

Triennial Torah Study – 3rd Year 05/05/2012

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We continue this weekend with our regular Triennial Torah reading which can be found at https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf

Lev 27	Ezek 37-39		1 John 1-2
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Leviticus 27

Redeeming Dedicated Persons and Property (Leviticus 27)

Based on the redemption amounts, some might think God is sexist and ageist. But God does not play favorites. The amounts here have only to do with a practical valuation of how useful the various classes of people would be in carrying out the heavy work of the tabernacle.

Certain dedicated property could be redeemed through paying the valuation plus an additional one fifth. This could even be done with tithes of produce (verses 30-31), but not with the tithe of livestock (verses 32-33). “Every tenth animal was part of the tithe that belonged to God. The owner was not allowed to adjust this procedure so that the animal for the tithe was small, weak, or sickly, nor could he substitute a poor animal for a better one” (Nelson Study Bible, note on verses 32-33).

Some today have taken the verses regarding the redeeming of tithes to mean that it is permissible to borrow from their monetary tithes and pay them back by adding a fifth. Yet this is not at all what is meant here. The regulation is about exchanging, not borrowing. Tithes were owed directly to God as the firstfruits of increase. It was not permissible to borrow from them. God said in Exodus 22:29 that the people were not to delay in turning over their firstfruits to Him. Consider that if someone owed some carrots as a tithe, he could redeem them by adding one fifth to their evaluation and paying that in cash. But he could not simply eat the carrots and later grow new carrots to replace them, giving the new ones plus one fifth. That was not allowed. And it would still be wrong today. (To learn more about the subject of tithing, download or send for our free booklet *What Does the Bible Teach About Tithing?*)

Ezekiel 37

“O Dry Bones...You Shall Live” (Ezekiel 37)

As chapter 37 opens, it appears to continue right on from the prophecy of Israel’s restoration in the previous chapter. Consider the great hope that was there offered to the people of Israel, to be realized at the time of Christ’s return and reign, when they would ultimately return from captivity and receive a changed heart. Yet how could that help the Jews who were hearing Ezekiel’s message at the time he received it? They would be long dead and gone by the time Israel’s great restoration was accomplished. And what about all the Israelites who had already died or the millions who would yet die before that restoration? Where was their hope? Things looked rosy for their end-time descendants—but what about them personally?

God reveals in the wonderful prophecy of Ezekiel 37:1-14 that all hope is not lost. He intends to raise all the Israelites who have ever lived from the dead! Some see this passage as merely figurative of national resurrection—that is, restoration of the country of Israel—at the time of Christ’s return. But it more naturally reads as something that is actually going to happen—a literal resurrection of people to physical life. Indeed, their being literally raised from the grave will serve as a proof of God and His omnipotent power (verse 14).

However, figurative language certainly is used here. For instance, to represent the apparent hopelessness of death, the dry bones are portrayed as saying as much (verse 11). Some, influenced by the false doctrine of the immortality of the soul, might view even that as somewhat literal—thinking it pictures disembodied souls once connected with the bones doing the speaking. But that is not the case. The imagery is similar to Abel’s blood crying out to God in Genesis 4:10 or the slain martyrs crying out to God in Revelation 6:9-11. These are all figurative images, as there is no consciousness in death (see Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10).

The bones of all Israel being in one valley may also be figurative, since the people of Israel actually died in many different places over the millennia. However, it could be that the bones—or at least whatever is left of them—will actually be miraculously gathered together by God in one place prior to the resurrection described. Of course, even if He were to do it this way, the Almighty God does not actually need bones or any other body parts to recreate human bodies. What about the covering with sinews and flesh and being brought out of graves? The description given may be literal, although the process could be somewhat figurative, the main point being the ultimate result—an actual physical bodily resurrection. We don’t really know exactly how God will reconstitute those who are long dead—especially considering that for many any physical remains long since decomposed or were otherwise destroyed. It may look like the vision Ezekiel described, or it could appear like a Star Trek “beam up” or something entirely different—we just don’t know.

