


The silhouettes of two men walking are positioned behind the word 'COUNSEL'. They are walking away from the viewer, and their shadows are cast on the ground below them.

COUNSEL

SPRING 2013

A large, vibrant yellow daffodil flower is the central focus of the lower half of the cover. It has six petals and a prominent central corona. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting other flowers and foliage.

*God's Plan of Salvation
Perfecting Holiness
Two Men and You
and more...*

*“Therefore I endure all things for the elects’ sakes...”
2 Timothy 2:10*

Second Timothy is Paul’s last words to the church. The letter has a warm yet sober character to it, as Paul both encourages and challenges his younger fellow worker in the duty that lay before him. The letter has tremendous contemporary application to us today, as like Timothy, duty calls us in our generation and we must answer this call.

This kind of language is foreign to worldly thinking, where self sacrifice is a quaint notion of the past or at least only a temporary arrangement until ideals of success are personally realized. The notion of pouring out one’s life for service of another, with no personal benefit accruing to us has never been the thinking of the natural man.

In that there is nothing new. What is unsettling however is when the call to service for God, which includes personal cost, not convenience, is rejected among professing Christians. When the Christian’s goals, lifestyles, dreams, concerns and tears are indistinguishable from the worlds, we have sunk to an unacceptable low spiritual state.

Paul was a man who this world could not touch. He had witnessed the ‘eternal glory’. The

verse quoted above finishes this way, ‘that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.’ How could the world compete with ‘eternal glory’?

But pursuing the things of ‘eternal glory’ meant ‘endur(ing) all things for the elects’ sakes’. Confining ourselves to 2 Timothy here are some of the things Paul endured. Rejection by those he once served (1:15), falsely imprisoned (2:9), persecution (3:10-12), desertion by one time fellow labourer (4:10), personal attacks for his stand for truth (4:14), abandonment by fellow believers in his hour of need (4:16, 17). And of course his life’s work is seen through the Acts and his epistles telling of sufferings and sacrifice for Christ.

These things seem remote to many of us in the Western world at least. It seems more like stories of a distant past. Certainly we see ominous signs in even the freedoms of the west. But for the present many freedoms remain intact. Paul’s words of the first epistle are timely, *“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”* (1 Tim. 2:1, 2)

And Paul’s challenge remains. Are we willing to ‘endure all things for the elects’ sake’? Am I prepared to be available to the Lord and to his people to do what

is necessary for the advancing of the gospel and growth in the local church? Or is my Christian life only one of convenience? Do I complain or feel imposed upon when demands are placed on me. Listen again to Paul’s words, *‘Therefore I endure all things for the elects’ sakes.’*

To think and live like Paul, we are helped if we understand the divine plan. Paul goes on to say, *‘It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.’* (2 Tim. 2:11-13). The expectation of future reigning with Him simply crushed any worldly ambition or ease of life now. To be denied future reward because we denied His right in our lives now was unthinkable for Paul. Although salvation is always secure, future service will be determined by present service.

What about our generation? Are we willing to embrace the spirit of Paul? Are we prepared to view eternity’s values and let them be the vision of our lives? Perhaps the time is now for all of us, to set aside the wasted years and squandered opportunities and give ourselves afresh to the Lord in unreserved service for Him. He can take us where we are and do great things. No price is too high for Him. *‘Therefore I endure all things for the elects’ sakes.’*



COUNSEL

Timely Truths For The People Of God

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*When across the heart deep waves of sorrow
Break, as on a dry and barren shore;
When hope glistens with no bright tomorrow,
And the storm seems sweeping evermore;*

*When the cup of every earthly gladness
Bears no taste of the life-giving stream;
And high hopes, as though to mock our sadness,
Fade and die as in some fitful dream,*

*Who shall hush the weary spirit's chiding?
Who the aching void within shall fill?
Who shall whisper of a peace abiding,
And each surging billow calmy still?*

*Only He whose wounded heart was broken
With the bitter cross and thorny crown;
Whose dear love glad words of joy had spoken,
Who His life for us laid meekly down.*

*Blessed Healer, all our burdens lighten;
Give us peace. Thine own sweet peace, we pray!
Keep us near Thee till the morn shall brighten,
And all the mists and shadows flee away!*

-from Streams in the Desert



GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Galatians 4:4-5

I cannot think of any where else in the sacred Text where there is such a comprehensive yet concise exposition of the Gospel of God concerning His Son and its ultimate outcome as outlined in the six short unambiguous statements recorded by an inspired apostle Paul. The following Meditation deals in summary form with each of these, trusting that it will lead to a greater appreciation of Whose we are and Whom we serve.

