

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

Glory, honour, power and majesty be continually, ascribed to the Lord our God. We thank him for this wonderful privilege of sharing with you in His word. We are beginning a new series of teaching which will concern itself with aspect of the events of the last days. We will be talking about the Second Coming of Christ, and the fullness of salvation blessings that come with it. We will be touching on all of those things which the scriptures indicate are events of the last hour. But there will be some introductory considerations.

In the first three editions, we will be handling an important topic: *Understanding the Times*. The purpose is to share along such lines as to make everyone see that we are in the final hour of the church age.

Now, in "God's Pattern Church," we had cause to meditate on the parable of the house built on the rock. A house built on the rock represents a life lived in adherence to the teachings of the Lord. That is, to allow Christ's teachings to influence one's daily living. The house built on the sand represents persons who are careless with the word of the Lord and so with their morals. Another emphasis along the same line has to do with the belief system of his people. We shall have a re-cap of what was observed about the character and faith structure of a believer.

When we talk of character structure, we are saying that God is concerned about developing in us, the holiness of life that we find so greatly manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ in the days of his flesh. When we talk about faith structure, the concern is about our belief system. What a man believes in influences his conduct. So they are interrelated.

In "God's Pattern Church", we dealt with some erroneous practices in the churches today. We sought by the light of God's word to bring correction. In this volume, we are focusing on the hope of the believer, what Paul in Titus calls "that blessed hope". The hope of the believer. In looking at the blessed hope, and the events associated with this, we will concentrate on setting forth what the Bible really teaches. We hope by so doing, the voice of truth will save many from the hold of erroneous doctrines. Truth thoroughly known sets free and motivate a soul to a more purposeful walk with God.

We had thought of taking up these erroneous teachings and examining them one by one. That may seem confrontational. But the word of God will be ministered bit by bit, covering the teachings of scriptures on the events of the last days and how these things concern us. We trust that as we see the glory that God has planned for the church, we will put away childish things (1Corinthians 13:11). Paul said, "In understanding let us be men, but in evil let us be babes". Erroneous doctrines prey upon immature, untaught minds (Eph. 4:14).

So we are saying that many cherished position in scriptures, doctrines that have been taught by men will have to be abandoned as God's Word shines forth. Yes, we trust that as the true and proper picture of the provisions in God's word for the perfection of the church is set forth, the Lord's people will know that the time of playing church is over. There would be a great arising, a great reaching out to lay hold upon our inheritance.

We begin this mediation by drawing attention to four specific teachings that the Lord Jesus gave during the three and a half years of His ministry on earth. There are four discourses in which the Lord Jesus Christ taught extensively about the kingdom of God.

The first is the teaching on the life style of the kingdom as set forth in what we commonly call "the Sermon on the Mount". This teaching went on for three days. It is covered in Mathew chapters 5,6 and 7. Of course, we have some account of it in the other synoptic gospels.

Then, the second discourse we find in Mathew 13, and that itself is, a series of parables on the kingdom of heaven. Essentially the Lord Jesus Christ sketched the picture of the whole period from the day of Pentecost until the time the kingdom of heaven is installed over all the earth. Those seven parables have strong prophetic signification. They are also covered in Mark 4 and Luke 8.

Then the third teaching is on what is generally called "the Second Coming of Christ", or more appropriately, the events of the last days. That is covered in Luke 21, Luke 17, Mark 13 and Mathew 24.

These three teachings are recorded in all three of the synoptic gospels. But there is a fourth; incidentally not mentioned in the synoptic gospels but given full coverage in the gospel according to Saint John. It is the teaching on the Holy Spirit, and understanding the place of the Holy Spirit in the events of the last hour. This teaching is covered in John chapters 14, 15 and 16.

Looking closely at all the discourses, we find in them a special emphasis that the Lord Jesus Christ wants to get across to us. We are shown how the believer is to conduct himself now, by virtue of the fact that the king is resident within him. Christ in us, the hope of glory. If he be Lord inside of us, then the kingdom has begun to be set up within us. Ultimately, it will be set up over all the earth. If he is king within us, then there must be a growing expression of our submission to His benevolent rule as we partake of the kingdom life.

So the life style of the kingdom is revealed in Mathew 5, 6 and 7. Then in Matthew, 13, we are shown that there will be times of spiritual decay in the church, but, towards the end of the church age, there will be the recovery of truth, and of that life style that truth births in man. In Luke 21, Mark 13, Mathew 24, we are shown things that border on the Second Coming of Christ (using a phrase we are more familiar with). And there, we are given a key by which we are able to understand when the time sets in for His glorious appearing.

So, in this topical study, "understanding the time", we are not thinking of making some predictive prophecies. But we will so speak by the help of the spirit of God, as to make an impression upon our hearts and minds that we are living in the very (last) hour. We are to know that there are certain things that belong to our day as the Lord Jesus Christ completes the work of redemption in His church.

Let us now turn to Luke 21. We will do a little bit of reading here and there, get quickly at the key verse and by the means of it, set forth a proper understanding of the times. Luke 21. We will take the reading from verse 29. Actually, the entire chapter deals with the Second Coming of Christ, the events of the last hour. But, we are just taking a portion that emphasises the Lord's interest in our becoming aware of the hour in which these things will be taking place: things that relate to the Lord Jesus Christ setting up his kingdom over the nations, and the attitude of life we should possess when we find ourselves in such an hour, so, from verse 29, we read straight on to verse 36.

²⁹And he spoke to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; ³⁰When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. ³¹So like wise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. ³²Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.

There is a generation that will see these prophetic signs. That generation will also witness everything that the Lord's words have indicated would be fulfilled. They will witness the fulfilment of this prophetic scripture that all of mankind have waited for these many years. Verse 32 is not about some persons physically alive when the Lord was speaking. Rather, it speaks of that generation that will see the shooting forth of the branch of the symbolic tree involved with events of the last hour. Verse 33.

³³Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. ³⁴And take heed to yourselves, lest at anytime your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. ³⁵For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

The very tenor of verse 34 suggests to us that whereas the hour or the day that will usher in the kingdom may not be known to anyone, yet the Lord does not want His own to be unaware, to be ignorant of the specific time period the prophecy refer to. He shows that ignorance of the times and seasons may set in only when his people are given over to worldliness and materialism, here indicated as surfeiting. That is saying, indulgence in the illicit pleasure of this world blinds. There is that which is legitimate, but there is that which borders on sin and careless living.

The passage talks also of drunkenness. Of course that relates to being drunk with the cares of this world just as much as it does with alcohol. There is just as much danger in being drunk with worldliness as in being drunk with alcohol. We are told that only when there is surfeiting and drunkenness that the day comes upon the Lord's people unawares. That is, if we are living in consecration, then our spiritual senses will be alert; such will be enlightened in their spirits to know the things that belong to our day.