Now, what is the time frame of this resurrection? We find that spelled out in Revelation 20:4-6. That passage explains that the saints of God—His spiritually transformed servants of all ages (that is, the faithful people of Old Testament times and all faithful true Christians of New Testament times)—will be resurrected at the time of Christ’s return in what is referred to as the “first resurrection,” to reign with Him over all nations for 1,000 years, a period Bible students often refer to simply as the Millennium. Verse 5 contains this parenthetical note: “But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.” The NRSV appropriately places this sentence in parentheses.

Since the resurrected Israelites of Ezekiel 37 are not saints—indeed, they receive God’s Spirit only after they are raised from the dead (verses 13-14)—they will not be part of the first resurrection. Therefore they must be part of “the rest of the dead” in the second or general resurrection, which occurs after the Millennium.

This fact is further substantiated by the nature of the resurrections. The first resurrection is described in 1 Corinthians 15, where we are told that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (verse 50). According to that chapter, the saints of God, who formerly had “natural bodies” of flesh, will be resurrected with “spiritual bodies.” Some think this merely refers to spirit-preserved physical bodies, but that is not the case. When Jesus Christ, the “last Adam,” was resurrected to glory, He returned to the state of being “a life-giving spirit” (verse 45). And that is what resurrected Christians will be like (verse 49)—having bodies actually composed of spirit. While these glorified spirit beings will be able to manifest themselves as flesh if they so choose (just as Christ did after His resurrection to spirit), they will not actually be composed of flesh as is clearly the case with those in the resurrection of Ezekiel 37.

Since the resurrection of Israelites in Ezekiel 37 must be part of the general resurrection at the end of the Millennium, it follows that all others of that resurrection will experience basically the same thing. So this prophecy is representative of how God will deal with all people, not just Israel. What this means is that all the unconverted of mankind who have ever lived—which is almost everyone—will be raised at this same time to physical life. Revelation 20:11-12 describes this time in which people will be judged according to their works. Yet it should be explained that this will be a judgment over a period of time—not an immediate sentencing. Just as God’s Church is being judged now (1 Peter 4:17), so will the rest of mankind be judged according to how they live their lives then—following their resurrection. Those who never knew God or His truth will at last be given the opportunity to repent of their sinful past, understand and receive forgiveness through Christ’s sacrifice and be converted through receiving God’s Spirit. And they will be evaluated according to how they live out the rest of their physical lives. This is not a “second chance” at salvation, as some would argue, for none of these people will have ever had that opportunity when they lived previously.

Jesus Himself referred to this future judgment period as a time when people who lived many centuries apart “will rise up in the judgment” together (Matthew 11:20-24; 12:41-42). During that judgment period, those who choose to serve God and remain faithful to Him until the end of their lives will ultimately be changed into immortal spirit beings, joining the saints who will have been glorified with eternal life 1,000 years before.

How wonderful and amazing this truth is! It answers so many questions. For instance, if it is only through Jesus that human beings can be saved (Acts 4:12), what about the untold millions who lived and died without ever hearing His name or anything He ever taught? Answer: the second resurrection! What about the billions of little children who have died over the millennia of human history? Answer: the second resurrection! What about the vast numbers God destroyed in the Flood of Noah’s day? Answer: the second resurrection! What about the millions dying of AIDS today in Africa? Answer: the second resurrection! What about the 6 million Jews who died in the Nazi Holocaust of World War II? Answer: the second resurrection! What about the millions of men, women and children who have lived and died under communist dictatorships where religion was forbidden? Answer again: the second resurrection! And what about our relatives and friends who have died without understanding and obeying the Bible? Yes, the answer yet again is the second resurrection! Without the reality of this wonderful and paramount truth, the vast majority of mankind truly is lost and without hope. Thankfully, God has a plan to offer His salvation to all humanity, not just a few.