"When the fullness of the time came"

Prediction Fulfilled God's Sovereignty

Fullness - *pleroma* - is used in several contexts in the New Testament, here it is connected to "time" - *chromos* - and grammatically refers to a specific moment in time. It is closely linked to Hebrews 9:26- "...now once at the end (consummation) of the ages has he appeared to put away sin by

the sacrifice of himself" It was the zenith of God's plan of salvation. All the symbolism and prophecies of the Old Testament pointing forward to the incarnation and death of coming Messiah is now finished. The time had arrived when the world that God SO loved,

the world and go to the Father" John 16:28. This is indicative of the eternal union within the Godhead. Scholars refer to it as the 'hypostatic union' meaning to personalise the invisible. The Apostle John in the introduction of his Gospel describes it as "the

WE MARVEL, THE CREATOR, A BABE WITHIN HIS OWN UNIVERSE!

comprising both Jew and Gentile, would see His rescue mission unfold in all its untold wonder.

"God sent forth his Son"

Pre-existence Declared The Son's Deity

Deuteronomy 33:37 refers to the "Eternal God" and linked to Isaiah 9:6 the "Everlasting Father." In human terms a man as a father is the same age as the eldest child. Here the Father and the Son are in a unity of Deity. The Lord Jesus, Himself, made a profound statement to His disciples in this connection "I came forth from (beside) the Father and am come into the world, again I leave

Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us" Referring again to Isaiah - the Child is born but the Son is given.

"Born of a woman"

Parenthood Explained His Humanity

The use of the word 'woman' and not 'virgin' is to emphasis our Lord's humanity. His birth was natural, in every sense of the word. The writing is explicit, Luke 2:6-7. *"the days were completed for her to be delivered and she brought forth her first born son..."* We marvel, the Creator, a babe within His own universe! It was His conception that was supernatural, Luke

describes the young chaste virgin's incredulity. Troubled not only by the sudden appearance of an angel but confused by the message he brought. In human terms to her it was an impossibility! When she heard the full message regarding the Holy Spirit's intervention that the

Jews in the law given at Sinai. The fulfilment of this law by the Lord was the outward and evident token of His acceptance by God, and of His competence for the work He had undertaken to do" This surely gives significance to the truthfulness of the declaration to His Father "I

all," Eric Sauer in his book 'The Triumphs of the Crucified' with an economy of words says:

Bethlehem and Calvary are:

*'Of all ages the turning point,
Of all love the highest point,
Of all salvation the starting point,
Of all worship the central point,'*

"that we might receive the adoption of sons"

...IF CONDEMNED SINNERS ARE TO BE PARDONED AND JUSTIFIED GOD'S HOLINESS MUST BE MET.

Privilege Extended Responsibility

child would be "holy...son of God... and Saviour," we read, "Then Mary said, "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." Luke 1:38.

have glorified you on the earth, I have finished the work that you gave me to do" John 17:4

"to redeem those whom were under the law"

"Born under the Law"

Purpose Unfolded Liberation

Pathway Defined His Normality

Not only was he fully man but he was identified directly with the Jewish race - the land and the people. It was to "His own things and His own people He came", John 1:11. Luke is quick to emphasise this in his following statement.

The law was condemnatory, embracing not only Jews, but Gentiles "all have sinned" says the Apostle Paul, Romans 3:23. And so it follows that if condemned sinners are to be pardoned and justified God's holiness must be met. God had declared, as a principle, that "without the shedding of blood" - that is death as a punishment - "there is no remission of sin" And so redemption - liberating by purchase through the payment of a ransom - was accomplished by God Himself in the death of His sinless Son. As we have already seen, this unique act was the consummation, the zenith of the ages. When God "made to meet upon Him" His only begotten Son, "the iniquities of us

The Apostle in 2 Peter 1:4 says "He, God, has granted unto us, his precious and exceeding great promises, that through these you may become partakers of the divine nature" Adoption is establishing a family relationship to a child that is not connected by birth. In the new birth we are regenerated, born again, and that without condition. Here the emphasis is placed on the privilege and the ensuing responsibilities of spiritual adults. The expression 'like father like son' expresses the taking on of the family likeness. God in an act of sovereign grace in redeeming us has placed His Spirit within us as enabling us to address Him as Father, bearing His likeness. And the Apostle concludes "...if a son then an heir of God through Christ." The Apostle Paul's treatise in Romans 8:12-17 on this topic concludes "...heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with him, that we also may be glorified together" What a prospect!

DREW CRAIG | Belfast, Northern Ireland



Are the “Lost 10 Tribes” of Israel Really... Lost?