It is interesting to note that God always point to the second coming of Christ as that which must influence the lifestyle of his people. Although the church is two thousand years old, nevertheless the things that are taught here are designed to govern the lifestyle of God's people all through the course of the church age. More so at this time of the end.

"Watch ye therefore and pray". Why should we watch? Verse 35 provides the answer... "For as a snare shall that day (and a prophetic day span over many years) come upon all them that dwell upon the face of the earth."

A Vital Prophetic Key

Having shown that there is to be a close connection between understanding the times we are in and the life style it is supposed to birth in us, we now touch on the key that makes us know that we are in the very last hour. Verse 24 of Luke 21 provides the key. Of course, what the Lord Jesus Christ did in his

teachings was to provide us with keys that unlock all of the prophetic writings in the Old Testament and the apostolic writings in the New Testament. Without the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, many prophetic passages of scripture will be like a Jigsaw puzzle to us. But He brings both the Old and the New, and in His teaching, He marries them. In the synoptic gospels and the gospel according to Saint John are enough keys to open up all prophetic scriptures.

We come to verse 24 of our passage it says ...and they... Who are the persons referred to by this word "they"? The reference is to the children of Israel. The people called Israel now has always been, a people who entered into covenant relationship with God, through the intermediary of Moses, on Mount Sinai. From that time, the children of Israel became, as it were, the kingdom of God over the world; a nation set apart unto God.

So here, the Lord speaks to us concerning certain of His dealings with the nation of Israel. By it, we are assisted to know something about the last hour. So, let us take the reading again.

²⁴And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

The reference here is to an event that took place in AD 69/70, when the polity of Israel was destroyed, and her citizens were led captives into all nations. Now, this is a fact of history that many are conversant with. We are told that Israel shall be led away captive into all nations, and that speaks of a scattering.

Then He says, "and Jerusalem... that portion of land that was the centre of all their religious and political activities, Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles.... The word "Gentiles" simply means the nations. In scriptures, mankind is divided into the Jews and the non-Jews. The non-Jews are the gentiles, while the Jews are the children of Israel (or putting it more correctly) they are those children of Israel that remained relatively true to the covenant when the ten northern tribes had gone into marriage with the world).

So, the "Gentiles" simply means "The nations". Reading verse 24 again and substituting the word "nations" for "Gentiles". We read "... and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the nations until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled".

What does it mean for the Gentiles to tread down Jerusalem under foot? It means that the physical land call Jerusalem will be under the occupation of non-Jewish nations until what is here described as "the times of the gentiles be fulfilled." And from AD 70 until 1948, the land of Israel, the whole of Palestine was occupied by non-Jewish nations. And, even in 1948 when the Jews were re-gathered and brought into their own land and proclaimed a sovereign state, Jerusalem as a city, was still under the occupation of the Arabs. Israel is today contending for a full occupation of Jerusalem even though it has much of the City under its political control

(It was not until about twenty years ago that Jerusalem returned back to the control of the Jews. It was then proclaimed the eternal capital City of the Jewish State of Israel 1980).

Now, we are told that Jerusalem shall be trodden down under foot of the gentiles, shall be subjugated by non-Jewish nations, "*until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*" Thus, at the time that Jerusalem comes back to the occupation and sovereignty of the nation of Israel, we are to know that the times of the Gentiles have expired.

But what does this phrase "the times of the Gentiles" mean? There are three crucial time periods in the history of redemption. A great attention is given in scriptures to detail the things that pertain to these time

periods. One, we have the beginning, the creation of man, down unto the fall. All of that is given coverage in the first few chapters of the book of Genesis.

Then, the second is the advent of the Son of God in what is generally called the first coming of Christ, when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. That situation came in order that, the Word of God becoming flesh, might be the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. He came to lay down his life as a ransom for the redemption of humanity.

Then the third time period is what is called "*the last time*", our principal concern in this meditation. And as the Lord Jesus Christ gives us the key that opens the whole world to the events of the last hour in Luke 21, 24 we must go back to the scriptures to trace the origin of this phrase "the times of the Gentiles".

The Times of the Gentiles Marked Out

So, turn with me to Ezekiel 21. We know that God in the out working of the plan of redemption apprehended Abraham, and then apprehended the seed of Abraham, which became the nation of Israel. His dealings with the nation of Israel mirrored God's attitude towards the rest of the nations. Through Israel, He desired to reach all the nations.

Israel failed as a nation, but God's word shows that there is another Israel: the spiritual Israel. The spiritual Israel is the church. But in those times of God's symbolic dealings with the nation of Israel, that nation was the representative kingdom of God over the earth. God demonstrated how He administers the affairs of the whole world through His dealings with the nation of Israel. But a time came when the nation ceased to be God's representative kingdom. They were sacked from that exalted position and God said, "another nation shall come that shall bear fruit to my redemption plan. In Ezekiel 21, we find the time when Israel ceased from being a covenant nation unto God, in terms of being the instrument through which God will take over the nations of the earth.

Ezekiel 21:25-27 says,

²⁵And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel...

The reference here is to the last king over the nation of Israel before Nebucadnezzar was used of God to overthrow the polity of Israel. Israel was led into captivity in Babylon. From that time up till now, there has been no king over Israel.

Here in Ezekiel 21, the prophecy was being given many years before the events took place. And the prophet said that at the time of a certain king (which King is Zedekiah), God would take away the kingdom from Israel and give the right to world-wide rule to the gentile nations. His focus will then be on the nations and no longer on Israel. So, let us read verse 25 again.

²⁵And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end...

God has always pardoned the iniquity of Israel. But here He says, "In the time of this particular king, iniquity is to have an end". That is, He will bring swift judgement to terminate the vicious cycles of unfaithfulness of the nation. All of that is prophesied in Leviticus 26. We read verse 26 of Ezekiel 21 now

²⁶Thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is Low, and abase him that is high.

The Gentile nations were in a low estate in God's redemptive economy. They were cut off from the covenant and commonwealth of Israel. They were without hope and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12), And to the average Jew, a gentile is regarded as a dog. But here the prophet says, "exalt him that is low and abase him that is high" (the Jewish nation being the high one, exalted to the privileges and glory of the covenant). From that time (about BC 608), God exalted the gentile nations and cast down the Jewish nation.

We read again verse 26 together with the twenty-seven verse.

²⁶Thus saith the LORD GOD, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same (anymore): exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. ²⁷I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more until he come whose right it is: and I will give it him

We will be continuing with a consideration of this passage in the next edition. But suffice to say for now that Ezekiel 21:25-27 shows to us in prophecy, when the times of the gentiles was to begin. At the time of Ezekiel was prophesying, Israel was still God's representative kingdom, but a judgement against her was already determined. It was already clear that the kingdom would be taken away from Israel and given to the gentiles. And of this, the prophet prophesied.