Israel and Judah to Be One United Nation (Ezekiel 37)

Another prophecy is given in verses 15-28 of Ezekiel 37. It returns to the beginning of the Millennium—continuing the theme of Ezekiel 36 and the other chapters at the end of Ezekiel’s book. (The flash-forward to the end of the Millennium at the beginning of chapter 37 was to give hope to those who would be dead at the time of the initial restoration.)

Here we see that the descendants of the southern kingdom of Judah and the descendants of the northern 10 tribes of Israel will ultimately be reunited as one nation, never to be divided again. (The northern tribes are represented by the birthright people of Joseph—Ephraim and Manasseh—chief among whom is Ephraim.) This reuniting will happen when the remnant of Israel and Judah are brought back to the Promised Land when Jesus Christ returns to rule all nations. As we have seen in other passages, David will be resurrected (as part of the first resurrection) to serve as king, under Christ, over the entire reunited nation (verses 24-25; 34:24; Jeremiah 30:9).

Of course, while this passage will be fulfilled at the time of Christ’s return, its fulfillment won’t end there. That is, it is not just a millennial prophecy. There is obviously also a relation to the time, following the

Millennium, of the second resurrection—when all Israelites who have ever lived will be joined together as one nation and David will reign over them all.

Indeed, while verse 27—regarding God’s tabernacle or dwelling being with the people, they being His people and He being their God—finds initial fulfillment at the time of Christ’s return, greater fulfillment will still lie yet ahead. For this verse is used in Revelation 21:3 to denote the time of the new heaven and new earth, when even God the Father will come to dwell among His children forever.

Gog of Magog and His Allies (Ezekiel 38-39)

We come now to a remarkable prophecy, spanning chapters 38 and 39. It is God’s message to Gog of Magog and his allies, who dwell far to the north of the Promised Land and of Ezekiel’s place of exile in Babylon but will one day come down into the land of Israel with a vast invasion force. Notice that Gog’s invasion will occur “after many days...in the latter years...in the latter days” (38:8, 16). So we are clearly dealing with an end-time prophecy.

Before more specifically examining the time factor, let’s look at the identities of the various peoples mentioned.

“Gog, of the land of Magog,” is called the “prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal” (verses 2-3; 39:1). He is allied with “Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya” (verse 5)-or, as Ezekiel actually wrote, “Peras, Cush and Put” (Living Bible)-as well as “Gomer and...the house of Togarmah” (verse 6).

Most of these names can be found in the Table of Nations of Genesis 10, which lists the families of humanity descended from Noah. Notice: “Now this is the genealogy of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And sons were born to them after the flood. The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.... The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan....” (verses 1-2, 6 emphasis added).

Notice that Gog is not mentioned here. That may be because the name Magog actually means “land of Gog”—so that perhaps the actual son of Japheth was named Gog and the nation he founded became known as Magog. The name Gog could in a later context designate anyone who was from the land of Gog (i.e., from Magog).

The first-century Jewish historian Josephus wrote: “Magog founded those that from him were named Magogites, but who by the Greeks were called Scythians” (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 1, chap. 6, sec. 2). The name Scythians denoted a wide array of peoples who ranged across the Russian Steppes all the way into China. (The Western Scythians were heavily Israelite and Germanic in nationality.)

One researcher writes of the Eastern-ranging Scythians: “The Assyrians called them Mat Gugi (Ma-Gog) which means ‘the country of Gog’.... Let Milner, famous for his writings on the Japhetic races, add further to our understanding: ‘Magog, as a geographical term used by Hebrews of old and Arabs today (Majaj), denoted that vast stretch of country to the north of the Black Sea, Caucasus, Caspian Sea, Hindu Kush, and Altai, known to the Greek geographers as Skythia’....

“The term Mongol, sometimes written as Mongoul, appears to be directly derived from Magog. In India, for example, Mongol becomes Moghul and a large part of China was known as Mangi when Europeans first visited it. The Arabs called the Scythian tribes of Tartary Yajuj and Majuj which is Gog and Magog and the Great Wall of China as the ‘wall of al Magog’....