In the year 2000, NOVA/PBS produced and aired a special entitled the “The Lost Tribes of Israel.” This television special concluded that tribal peoples in Africa are the lost tribes of Israel! For many years the late Herbert W. Armstrong, founder of the World Wide Church of God, taught that the so-called lost ten tribes were no longer Jewish people but the Anglo-Saxon people of Great Britain and the United States. The “Christian Identity Movement”, a growing white-supremacy hate group, teaches that the white people are the lost ten tribes of Israel. Down through history various ethnic groups in Japan, China, Afghanistan, and Persia have been identified as the lost ten tribes of Israel. What does the Bible teach? Who are the alleged lost ten tribes of Israel today? Allow us to first examine the meaning of the phrase the “Lost Ten Tribes of Israel.”

The Meaning of the Phrase “Lost Ten Tribes of Israel”

In 930 B.C., soon after the death of Solomon, the united kingdom of

Israel ruptured into two separate kingdoms, commonly referred to as the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Within three hundred and fifty years, both of these kingdoms would fail in their stand against idolatry and would be conquered by foreign nations. The northern kingdom, consisting of ten tribes, was conquered by the Assyrians in 721 B.C.

Their kinsmen, in the southern kingdom of Judah, (consisting of the tribes Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin) were conquered by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. Some of these exiles returned under Zerubbabel and reestablished their presence in the land of Israel in 536 B.C. However, since there never was a formal return of the northern tribes to reestablish their kingdom, they have been popularly referred to as the lost ten tribes of Israel. Until modern times, Jewish tradition held that all the population of the northern kingdom was deported by Assyria, never to be heard of again; they are considered the ten lost tribes.

The Theory of British-Israelism

The theory called “British-Israelism” has gained a loyal and persistent following among many in Great Britain and the United States over the last one hundred years. This view, when it was first propounded in nineteenth-century England, drew a great deal of interest. The basic idea is that the lost ten tribes of Israel captured by the Assyrians are, in reality, the Saxon people, or Scythians, who surged westward through Scandinavia into Europe. These people were the ancestors of the Saxons who invaded and settled England. This theory maintains that the Anglo-Saxons are thus the lost ten tribes of the nation of Israel.

This viewpoint is based upon some misunderstood Scriptures relating to the birthright of Joseph (Genesis 49:26) and the promises to his sons Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48:20). British-Israelism maintains that the lost tribes of Israel left landmarks on their trek across Europe. Thus, the Dan

and Danube Rivers, as well as the city of Danzig and the country of Denmark, are clear indications to them of the tribe of Dan! The term “Saxon” is supposedly a contraction of “Isaac’s sons” while the term “British” is actually derived from the Hebrew words for “covenant” (berith) and “man” (ish)!¹ These linguistic arguments have been rejected by every reputable Hebrew and biblical scholar as absolutely without basis.

The original proponents of British-Israelism were evangelical and orthodox in the rest of their theology. Some still exist, not as a separate denomination, but

lives on in the printed page and recorded messages.

Another group that has adopted British-Israelism is the “Identity Movement” of white-supremacy. They teach the Satanic character of Zionism, a world-wide Jewish conspiracy, and the superiority of the white race over Jews, Asians, and those of African descent. These groups have often led demonstrations against so-called Jewish control of money and the media, and committed acts of violence against Jews and Jewish symbols.² In the United States there are an estimated 50,000 followers of the reputed “Christian Identity Movement.”

Although Jews today do not know from which tribe they are descended (with the possible exception of the Levites), Scripture affirms that God knows

as a small movement which is found in a variety of churches. What should cause real concern, however, is the way this teaching has been adopted into the teaching of two groups which are out of line with the main tenets of biblical Christianity. The first of these groups is known as the World Wide Church of God, founded by the late Herbert W. Armstrong. Armstrong made British-Israelism an important part of his teaching; he also denied the deity of the Holy Spirit and the reality of eternal punishment. Armstrong’s teaching also imposed Old Testament laws on the believer as a means of salvation. Herbert W. Armstrong died in 1986, at 93 years old; however, much of this teaching

What Does the Bible Teach About the Lost Ten Tribes?

Over the last one hundred years, a number of very respected Bible scholars have researched this crucial subject. Respected Hebrew scholar Dr. David Baron (1857-1926) wrote a leading book on the subject entitled *The History of the Ten Lost Tribes* in 1915. Dr. Baron’s brilliant and thorough refutation cannot be improved and, up to the present day, has never been rebutted. Dr. David Baron and other researchers concluded that the so-called ten “lost” tribes of Israel were never lost, but continued as a part of the main body of the

Jewish people. These researchers drew their conclusions from a number of important biblical facts.