From the time when this prophecy was fulfilled (in 608 BC when Nebuchadnezer overthrew the kingdom of Israel) began the times of the gentiles. From that time Israel ceased to be a special nation to God until when at the end of the times, a special place will again be given to that nation. And in verse 27 we are told that the times of the gentiles will continue until when "He who has the right to rule " over the world would come. This brings us to a specific word on this in Luke 21:24

The great empires of this present world and the sovereign rule they exercise over the earth are coming to a close in this end of time. 1980 is a significant year in prophetic scripture. Details of this, we shall examine in the next meditation. The Lord bless you and do you good in Jesus name. Amen.

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UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

We will be going straight to our meditation. We are continuing our study on the topic: "Understanding the times" God is a God of purpose. And the meaning of that is that God does all things after the counsel of His will. Everything God does and the ordering of the events of our world are but reflections of the purpose He has in mind. Now, we know that God's eternal purpose is in Christ Jesus.

Our burden in these ministrations is to cause us to be thoroughly aware of the times we are in, and of the things the Lord is doing in His church, so that we might be better prepared to submit to the Lord's dealings. God expects us to be well positioned to receive the fullness of life, which He has prepared for His people.

Turn with me to Acts 1:6-8, our attention will be on the eighth verse. The context is the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. After his resurrection, for forty continuous days, a little period of time in each of those forty days, the Lord showed himself alive to the disciples. And on the day of His ascension the disciples asked the question that led Him in His answer to give us two things of vital importance in understanding how God programs His works.

Of Times And Seasons

God is a God of time, in the sense that His redemptive purposes are all worked out within specific time frames. After redemption is over, we enter into what we might call "timelessness" or eternity. This is important. So let us read Acts 1:6-8

⁶When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? ⁷And he said unto them, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. ⁸But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Jesus told them "it is not for you to know times and seasons, which the Father has set in his power". The Greek word translated "time" here is *chronos*. Its emphasis is on the time duration, **the time interval** in which God carries out certain specific activities in relation to redemption. Here in Acts 1, we are given the

word in plural form: it is not for you to know times and seasons. So we can say that there are various epochs in God's redemptive dealings with man. This must be clearly understood.

In each of these time periods, the Lord carries out certain activities. The word season in Acts 1:7 is the Greek word Kairos. The emphasis is on the **characteristics of a given period**, the events that transpire. More specifically, it refers to what God does directly in relation to redemption or what God does in the ordering of the events of human history.

So, there are times and there are seasons. We should know that God works within certain time frames that He has before had marked out. For example when you look at Acts 2:1, it reads this way, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come". There was an event that was to take place, that is, the outpouring of the spirit. But this could only occur when the day of Pentecost was fully come.

God waited for that day. It was fifty days from the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. It is interesting to note that fifty days after the deliverance of Israel from bondage to Egypt, God gave them the ten Commandment. So the Law is to the Old Covenant what the Holy Spirit is to the Covenant. The law was given on the day of Pentecost. So, when the antitype, (the fulfilment of that which the Law was only a shadow of) was to set in, God waited for the actual time.

It is important to know that God works with time as He has laid it out. When we are brought by the spirit of God to have an understanding of a time period in the plans and purposes of God in redemption, then, we are to seek from the word of God, the events that belong to that time period. This motivates us to yield ourselves to the LORD along lines in harmony with His redemptive will.

You may want to take note of these passages. They draw the attention to the importance of time in the dealings of God. Whereas all forms of prophecy are important, time prophecies positively impacts those who are brought into their understanding. For example, in talking about others signs of the times, we are told that there would be wars and rumours of wars. Now, there seem to be no period of human history when that has not been true. But when we come to time prophecies, they show us that certain things can only be fulfilled at the appointed times. May the Lord help us to see what time we are in.

Still in this connection note the following. In Galatians 4:4 we are told that when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his son born of a woman, made under the law. God waited until that specific time He had in mind for the Logos to be made flesh. Jesus came forth in due time that He might be the sacrificial Lamb; the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

Also in Titus 1:3, we are told that there are some "due times" in which certain activities are to take place. We have another reference in 1 Timothy 6:15. God has hidden Himself (as it were) in thick darkness, in this sense, that much of His works is not known by mankind except those enlightened by His word. But the time will come when He will show His Almightyness in taking over the affairs of the world in a very direct way. He shall set up the kingdom of His son over the whole earth.

There is yet another reference in Timothy 2:5-6 demonstrating that the various times and season is marked out also for the declaration of what Christ did for us in His death and resurrection.

The purpose of all these is to make us aware that God never does anything in redemption except as it agrees with the times and season that He himself has before hand marked out. And we can go into several other scriptures to show that God is a God who has programmed the workings of redemption.

And now, let us go to the passage of interest, Luke 21:24. We are using this verse to locate this time period and to note specifically that it is the time when the church age will wound up. After this, the reign of Christ (Head and Body) over all the earth commences. Over a period of one thousand years, the Lord Jesus Christ and the glorified church will reign over the kingdoms of this world. The church age winds up introducing that age. So, come with me to Luke 21:24.

²⁴And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

In the last edition we showed that the nation referred to here is Israel. Israel "shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive into all nations". The scattering of the Jewish nation of Israel took place in AD 70 about thirty-six to thirty-seven years after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. And from that time up till 1948, there was no nation under the heaven called Israel.

In 1948, by a divine working expressed through the committee of nations, the sovereign state of Israel was declared. Quite a number of Jews had moved into their own Land. That was a very important development because Luke 21:24 says they shall be led away captive into all nations. But then, another element was introduced. It says, "and Jerusalem... the physical land called Jerusalem, the centre of their religious and political activities all throughout the Old Testament age, that city, Jerusalem, shall be trodden down of the gentiles, *"until..."*."

We saw earlier that "*gentiles*" is a word that is used to describe the non-Jewish nations. There are two great races so to speak: the Jewish race and the gentiles. And, we are here told that "*Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*"

We saw in the last edition that until Jerusalem comes under the sovereign rule of the nation of Israel, we cannot say with any degree of assurance that the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled or to say emphatically that the end of time is come. That is a key provided for us by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It has awaited measurable fulfilment until after the six day war. And in 1974, much of Jerusalem came under the sovereign rule of the nation of Israel. 1974 therefore, marks a very important era in the history of God's dealings with man.

