHEEP OF ISRAEL.**"* Christ, like the prophet Ezekiel, was sent to the Tribes of Israel, even though He never visited them. Instead He appeared to the southern tribes, Judah and Levi (Matthew was a Levite). But His message was predominantly to the 10 Tribes scattered around the earth in exile. So His message was to the lost tribes of Israel, but then **AS NOW**, the message was to be delivered by Judah and Levi. The myopic view of many who promote the cause of the Gentiles as being the bringers of light is just plain crazy.

Now the Jewish people at the time of Christ's first appearance had great expectations of favourable outcomes, particularly when John the Baptist began to preach from **Isa 40:3**. This is because verse 1 and 2 referred to them: **Isa 40:1** *"Comfort, comfort **MY PEOPLE**, says your God. Speak tenderly to **JERUSALEM**, and proclaim to her that **HER HARD SERVICE HAS BEEN COMPLETED**, that **HER SINS HAVE BEEN PAID FOR**, that she has received from the **LORD's hand double for all her sins.**"* (And just to inject a personal note here; many people have levelled criticism for this writer's assailing comments against the false shepherds in the Churches. And whereas they like to use disparaging comments against God's people Judah [the Jews], they take exception to any criticism of their own teachers. They too, err, not knowing the Scriptures. But God's instructions are to **"SPEAK TENDERLY TO JERUSALEM, and proclaim to her that her **HARD SERVICE has been completed, that her sins have been paid for.**"** We stand on the very threshold of this time. God's instructions are to **COMFORT** them and **SPEAK TENDERLY** to them. This writer obeys this command.)

Since John the Baptist began preaching from the very next verse (see also **Luke 3:4**), they expected to see a logical sequence to the rest of the chapter. They were expecting a mighty warrior like David, and for that matter, one who was also like Abraham.

Why then, did they get it so wrong?

In the first place, they ignored the message of the prophets who declared the time and circumstances of His first appearance. The circumstances they expected was that of a mighty warrior who would fight all the nations surrounding Jerusalem and they (the Jews) would fight with Him (**Zech 14:3, 14**). These Scriptures were very clear! What is more, **Isa 40** had much more to say on these things. Since **Zech 14:14** plainly says that Judah will fight with this Mighty Conqueror, and **Isa 40** describes the might of this army, to their minds, something was hopelessly wrong. And this is what it says in **Isa 40:29** *"He gives **STRENGTH** to the weary and **INCREASES THE POWER** of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall, **BUT THOSE WHO HOPE IN THE LORD WILL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH. They will soar on **WINGS LIKE EAGLES**; they will **RUN AND NOT GROW WEARY**, they will **WALK AND NOT BE FAINT.**"*** This is not 'spiritual' talk as most Christians today would have you believe. It means what it says! You should also remember that Elijah **OUTRAN** a galloping horse for 20 miles without growing weary, and actually arrived before the horse and rider (**1Kings 18:45**). He also **WALKED** for forty days on just a morsel of bread (**1Kings 19:8**).

Obviously, the Jewish leaders understood that what was spoken of them would be fulfilled at that time. They expected a renewal of their **STRENGTH** and **POWER**, that they would become an invincible force against their enemies. Under the banner of the Mighty Messiah they would lay waste all the enemies of God. **FOR THIS IS WHAT THE SCRIPTURE PLAINLY SAYS!** To their great regret, this didn't happen. The Man who seemed to fulfil all their expectations, and whom the prophet John the Baptist confirmed as the Christ, seemed to do many miracles, but fulfilled none of the prophecies that foreshadowed the glorious Kingdom they were expecting.

Increasingly though, He was doing many miracles. And they knew of another that was prophesied to come before the Great and Dreadful Day of the LORD who would also do this and **DECEIVE MANY PEOPLE**. This man was spoken of by Daniel, and this man was **NOT** to be believed. He would claim to be God and to sit in the Holy Place. This man they couldn't accept! Of all the people on the earth, only the southern tribes Judah and Levi loved the Holy City so much they would sacrifice their lives for it. Even in captivity Daniel made this plea to God: **Dan 9:18** *"Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the **CITY THAT BEARS YOUR NAME.** We do not make requests of you because we are*

*righteous, but because of your great mercy. O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because YOUR CITY and YOUR PEOPLE bear YOUR NAME."* See also **Isa 18:7**.

They believed they had two options. They saw this humble carpenter doing many miracles and wondrous signs, but they also knew that another man would arise who would do similar miracles **BEFORE** the Great and Terrible Day of the LORD. This man would do many lying signs and wonders and deceive people. He would be the adversary of God's truth. And this man would sit in the Temple of God and claim to be God. He would speak against the Most High God and bring destruction and death to many people. Since this man of sin was to appear first - the one whom Daniel called **THE BEAST**, the Jewish leaders rationalized that this humble carpenter from Galilee must be this Beast. This misjudgment occurred because of lack of understanding of the Scripture. And hence, they deceived themselves.

Some years after the death and resurrection of Christ, another man arose. He was a devout and righteous man. What he believed, he believed with a passion. He was a Pharisee and was taught by Gamaliel, one of the greatest of Jewish Scholars and grandson of Hillel. In his zeal, this man set out to destroy all the followers of the Man whom he assumed was **THE BEAST**. In his blindness, this man set about killing the disciples of Christ. Then on the road to Damascus, he was blinded by a great light and later his blindness was taken away. This was Paul, the man whom Christ would send to the Gentiles. It was not until his sight was restored that he was able to see clearly. And Christ foreshadowed this in His quote from Isaiah (**Matt 13:14**). He quoted from **Isa 6:9-11**. From this we learn some important principles. We cannot take a few verses in isolation and then make assumptions as to their meaning.

And here is what Christ quoted: **Isa 6:9-11** *"Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."* The prophet Isaiah **BELIEVED** God and asked **HOW LONG** this condition would continue. What is more, Christ confirmed that this condition continued in His day (**Matt 13:14**). **V11** *"Then I asked, "For HOW LONG, O LORD?" And He answered: "UNTIL THE CITIES LIE RUINED AND WITHOUT INHABITANT, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the LORD has SENT EVERYONE FAR AWAY and the LAND IS UTTERLY FORSAKEN."* Isaiah was then standing in the Kingdom established by David in the promised land. He clearly understood what God was saying and detailed many prophecies concerning this time. But God adds more: **V13** *"And though a tenth remains in the land, it will AGAIN be LAID WASTE. But as the terebinth and the oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the HOLY SEED will be a STUMP in the LAND."*

Isaiah also spoke of this **STUMP** which is the **HOLY SEED**: **Isa 11:1** *"A shoot WILL come up from the STUMP of JESSE, from his ROOTS a BRANCH will bear fruit."* Isaiah wrote this 200 years after David was dead and buried, yet he speaks of a time when this shoot **WILL** arise. And the Pharisee who once persecuted the **HOLY SEED**, and who later became the Apostle Paul, wrote this: **Rom 15:12** *"The ROOT OF JESSE will spring up, One who will arise to RULE OVER THE NATIONS; the Gentiles will hope in Him."* In the Book of Acts we find this: **Acts 13:22** *"After removing Saul, He made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found DAVID SON OF JESSE a man after My own heart; HE WILL DO EVERYTHING I WANT HIM TO DO.'" Like a good servant of Almighty God, David did **ALL** that God **REQUIRED** of him. God did not want him to build the Temple however, and this privilege was given to His son Solomon. Having achieved all that God required of him, David died. And as is the way of all flesh, his body **DECAYED** (**Acts 13:36**) and he is still in the sepulchre (**Acts 2:29**).*

But David spoke of another whose body would **NOT DECAY**. **Ps 16:9** *"Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; because You will not abandon me to the grave, nor let YOUR HOLY ONE see DECAY."* The **HOLY ONE** spoken of here was not left to decay in the grave, instead He was raised from the dead after just 3 days and 3 nights. What is more, this was a sign given by Christ as absolute proof that He was the Messiah (**Matt 12:40**). David knew that this lesser Lord, the Son of Almighty God would arise at a later time and would experience death, but His body would not see decay. And this was a central feature of Christ's prophecy in **Matt 12:40**. This was the last straw for the Jewish leaders of Christ's day. They endeavoured to bribe the guards to say that His body had been stolen. The evil seed of Satan would have dragged the body through the streets after three days and nights to prove that it had decayed and that He therefore was not the Messiah. They will certainly do this to the endtime servants of God (**Rev 11:8-9**). These two men will come in the **POWER OF ALMIGHTY GOD (V3)** with the unfettered power to do as they please - but with a difference! What they please to do is what pleases God. No power on earth could dissuade them from obedience to their Creator! And like their Creator they must suffer death at the hands of the Adversary. But neither will their bodies see decay. Both are of the House of David, and one is of the Seed of David - a direct

descendant. And they will be like the Rock Christ, and like the other rocks, Abraham and Peter; they will be steadfast and immovable in the face of all opposition. Not by choice alone, but by the **POWER OF GOD!**