1. In 930 B.C., Many from the Northern Kingdom of Israel Joined the Southern Kingdom of Judah

At the time of the disruption of the united kingdom in 930 B.C., faithful Israelites from all of the ten northern tribes joined their kinsmen in the south and continued their identity as part of the kingdom of Judah. Two books of Scripture that detail this historical event are 1 and 2 Chronicles. These books make it clear that the ten northern tribes along with the two southern tribes continued as a nation in the tribal allotment of Judah.

2 Chronicles 11:14, 16 states, *“For the Levites left their suburban lands and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem; for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest’s office unto the LORD;...and after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of their fathers.”* These verses provide irrefutable proof that many godly individuals out of “all the tribes of Israel” rejected Jeroboam’s idolatry and joined the southern kingdom. During the reign of King Asa, others followed from Ephraim and Manasseh (2 Chronicles 15:9). It is clear from Scripture that many from the so-called lost ten tribes of Israel traveled south to Judah and Jerusalem, forming one region that consisted of Israelites from all the twelve tribes of Israel.

2. The Truth About the Assyrian Captivity 721 B.C.

It is often assumed that all

(every person) of the ten tribes of northern Israel were taken to Assyria in 721 B.C. Again, this is not true. Many from the ten northern tribes continued to live there after the Assyrian invasion. The book of 2 Chronicles helps us in this regard. At Hezekiah's invitation, many from the north traveled to Judah after the destruction of the northern kingdom (2 Chronicles 30). Even later, in 622 B.C., more godly Israelites came to Jerusalem to help repair the temple (2 Chronicles 34:9), and later to celebrate the Passover (2 Chronicles 35:17-18) under King Josiah. If the northern ten tribes of Israel had become "lost" in the Assyrian invasion, how could these representatives have joined in worship in Jerusalem? Surely, we must conclude that not all in the ten tribes were taken to Assyria and were "lost".

Archeology has confirmed what the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles have recorded. Archeologists have uncovered the annals of the Assyrian Sargon, in which is recorded that only 27,290 people and 50 chariots were carried away in the invasion. Since the population of the northern 10 tribes numbered between 400,000-500,000 people, clearly less than 1/20th of the total population was deported.³ Therefore, the ten tribes were never "lost" because the majority of the people were never deported. Although their kingdom was destroyed, the people as a community did not cease to exist, but remained in their ten tribal allotments in the northern kingdom.

3. *The New Testament and Ten "Lost" Tribes*

The New Testament clearly indicates that there were individuals in the first century who still maintained their Jewish tribal identities, some of whom were members of those supposedly "lost" tribes. Consider, for example, the aged Anna who beheld Jesus in the temple. Luke 2:36 states that she was of the "tribe of Asher." When the apostle Paul spoke of his Jewish brethren, he spoke of a common hope and promise: "*Unto which promise the twelve tribes, earnestly serving God day and night, hope to come*" (Acts 26:7). James addressed his epistle "*to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad*" (James 1:1). Both James and the apostle Paul made no distinction between Judah and the ten tribes of Israel. All Jews were of a common body, the only difference being that some were in the land and others were in the Diaspora. Concerning the question of the lost ten tribes Hebrew scholar David Baron writes, "Let us glance at the question of the so-called 'lost' ten tribes in the light of Scripture, history and prophecy...There is little historical reason to suppose that the ten tribes are lost."⁴

Evidently, members of all the twelve tribes of Jacob dwelt either in the land or outside of the Promised Land. Although Jews today do not know from which tribe they are descended (with the possible exception of the Levites), Scripture affirms that God knows. Such passages as Revelation 7:4-8 and Ezekiel 48 declare that representatives of every tribe of restored Israel will be present in the Tribulation and the Millennial kingdom.

Conclusion

To summarize, it can be said, on the basis of Scripture, history, and archeology, that there is no such thing as the ten lost tribes of Israel. What was lost was the existence of the kingdom of Israel in the northern region of Israel. The ten tribes, however, continued to exist in the body of the southern kingdom with the terms "Jews" and "Israelite" applied to all of the Jewish nation. Any claim that some ethnic group descended from the ten tribes rests on shaky ground at best. The suggestion that the Caucasian people are the true lost ten tribes must be thoroughly rejected. This ideology has helped to fuel white supremacist hatred and, in many cases, violence against the Jewish people. This theory robs the Jewish people of God's promises and promotes the lie that the Jewish people are not truly the people of God.