And, please take note that there are three tiers of interest in prophecy: we have the church, we have the nations (the Gentile nations), and we have the Jewish nation of Israel, Our emphasis for now is on the nation of Israel and by extension, the Gentile nations. But when we have by it discovered the time we are in, we will be able to concentrate attention upon the church. We remain very focused on what God wants to pass across to His people. Knowing the times is a means to an end. Our goal is to open up the church to the fullness of the blessings of redemption that Christ is bringing to the consecrated in this hour.

Now, we desire to show when the times of the gentiles commenced. On the authority of Luke 21:24 we also see its end point. Since in 1974, Jerusalem virtually came under the sovereign rule of the nation of Israel, we can say that God was indicating by this, that the end of times of the Gentiles is in full view.

Lets get a little more detail than we did in the past edition. Please turn with me to Ezekiel 21:25-27. From this scriptures (Ezekiel 21:25-27, we can see that the times of the Gentiles ha run over fifty jubilees, fifty periods of fifty years. Over two thousand and five hundred years was given to the Gentiles (the-Jewish nation) to exercise world-wide rule. Let's take the reading again. Ezekiel 21:25-27.

And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come when iniquity shall have an end.

The phrase "*iniquity shall an end*", suggests two things. First that God pardons iniquity. He brings judgement upon iniquity in order to recover His people and then brings in a season of mercy again. But, there comes a time, because of persistence in doing evil, iniquity is brought to total judgement. And that is what is revealed here.

Leviticus 26 shows that there are five cycles of judgement that God would bring upon the iniquity of the nation of Israel. After these five cycles are exhausted, He will give them over to captivity. So here, they were to go into captivity for seventy years in Babylon. And, in addition, the monarchy was to be brought to an end.

From the time this prophecy was fulfilled six hundred and eight years before the Lord Jesus Christ came in his first advent, there had been no king over Israel. The rule of Monarchs, the period of Monarchy, ended with Zedekiah, the wicked and profane prince under reference here. 2 Chronicles 36 covers all that. But here, Ezekiel was giving the prophecy many years before it happened. Until 608 BC, God dealt with the nation of Israel as a covenant nation. But from that time, God dealt with individuals in that nation according to their measure of faithfulness. Israel ceased to be a covenant nation under God as from BC 608.

And we find the reference to this in Mathew 21:43 when the Lord Jesus Christ told them "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and given to a nation that shall bring forth the fruit thereof". So, the church is a continuous reminder to us that the nation of Israel has been sacked. God has raised up another nation, a spiritual nation in its stead, to bring to God what He could not get from Israel. In the twenty-sixth verse, Ezekiel continues

Thus saith the Lord, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown...

The diadem is the glory of the monarchy, while the crown is the very physical evidence of the kingship. And here, Ezekiel says, removed the diadem and take off the crown.

This shall not be the same: ...

That is, things shall not be the same anymore in Israel. After the captivity, there were Governors and Tetrarchs, but Israel never had a king. And she was under the Roman Empire at the time the Lord Jesus Christ came in his first advent. So in fulfilment of this prophecy, things were no longer the same with Israel after the inglorious reign of Zedekiah. The prophet continues in verse 27.

Exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high

You will notice that the word "him" above is rendered in italic in the scriptures while the other words are in normal Roman letters. That means that it was supplied by the translators to give the rendering fluency. But the thought is that the "he" that is low is not an individual but the gentile nations.

Whereas Israel has been a peculiar nation unto God, that estate was to be lost. Time was now to be given to the gentile nations to show how much man, plagued with the effect of the fall, can exercise benevolent rule over his fellow man. Can man rule over man and there will be a lasting peace in the earth? That is the great question. And God has shown by the times of the Gentiles that man's rule over man while he is still under the influence of sin, can only end in irredeemable collapse and annihilating catastrophe. But God in trueness plans an intervention.

Now, concerning the overthrow of the kingdom of Israel, the Lord said in verse 27 that He will do it in three consecutive judgements. (And it is in the third judgement that we see the prophecy in verse 25 fulfilled, in the reign of Zedekiah). So the prophets says in verse 27,

²⁷I will overturn, overturn, overturn it.

We notice that God used Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon to sack the nation of Israel. But he did it in three consecutive battles. From the first time he began his military campaign against Israel to the third and last time spanned a period of twenty-five years.

In the first instance, Nubuchadnezzar went to Israel to destroy the cities of Israel and to carry away some valuable things in the temple. This happened under king Jehoachin, 2Chronicles 36 list out these three separate assaults against Israel. It was at the third campaign against Israel that Israel was completely destroyed, and at that time Zedekiah was king over Israel.

So, in verse 27, it is predicted that in three separate assaults against Israel, the kingdom will be taking away from her.

²⁷I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.

The time period in which the Gentiles are to rule over the earth was to be terminated by the crucial entrance into the world affairs of the one who has the right under God to rule the whole earth. This is important. The "he" there who is to come is Christ, Head and body, the corporate Christ: the LORD coming to set up his kingdom upon the earth and the church ruling with him.

The following scriptures are relevant to the consideration of the matter at hand, first; Daniel 2, especially from verse 31 to 45. There we find that four world empires were to emerge during the times of the Gentiles. In Daniel 7, we are shown again these four world empires in another symbolism. It is in reference to these four world (gentile) empires that were divinely permitted to rule over all the earth after God overthrew the kingdom of Israel, that we have the phrase "*times of the Gentiles*".

The four world empires are the Babylonian empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Grecian Empire, and the Roman Empire, whose reign has been stretched over a long time.

According to verse 23 of 2Chronicles 36, we know that a particular kingdom has set in when it begins to have dominance over all the earth. We also see this in Daniel 2:39. So, we are talking about world empires, not merely a major kingdom, but such kingdom that had a sovereign rule over all the earth. And there has been four such, the last being the Roman Empire.

The Roman Empire has had two lives already. And there is in the background the emergence again of that empire. That does not perturb us, because we know that God will destroy it completely when it fully re-emerges. God will install His kingdom over all the earth upon the ruins of these kingdoms.

In interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel simply said "in the days of these kings" (Daniel 2:44) which means that even when a kingdom or empire has lost its sovereign rule over the earth, it remains a power, seeking to re-establish its dominance. But in the days of these kings, God shall set up a kingdom that shall reign over all the earth.

That promised kingdom was inaugurated when the Lord Jesus came in his first advent. He it was who introduced the kingdom of heaven, opening the door for men to be united with Him in the glory of the kingdom. And the kingdom shall be set up (installed) when the perfected church with Christ reigns over all the earth.

That is the first point. In the days of these kings, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom. It shall be a stone cut without hands (Daniel 2:45). That is the first of two facts we are seeking to establish. Then, the second point: This is drawn from how the kingdom of Israel was overturn by God's judgement in 3 separate assaults until it was completely brought low.