The prophet Isaiah recorded a great deal about this time in which we live. Those who are wise will understand many things from **Isa 32** and **Isa 33**. Notice some of the verses: **Isa 32:1** "See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice. Each man will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like **STREAMS OF WATER** in the desert and the **SHADOW OF A GREAT ROCK** in a thirsty land. Then the eyes of those who see will **NO LONGER BE CLOSED**, and the ears of those who hear **WILL LISTEN**." (Remember Isaiah's words in **Isa 6:11** "For how long, O Lord?") **V8** "But the **NOBLE MAN** makes **NOBLE PLANS**, and by **NOBLE DEEDS HE STANDS**." **Isa 33:5** "The **LORD** is exalted, for He dwells on high; He will fill **ZION** with justice and righteousness. He will be a sure foundation for your times, **A RICH STORE OF SALVATION** and **WISDOM** and **KNOWLEDGE**; the **FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE KEY TO THIS TREASURE**." **V15** "He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes from contemplating evil - this is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose **REFUGE** will be the **MOUNTAIN FORTRESS**. His **BREAD WILL BE SUPPLIED**, and **WATER WILL NOT FAIL HIM**." **V20** "Look upon **ZION, THE CITY OF OUR FESTIVALS**; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a peaceful abode, a tent that will not be moved; its stakes will never be pulled up, nor any of its ropes broken. There the **LORD** will be our **Mighty One**. It will be a place of **BROAD RIVERS** and **STREAMS**." **V22** "For the **LORD** is our judge, the **LORD** is our **LAWGIVER**, the **LORD** is our King; it is He who will save us." **V24** "No-one living in Zion will say, "I am ill": **FOR THE SINS OF THOSE WHO DWELL THERE WILL BE FORGIVEN**."

The very nature of God's Great Plan which initially spans 6,000 years requires a tumultuous climax. Most Christians limit their understanding to the Great Tribulation as a sort of localized event that needs to be avoided. Most feel secure in their belief that they and their church group will be able to avoid it. Many believe they will sit it out in a 'place of safety' and swan their way into the Kingdom of God afterwards. But their view of God's Great Plan is completely different from God's.

Many years after David died, Isaiah recorded this: **Isa 16:5** "In love a **THRONE** will be established; in faithfulness a **MAN** will sit on it - one from the **HOUSE OF DAVID** - one who in **JUDGING** seeks **JUSTICE** and **SPEEDS THE CAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**." When Isaiah recorded this, David had already died (200 years before). In the days of his grandson Rehoboam, the **HOUSE OF DAVID** was reduced to just two tribes: Judah and Levi (with some Benjamites). The house of Ephraim ruled over the other ten tribes. And the Bible further describes the **HOUSE OF DAVID** in the Book of Zechariah, and the prophet makes it very plain the true meaning of the **HOUSE OF DAVID**. **Zech 12:8** "On that day the **LORD** will **SHIELD** those who **LIVE IN JERUSALEM**, so that the feeblest among them will be **LIKE DAVID**, and the **HOUSE OF DAVID** will be **LIKE GOD**, like the Angel of the **LORD** going before them. On that day I will set out to **DESTROY ALL THE NATIONS THAT ATTACK JERUSALEM**. And I will pour out on the **HOUSE OF DAVID** and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a **SPIRIT OF GRACE AND SUPPLICATION**. They will look on Me, **THE ONE THEY HAVE PIERCED**, and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for Him as one grieves for a **FIRSTBORN SON**. On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great, like the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. The land will mourn, each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves: the clan of the **HOUSE OF DAVID** and their wives, the clan of the **HOUSE OF NATHAN** and their wives, the clan of the **HOUSE OF LEVI** and their wives, and all the rest of the clans and their wives."

These verses contain many lessons for all those who are seriously wanting to understand prophetic endtime events. You will notice that these verses have not yet been fulfilled. It's true that God has held out an olive branch to them since 1948, and has led them to successful battle on many occasions. The Jewish people have humiliated all the surrounding nations, and still these **DOGS** persist with their goal of conquest of the Jewish state. But all the conquests of the Jewish State of Israel count for nothing in comparison to the victories that will occur **AFTER** they mourn for the **ONE THEY HAVE PIERCED**. Then they will truly be **LIKE DAVID**, and the **HOUSE OF DAVID** will be **LIKE GOD!** Don't kid yourselves - **THIS HAS NOT YET HAPPENED!**

Unfortunately, this Jewish State of Israel will have plenty to mourn over - yet! God will soon remove His protection of this stubborn people and in the holocaust that awaits them they will **MOURN FOR THE ONE THEY HAVE PIERCED**. And whether you believe it or not, God will then send in **HIS ARMY** and they will be appointed to **DESTROY ALL THE NATIONS THAT ATTACK JERUSALEM**. And this army will be like the **HOUSE OF DAVID - AND LIKE GOD!**

To all you Christians who think you are like God - go back to sleep; you'll be awakened soon enough. You've despised Jerusalem - the **ZION OF GOD** that **BEARS HIS NAME**. You've also despised the Jewish people - the brothers of Christ. Even today, you contemptuously speak against the State of Israel in favour of



the Philistine dogs that surround it. And you teach a gospel that is no Gospel at all! You lie and twist everything to conform to your own doctrine, and you deceive the flock of God with your fanciful renditions of 'prophecy' which is no prophecy at all! Yet you claim to have the Testimony of Jesus! (see **Rev 19:10**). How pathetic you are!

And you in the Churches of God - where's your prophet now? Where's the man who once claimed to be Elijah - one of the greatest of the prophets. Where's *your* Elijah? Why don't you dazzle us all with great utterances of his fulfilled predictions? Let's see some evidence of your claims! Why is he now rotted in the grave while his false predictions continue to be taught? You certainly believed him, didn't you? **BUT YOU DON'T BELIEVE GOD!** Of course, Herbert Armstrong sometimes denied he was a prophet (especially in view of his failed prophecies), but he had no qualms about claiming to be **THE** prophet - the prophet Elijah! Perhaps he believed that Elijah wasn't really a prophet either!

There are some up-coming articles that you will no doubt find amusing. But your smug looks will soon fade from your faces. And when you go as lambs to the slaughter, and when God Himself hands you over to the Beast (**Dan 7:21, 25; Rev 13:7**) you had better have the attitude of the Jewish people in Jerusalem at that time. And if you don't, then there will be no resurrection to everlasting life for you.

For reasons known only to themselves, and certainly not from Bible revelation, many have assumed the British throne to be the throne of David. For hundreds of years this view has prevailed. Even the translators of the KJV Bible believed this throne to be their Sion [Zion] (see the forward of the KJV, para 1). And like the sycophants that they were, they also claimed that King James was the sanctified person, who, under God is the immediate Author of their true happiness (3rd para). A certain worthless shepherd also wrote about these things, and greatly embellished them, creating a patchwork quilt of unrelated verses to substantiate his delusion. But God says this: **Jer 22:1** *"Go down to the palace of the KING OF JUDAH and proclaim this message there: 'Hear the Word of the LORD, O KING OF JUDAH, you who SIT ON DAVID'S THRONE - you, your officials and your people who come through THESE GATES.'" And again in Jer 21:11 "Moreover, say to the ROYAL HOUSE OF JUDAH, 'Hear the Word of the LORD: O HOUSE OF DAVID...'"* It's a curious thing that some have imagined the British throne to be the throne of David. Both Matthew (ch 1) and Luke (ch. 3) record the genealogy of Jesus in order to prove Him the **SON OF DAVID** and an heir to the throne. And neither was this impeccable genealogy challenged! Everyone knew and understood that He was the **SEED** of David. Jesus didn't appear to the British people, nor did He visit Britain (even though some maniacs have sought to prove that He did), instead He conducted His entire ministry in the Holy Land. He appeared to His own people - the people of Judah! David ruled in the Holy Land, his throne will always be in the Holy Land. And when the throne of David is re-established, it will be in the Holy Land.

It may seem strange that Christ was not of the Tribe of Levi, but of the Tribe of Judah, since He was a priest forever according to David's own testimony. And since only a Levite can serve as a priest, Christ never served at the Temple. And neither was it disputed that Christ was of the Son of David. His genealogy was there for all to see. John the Baptist, however, was a Levite, and was born of a Levite priest - Zechariah. His mother, Elizabeth, was also the cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus. So John the Baptist was of the Tribe of Levi and the Tribe of Judah, or more correctly, the seed of David as well as the House of David. The Bible makes it very plain that the one who precedes the Messiah and prepares the way for Him will be of the Tribe of Levi (**Mal 2:4, 3:1, 4:5**). What is more, this Levite will be both king and priest: **Zech 6:11** *"Take silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak. Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and BUILD THE TEMPLE of the LORD. It is he who will build the Temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed in majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a PRIEST ON HIS THRONE. And there will be harmony between the two.'" V15 "Those who are FAR AWAY will come and help BUILD THE TEMPLE of the LORD, and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you. This will happen if you DILIGENTLY OBEY the LORD your God."*

In case you haven't noticed, Joshua was never crowned king, and neither did he build the Temple that is described in **Eze 40-48**. When this Temple is built, the Holy Land will again be re-allocated to the 12 tribes of Israel according to their portions (**Eze 48**).