Endnotes

1. Walter Martin, *Kingdom of the Cults, Anglo-Israelism*, (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1982). p. 299
2. Viola Larson, *Identity: 'Christian' Religion for White Racists*, Christian Research Journal, (Fall, 1992), pp. 20-28
3. Biblical Archeologist Magazine, vol. VI, 1943, p. 58
4. David Baron, *The History of the "Lost" Tribes*, (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1915),

Further Reading

David Baron, *The History of the Ten "Lost" Tribes*, (University of Michigan Press), 95 pages.



Perfecting *Holiness*

People who are elderly believers often wonder, “Why is the Lord leaving me here? I want to go home.” Why indeed, when we are qualified for heaven at the moment of conversion (Col. 1:12). Why has he left us here, some living to old age?

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord” (2 Cor. 7:1 NKJ).

Although as Christians we are qualified judicially for heaven at the moment of conversion, our character needs much improvement. There are bad habits that need to be destroyed. The old man, the old nature, needs killing, daily. The flesh is very stubborn, refusing to die. It will take time for the fruit of Spirit (Gal. 5) to ripen in our lives. It may take years for one to learn to control his temper. For the selfish person who has lived for self gratification it will take time for one to become like the Lord Jesus, unselfish and loving God and others. Some of us are slow

learners, but the Lord is patient and the Spirit continues to work.

So what is the blessing of coming to old age? First of all, God has more time to work on us! Some of us are tough material, resistant to change. But the Lord is patient and persistent. Hopefully our character has mellowed and improved with age. And character is what we are at heart when the external husk of hypocrisy is stripped away. This we will carry into eternity. So be grateful for the years you have to become more like the Lord Jesus.

Secondly, a godly person in old age is an encouragement to young believers. One can come to old age without a serious blot on his character. Praise God! You too can finish the battle of life victorious also. Young people need such positive examples to emulate.

Thirdly, it is a powerful testimony to the world of the saving power of God in a life. The world views religion cynically. “They are all a bunch of hypocrites!”

The testimony of a godly, old man or woman is powerful. Abraham in

old age buried his wife Sarah. He owned no property and needed to buy a burial site.

When Abraham attempted to buy a plot of ground from the owners, he said, *“I am a foreigner and a visitor among you. Give me property for a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.” And the sons of Heth answered Abraham saying to him, ‘Hear us, my lord. You are mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places....’*” (Gen. 23:4-6). It is a touching scene, Abraham, a white haired old man, weeping and seeking to buy a burial plot for Sarah, his faithful wife of many years. These men were heathen, not worshiping the God of Abraham. But they recognized his strength of character, his integrity. Abraham had been a man of faith and he finished well, a good example for believers today.

So be patient and let God work in your life, “perfecting holiness.” The Lord will take you home when chooses. And His will is always best.



The Mount of Olives

The Mount of Olives was a place frequented by the Lord during His earthly ministry. The Garden of Gethsemane, where the Lord agonised in anticipation of Calvary, is to be found at Olivet. It is also the place from which He ascended into Heaven whilst His disciples watched. It also is the place to which He will return at His Second Advent, to set up His Kingdom on earth. We intend to examine Olivet's association with the past, and with events yet future. The features we wish to consider about the Mt. of Olives are as follows:

- A Place of Communion
- A Place of Revelation
- A Place of Anticipation and Humiliation

- A Place of Ascension
- A Place of Victory and Vindication

Place of Communion

Both Luke and John record that the Lord went frequently to the Mt of Olives. Luke tells us that after the Lord had instituted the Lord's Supper, He went out and "*went as He was wont to the Mt of Olives.*"¹ John records that "*every man went unto his own house. Jesus went to the Mt. of Olives.*"² We gather from these scriptures that the Lord was no stranger to the Mt. of Olives, and that most of these times He went alone. We are not told specifically why the Lord went there but it would be safe to assume that He found it necessary

under the burden of service, and the anticipation of the future, to be alone with the Father.

So it must be with us. It is possible to be too busy serving, and to neglect the necessity of personal communion with the Father. Possible that the burdens of service and our schedules, could take precedence over time alone with God. In such a situation our service will become mechanical, and lacking that necessary unction of the Spirit. The Lord told Peter that unless He allowed Him to wash His feet, he had no part with Him. A very solemn warning to us as we serve. We cannot claim to be serving Him, if we are not spending time with Him. Could it be said of

us that in the midst of busy service, 'we go as we are wont' to be alone with Him?