Now, we can show that the first and second world wars were by God, used to forcibly checkmate certain world powers and their tyrannical controls over mankind. We know that the Roman Empire that is again in formation will come to prominence. But the Lord our God will destroy it completely in what might be called the third world war. But, a lot of activities will take place in the church unto her perfection and glorification before that time. And it is the church in power that will signal the final battle. That stone cut out without hands, as the prophet puts it, shall smite and break down completely the remains of the kingdoms of these worlds.

We will close on that note. From 1974 began to be that generation that will witness the fulfilment of all prophetic scriptures. How long is a generation? The longest in scriptures is one hundred and twenty (120) years, the shortest has been forty (40) years. But we know that the Lord will do a quick work and cut it short in righteousness. Our burden is not so much as knowing the time duration. We are more concerned with alerting the church as to the great work of perfecting the willing hearted which Christ is carrying out on earth today. The earnest expectation of all creation waits for this class of believers to be revealed (Romans 8:19). Beloved arise and continually yield to the Lord's voice and works in these crucial days.

3

UNDERSTANDING

THE

TIMES

Glory, honour, power and majesty be continuously ascribed to the name of the living God. In this edition, we will be concluding our meditation on "Understanding the Times. Towards the end of this meditation we

shall be drawing attention to the use in the old covenant era of the blowing of trumpets in connection with times and seasons. For now, lets go to Luke 21:24-28

²⁴And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled...

We know from the last two editions that the persons referred to above are the Jews, the nation of Israel. We saw what the phrase the "*times of the gentiles*" stand for, and that Luke 21:24 is a time prophecy something that is indicative of events of the last days. The preposition "*until*" acts like an adverb modifying the phrase "trodden down of the Gentiles". And we said that it was in 1974 (strictly speaking) that the nation of Israel knew that Jerusalem had come under their full political reach.

The closing month of 1973 witnessed a decisive battle against Israel by the Arabs hoping in vain to break through and capture part of Jerusalem. But after that time, it was clear to the nation of Israel that Jerusalem is under their sovereign control. Six years later in 1980, Menachem Begin proclaimed the whole of Jerusalem as the eternal capital city of the nation of Israel. So, whether we take it from the 1974 or from the 1980 view point, or from the six day war in 1967 when most parts of Jerusalem came under the occupation of the nation of Israel, we know that that time period indicates to us that the times of the Gentiles has only a fleeting remains.

We have shown in previous editions that the times of the Gentiles began six hundred and eight years before the first advent of Christ and have run on up till about 1980. And our purpose is to show that we are in the time of the end. We will take the reading of Luke 21 a little bit further to find the events that the Lord said would be taking place in the earth during that time, Luke 21:25-27

²⁵And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars: and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity: the sea and the waves roaring. ²⁶Men's hearts failing them for fears, and for looking after those things, which are coming on the earth: for the powers of the heaven shall be shaken. ²⁷And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory...

The Son of man is the Lord Jesus Christ. The conjunction with which verse 27 begins shows that it is linked with the events of verses 25 and 26. This is saying that the events revealed in those two verses lead to what is shown in verse 27: "And then shall they see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory". Verse 28 is the verse of choice. It says

²⁸And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

There is an expected response from the class of people assisted to see what is transpiring in the earth today. They are called upon to "look", to "lift up the head". Now we may not know when this generation began. But we know, by the Spirit of God and the light of the prophetic scriptures, that we are in that generation that will close up the church age. It is a season of great import to the church of Jesus Christ. It is with power and great glory that the church will manifest Him in the last hour. There is a whole lot of work to be done in the church. What we see now of ourselves, and what we see in the Church World are

far removed from what God desires. But God is working to beautify and fill with glory a people earnestly desiring a place with Him on the throne.

Now, some other questions come to mind in the light of what was shared in the second edition. How may we know that the last two world wars have any reference to the gradual overthrow of the kingdoms of this world? Is it sufficient to say that and Chronicles 36 describing the overthrow of the kingdom of Israel in three separate military campaigns is typical and points out how God will overthrow the kingdoms of this world? Are we to find in the scriptures some other passages that touch on the same thing?. No doubt, these several questions are warranted. We shall show that it is not only from Ezekiel 21:24-27 that we can draw this conclusion, but that it is specifically referred to in the book of Haggai.

Haggai and Zechariah were two prophets that ministered to the nation of Israel after the Babylonian captivity. Thus the message of Haggai has much relevance to the church. We shall be reading from Haggai 2. For those who are familiar with this book, a little reading will show to us that his prophetic message relate to things that will be taking place in the church at the time of the end. The passage refers to Christ activities in His Church and in the midst of the nations at the end (the closing period) of the church age. Haggai 2:4-7

⁴Yet now be strong, O Zerubabel, saith the LORD, and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the Land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of host: ⁵According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye come out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. ⁶For thus saith the LORD of host; yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;

The phrase "*yet once*" means He has done it previously. But the reference here is to the final onslaught of the divine in the overthrow of the kingdoms of this world, as we shall show more clearly. He says, "yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and earth, and the sea, and the dry land. The reference is to the kingdoms of this world both ecclesiastical (religious), political, civil and economic; whatever combines to give us the present world systems. All of these will be terribly shaken in the last hour. And at the same time, the Lord will be doing a similar work in His church: first, in the visible church systems to overthrow unfaithfulness and moral decay. Secondly to lead a cleansed and worshipping church into a greater and greater communion with Him until she receives perfection of Life.

This passage (Haggai 2:6) is quoted in Hebrews 12:22-28. Paul says, the phrase "yet once more", signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things, which cannot be shaken, may remain. And he concludes, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom, which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear".

So Haggai 2:6 says God shall shake not just the ecclesiastical heavens but political expressions of the present world system. In verse 7, He says,

⁷And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations

shall come...

Christ is the desire of all nations, seen from the divine standpoint. The cry of all the nations for the rule of Christ is seen in this same word "desire". Nations will cry out for Christ. Christ is the desire of all nations. When man shall be totally disenchanted with man's rule over man, they will cry out for the kingdom of Christ. Things shall be very terrible. All that we have heard and known of wars and rumours of wars up till now are like a child's play when compared with the events that shall close up this church age and introduce the kingdom age. Let us take verse 7 of Haggai 2 again. It says

⁷And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

The house is the church. He says He will fill it with glory. He fills that which is relatively or totally empty. But here, the reference is to the church. We have not yet seen glory as God has purposed that His church should bear. Glory will be poured upon the church. This He will do when He would have cleansed the church. There is now so much of the way of the world in the church. He would deliver the hearts of the obedient from a marriage to the world that has eaten up the visible church systems. He would turn our hearts, minds and total focus to Himself. He will fill His house with glory. Verse 8.

⁸The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts.