Many people have tried to force the issue of a resurrection of David to take command of the armies of Israel. And indeed, God speaks of David's resurrection when he will again rule over the 12 tribes: **Jer 30:8** *"IN THAT DAY,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'I will BREAK THE YOKE OFF THEIR NECKS and will TEAR OFF THEIR BONDS; no longer will foreigners ENSLAVE them. Instead they will serve the LORD their God and DAVID THEIR KING, WHOM I WILL RAISE UP TO THEM.'"*

So here we see clearly that David will be raised up **AFTER** God has removed the bonds of Israel and Judah so that foreigners will no longer enslave them - **NOT BEFORE!** There are some Jews (and pseudo-

Jews) who claim that God is to raise David as the promised Messiah. Their reasoning is not just in error, it is downright deceptive. Generally, the Jewish people acknowledge that Christ was a prophet - they don't acknowledge that He was the Messiah. They, themselves, acknowledged an expectation of a Messiah at the time of Christ's appearance. The father of John the Baptist was also both a Levite priest and a prophet.

It's interesting to note that Ezekiel lived among the Jews in captivity, yet his message was directed to all the 12 Tribes of Israel. He spoke in parables (**Eze 20:21, 24:3**) and his message was not understood (**Eze 24:19**). Yet he never went to the lost tribes. Ezekiel wrote of our time in very great detail and his message culminates in the establishment of the Kingdom of God and its ultimate fulfilment - even to a description of the River of life (**Eze 47:1**). And this 'son of man', Ezekiel, was sent to prophesy against the 'prophets' of Israel: **Eze 13:1** *"The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, **PROPHECY AGAINST** the prophets of ISRAEL who are now **PROPHECYING**. Say to those who **PROPHECY OUT OF THEIR OWN IMAGINATION: 'Hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the **FOOLISH PROPHETS** who follow their own spirit **AND HAVE SEEN NOTHING.**'"*** And aren't they good at **PROPHECYING FROM THEIR OWN IMAGINATIONS?** They invent their own lies as they go along.

The first messenger mentioned in **Mal 3:1** is Elijah (partially fulfilled by John the Baptist). It may seem academic now, nearly 2,000 years later, that Christ came as a Messenger, but to the Jewish people the One who was expected was a man who would emulate Abraham, Moses, Joshua (son of Nun), and David. They tended to ignore the many Scriptures that stated His intended purpose, including **Mal 3:1**. The importance of Melchizedek was played down and generally ignored, even though the words of David (**Ps 110**) should have injected some urgency into their lateral thinking.

Remember the scripture previously quoted: *"Look to rock from which you were hewn...to Abraham...and to Sarah, who gave you birth..."* (**Isa 51:2**). Those who refuse to look to this rock turn into wimps! These cringing cowards would no more lay down their lives for the flock than they would refuse to take their money.

Even from these early days, God established the protocol for all eternity. This tiny force, with Abraham at the head, pursued the mighty enemy that greatly outnumbered them and cut them to pieces. **AND GOD WAS PLEASED!** Do you imagine that Abraham had any real expectation of success by his *own* might and power? Abraham commanded a fledgling, untrained army of just 318 men. He faced a seemingly invincible army of probably tens of thousands. Yet Abraham didn't even approach with caution, but rather gave the order to attack with a full-frontal assault. **ABRAHAM BELIEVED THE BATTLE WAS GOD'S.**

Centuries later, another man arose who was cut from the very rock which was Abraham. As a young man tending the flocks of his father, David arrived at a battle scene. The Philistines were tormenting the King and armies of Israel. Their champion, Goliath, openly challenged all, and the Israelites were afraid. The impasse was resolved when David saw the situation and issued his challenge; *"Who is this Philistine dog that challenges the **ARMIES OF THE LIVING GOD?**"* Well, you know the rest of the story. Significantly, these **'ARMIES OF THE LIVING GOD'** were being terrorised because there was no-one who believed the great Power of God - until David arrived! And David's arrival began seven long, hard years of fighting and conquest before he finally ruled in Jerusalem (**1Chron 29:27**). He ruled a further 33 years in Jerusalem - a total of 40 years. Interesting numbers aren't they?

Of David's throne, God says it would be established forever. Furthermore, God also says David would never want for a man to sit on his throne. Significantly, there were long periods of time when no-one actually sat on this throne, in fact, the actual throne was not a visible entity for many centuries even prior to Christ. But the throne existed as an office of royalty. The Jewish people at the time of Christ hoped for the establishment of this throne and its king in Jerusalem. It never happened at that time. Christ never sat on any throne during His tenure on earth. But a man did sit on a throne, and so did a number of his descendants. This was Herod. Of Herod Antipas, Christ said: **Mark 8:15** *"Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the **YEAST** of the Pharisees and that of **HEROD.**"* While this warning was against the Pharisees as well as **HEROD**, significantly, it was the Pharisees that came to warn Christ on one occasion: **Luke 13:31** *"At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to Him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. **HEROD** wants to kill you."*

Herod had a religious following; they were called Sadducees or Herodians. These lacked the religious clout of the Pharisees. And the beast that then was, sought the backing of all who would bring about the desired result - that of killing any future king. This mentality followed in the footsteps of Herod the first, who killed all the children under two years old, his objective being to kill any future king. This characteristic was engrained in Herod and all his descendants. It's no accident of history that Pharaoh did precisely the same thing which almost claimed the other great leader of the Children of Israel - Moses! Nor is it a coincidence that the Jewish people have been pursued across the face of the earth, almost to extinction during the last two millennia, and

particularly during the 20th century.

Any knowledgeable student of the Bible will realize that the whole Bible is about the **ONLY** people God has ever called His own (**Deut 7:6, 2Sam 7:23, Amos 3:1-2**), that is the **12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL**. It is God's avowed intentions to crush all the other kings and rulers on the face of the earth, and to heap up the bodies of their constituents (**Ps 110:5-6**). This has been God's plan throughout all history, and God has set a day for these events. The Jewish people will see the Commander of Armies they have long expected. They failed to recognize Him at His first appearance because they failed to understand the scriptures. This is as true today as it was then. At Christ's first appearance, the Jewish leaders disregarded the miracles, they sought only the power and might of the former glory. They longed for a reincarnation of David the mighty Commander of the **ARMIES OF THE LIVING GOD**.

This writer, in earlier articles, mentioned several times that Christ observed the Festival of Dedication, also called the Festival of lights (**John 10:22**) which was instituted to commemorate the victories of Judas Maccabee. The Jewish community call it 'Hannukah', and it falls around December 25. It's not a commanded festival. It was observed in commemoration of the 'blacksmith hammer' which is implied by the meaning of the name 'Maccabee' (**see Isa 54:16**).

Well-meaning (perhaps) Gentile Christians sought to perpetuate this festival, but like everything the Gentiles did in connection with God's truth, they polluted it and instituted many of the former pagan beliefs for which so many were familiar. And they called it Christmas since their objective was to build a Church using the name of Christ. In the early centuries of Christianity, true Christians lived the life according to Scripture. They lived simply just like Christ. The overseers to the flock lived in their own houses, and in Jerusalem, they met in Solomon's Colonnade. They didn't build great structures and call them churches. But the Gentiles did. The Gentiles chose to build visible structures that were super-imposing, that would resemble the majestic glory of the former Temple. What is more, they decided to install a throne upon which would sit their king and priest. Having done this, they could then claim that the Kingdom of God had arrived. Hence, all the former prophets could be abandoned, since by their reasoning, all had been fulfilled in Christ. To complete the illusion, they sought to deify the blessed Mary as the righteous Woman in contrast to the Great Harlot (which many mistakenly **ASSUME** is the Catholic Church). This Harlot is still hovering in the wings of the most recent prophecies - those of the Apostle John (Book of Revelation).

The deifying of Mary was based on the prophecies of Rev 12. They foolishly misunderstood that the woman who gave birth to Christ in this prophecy was not Mary, but the woman who wore the 12 crowns - that is, Judah, and more particularly, the seed of David. Royalty will forever be associated with David, whom God will raise up to rule over the 12 tribes.

Significantly, the Catholic Church clung to what they perceived to be the righteous Woman that wears the 12 crowns. This they mistakenly assumed was Mary rather than the real Mother of Christ - the Tribe of Judah, and more particularly, the Seed of David!