Place of Revelation

Twice over it is recorded in the Gospels that a select group of the disciples approached Him on the Mt. of Olives and asked Him the question: "...When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming...?"³ Mark records that Peter, James, John and Andrew were the disciples present on that occasion. In this great passage often referred to as The Olivet Discourse, the Lord disclosed to them the vista or prophecy, well beyond the times in which they were living. The prophetic picture presented by the Lord goes beyond the Church Age and tells of the events that will surround the fulfillment of Daniel's 70th week, including the Great Tribulation period. He then goes on to speak

Mt. of Olives, that the secret to understanding the will of the Lord for our personal lives, and also the bigger picture for the future of the world and the universe, can only be discovered in the measure that we spend time with Him and allow Him to teach us. We see this in the lives of the two on the road to Emmaus. Their depression and doubt arose from a lack of understanding of the scriptures and they thought that everything had gone wrong. But when the Lord appeared all was made right. He gently chided them "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"⁵ We may have many problems with our comprehension of what the future might hold, and whilst the Lord might not reveal all to us, we will receive great peace of mind from what he does reveal. For example, the disciples present with the Lord on the Mount of Olives, learned that the balmy days

Place of Anticipation & Humiliation

Now we turn to the same mountain, but this time under vastly different conditions. The Lord is nearing the end of His time here on earth, and the shadow of the Cross lies heavily across His path - Calvary with all its suffering. At this point He enters the Garden of Gethsemane which was located on the slopes of Olivet.

Immediately after instituting the Lord's Supper, this symbol of His coming death, the Lord and his disciples, apart from Judas, went out, crossed the brook Kidron, and entered the Garden of Gethsemane. In a sense it was appropriate that the Lord should undergo His agony of anticipation at this place. The Mt. of Olives was the place of 'olive presses,' where the fruit of its many olive trees was crushed and bruised to yield the oil. It was here that the Lord was to undergo the crushing and bruising as He anticipated the suffering of Calvary. In that Garden the Lord was crushed to the point where "His sweat was it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground."⁶ The writer to the Hebrews enlarges on this scene as he writes about "...prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears...;"⁷

...the Lord was no stranger to the Mt. of Olives, and that most of these times He went alone...

about His Second Advent, when He will return to set up His Kingdom. For those disciples anticipating the soon arrival of the visible Kingdom on earth, this must have been a puzzling picture. Indeed even after the Lord had been crucified and has risen from the dead, despite all He had told them they were still asking "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"⁴ Like ourselves sometimes, they had made up their minds as to how things should unfold and they had great difficulty in laying these ideas aside to accept the truth.

We learn from this scene at the

of the Kingdom were not about to be realised, and that persecution and danger lay in their path. It was important that they should understand this because when the opposition came, they would realise that this was not outside the purposes of God for them. But the revelations given here will be of special comfort to the saints of the Tribulation period, when they realise that that seemingly chaotic conditions they are experiencing are all under the control of their God, and that the storm clouds are but the forerunners of the Coming of the Lord to deliver them and establish His Kingdom.

First, the Lord said to His disciples to "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder."⁸ Luke tells us that the Lord withdrew from them "a stone's cast, and, and kneeled down and prayed."⁹ I suggest that this is highly symbolic. Here was an experience that the Lord alone could pass through, and into which none could share a part. It was a time of intense agony and suffering as the Lord anticipated the horror of Calvary. And indeed we must like the disciples recognise that we cannot follow Him in all that Gethsemane involves. There are mysteries here that defy analysis, and there we must leave it. This is

the Holiest of ground. The Lord speaks to his Father and he says "Father if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."¹⁰ This was said with the Lord "being in an agony, and his sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."¹¹ We must not assume that the Lord Jesus was shrinking from doing the Father's will. No! Far be the thought. There was no reluctance, but certainly a dread of all that lay before Him. The Lord was willing to drink that dark and dreadful cup in obedience to the Father's will, and for our salvation.

*Death and the curse were in our cup,
O Christ t'was full for Thee,
But Thou hast drained the last dark drop,
'Tis empty now for me,
That bitter cup, love drank it up,
Now blessings draught for me.*

Place of Ascension

We now leave Gethsemane, and come to another scene associated with the Mt. of Olives after the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus – the place of His ascension. The Lord had tried to forewarn the disciples that He was going to leave them and go back to Heaven. He had said "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."¹² He had also said "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and to your God."¹³ and now that time of parting has come. Following His resurrection the Lord had been on the earth now for 40 days, and had established 'many infallible proofs' of His resurrection, which was fundamental to the whole scheme of Salvation.

It is worthy of note that the Ascension of the Lord is absent from Matthew and from John.