“Where is Magog located today? They migrated via southern Russia to their current homeland, leaving behind such place-names as: Mogliev city, Mogiolistan, Mugojar Mountains, Mogol-Tau Mountains.

Among the people of Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, central and much of northern and southern China...and even some Japanese are also descended from Magog. Here are the hundreds of millions of China today. No wonder the name of ancestor Japhet means 'expansion,' implying a large or expanding race. Other peoples descended from Magog [as well]" (Craig White, *In Search of...The Origin of Nations*, 2003, pp. 189-190, available at www.originofnations.org).

Jones' Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names states in its entry on Magog: "[English biblical commentator Bishop] Lowth on this place says: 'The Mogul Tatars, a people of the Scythian race, are still called so by the Arabian writers.... By Gog and Magog may most probably be meant the Turks, who were originally natives of Tartary, called Turcheston [Turkestan] by the eastern writers, and whose language is derived from that of the Tartars'" (Alfred Jones, 1997).

Indeed, the Turkish peoples of Central Asia may be included-and are, at the very least, included in the broader alliance, as many of the Eastern Turks appear to derive from Togarmah (see White, p. 198). The Western Turks, as noted in the Bible Reading Program comments on Obadiah, appear to derive from Edom. As also explained there, one such group that appears to have migrated into Central Asia is the Edomite tribe of Amalek (see also White, p. 65). Interestingly, Amalekite kings bore the name Agag (Numbers 24:7; 1 Samuel 15:8) and we later see the enemy in the book of Esther, Haman, referred to as an Agagite (3:1, 10; 8:3, 5; 9:24). Josephus refers to him as an Amalekite (Antiquities, Book 11, chap. 6, sec. 5). Agag is written in the Septuagint as Agog, and there could conceivably be some relation to the name Gog-some, such as Milner cited above, suggesting that Agog is a compound of A (number 1) and Gog (great or high), denoting the ruler (see White, p. 65).

Indeed, it is possible that the names Gog and Magog may be figurative labels on some level in Ezekiel 38-39. Gog basically means "rooftop" and is also thought to mean mountain. As it seems to indicate a peak or highest point, some have viewed it as designating a supreme ruler-a despot or dictator. In that case, Gog of Magog becomes "dictator of the dictatorship." That would certainly fit the description given. Perhaps both the figurative and national meanings are intended.

On the other peoples listed, a footnote to Ezekiel 38:2-3 in *The Living Bible* states: "The names of Gog's confederates (Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, Beth-togarmah) can be identified as Mushki, Tabal, Gimaraya, Tegerama, peoples who lived in the mountainous area southeast of the Black Sea and southwest of the Caspian." This would place them in the region of eastern Turkey and Armenia, just south of the Caucasus Mountains.

The New Unger's Bible Dictionary states in its entry on Tubal: "Tubal and Meshech, the Tabali and Mushki of the Assyrian monuments, were the representatives of eastern Asia Minor. Their territory originally extended far to the S[outh]. In the time of [Assyrian emperors] Sargon and Sennacherib, the territory of the Tabali adjoined Cilicia [in southeast Asia Minor], while the Mushki inhabited the highlands to the E[ast] of them, where they were in contact with the Hittites. In later days, however, Meshech had retreated to the N[orth], and the classical geographers place the Tibereni and the Mushki not far from the Black Sea." Thus we see a clear northward progression.

Meshech evidently "migrated with Tubal up to the Black Sea and into the Russian plains. Dr. Gesenius [the famous Hebrew lexicographer] wrote in the nineteenth century that Meshech became the Moschi.... They dwelt, he said, in the Moschian Mountains. The Moschian Mountains were the connecting chain between the Caucasus and Anti Taurus Mountains. The Scofield Reference Bible says that the 'reference to Meshech and Tubal (Moscow [the Russian capital] and Tobolsk [in West Siberia]) is a very clear mark of identification.... Milner explains: '...The whole district within five hundred miles of Moscow seems to be saturated with the name of Meshech.' He then refers...to the following place names: Moscow; the Moskva

River; the Novo-Mosc-owsk on a tributary of the Dnieper; Mosch-Aisk near Borodino; Mosch-ok between Moscow and Nijini Novogorod; Mosch-arki stood on a tributary of the Volga River; Misch-etski stood between Moskow and the Tula...Mesch-a, a branch of the Dwina River; Mesch-Tschowsk near Tula [etc.]....” (White, pp. 178-179).