It is this Woman (the Seed of David - Judah!) who will stand with Christ and will fight the armies of the Great Harlot. These armies will consist of **ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH EXCEPT** God's own chosen nations - **THE 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL**. And the **GREAT HARLOT HAS RULED OVER THEM ALL** from the dawn of this creation until now, but with the exception of the Offspring of the true Woman. From earliest times, God made the distinction between the **GREAT HARLOT** and the **TRUE WOMAN**: **Gen 3:15** "*And I will put enmity between YOU and the WOMAN, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*" And in this very Scripture the **WOMAN** is described in the *masculine gender*. The serpent (**or Dragon - Rev 12**) is the Great Harlot, and God made this clear **FROM THE VERY OUTSET**. And from the first Seed - which was Adam, who was also the Son of God (**Luke 3:38**), this thin thread of humanity continued to the present day. And the last Adam is Christ (**1Cor 15:45**). Christ also made it plain that He was the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last. And this is the meaning of these words.

From the very outset in the Garden of Eden, God made it plain that this Serpent (which is Satan) is **NOT** the **WOMAN** - but the **GREAT HARLOT!** This clearly shows just how ridiculous are those who have assumed the Catholic Church to be this Great Harlot. And because these silly people cling to their delusion, they are oblivious to the **REAL** offspring of the Great Harlot who are rapidly snowballing all around the world.

Long before David is raised up to resume his kingly role, the throne will be established with some considerable pomp and ceremony, and in the presence of God. But the man who will sit on this throne will not be a rightful heir, but a caretaker king. This man will be the most trustworthy man on earth who will fulfil all that is required of him. This man is the Levite priest who will also be crowned king, but the crown will then be set aside for the one who will rightfully wear it. It may seem logical for this messenger of the Covenant to be of the Tribe of Judah - just like David - particularly if he is to be crowned on the **THRONE OF DAVID** - who

was the ruler of the 12 tribes. But God makes it plain, that from the days of the **FIRST** Elijah, to the **SECOND** Elijah (John the Baptist) and beyond, to the final appearance of the one who appears in the endtime, all three prophets would be Levites. God chose the Tribe of Levi to be the faithful bearer of prophetic endtime events (**Mal 2:4-9, Zech 12:13**), and it's no accident that the name 'Elijah' is a two-part name comprising 'Eli' and 'Jah', both of which mean God.

The final endtime prophet who fulfils the role of Elijah also has a companion. Many scriptures identify this man as of the seed of David. Many scriptures indicate he will be a younger man than Levi, and perhaps quite a young man. But many scriptures also indicate that Levi and all his followers (who all follow God) will burst forth in youth and vigor, fresh like the dew, and will go forth conquering like lions. So this Prince of Judah may well be a man of advancing years who will have his youth restored in accordance with the prophecy (**Isa 58:8**). The Apostle Peter confirmed what the prophet Isaiah said: **2Pet 1:19** *"And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to **PAY ATTENTION TO IT**, as to a light shining in a dark place, **UNTIL THE DAY DAWNS** and the **MORNING STAR** arises in your hearts."*

The Scriptures confirm that Christ will be the **LIGHTBRINGER**, the **SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** (**Mal 4:2**), whereas, in the distant past, this term described Lucifer (**Isa 14:12**) who became the Serpent or Dragon. Peter stressed that we should **PAY ATTENTION** to the **CERTAIN WORD** of the **PROPHETS** and speaks of '**UNTIL THE DAY DAWNS**' - a clear indication that this is **YET IN THE FUTURE**. Of the prophets to whom he refers, Isaiah speaks further of these people and says they will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the age-old foundations. At the time Peter recorded these things, that **DAY HAD NOT DAWNED!** He was speaking of a **FUTURE EVENT**, and was warning all to pay attention to the **CERTAIN WORD** of the **PROPHETS**. When that **DAY DAWNS** it will affect the lives of every human being on this planet.

Some historians, and most Christians, attempt to relegate the Book of Daniel to past events. Correctly, however, they recognize that the prophecies seemed to have some fulfilment in events that occurred then and in the ensuing years. They point to Antiochus Ephiphanes and his desecration of the Temple, and also to Judas Maccabee and his triumphs over the evil hordes, and conclude that it has all been fulfilled. Yet on the word of Christ, these things are yet to be fulfilled (**Matt 24:15**). The exploits of Judas Maccabee, as great and courageous as they were, were merely local squirmishes in comparison to what lies ahead. Nothing in the annals of human history could equate to the horrors which lie ahead, and Christ Himself confirmed this (**Matt 24:21**). Now might be a good time to start **BELIEVING HIM!**

This might appear to be fanciful to those who have convinced themselves that Christianity will be a cake-walk into God's Kingdom. The simple formula that so many have adopted to make them feel good is widely at variance with all that the prophets, Christ and all the Apostles, had to say. And it is certainly at variance with what David had to say. He recorded great detail for the endtime. And God loved David! God sent the Levite Samuel to anoint him as king when he was a mere lad tending the flocks of his father. From that moment on the throne was David's - by the authority of God. But it required seven years of bitter fighting and conquest before the Holy Mount was established. During this time the mighty men of David were virtually invincible. The Bible enumerates their skills as warriors. Some of their exploits are beyond human comprehension, and in human terms, impossible. Such is the mighty Power of God that was imparted to David and his warriors.

If David was anointed king by Almighty God Himself, why was it necessary for David to fight for his kingdom? And lest any should suggest that David was in error in fighting for this kingdom, bear in mind that David could not have succeeded except for the strong hand of Almighty God. It was God who gave him the power, and David always acknowledged this.

Those who pretend to follow Christ and who understand nothing, might be surprised to know that from the earliest days of Abraham - the rock from which we are carved - Christ became involved in battle conquest. The same Jesus Christ who walked this earth at the time of the second Temple was the one who greeted Abraham on his arrival from the **SLAUGHTER OF THE KINGS**. Central to the whole issue of the Apostolic writings is the identity of this King of Peace - Melchisedec (**Heb 7** - the whole chapter). Note also **Heb 6:17** *"God wanted to make known the **UNCHANGING NATURE OF HIS PURPOSE** very **CLEAR** to the **HEIRS** of what was **PROMISED**."* The nature of God's **PURPOSE** has **NEVER CHANGED!** You must believe God!

David also wrote of Melchisedec. This is what he says: **Ps 110:1** *"The **LORD** says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."* See Christ's reference to this in (**Mark 12:36**). Christ was identifying Himself. Notice that Christ is to remain seated beside God - **UNTIL WHEN?** Until God makes His enemies His footstool! (**See also 1Cor 15:25**). Continuing: **V2** *"The **LORD** will extend your **MIGHTY SCEPTRE FROM ZION**; you will **RULE** in the **MIDST OF YOUR ENEMIES**. Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy majesty, from the **WOMB OF THE DAWN** you will*

receive the **DEW OF YOUR YOUTH.**" The Apostle Peter further described this **DAWN** as the time when the **MORNING STAR** arises in the hearts of those who are called to the great endtime mission (**2Pet 1:19**). The mighty Conqueror Christ is that **MORNING STAR** (**Rev 22:16**), as well as the root and offspring of David. The Book of Malachi further describes these events: **Mal 4:4** "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the **LORD Almighty**. "Not a root or branch will be left to them. But for you who revere My name (God the Father is speaking), the **SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** will arise with **HEALING** in [His] wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. Then you will **TRAMPLE DOWN THE WICKED**; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things," says the **LORD Almighty**."

And in the continuation of **Ps 110** we find the reference to Melchisedec as spoken by David: **V4** "The **LORD** has sworn and **WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND**: "You are a priest for ever, in the order of **MELCHISEDEK**. The **LORD** is at your right hand; **HE WILL CRUSH KINGS ON THE DAY OF HIS WRATH**. He will **JUDGE THE NATIONS**, heaping up the dead and **CRUSHING THE RULERS OF THE WHOLE EARTH**."

David knew and believed this situation existed in his time as it also did in the days of Abraham. The **UNCHANGING NATURE** of Melchisedec is evident in God's own Words.

## **THE GENTILES**

By cunning circular reasoning, the Gentiles succeeded in establishing a monolithic religion that would continue for many centuries. So engrained did their faulty reasoning become, they actually simulated the concepts of the Bible in destroying what they perceived to be the enemies of God. How strange that they should have targeted the very brothers of Christ - the Jewish people, who are identified as the true Woman that gave birth to Christ, that is, the Judaeian line of David.

Little wonder that God never trusted His Words to the Gentiles (His Words were entrusted to the Jews - **Rom 3:2**) even though *some* Gentiles were called to glory. In fact, Christ made it plain that He had come **ONLY** for the **LOST SHEEP OF ISRAEL** (**Matt 15:24**). Yet oddly, in terms of fulfilment of prophecy, the Gentiles for centuries have more closely resembled Christianity, than do most Christian religions now. For instance, the Catholic Church understood that the followers of Christ would usher in the everlasting Kingdom of God.. Like others who would follow them, they saw this duty as theirs. They all built houses for God, and assumed that God would use their mighty and visible presence to do what John the Baptist did prior to Christ's first coming, that is, to prepare the way for Him. But Christ Himself said this ministry would be conducted by **TWO WITNESSES** and would be like a **GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED** at its inception.