The words silver and gold here, though can be applied to physical wealth, are used to refer to redemptive truths and the divine nature. Silver in scriptures is the metal used to typify redemption, while Gold is used to typify the divine nature. Full revelation of the redemption in Christ shall be given to the church. For God has the power to make it known. And the life that corresponds to truth revealed shall be imparted unto the overcoming church. Verse 9 is a passage that we find upon all lips, but which is little understood. It says.

⁹The glory of this later house shall be greater than the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place I will give peace, saith the LORD of host.

That is the context. All Bible believers know that the reference in Haggai 2:9 is to the glory that is to be witnessed by the church. The latter house refers to the church at the time of the end. The former house is the Old Testament church, or viewed from another perspective, the early church. But the glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former.

All of this appears to be doctrinal. But the import is this. When we have seen by time prophecies that we are in the last hour as we have found indication in Jerusalem having being proclaimed the eternal capital city of the nation of Israel, we are to know that the Lord will be involved in quite some work in His church. And our burden is to show what He is doing in this last hour and how we can respond to Him.

We will read the closing verses of Haggai 2, which speak specifically concerning the overthrow of the kingdoms of this world. Haggai 2:20-22

²⁰And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying, ²¹Speak to Zerubabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth (remember verse 6, Here, the LORD is saying the same thing and He goes further to show us how He is going to bring it to pass. He says in the next verse): ²²And I will overthrow the

throne of kingdoms (this He did in the first world war), and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen (this He did in the second world war); and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and the rider's shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother (this he will do in the third world war).

So, three distinct campaigns by God shall bring to finality the overthrow of the kingdoms of this world. Revelation 11:15 say the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ. Notice the last phrase in verse 22. It says "everyone by the sword of his brother".

It can be shown that the Roman Empire has had two lives. But it is building up itself again. And Revelation 17 details to us the emergence of the Roman Empire, how it is going to be constituted. It shows to us that the Japhetite nations (European nations) shall be the main stay of that empire. And it goes on to show how the rebirth of the empire and its sovereign rule shall be crushed in due course. Revelation 17, 18 contains all of the details, but we are not drawn into those considerations now. The time interval between Jerusalem coming up under the occupation of nation of Israel, and when the third world war will take place, that time interval, is a season of great opportunity for the church. And that is our emphasis.

But somebody may say, "What do you mean that the Roman Empire has had two lives? If you will turn with me to Daniel 7, we shall in the twelfth verse see something that is of great importance concerning God's dealing with the kingdoms of this world. Daniel 7:12.

¹²As concerning the rest of the beasts...

The reference is to the first three beast or world empires that preceded the Roman Empire which is the fourth beast. These three beasts are the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian and the Grecian Empire. So, we are told in verse 12.

¹²As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had there dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time

What we find in history is that as one World Empire goes down, another is raised up. That is what happened to the four world gentile empires emerged. But when an empire comes down, even though it no longer has dominion over the whole earth, it remains a power, a force, and continues to stir up itself. This is what is meant by the phrase, "their lives were prolonged for a season and time". And this agrees with what we find in Daniel 2:45. When the stone cut without hands smite the great image (representing the kingdoms of this world), it breaks in pieces the iron and the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold.

So, for each of this world empire, when the dominion is taken away, the life is prolonged for a season and a time. For the Roman Empire, the most elastic of the four world empires, we find it re-emerging, each time becoming stronger than it was before. And Revelation 13:2 assures us that when it comes up in the final form, it will have all the strength of the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian and the Grecian empires. It will represent the kingdoms of this world in its full glory. That is why it is said to have the characteristic of the lion (the symbol used to represent Babylon in her royal glory), the bear (the symbol of the Medo-Persian empire) and the Leopard (the symbol of the Grecian empire).

That empire had its first life as a purely political world power. Through the Roman Emperors, Roman ruled the whole earth. But sometime in the fifth century, the kingdom was over thrown. But it re-emerged in

another form, as a religious kingdom. Papal Rome took over from Imperial Rome and continued its brutal reign until when it suffered great defeats in the 17th and 18th centuries.

But we are shown that the empire shall emerge again. The Roman Empire is re-emerging. And we can authoritatively say that the European Union forms the essential base for the emergence of this world empire. That can be shown from Revelation 17, but it is not our burden for now. All we are saying is that the Roman Empire shall emerge a third time, but God shall smite it. And Revelation 17 says there will be such a loss of confidence among the constituting nations that they will begin to fight against each other (the same picture given in Haggai 2:22).

Verse 28 of Luke 21 says, "When ye see these things begin to take place, look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh". That is very important when that begins to happen... And whereas we know that there was a sign in the rebirth of the nation of Israel in 1948, we cannot mistake that powerful witness of Jerusalem coming under the sovereign rule of the children of Israel. We have seen it; we must begin to lift up our heads.

The reference here is not the physical head, for there is no relationship between lifting up the physical head and experiencing redemption. The head is here used to represent our minds. We must begin to occupy our minds with the issues of our perfection and full redemption, the very things the Lord brings with Him in His Second Advent. Look up from the earth realm. So many are earth bound. There are those who dwell upon the earth. But look up! Set your focus upon the Lord for our full redemption draweth nigh.

Now, we move on to something we mentioned at the beginning. That has to do with blowing the trumpet. Let us read Numbers 10:1-10

¹And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ²Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. ³And when they shall blow with them all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. ⁴And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee. ⁵When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward. ⁶When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys. ⁷But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm. ⁸And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance forever throughout your generations. ⁹And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppreseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. ¹⁰Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt-offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God.

Now, we will simply gather a few thoughts and that will be sufficient for our

Present purpose. He says, "Make thee two trumpets of silver". First of all, let us look at the symbolism of silver and the fact of the trumpet. Silver is the metal in scriptures used to symbolise redemption. The trumpet assists amplification of the voice. Thus a trumpet made of silver denote the message of redemption.

Under the Old Testament, it is the sons of Aaron, the priests that blow the trumpet. We find a direct instruction concerning this in the eight verse. We find also that, the trumpet is used to indicate that a season has set in. It says "in the days of your gladness", the reference is to festal occasions: the feast of Passover, the feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles, including all the other four feasts built into those three feasts. Those are the days of their gladness

Then He says further, "and in your solemn days". That speaks of the Sabbath days. Even the Sabbath days were to be introduced by the blowing of the trumpets. And when a feast day falls into a weekday and not a Saturday, that weekday is declared as a Sabbath and the trumpet is blown to announce it. Then He says "in the beginning of your months". And he says when ye blow this trumpet; it should be over your burnt offerings, over the sacrifice of your peace offerings that they may be to you for a memorial before the Lord.