What about the name Rosh in Ezekiel 38-39? This name is not found in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10. Some translators prefer to view the word as the Hebrew word for “head” or “chief” and link it with the word prince in the verse as denoting “chief ruler” rather than as a tribal name. However, other translators prefer Rosh as a name. Interestingly, the Mitanni kingdom in eastern Asia Minor became known as the land of Rashu, “Rash or Rosh meaning ‘blond.’ Also, nearby dwelt the Urartians [ancient Armenians].... Their last great ruler was Rusa II who built great cities and huge defences. He established the religious center and fortress of Rusai-urau-tur or Rusa-patari which means ‘the small city of Rusa’.... Herodotus wrote that the Matienaians from the land of Rosh were with the peoples of Tubal and Meschech; while Pliny wrote of the Matiani as moving into southern Russia over the Caucasus” (White, p. 267; see also p. 268).

It is commonly believed that the Varangian Rus, Vikings from Sweden, gave their name to Russia. However, “while western scholars accept this as the origin of the Rus, Soviet scholars contend that the Rus were Slavs from the southern steppes. Both are probably correct.... There is no evidence of a tribe from Scandinavia called Ros or Rus. But a tribe of the Antes was known as the ‘Ros’ and later modified to ‘Rus’ which resided along the river Ros, a tributary of the Dnieper in the southern Ukraine, just north of the Black Sea” (White, pp. 268-269).

So far, then, we have an alliance stretching from Russia and Turkestan in Western Asia to Mongolia and China in the Far East. Are other eastern peoples listed in Ezekiel 38-39?

Notice the listing of Gomer. This name has caused a lot of confusion as the ancient people near Armenia known as the Gimirrai or Cimmerians migrated around both sides of the Black Sea into Europe-becoming the Celts. For this reason, many equate Gomer with Europe. But the Gimirrai or Cimmerians who migrated into Europe were actually the people known to the Assyrians as Bit Khumri, the “house of Omri”-that is, the northern tribes of Israel (once ruled by the dynasty of Omri), who were taken captive to northern Assyria.

The actual people of Gomer (that is, of Japheth’s son Gomer), migrated not to Europe but in the exact opposite direction-to southeast Asia. “Gomer gave rise to the Siamese [Thai], Burmese, Indonesians, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Laotians and Cambodians who all have the same sub-racial anthropological classifications.... The Cambodians’ real name is the Khmer which is very likely derived from Gomer. Similarly, one of the regions of Burma is known as Khemarata. Also, Kamara was the original name of Sumatra.... We also find the area of Kemarat in Thailand and the Gimaras island in the Philippines. Given the aforementioned, it is highly likely that these place and ethnic names are ultimately traceable back to Gomer. While it is impossible to prove, it is most likely and should be included in our list of strong probabilities” (White, p. 194).

Consider next the people of Gomer’s son Togarmah, who appears, as noted earlier, to be the progenitor of some of the peoples of eastern Turkestan. “The name may be preserved in the E[ast] Cappadocian city of Til-garimmu, listed in the Assyrian records” (“Togarmah,” New Unger’s Bible Dictionary). This location was in what is now central Turkey.

The Hittite name, given above in The Living Bible footnote, was Tegerama. The people of this region “lived on the border with Tabal. Other names for this people were Tegaram a Tilgarimma, Trochmi and Trogmades. The Tegerama or Tegarama migrated from Cappadocia into Armenia.... From there they moved

into Turcoman territory (Turkistan) a possible derivation of Tegarama. In Turkistan, among the tablelands of Pamir, rose a great mount, Tagharma... These were the Mongoloid peoples of the eastern division of the Turkic peoples of Central Asia” (White, p. 197).