It's strange that so many people have decided to build a house for God. The righteous King David was denied this privilege even though he made massive preparations for it. The honour was to go to his son. God doesn't take lightly the aspirations of those who decide to build a house for Him. It cannot be done without God's permission and it must be in total accord with God's instructions. This appears to have stopped no-one! Even the foolish shepherd whom God named in a parable for endtime prophecy sought to build a house for God. He called it the House of God, but later changed it to the Auditorium. While his extroverted claim to being Elijah may have prompted this, its clear that the overall objective was to build an auditorium to fete celebrities and to elevate his own stature in their eyes.

This man had many problems! And it's not without substance that God also called him a worthless shepherd (**Zech 11:17**). The name 'Armstrong' was derived from family traditions in Medieval England. They sought to emphasize their family-might in battle with family crests like Armstrong, Braveheart, and similar slogans. It had to do with valor on the battlefield. Hence the reference in **Zech 11:17** to the sword striking the arm and making it weak. He was no longer 'arm-strong' but 'arm-weak'. This prophecy has nothing to do with the physical state of his arm, but is a parable about the man, even though he was also blind in his right eye in the latter part of his life - in fulfilment of the prophecy. Some may say that linking his name to the prophecy is stretching things a bit far. Well prepare yourselves for a shock! This principle illuminates the penultimate rule for understanding God's Word for the endtime. God demonstrates by example that this is so in the endtime prophecies of Micah (and elsewhere). Notice **Micah 1:15** "I will bring a **CONQUEROR** against you who will live in **MARESHAH**." And where is **MARESHAH**? No-one knows! It was a play on words since in the original Hebrew the name **MARESHAH** resembles the word for **CONQUEROR**. Most reliable translators recognised this poetic link and made marginal references (see the NIV margin). See also **Micah 1, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14** where the same principle is used. Furthermore, the whole Book of Micah is about endtime prophecy! This Book of Micah contains very great detail of what lies just ahead. It will be the subject of some very indepth articles in the near future.

But Armstrong fulfilled all that God required of him, even though imperfectly. He brought together a group of people who would later fulfil an important duty to God. And all this was done in complete accord with

God's overall plan. Many of these people will fulfil this role. Sadly though, most will not. They've left their first love and seared their consciences. Unfortunately there remains no further sacrifice for them. The whole purpose for the existence of the Children of Israel was to faithfully obey God. This was firmly established in the Scriptures that Christ and the Apostles used - the Old Testament. David reflected this first love when he said, "*O how I love your Law. I meditate on it all day long.*" The Law of God was foremost in David's mind - he lived by it and he loved it! Furthermore, the Bible says this in **Acts 13:22** "*After removing Saul, He made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse A MAN AFTER MY OWN HEART; he will do everything I want him to do.'*" And David **DID** do everything God wanted him to do. David pondered the Law of God all day long to ensure that everything that was done, was done according to Law! Just like Christ!

But in the same chapter we find that David died and his body saw corruption. The **SON OF DAVID** (Christ) also died but his body didn't suffer corruption: **V36** "*For when DAVID SERVED GOD'S PURPOSE IN HIS OWN GENERATION, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers AND HIS BODY DECAYED. But the One whom God raised from the dead DID NOT SEE DECAY.*" All that David did served God's **UNCHANGING PURPOSE** in his own **GENERATION!** Then a warning is issued in **V40**. It speaks of the **PROPHETS**. Which **PROPHETS** we shall soon see! **V40** "*Take care that what the PROPHETS have said does not happen to you: 'Look you SCOFFERS, wonder and perish, FOR I AM GOING TO DO SOMETHING IN YOUR DAYS THAT YOU WOULD NEVER BELIEVE, even if someone TOLD YOU.'*" So there will be **SCOFFERS** in the **LAST DAYS**; this much we already knew (**2Pet 3:3**). But to whom was Paul's warning directed? And which prophet did he quote? The answer to these questions will identify what God plans to do, and **WHICH WON'T BE BELIEVED - except by God's treasured possession (Mal 3:17-18)**.

And we find the answer in **Hab 1:5** "*Look at the nations and watch - and be utterly amazed. FOR I AM GOING TO DO SOMETHING IN YOUR DAYS THAT YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE even if you WERE TOLD.*" And what is it that God says He will do? This is what He says: **V6** "*I am raising up the BABYLONIANS, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling-places not their own. They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honour.*" Why should we doubt the truth of this statement? Hasn't Babylon been a constant thorn in the side of common decency since the days of Noah? The Bible speaks from beginning to end about this Babylon!

There are many prophecies that speak of this Babylon, so why wouldn't it be believed? The reason is: **Most Christians have invented their own Babylon.** They never believed God so they decided to promote the illusion that Rome was Babylon, and more particularly, the Catholic Church. And they have no qualms about contradicting God. To offset their delusions they refer to Rome as 'spiritual' Babylon. The very word 'spiritual' is usually reserved as a reference to God's Spirit, but this doesn't worry them either.

Well, now you are being told! And God has told you in advance, but still you refuse to believe Him! We are living in the very days that Paul and Habakkuk refer to. All the players in the great prophecies of Daniel are appearing one by one. They will all exist together in the endtime, and they will be destroyed together in the endtime - by the very Rock that Christians *claim* to honour. But Christians refuse to see this Rock as the Mighty Commander of Armies (which He is), instead they *still* see Him as a humble carpenter!

Daniel spoke of a man who would arise in the endtime and do devastating damage, plundering and slaughtering at will (**Dan 11:36**). Christ confirmed what Daniel said, and many years after Christ's departure, and after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, Christ again spoke of this man in the prophesied events revealed to John. The Book of Revelation gives considerable detail of this man, and provides the means to identify him. He is called the **BEAST**, and his sidekick is called the **FALSE PROPHET**. God has appointed an absolute timeframe for all these things, and everything will be done at the appointed time.

There is great significance with the NATO forces involvement in the Balkans. Prophecy makes it clear that the Beast will arise from this territory. This is the territory from the Danube to the Mediterranean.

The Beast is a man of Satan's choosing. Satan will give him his throne and great power and he will be the absolute ruler of Greece and the Balkan territories. The Bible is very clear on this. He has not yet been revealed. It should not be doubted for one moment that Satan is already grooming this man for his final plans, but he has yet to reveal him. This person will be half-man and half-beast. In appearance he will look like a man, but the beast will be in him - just like Nebuchadnezzar and just like Pharaoh. In fact, the Bible frequently refers to the same individual by two different names; the name of the man and the name of the beast. The real 'rulers of the heavenly realm' are not those we see as ordinary human beings.

What is happening in the Balkans is in line with prophecy. Daniel describes the events we are soon to live through. He spoke of a great statue that was composed of 4 parts: gold, silver, bronze and iron. Daniel described the first ruler as Nebuchadnezzar - ruler of Babylon. Daniel lived to see the second ruler ascend the throne; this was Darius. But the third ruler didn't arise for over 200 years. Then he died. This was Alexander

the Greek/Macedonian. All three ruled Babylon, and Alexander died there. Daniel spoke of these three kings, all of whom passed into history. But assuredly, the Bible is clear that all these rulers will **EXIST TOGETHER** in the endtime and will be **DESTROYED TOGETHER** by the **MIGHTY ROCK** cut out without human hands. The problem with today's 'prophets' is they don't seem to understand that Daniel's prophecies relate to our time. Christ made this clear, but they don't seem to believe Him (**Matt 24:15**). These people always seem to present Daniel's prophecies as past events. They view the Book of Daniel as a bit of quaint history.

All three will exist together in the endtime, and as in the days of Daniel, will have their moment of glory. This is the meaning of the four seals that the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Christ) opens. The first king of the territory of Babylon (Saddam Hussein) has fueled a raging fire all over the world with his hatred and venom towards God's chosen people (the House of Israel). His plan was conquest, but instead his nation has been weakened. God has appointed three devastating strikes by the armies of Israel against Iraq. God has also appointed the armies of Israel to strike a deadly blow against the third king, but this deadly wound will be healed. When Satan realizes he has been duped by his own foolishness, he will plan an attack on the very throne of God. He will be expected, and he will suffer a devastating defeat and be cast back to earth forever. It is then that his appointee - the Beast - will be revealed.

Following the third strike against the king of Babylon, the Kurds and the Iranians will unite to overthrow him and seize the land, just like in the days of Daniel. Anciently, these were called the Medes and Persians. The Medes are also the Kurds today, and formerly they were called Assyrians before being conquered by Babylon. Darius was a Mede, and the second seal will reveal a Mede ruler. This ruler will greatly expand his borders, and set his sights on Jerusalem. The armies of Israel will not be the moderating force in the region, but they will be destroyed around this time, and the Medo-Persian ruler will not be able to help them.