Mark's account is very brief, and simply records the fact of the ascension but without details as to where or how. We are therefore indebted to Luke who gives us most of the information regarding the ascension at the close of His Gospel, but with much more details in Acts 1. Luke does not identify the place until after he has given details about the ascension, only then does he tell us "Then returned they to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet...."¹⁴

right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."¹⁶ Again we read "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,

...we must like the disciples recognise that we cannot follow Him in all that Gethsemane involves...

The Ascension

Prior to His ascension, the Lord first spent time with the disciples telling them about things that would pertain once he had gone. He spoke about the imminent descent of the Holy Spirit, and the fact that they would be His witnesses to a waiting world. It was as He spoke these things that He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. They watched transfixed "looking steadfastly towards Heaven," and two men in white apparel gave the closing message to this scene when they said "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."¹⁵ These verses give us the historical record of the ascension.

Other scriptures record the significance of this great event. The apostle writing to the Ephesians reminds us "... he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own

to the glory of God the Father."¹⁷ The writer to the Hebrews adds further to the scene as he records the words of the Father to the Son on His arrival in Heaven saying "... Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?"¹⁸ Yes, the glorification of Christ is not a future event - it is already history - and at His Advent, His Glory will be revealed to a wondering universe.

*He fills the Throne, the Throne above,
He fills it without wrong,
The object of His Fathers' love,
The theme of angel's song.*

Place of Victory & Vindication

Luke tells of the two men in white apparel who spoke to the disciples at the ascension, who prophesied that the Lord would return "in like manner as ye have seen him go.."¹⁹ referring to his return to the Mount of Olives at His Second Advent. It must be noted that this is not a reference to the Rapture of the

Saints, but to the coming of Christ in power and glory to the world to set up His Kingdom on earth. We are indebted to Zechariah for the details of that moment. Israel will be at the point of extinction, with all the nations of the world poised to make the final blow that will rid them of the Israeli problem. At that point Zechariah records *“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.”*²⁰ This cataclysmic event will drastically change the face of the region, and will herald His arrival. The enemies of Israel and of Christ will be destroyed by the brightness of His coming. The stone of Daniel 2 will grind and break the nations to powder, and become the great mountain that will fill the whole earth. – His Millennial Kingdom.²¹ All this at the place where He was in an agony, and sweat as it were

great drops of blood. That same place where He took the place of submission to the Father’s will saying *“Not my will, but Thine be done.”* The place where He was betrayed by Judas, and humiliated by the mob that arrested Him and *“led Him away.”* This time He returns to Mt. Olivet in power, glory, triumph and victory to put all His foes beneath His feet. This time Olivet – the place of Olive presses, will be not be the place where He will be crushed and bruised, but where the nations of the world in their enmity to God and His Christ will be crushed and bruise by His mighty power.

Conclusion

We have seen that the Mt. of Olives has had, and will have, an important part to play in the outworking of Divine purposes. We have seen that it was:

A Place Of Communion For The Lord.

A Place Of Revelation For The Disciples.

A Place Of Anticipation And

*Humiliation For The Lord.
A Place Of Ascension To Glory.
A Place Of Victory And Vindication
At His Second Advent.*

Endnotes

- 1 Lk. 22. 39
- 2 Jn. 7. 53 – 8. 1
- 3 Matt. 24. 3
- 4 Acts 1. 6
- 5 Lk. 24. 6
- 6 Lk. 22. 44
- 7 Heb. 5. 7
- 8 Matt. 26. 36
- 9 Lk. 22. 41.
- 10 Lk. 22. 42
- 11 Lk. 22. 44
- 12 Jn. 14. 2
- 13 Jn. 20. 17
- 14 Acts 1. 12
- 15 Acts 1. 11
- 16 Eph. 1. 19 -21
- 17 Php 2. 9 - 11
- 18 Heb. 1. 13
- 19 Acts 1. 11
- 20 Zech.14. 4
- 21 Dan. 2. 34 - 35

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TWO MEN AND YOU

The Story Of The Bible

The Holy Scriptures consist of sixty six books. Thousands of years lie between the first human author and the last, but the way its history, its prophecies, its songs and its teachings blend into a cohesive story calls for the superintendence of one Person. He must have existed throughout the years of its production! The Bible claims for itself that it is “God-breathed” or inspired. What is its story all about? Serious students of its pages have made various suggestions as to its overall purpose and plan according to which of its themes interested them. Every valid idea put forward is like a thread woven into the overall fabric of Scripture. It becomes possible to trace these themes throughout its pages like the colored strands in a tapestry. The topics of the glory of God, the sinful condition of mankind,

the need for a sufficient sacrifice etc., all contribute to the total impression left on the mind of the thoughtful reader. And each strand of truth that begins in the first book has its counterpart, contrast, and climax in the last.