An apocryphal Hebrew work known as the Book of Jasher, though contradictory of Scripture in a number of regards, may nevertheless contain some accurate historical traditions. It states that “the children of Tugarma are ten families, and these are their names: Buzar, Parzunac, Balgar, Elicanum, Ragbib, Tarki [another possible origin of the name Turk], Bid, Zebuc, Ongal and Tilmaz; all these spread and rested in the north and built themselves cities” (10:10).

“Among the sign-posts indicating where Togarmah settled we find: Tagarchi in eastern Turkestan; Tigranoama in eastern Turkey; Tagarma mountains in eastern Turkestan; the city of Tagarma in western China; Taganrog, Tigeretsk Mountain, Togur town, Turgai province and Turgins, a town in Siberia; many Uighur peoples may be a derivative of Togarmah.

“Tradition speaks in terms of a certain son of Japheth known as Tork [Togarmah or Tarki?]. He in turn had a son Taunak Chan. He was in turn succeeded by Jelza Khan, Dibbakui Khan, Kajuk Khan and Ilingeh (or Alanza) Khan. Ilingeh Khan in turn had two sons: Tatar Khan-progenitor of the Tartars; and Mongul Khan-progenitor of some of the Mongols or Moghuls” (White, pp. 197-198).

If these people did indeed migrate to eastern Turkestan and then up into Siberia and Mongolia, as appears likely, that would certainly fit the biblical description of “the house of Togarmah from the far north” (Ezekiel 38:6).

The only ones left to identify in Gog’s confederation are “Peras, Cush and Put” (Ezekiel 38:5, The Living Bible). Peras is correctly translated in the NKJV and other versions as Persia. Persia is modern-day Iran. The descendants of the ancient Persians may still be found in their homeland of Iran. They can also be found, as noted in the Bible Reading Program comments on Isaiah 21, in parts of Eastern Europe and of India.

What then of Cush and Put? The NKJV and other translations usually render these as Ethiopia and Libya. Cush and Put (or Phut) were, according to the Table of Nations in Genesis 10, sons of Ham, father of many of the dark-skinned people of the world. Cush, it is generally acknowledged, became Ethiopia and other black peoples of East Africa. And the people of Put were indeed the ancient Libyans, whose descendants may be found throughout black Africa (see White, pp. 89-97).

Yet these two would seem to be the odd men out in this prophecy, being African while all the rest of the confederation is Eurasian. Indeed, the alliance thus far appears to include all of Asia north and east of the Euphrates River except for most of the people of the Indian subcontinent. However, when we better understand the identity of Cush and Put, we can see that the people of South Asia are not left out at all (and that the African branch of these peoples are probably not intended by the prophecy).

Concerning the identity of the people of India, 19th-century author George Faber wrote: “Their military nobility is acknowledged to be of the same family as the Sacas or Chasas, who maintain that their great common ancestor was Cush or Cush... But we read in a special manner of two lands of Cush, the Asiatic and the African. These were by the Greeks called the two Ethiopias...but by the Hindoos [Hindus], as by the sacred writers, they are denominated the land of Cush within and the land of Cush without” (The Origin of Pagan Idolatry, 1816, qtd. by White, p. 99).

In *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, author Martin Bernal writes: “The tradition of two Ethiopias is much older than [the 5th-century-B.C. Greek historian] Herodotus. In the

Odyssey [of the Greek writer Homer], the Ethiopians are described as dwelling ‘sundered in twain, the farthest of men, some where Hyperion [the sun] sets and some where he rises.’ Thus, there were Black men, Aithiopes...from Western Libya (Africa) to Eastern Mesopotamia” (qtd. by White, pp. 100-101).

Those on the east of Mesopotamia evidently migrated further east, giving their name to the Hindu Kush Mountains of Afghanistan and Pakistan. “A few other tell-tale signs of the movement eastwards of the sons of Cush include a land called Kushian, in modern Pakistan. Just to the north of India also lay the land Kashgana. And in the south of India ran a river called Kishna. All of these names are variously derivatives of ‘Cush” (White, p. 102). Thus, many of the dark-skinned people of the Indian subcontinent are evidently Cushite.