Amid this power vacuum, moves will be made for conquest of the Holy Land by the Medes and Persians. Because of the dominance of the Kurds, the Bible refers to them as Assyria (their ancient identity - see **Mic 5:6, Gen 10:9-12**). To these people, the Holy Land will look like a ripe fig ready to be picked. Defenceless and frightened, the little nation of Israel will be terrorized and overrun. Ephraim will be a spent force and unable to offer protection.

If God had not made provisional plans, then all the tribes of Israel would be wiped out forever in the ensuing events. But God has called a mighty force which He will transport to a special place He has prepared. But this mighty force, which God calls the 'remnant of Jacob' is just a handful of people.

The Assyrian/Persian empire will be destroyed and plundered by the armies of God - the tiny force that God has appointed to the task. At their head will be the battle commander Gabriel who will ensure the victory (**Dan 10:20**). In the first year of this Assyrian/Mede, Gabriel will protect him. This seems to be the year when the Tribes of Israel will amass their military forces in the Holy Land where they'll be destroyed. The shock waves of this event will reverberate around the world. Among the Tribes of Israel all hope will be gone. At the end of that year, Gabriel will be appointed to lead God's army to victory.

The Persian Empire will be thoroughly plundered and the Temple will be built in Jerusalem with the proceeds. Then the man of sin will be revealed, and will arise from Greece and its territories. He will sweep across the earth and take many nations captive. He will seat himself in the Temple of God and claim to be God. The whole world will worship him. This Beast will not forget the deadly wound he received and he will be bent on vengeance, and the deadly wound will be healed. Already his brood is venting their hatred for the U.S. and its allies, burning flags and destroying embassies.

Christ said in **Luke 12:49** "*I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!*" Christ Himself longed for that day, but He knew that first He had to suffer the baptism of death. That fire is yet to be kindled. During the kindling process cities and land will be devastated and left smouldering and in ruins. Before this kindled force will be like the Garden of Eden (which was in the land of Nimrod), and behind them will be scorched earth. God will not send this force out armed with swords or bows (though if He did, the outcome would be the same), but they will be equipped with weapons of destruction that the world could not imagine. Habakkuk partially described these things (**Hab 3:4**). Just as Moses was like God to Pharaoh, so this mighty force will be like God (**Zech 12:8**). They are hand-picked servants of God who will be used to rescue God's people from captivity. These people will be filled with the Power of God and will fight in the Name of God. At Christ's return when He personally returns to take all the kingdoms of the world, and when He personally smashes all the kingdoms mentioned by Daniel, this mighty force will fight with Him (**Zech 14:13**) and they will plunder the attacking nations. And they will **CAPTURE THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET** in a furious fight that has no equal.

These things are a little different to what is currently being taught by those who refuse to believe God. If Christ longed for the day when the fire would be kindled, then so should we. It will see the Kingdom of God established as a mustard seed which will grow to fill the whole earth. This will be the time when Christ is

empowered to act (**Rev 12:10-12**). The Apostles longed to see this day, but they won't see it (**Luke 17:22**).

All prophecy must be fulfilled (**Matt 5:17**), and God has appointed a deadly blow against the Beast that will arise. This Beast is in the former territory from where Alexander the Great arose. This deadly wound is to be of considerable significance because the whole world will be amazed when the deadly wound is healed. This Beast will swoop through the Middle East and seize all the territories of Babylon - just as Alexander did. But this king will do what neither Nebuchadnezzar, Darius or Alexander ever did, he will conquer the whole world. He will set up 10 puppet kings who will all submit to his power. He will appoint lands, cities and possessions to all who honour him (**Dan 11:39**). And he will have unfettered power to do this.

God has given us an exact time frame for the revealing of the Beast. Ephraim is God's son for the purpose of prophecy for the Tribes of Israel (**Jer 31:9**). In exactly the same way, Christ was likened to the Tribes of Israel as the son whom God called out of Egypt (**Matt 2:15, Hos 11:1**). God refers to Ephraim as an individual man or son in prophecy. In the same way, God also refers to the whole tribe of Levi by reference to one man - Levi (**Mal 2:4-7**). When God speaks of Ephraim, He is speaking of the whole northern 10 tribes (**Jer 7:15**). God has appointed Ephraim over all his brothers as the ruling tribe just as He did in the days of Solomon (**1Kings 11:31**). And God Himself calls Ephraim His firstborn son (**Jer 31:9 again**) and the prophet Hosea confirms this. If Ephraim is God's son, then the nation of Ephraim is a holy nation. God is prepared to sacrifice His son Ephraim, just as He was prepared to sacrifice His Son Jesus. But the sacrifice of Ephraim will be done outside of Jerusalem, in fact, in the valley of Jezreel. As the blood and body of Christ is for the healing of those whom God has called, so the sacrifice of Ephraim will be for the healing of the nations.

God says in **Jer 31:18** *"I have surely heard Ephraim's moaning: 'You disciplined me like an unruly CALF, and I have been disciplined.'" God has trained Ephraim to do as He requires of them: Hos 10:11 "Ephraim is a trained HEIFER who loves to thresh; so I will put a YOKE on her fair neck. I will drive Ephraim.....". As unseemly as it may be to some, Ephraim is being driven to fulfil all that God requires of them. During this period, God has overlooked many things regarding Ephraim: Hos 13:12 "The guilt of Ephraim is stored up, his sins are kept on record."*

God's primary purpose for His son Ephraim is to hold back the man of lawlessness, the one who will claim to be God and sit in the Temple. This reference is found in **2Thess 2:6** *"And now you KNOW what is HOLDING HIM BACK, so that he may be REVEALED AT THE PROPER TIME. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but THE ONE WHO NOW HOLDS IT BACK will continue to do so TILL HE IS TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY. And THEN the lawless one will be revealed...."* And now you know what is holding him back, because you have seen it with your own eyes. Whether or not you believe God is up to you!

For this reason we should not try to guess who this man is. It is Satan's choice, that is, his appointee, and he will be revealed when Ephraim is taken out of the way. The identity or the appearance of the man is not really that important. He'll be easily identifiable; he will appear as an angel of light and perform miracles and generally delude everyone. The whole world will worship him. He will honour a god of fortresses (Heb: Mauzzim - the former protector of God). The Bible speaks of the House of Israel worshipping Baal in the endtime. Baal is sometimes called Bel. Christ identified who this Baal is: **Luke 11:18** *"If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebub (BAAL-zebub or BEL-zebub). Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out?"* This is the prince of demons (**V15**).

And why wouldn't this Beast worship the Mauzzim (Satan)? It is Satan that gives him his great power (**Rev 13:2**). (This was one subject that was particularly tedious when the WCG continued to offer silly explanations for the identity of Baal. They just would not believe the Bible!). Also see the KJV margin note on **Dan 11:38** and its reference to 'Mauzzim'.

Obviously, the progression of events that we will now see unfolding is in complete accord with God's great wisdom. It is not only logical but it is also very just. And God delivers **JUSTICE** according to His **LAW**.

In the past you were taught that Satan is super-intelligent and understands all Scripture. Let it be stated unequivocally that he does not. He was once full of wisdom and beauty and brightness, but he lost all that when he rebelled against God. It doesn't take a lot of wisdom to be a tyrant, and this is the word that best describes him. Of the time when God reveals the mystery which has been kept hidden by God until the very endtime, the Bible says this: **Eph 3:10** *"His intent was that now, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the RULERS AND AUTHORITIES IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS..."* It goes without saying that the Church today would have nothing to offer Satan and his realm since they are predominantly teaching what Satan has infused into them. But Satan and his realm are soon to learn the truth of the mystery that God has **KEPT HIDDEN (V9)**. There will be an explosive reaction and an attempt will be made to overthrow God (**Rev 12:7**). This event will be as real as tomorrow's sunrise. From then on Satan will



show no restraint, he will consider he has nothing to lose, hence the words in **Rev 12:12**. The suggestion that this ministry will be used by God to reveal the secret mysteries to Satan and his realm is enough to turn some people into foaming maniacs. The Churches of God seemed to have no qualms when HWA invited Franz Joseph Strauss to Pasadena and virtually told him that he was the Beast. That 'beast' is now dead. And so is the one who **CLAIMED** to be **ELIJAH** (and **LEVI**) and a host of other Bible identities, including an **APOSTLE**. Nearly 14 years have passed and the legacy that HWA left was one of a very foolish shepherd, and that is what HWA was, and a worthless one at that. Those who still believe him have sealed their own fate. Those who believe HWA are proving they don't believe God. HWA offered a doctrine that is contrary to the teachings of God.

The children of Israel and Christ are the same entity in Bible prophecy. Both are the same Son of God. There is the physical and the spiritual. When God gathers His tiny, mighty force (his army) they will be imbued with the very Power of God, and will be like God in battle. And when God sends them into battle they will be the very **SONS OF GOD** - just like Christ!