That is all we will be taking for now. In closing we return to that which we began with in this meditation. We are in the last hour and Christ has so much work to do in the church. After about two thousand years, majority of the believers are still babes. Yet, in the natural, we do not expect a forty-year-old man to get married to a two-year-old girl. In the ancient times, we see a situation where people "throw firewood down" for a baby girl just born with the intention to marry her when she comes of age. But, we are talking seriously now. The church that would be the bride of Christ must be fully grown in Christ.

And concerning this, God is opening the scriptures at this last hour. When we see these signs, the believers are to detach themselves from the earth, they should not be earth bound. They should not be part of them that dwell upon the earth, that is, them that live their lives around what to eat, what to wear etc. and do not give adequate attention to the spiritual prosperity of their souls.

The Lord says, "Look up for your redemption draweth nigh". That concerns you and me in this last hour. And all we ask for is "Lord, make yourself known to your church in this last hour, fill her with glory as you have said that the glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former". We do not see it so now, but it shall be so, for your word shall not fail". The Lord bless you, in Jesus name. Amen.

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4

UNDERSTANDING

THE

TIMES

We are continuing in our discussion on the blessed hope but actually taking some introductory considerations. The introduction, which will till cover some further editions, is important. A matter of such importance as the blessed hope should have no shadow cast upon it in any way. Lack of understanding hinders proper response to divine things.

The Old Testament (the law and the prophets) and all of God's dealings with Biblical characters in that era foreshadow God's dealings with His people in the New Testament age. This is of much importance. For example, take the man Abraham. We know at the beginning, he has just one wife: Sarah. But at some point in his life, Agar, who was actually a house help to Sarah, came in. And after Sarah died, Abraham married another wife, Keturah.

Now these were actually three women that lived. But we know that God's dealings with Abraham and all the Biblical records concerning him foreshadow His dealings with His people under the 2 covenants. For example in Galatians 4, we are told that both Sarah and Agar are allegories. Sarah typified the New Testament while Agar typified the Old Testament. And, after the death of Sarah we find Keturah coming in to give some special emphasis to the antitype of that covenant that Agar represents.

So, all of God's dealing with the people of Israel and those Biblical characters presented in the first thirty nine books of the Bible are, strictly speaking, shadows of the Lord's people and of their experiences under God in the New Testament. This should be noted carefully.

We may look at the Old Testament as serving two purposes. One, God is showing to us in the great doctrines taught by Moses, Aaron and the prophets, shadows of the great themes of redemption. The elaborate ritual and ceremonies, the festal occasions are but types and imageries of real events in the New Testament age touching on the redemption that is in Christ. We can look at the Old Testament therefore as the New Testament concealed in shadows. And in the light of the teachings of the New Testament, we find that God's dealings with the children of Israel under the Old covenant had the general characteristics and boundaries of the great themes of redemption in the New.

Again, we can also look at the New Testament as the Old Testament revealed. So that, when you take any subject matter in the New, you will find that there is an adequate discussion on that same subject in the Old. Thus both the Old Testament and the New Testament writings provide the full range of truth on any subject matter To discuss something in one without an appropriate reference to some passage in the other might border on wrong emphasis. The scripture has provided that by the mouth of two or three witnesses let every matter be established. More importantly, there is no subject matter in the New but that it is to be found in the Old. Even if it is just one aspect of that matter, we will find it in the Old. Thus, we may not be able to fully appreciate a subject matter in the New, without reference to the Old.

There is a scriptural backing for the above observation. Take for example, Paul. He wrote about half of New Testament scriptures. But he said the authority he had for all the things contained in His epistles, is that they agree with the principles of truth that God has laid down in the Old Testament. Paul knew he was an apostle; was called of God and anointed of Him to preach the gospel, but he said all he taught and preached were derived from what was written in the Law and the prophets.

Let us go to the scriptures to see where Paul made this important observation. Acts 26:22. The occasion was the defence of Paul in the presence of Festus and King Agrippa who were dignitaries in the Roman Empire. Paul was converted on the way to Damascus when he was on mission to persecute the church.

On the way to Damascus to arrest believers, God apprehended him. And from that time, all of Paul's life was turned the right way up, and he began to preach Jesus Christ. Certain of his teachings on grace and related subjects were seen by the Jews (who still held rigidly to certain of the Old Testament practices) as heresies. And they were minded to kill him. It was on such an occasion when he was dragged before Festus and subsequently before Agrippa that we find this statement made in verse 22 of Acts 26.

²²Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.

Now, Paul is saying here that there is no doctrine taught by him, whether he was talking of the gifts of spirit, the five-fold ministry, or things that pertain to the perfection and glorification of the church, but that it derived its authority from the Old Testament scriptures.

I Corinthians 10 further confirm the above observation. There Paul said that the events that transpired for those forty years during the wanderings of the children of Israel through the wilderness to the promised land, answer to specific events taking place in and among God's people all through the gospel age. And, of course, saints of this church age have identified this position as true. This song comes to mind now "Guide me O thou great Jehovah, pilgrims through this wilderness".

So, the wilderness journey of the children of Israel answers to the wilderness journey of the New Testament church. We are not passing through any physical wilderness, but from the point we are saved to the point we enter into the fullness of the inheritance reserved for us by God, our pertinent experiences during that time are by the word of God pictured as a wilderness, showing that there is something better, fuller, richer in the mind of God for us than all that we have experienced up till now.

In Hebrews 10, Paul says "for the law... And the word" Law" here covers the first five books of the Old Testament. They constitute the spiritual foundation for the writings of the prophets and the ministry of the priests all through the Old Testament age. There is no prophecy in the Old Testament but that it has its roots in the first five books called Law. The Law founded the words that came forth from the mouth of the prophets. For the law came out of Zion and the word of God from Jerusalem, we are told in Isaiah 2:3.

So the law was the foundation for all that did labour under the Old Testament in teaching and preaching. And so Paul says in Hebrews 10:1

¹For the laws having a shadow of good things to come, And not the very image of the things can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.

So here we are told that all the provisions in the book of Genesis, Exodus,

Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy could not make the comers there unto perfect because they were images of the real substance. Colossians 2:17 say they are a shadow of things to come; but the body (the substance) is of Christ,

Whenever we look at any aspect of God's word in the New, we must seek to find out what is revealed of the same matter under the Old. We must search the scriptures, going through the writings of the prophet, the apostles and other writers on the same subject matter

That is the meaning of Hebrews 1:1, in many ways and in different parts God caused His word to be spoken in time past. So, this prophet had a little of the manifestation of truth in his teachings concerning a particular subject matter in redemption leaving other details to be supplied by other prophets. And this is how all scriptures come to us, here a little and there a little

And all of these things we are saying relate to what we have on hand: the blowing of the trumpet. Quite some wrong emphasis and false teachings, which abound are associated with the events of this last hour. This is why we are very deliberate in our approach to establishing any word of doctrine.