Representative Men

One way the Scripture must be viewed is as the story of two men. All humans relate to these men for they are representatives, standing for those in their train who become in some way their descendants. Scripture states we are “in” the one or the other. In the case of the first man we are affected by what was done by him without personal involvement on our part. In the case of the other a choice must be made by us to benefit from what he did, does and will yet do. We are speaking of course of Adam and Christ. To some extent the conduct of all individuals can be explained in the terms of their

relationship to the one or the other of these two, sometimes referred to as the two “federal heads” of the human race.

The term “In Adam” indicates mankind’s citizenship by birth, for Adam was the head of the old creation and in him all sinned, fall short of the glory of God and will die (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 3:23; 5:12). This is our natural statehood or citizenship which gives rise to a condition in which we habitually sin and much more than we are aware, “*For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.*” (1 John 3:20). We may illustrate the difference between our legal standing by birth (in Adam) and the sinful conduct that results, by thinking of how our accent betrays where we were born.

David did not use the term “in Adam” when confessing his sin to God but spoke of what is true

of all, “...*in sin did my mother conceive me*” (Psalm 51:5). He wasn’t shifting the blame for his own sins upon his *immediate* parents, but confessing how deep rooted was the sinful nature that influenced him to act the way he did. So though he did not use that term, his experience had taught him that he had, by reason of his birth into the human family, inherited a sinful nature.*

The same is true of us all. That is what is meant when Scripture says we are “in Adam.”

The New Creation

Though vestiges of the old life still remain after we have placed our faith in the Lord Jesus, our standing before God is on an entirely different basis. We are no longer seen by Him as being in Adam but in Christ. This means we are not only cared for during our earthly pilgrimage by virtue of His offices as our Advocate and Great High Priest, but have become part of the New Creation of which Christ is the federal Head. By the new-birth you, perhaps unknowingly, became an added witness to that unseen reality and soon-to-be manifested glory.

I believe this is what Paul argues for in 2 Cor. 5:17. You are familiar with the words as they appear in the K.J.V. and may have applied them to yourself or a newly saved friend, “*If any man be in Christ he is a new creature*”

That is true, but is it perhaps a more limited understanding on our part than the Holy Spirit had in mind? Greek scholars tell us that the word “*creature*” may be read as “*Creation*”. And words in italics in our Bibles are those supplied by translators; so “*he is*” in our text could also be read as “*there is*”. That being the case we may understand the verse as saying, “*For anyone [not just you or your friend] to be in Christ [means] there is a New Creation*.” So, although we should allow for a young convert’s exuberance, his present experience is not the *only* thing that should cause him or her to burst into song as in, “*What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought...*” for, with our fluctuating feelings and moods we may not always be that happy! No, not only the change in a person’s behaviour is a cause for rejoicing but also (and more so!) is the change in their standing before God. Their name is written in heaven and they are no longer in Adam but “*in Christ*,” giving evidence of there being a New Creation and that he/she is already a part of it! (See Rev. 21). “*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice.*” (Phil. 4:4).

Two Titles

The two men we have thought about are alike in this way only; they each represent those in their train. In all else they stand in contrast to each other. This is made clear in Rom. 5 and 1 Cor.

15. The first of these chapters views these differences mainly in the light of Christ’s first advent and death, while the latter focuses on His resurrection, return and the coming glory - a glory for Him and all “*in Him*”. In this chapter, the “*Lord from heaven*” is titled the “*second Man*” (v. 47). We might wonder at that when we think of the many generations that preceded His arrival on planet earth. But Old Testament prophets had portrayed God as seeking for “*a man among them who would... stand in the gap before Me...He saw there was no man...His own arm brought salvation for Him*” (See Ezek. 22:30; Isa. 59:16). No one who came before Christ was qualified to be such a mediator. For a similar reason He is titled “*the last Adam*” for there has been and never will be need for some successor or another representative man to appear - and you are *complete* “*in Him*” (Col. 2:10).

**God had foreseen his plight and that of all who believed God in Old Testament times. God’s deep love is commended toward us in the death of His Son, “While we were still sinners Christ’s died for us” (Romans 5:8) thus taking care of all sins through faith in Him whether those sins were committed before the Saviour’s death burial and resurrection (Rom. 3:25) or afterward (1 Jn. 1:7).*

TRUE WISDOM

True wisdom is in leaning
On Jesus Christ, our Lord;
True wisdom is in trusting
His own life-giving word;
True wisdom is in living
Near Jesus every day;
True wisdom is in walking
Where He shall lead the way.

- Author Unknown