The perception that Christ is still a humble carpenter seems to be in the minds of many. They seem incapable of visualizing Him as the Mighty Commander of Armies. Have they forgotten that it was **THIS GREAT BEING** that lead the **ARMIES OF THE LIVING GOD** (to quote David - **1Sam 17:26**) into battle?

Just before Christ's death He said He was born to be a king, but He said His Kingdom '*was not from hence*'. It was not from that period but a later period. Christ revealed to John (and to us) that the time would come when Satan would be deposed and cast to earth, and then Christ will take the reins of government and His Kingdom would be established (**Rev 12:9-12**). Not in a horizon to horizon show of Power and Glory, but like a mustard seed that will grow to fill the earth. He further stated that, at that time, His servants would fight (**John 18:36**).

The rejection of the Scriptures (Old Testament) that Christ used has resulted in a form of madness among the Churches of God, and the WCG in particular. They seem to be permanently engaged in a debate over which part of the Laws of God should be kept. The **SCRIPTURES** that Christ used are castigating from start to finish against those who violate God's Law.

In the same vein, we are confronted with another Scripture; this is found in **Matt 24:24** "*For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to DECEIVE EVEN THE ELECT - IF THAT WERE POSSIBLE. See I have told you ahead of time.*" So who are the **ELECT**? Surely not those who are deceived by a foolish shepherd who never understood the Bible! And who consistently proclaimed prophecies that failed! HWA fulfilled nothing ascribed to the endtime Elijah - absolute zilch! Zero! He was lost in the mists of his own delusion, and he knew by his own conduct that his extroverted delusions had no substance. But those he gathered and brought together and who had a **LOVE FOR GOD** and **DESIRED TO OBEY HIM**, are described as **SAINTS**. And many of these that endure to the end, and who hold fast to that which they have (that is, the will to obey God and believe Him) will be received to glory in the Kingdom of God. In order to achieve this, the love of God and obedience to His Laws must be paramount in your lives. Sin was found in Lucifer who was a murderer and a liar from the beginning. If you are either of these (**Rev 22:15**) you will not be in the Kingdom of God. Those who think they can lie their way into God's Kingdom are deluding themselves. Notice **Mal 3:13** "*You have said HARSH THINGS against Me,*" says the **LORD**. "*Yet you ask, 'What have we said against You?' You have said, 'It is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out His REQUIREMENTS and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty?' But now you call the ARROGANT blessed. Certainly the EVILDOERS prosper, and even those who CHALLENGE GOD escape.*" And this is a little different to those God describes in **V16-18**. To suggest that God the Great Lawgiver, that Great Judge, would give bad laws to His people Israel is very **HARSH** indeed. And those who suggest such things are **ARROGANT EVILDOERS** who are plainly distinguishable from those who truly **SERVE** God (**V16**).

Christ in His mercy gave His followers the formula for surviving nearly two thousand years. This is found in **Matt 5**. At the other end of the spectrum, Christ spoke of horrific endtime events (**Matt 24**). It was necessary for Christianity to live in peace with all men during this long period. Even so, Christ warned they would be persecuted and reviled for their beliefs (**Matt 5:11**). This happened continually during this long period. It's been less evident during this century, although in the last few years it has become rampant in Moslem countries. But Christianity has survived even under the auspices of Gentile-dominated beliefs, and it is these beliefs that have left people ill-prepared for truth. Notwithstanding, the present WCG has sought refuge in these very beliefs, and those who should know better have believed them! How shocked they will be to learn the true message from God.

Well, we've spoken a lot about the Tribes of Israel, but the question remains: Who are they? Since over 99% of all references to the Tribes of Israel links them to the Holy Land - the land promised to Abraham,

Isaac, Jacob and their descendants, how do we determine where the 'lost Tribes of Israel' (to use Christ's words) are? God doesn't give us a roadmap, but He does leave us some signposts. For instance, God says that Ephraim would be greater than Manasseh, and speaks of the **'TEN THOUSANDS OF EPHRAIM, and the THOUSANDS OF MANASSEH'** (**Deut 33:17**). Obviously Ephraim is to be greater and more powerful than Manasseh. And this is in accord with Jacob's prophecy for the endtime (**Gen 49:17-19**). Jacob (Israel) made it clear that Ephraim would be greater than his brother Manasseh, but not only that, he would also be greater than all his other brothers. In fact he would be the Prince among his brothers, possessing almost God-like power. Hosea confirmed this: **Hos 13:1** *"When Ephraim spoke, men trembled; he was exalted in Israel."*

Men, in fact whole nations, tremble before the awesome fire power of Ephraim. And God is making it clear that Ephraim is His firstborn son (**Jer 31:9**). And the world would do well to acknowledge this! Wasn't this also confirmed by an Apostle of Christ - the Levite Matthew? He wrote this: **Matt 2:13** *"When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON.""* Today, there are some *pseudo-Jews* (that is, those who claim to be Jews but are not) who ridicule this statement by the Apostle Matthew saying it misquotes the intent of the prophet Isaiah.

Well, those who claim to be Christians had better believe both the Apostle Matthew and the prophet Isaiah, because if they don't they will never understand prophecy. And if they don't understand prophecy, then neither do they have the **TESTIMONY OF JESUS** because the **TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY** (**Rev 19:10**). Mainstream Christianity, together with those who claim to be Jews and are not, are barreling headlong to their own destruction! They don't believe God and, what is more, they reject the very Scripture that Christ used (the Old Testament) and refuse to believe it. Will you now believe the Apostles and prophets? This is what the Prophet Isaiah said, and this is the passage that Matthew quoted from: **Isa 11:1** *"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON."* And this is where Matthew stopped quoting. But the prophet adds more detail: **V2** *"But the more I called ISRAEL, the further they went from Me. They sacrificed to Baals and they burned incense to images. It was I who taught EPHRAIM to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize IT WAS I WHO HEALED THEM. I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them"*

Did Matthew misunderstand the intent of the prophet? Did he confuse the meaning of these scriptures? Was he aware of what he was saying? We have the sure word of prophecy that he did know exactly what he was saying! Notice what else he added in the next verse: **Matt 2:16** *"When Herod realised that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in BETHLEHEM AND ITS VICINITY who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he learned from the Magi. THEN WHAT WAS SAID THROUGH THE PROPHET JEREMIAH WAS FULFILLED: "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.""*

Was Rachel the mother of the Jews? **NO, SHE WASN'T!** The Jews were **NOT** her children, **JOSEPH** was! And the two sons of Joseph, **EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH**, were raised to the rank of **FIRSTBORN SONS** to Jacob (**Gen 48:5**). And these would bear the name of Jacob whose name was changed to Israel (**V16**) and also Abraham and Isaac (same verse).

Just so we understand the intent of God's Words through the Apostles and prophets, Matthew linked Christ to Israel (and Ephraim in particular) (**Isa 11:1**), and then linked the slaughter of the male children by the beast that then was - Herod, to the words of Jeremiah. He quoted from **Jer 31:15** *"A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, BECAUSE HER CHILDREN ARE NO MORE."* You will notice that Herod killed all the male babies in **BETHLEHEM** and the immediate vicinity. Other children survived - at that time! But Jeremiah spoke of a time far beyond the time of Matthew as did all the prophets. And in the same chapter, Jeremiah said this: **Jer 31:9** *"They will come weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside STREAMS OF WATER on a level path where they will not stumble, because I am ISRAEL'S FATHER, and EPHRAIM IS MY FIRSTBORN SON."*

Oh, oh! This can't be right! All Christians know that Christ is God's firstborn Son. What is more, Jeremiah's prophecies relate to the very endtime when God will redeem His children from slavery and bring them back to the land of streams and rivers - the land from where the River of Life will flow. So what does it all mean? Can we believe that Ephraim is not only God's son, but His **FIRSTBORN** son - exactly as stated by Jeremiah? Herein lies one of the great **MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**.

Many Christians know that the Kingdom of God will fill the whole earth and there will be no end to it.

Most of these know that human beings will inhabit this earth even during the Millennium (**Isa 65:17-25**). Israel will be redeemed and they will inherit the land that God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants. So if there will be human beings on the earth, and the whole earth is the Kingdom of God, then what did Paul mean when he said flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God? (**1Cor 15:50**). In **V35-49** Paul explains that there will be differences even in those who inherit eternal life. And when Christ returns, His reward will be with Him to give to each man according to his **WORKS (Rev 22:12)**. Christ also said this: **Rev 2:26** *"To him that **OVERCOMES** and **DOES MY WILL TO THE END**, I will give **AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS** - 'He will **RULE** them with an iron sceptre; he will dash them to pieces like pottery' - just as I have received authority from My Father."*

Some of you will be aware that the WCG now teaches that you don't have to **OVERCOME** anything - because Christ has done it all for you. Joe Tkach has appointed a number of feeble-minded geriatrics with IQ's smaller than their hatsizes to invade the religious newsgroups to subvert God's people. These pathetic mendicants are characterised by their giant egos - always billowing their own perceived 'righteousness'. Their message is that you mustn't keep the Laws of God because Christ has done it all for you. Just 'accept Christ as your Saviour' and you will swan into the Kingdom of God. What is more, they also contend that the keeping of God's Laws demonstrates a lack of faith and a denial of the grace that has been given to us. According to their deceived minds, the whole world which treats God and His Laws with contempt, are more righteous than those who obey and honour God.