Thus, as we continue on this great subject: the Blessed hope, we must look into the scriptures in sufficient details in order to have a clear understanding of the things that belong to our Salvation, perfection and glorification.

So, come with me to Numbers 10:1-10

¹And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ²Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. ³And when they shall blow with them all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. ⁴And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee. ⁵When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward. ⁶When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys. ⁷But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm. ⁸And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance forever throughout your generations. ⁹And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppreseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. ¹⁰Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt-offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God.

We will go straight to verse 8. There it says it is the sons of Aaron that were commanded to blow the trumpet. This is important. Not Aaron, but the Sons of Aaron that did blow the trumpet. The closing verses of chapter 10 tell us how a typical occasion of the blowing of the trumpet set in. Notice that we are told that the blowing of the trumpet was for the journeying of the children of Israel.

So moving from the red sea through the wilderness to the land of promise answers to the believer's progressive experiences of the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. The closer we are to "the Promised Land", the closer we are to the fullness that God has prepared for us in Christ Jesus. We see Israel's journey in a new perspective. They journeyed to life. They were coming from the realm of death, and they journey to life.

When the trumpet is to be blown, it is Moses that first gets the signal. If while waiting upon the Lord, the Shekinah glory, which is as a column of light in the holiest of all, begins to lift, by this Moses is able to know that God wants them to move, to break camp and journey into another place of encampment that He would show them. Moses would say on such occasion "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered, let them that hate him flee before him".

Then he comes out, shares that insight with Aaron who begins to intercede, because fraught with danger and great conflicts were the movements of the children of Israel. Israel moved unto their inheritance but not without opposition. Aaron upon receiving that word would now tell his sons to blow the trumpet.

Aaron and Moses are two types of the same person, the Lord Jesus Christ. They were simply figures of the Lord Jesus Christ in their respective ministries. And it is important to note that it was neither Aaron nor Moses that blow the trumpet but the sons of Aaron. But they took their instructions, got their inspiration for the blowing of the trumpet from their father Aaron.

Now again we see in the second part of verse 8 that this blowing of the trumpet was something that was to be observed throughout their generations. So, for about one thousand five hundred years, month in, month out, all throughout that long period, Israel observed this ordinance. And whenever we see something repeated in so many ways and spanning over a long period, it is indicative that it has prophetic signification.

The next thought is in verse 10. We read verse 10 again

¹⁰Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn day and in the beginning of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets...

That gives us an idea that in Israel there is a close relationship between times and seasons when they set in and the blowing of the trumpet. The trumpet was never blown in vain. It had a signification. On the first day of each month, they blew the trumpet. On the day of their gladness they blew the trumpet. Then on festive occasions, here called "on your solemn days", they blew the trumpet. And when there is war, they blew the trumpet; they sounded an alarm with it. This is important.

Now, what do all of these things stand for? First, we want to observe that the solemn days or the festal occasions in Israel were grouped into three seasons. The season or festive period of Passover, which covered eight days, the season, or feast of Pentecost, which covered just one day and the season (feast) of Tabernacles which covered twenty-two days.

These three great festal occasions answer to three distinct experiences the church must undergo before coming into fullness of redemption. Historically we can say that the feast of Passover is already fulfilled in the church. 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 says that Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. And when

The Lord Jesus Christ would die on the cross, the event took place on the day the children of Israel were commanded to celebrate the feast of Passover under the Old Testament.

They, they slew a lamb, applied the blood on the lintel and side posts of their houses, as it is written, "when I see the blood, I will pass over you". On that same day the Lord Jesus Christ died upon the cross. And fifty days after, on the very day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was outpoured upon the waiting church. The phrase that opens Acts 2:1 *and when the day of Pentecost was fully come*, shows us that the event of the out pouring of the Holy spirit was the antitypical fulfilment of the Old Testament feast of Pentecost.

So, relative to the church, the feast of Pentecost has been already fulfilled. More correctly, we can say that for the church corporately, the feast of Passover has been fulfilled, but for the individual, the day he gives his life to Christ and experience the new birth, he begins to celebrate the feast of Passover. And for the believer, the day he comes into the experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, he begins to celebrate the feast of Pentecost.

So, while the feast of Passover and Pentecost may be futuristic in relation to any one individual, if the person is not saved or if the person is not baptised with the Holy Spirit, nevertheless, relative to the church, these spiritual events have already been fulfilled. But there is a third event that answers to fullness of redemption the feast of tabernacles.

Under the Old Testament, the Feast of Passover had two other feasts attached to it, the feast of unleavened bread and the waving of the sheaves, (also called first fruits). In other words, when the season of Passover sets in, all its three feasts: the Passover itself, the feast of unleavened bread and the feast of first fruits are what is in view. All of them are celebrated in the season of Passover.

Then, the Pentecost feast stood alone, while the Feast of Tabernacles, like the Feast of Passover had two additional feasts associated with it: the feast of trumpets and the feast of atonement. The season of Tabernacles is introduced by the feast of trumpets, followed by the atonement, and then the tabernacle proper.

All seven feasts (Passover, Unleavened bread, the first fruits, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacle) were announced by the blowing of the trumpet as we found in Numbers 10:10 and also in Leviticus 23:4. But, apart from this general blowing of the trumpet to announce the feasts, there was a particular feast that answers to the trumpets, a particular season set aside for the blowing of the trumpet.

Now, when we take that and consider it along with the fact that the trumpet is blown also to announce the beginning of the months, we know that there is a close connection between the blowing of the trumpet and the various events that took place in Israel from season to season.

We want to bring this meditation to a close. But we will take on a few more things that will assist in preparing us for the next meditation. You will recall that in the last edition we said that the trumpets, which were two, were made of silver. And we said that silver is a metal in the Old Testament that is used to typify redemption. Notice, the trumpet simply amplifies the voice, it is the voice of the priest that sounds out. The trumpet only gives a distinction to that sound, to amplify it.

Thus, we can say with all authority that all of the redemptive experiences that the church is to have are to be proclaimed by the ministry of God's word. As we shall show in the next edition, the blowing of the trumpet and the ministry of the prophetic word are associated concepts. What was found in the Old as just the blowing of physical sound is in the New having the emphasis of the voice of the Son of God through prophetic channels. It is the declaration of God's mind and purpose relative to some aspect of redemption that has set in.

The blowing of the trumpet in the Old relates to times and seasons. The blowing of the trumpet in the New is the ministry of the prophetic word emphasising a new season in the redemptive activities of Christ in His church. Light must precede any redemptive blessing the church must experience. This is quite important. In the next edition we shall continue on this matter of the blowing of the trumpet. The LORD bless you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.