But is this what Christ said? Notice: **Matt 7:21** *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will **ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**, but **ONLY** he who does the **WILL OF MY FATHER** who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, '**I NEVER KNEW YOU. AWAY FROM ME, YOU EVILDOERS.**'"* Christ also describes their fate in **Matt 25:41**; those who are ordered away are cast into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. There will be no last-minute clemency - these people are doomed! These people have no idea what awaits them! And all those who patronize them are also standing perilously close to this abyss.

But those who **OVERCOME** and do the **WILL OF THE FATHER** will be given power over all the nations of human beings - and they will **RULE** with a rod of iron - just like Christ! Those who inherit **RULERSHIP** in the **KINGDOM OF GOD** will rule over the nations of human beings. Clearly there is a **PHYSICAL** realm and a **SPIRITUAL** realm. In the physical realm, human beings will live to a very great age and they will die a gracious death (**Isa 65:20**). In the spiritual realm will be those who are raised to everlasting life. These will not die - ever!

And should there be any doubt about how it will be in the **KINGDOM OF GOD**, Zechariah recorded this: **Zech 14:16** *"Then the **SURVIVORS** from **ALL THE NATIONS** that have **ATTACKED JERUSALEM** will go up year after year to worship the King, the **LORD Almighty**, and to **CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES**. If **ANY** of the **PEOPLES OF THE EARTH** do **NOT** go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the **LORD Almighty**, they will have no rain. If the Egyptian people do not go up and take part, they will have no rain. The **LORD** will bring on them the plague He inflicts on the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This will be the punishment of Egypt and the **PUNISHMENT OF ALL NATIONS** that do **NOT** go up to **CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES**."*

At Jerusalem will be their host nations - the 12 Tribes of Israel - the **ONLY** nations that God has called for His own. They will occupy all the Holy Land and its environs. And if the land becomes too small for them all, then God will expand it, and all the nations of the earth will be pushed back (**Isa 49:20; 54:2-3**). Make no mistake! The Tribes of Israel will always be God's preferred nation, and the Gentiles of the world will always be clinging to their coattails. And God Himself confirms this: **Zech 8:23** *"This is what the **LORD Almighty** says: 'In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the edge of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'"*

Among the Tribes of Israel today there is an evil mood emerging; it's a mood of condemnation against God's own people. Because of the lunacy of 'political correctness' many subversives have arisen in condemnation of their own nation. Whatever Ephraim does, it meets with stiff opposition from all quarters, and always in favour of Gentiles. Whenever God sends the '**ARMIES OF THE LIVING GOD**' into battle against the cruel and evil nations of the world, the subversives have a field day! They speak against the son of God, God's firstborn Ephraim. In some respects, it's become a national sport to condemn the actions of God's favoured nation. Perhaps some believe that God will judge Ephraim for making war against the degenerates that kill their own people, and proceed to take other nations captive. The truth is, God will judge Ephraim and all the Tribes of Israel for their contempt for Him, for daring to speak against what He Himself has ordained. And those who think they have a right to criticise their prince - the leader of their nation - unjustly, will be judged by

the very standards they use in their condemnation. You are either with God or you are against Him. Those who **THINK** they are **FOR** God should examine themselves carefully. God is about to bring your own condemnation down on your own heads.

Isn't it amazing that one of the most popular 'documentaries' in recent times has been called 'Blue eyes, brown eyes' which castigates God's people Israel in favour of Gentiles. And did you notice the 'brown-eyed' section of the audience. These are the descendants of the machete-wielding beasts of Africa who kill and maim even their own people with no form of humanity evident in their crazed actions. But this program intended for you to see them as possessing virtues equivalent to the nations of Israel.

And all you sanctimonious and self-righteous 'christians' who are at the forefront of promoting the madness of 'political correctness' should remember who it is you should be following! You may think that Christ treated all men equally. **HE DIDN'T!** And neither does the Father - the LORD Almighty! Christ Himself totally ignored the pleas of a Gentile woman who came to Him and this is the account of this: **Matt 15:22** "A Canaanite woman from the vicinity came to Him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering from demon-possession." **JESUS DID NOT ANSWER HER A WORD.** So His disciples came to Him and urged Him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying after us." He answered, "**I WAS SENT ONLY TO THE LOST SHEEP OF ISRAEL.**" "The woman came and knelt before Him. "Lord, help me!" she said. He replied, "It is not right to take the **CHILDREN'S BREAD** and **TOSS IT TO THEIR DOGS.**"

How would the authoress of 'Blue eyes, brown eyes' judge Christ for His comments? I think you know! Who should we believe? This mad authoress of this documentary - or Christ? If you claim to be a Christian, and if you claim to follow Christ, and you still believe this woman, then you had better get your brain unscrambled! God's standards are a whole lot different to yours!

The 'wisdom' of this world is totally at variance to the Wisdom of God! And Christ is the Wisdom of God. This is what the Scripture says: **1Cor 1:20** "Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the **WISDOM OF GOD** the world did not know **HIM**, God was pleased through the 'foolishness' of what was preached to save those who believe." **V24** "But to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, **CHRIST** [is] the **POWER OF GOD** and the **WISDOM OF GOD.**" If you disagree with Christ, then you don't have the **POWER OF GOD**, and nor do you have the **WISDOM OF GOD**, because these are the **SPIRIT OF CHRIST**. Notice these verses: **John 14:23** "Jesus replied, "If anyone **LOVES** Me, he will **OBEY MY TEACHING.** My Father will love him, and **WE** will come to him and make **OUR** home with him. He who does not love Me will not obey My teaching. These words you hear are not My own; **THEY BELONG TO THE FATHER WHO SENT ME.** All this I have spoken while still with you. But the **COUNSELLOR**, the **HOLY SPIRIT**, whom **THE FATHER WILL SEND** in **MY NAME**, will teach you all things and will **REMINDE** you of **EVERYTHING I HAVE SAID TO YOU.**"

Many writers have recorded details during mankind's long history, of this **WISDOM**, who is also called the **WORD** of God. And wisdom is expressed in words. Solomon was known for his wisdom by what he said. People came from all over the world to hear his wisdom. By understanding this Wisdom, the prophets of old were able to understand many of the mysteries of God. And it was this knowledge that enabled them to find out "the time and circumstances to which the **SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN THEM** was **POINTING** when they **PREDICTED** the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow." (**1Pet 1:10**). The Scriptures are **POINTERS** - pointing out the way to Wisdom and understanding. For this reason the Scriptural writers referred often to the Scriptures that Christ used, that is, the Old Testament. They recognised that these were pointing to many things of great significance. Things that we need to understand today!

There are many more things to be said about the 12 Tribes of Israel. As Christ has said, He came only to the 'lost Tribes of Israel.' And contrary to all that Christianity believes today, the whole Bible concerns **ONLY** God's chosen people. And while God has made provision for many Gentiles to be called (**Rev 7:9**), they must be **GRAFTED INTO THE TREE** (**Rom 11:24**) of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. At the conclusion of the endtime events, many people will worship the God of the Fathers - the Almighty God of Israel. And they will receive the same rewards that Christ has prepared for His people. And neither will any of these enter by the back-door! Today, there is only one door (gate: NIV) - and that Door is the Counsellor - the Son of God - Christ! (**John 10:1-7**).

In language that even a drover's dog could understand, the Bible relates events for the endtime which will see the greatest upheaval of carnage and destruction the world has ever seen. The reasons for this will soon be explained, but it must be remembered that God has a **MASTER PLAN** that is undiminished since the foundation of the world. And contrary to all that is taught today, human beings have very little to do with it. But by the **GRACE OF GOD**, we humans have an opportunity to serve Him and support Him in His objectives

and to gain the very great reward He has planned for our efforts. No doubt when you learn the truth you will think it to be star-wars fiction, but the reality is based on the absolute **WISDOM OF GOD**. Stupid people posing as Christians have brought the name of God and His Mighty Son into disrepute. They've trivilised the Great Plan of God and projected it as a human emotion with childish expectations. But the good news is that nothing they have done or could do will alter the outcome of all that God intends to do.

In fact, the whole world is under the threat of total destruction, and God says this: **Mal 4:5** "*See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before **THAT GREAT AND DREADFUL DAY OF THE LORD** comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; **OR ELSE I WILL COME AND STRIKE THE [EARTH] WITH [UTTER DESTRUCTION]!**"* If you check the original Hebrew words you will find this exact meaning! **AND GOD MEANS IT!**

**CHAPTER TWO WILL CONTINUE THIS THEME.**

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