Regarding the people of Put or Phut, historian George Rawlinson wrote: “This term is obscure.... In most {scriptures} Phut is joined with tribes which are distinctively African; but in two of them (Ezek [27].10, and [38].5), the accompanying nations seem to be Asiatic. The explanation of this may possibly be that, as there were two Cushes, so there were two Phuts, one Asiatic, and the other African” (qtd. by White, p. 97).

The eastern branch of Put “may have migrated from the east Mediterranean region as this is where anthropologists trace the northern Indians to. All one can say is that large parts of India were known as Rajputna (modern Rajasthan state). Rajputna was a group of princely states ruled over by a warrior-caste called the Rajputs (meaning ‘chief of Put’ or ‘chief over Put’). In northern India, near Bhutan, we find the town called Panta, later Patali-putra, the capital city of Maghada State. The Rajputs and others drove the Dravidian Cushites into Central and Southern India. Those Phutites which settled in Central India mixed with the Dravidians. In the east some mixed with the Mongoloids” (White, pp. 97-98).

So rather than present-day Ethiopia and Libya in Africa, it appears much more likely that Ezekiel 38:5 is speaking of the people of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Consider then: the vast hordes of India, China, Indonesia, Russia, Turkestan and more combined-an unimaginable force and staggeringly formidable foe to be sure...

But no match at all for Almighty God.

When Will Gog’s Forces Invade and Be Destroyed? (Ezekiel 38-39)

We have already seen that Ezekiel 38-39 is a prophecy of the latter days (38:8, 16). Yet where does it fit in the march of end-time events?

Some, thinking the Israelites brought out of the nations and back to the Promised Land in Ezekiel 38:8 is referring to the Jews who have returned to the land during the past century, conclude that this prophecy concerns an invasion of the modern Jewish state of Israel prior to Christ’s return. But this view simply does not fit the picture here. The returned Israelites are described in this prophecy as dwelling in peace and safety-in a “land of unwalled villages...without walls, and having neither bars nor gates” (verse 11). While modern cities don’t normally have defensive walls, the image here is mainly a figurative one-of living in complete peace, free from invasion or harm. And that certainly does not describe the modern Israeli state. Israel today is constantly under grave threat from hostile neighbors and from terrorists within. In fact, the Israelis are currently building an actual wall or security fence to protect them against Palestinian suicide bombers.

Neither can the prophecy refer to, as some assume, the gathering of forces at Armageddon referred to in Revelation 16 and their destruction in Revelation 19. There is some parallel symbolism, as the sacrificial feast of fallen troops given to birds and beasts is found in both Ezekiel 39 and Revelation 19. However, similar imagery is also used of the defeat of Egypt, as we will next read in Ezekiel 32:4-5. Moreover, the

people of Israel will by no means be dwelling safely as the gathering at Armageddon occurs, with the forces of the European-centered Beast power, end-time Babylon, still occupying the Holy Land. And having just experienced the Great Tribulation, with the cataclysmic Day of the Lord still ongoing, the Israelites will not yet be enriched with “livestock and goods” (compare Ezekiel 38:12).

Considering these factors, the only time that fits what is described is the period after the return of Jesus Christ. When He comes, He will defeat Israel’s enemies and gather those who are left of all Israel in the Promised Land, where they will at last dwell in peace and safety under His rule.

As that stage of Christ’s reign will last 1,000 years (the Millennium), during which time Satan the devil will be imprisoned (Revelation 20:1-6), the question now becomes: At what point following the commencement of the Millennium will the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38-39 come to pass?

Some think it comes at the end, when there definitely will be a march to battle by Gog and Magog.

Revelation 20:7-9 states: “Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.” It is also claimed that because armaments such as shields, bucklers, bows, arrows, javelins and spears will be able to be burned for seven years (Ezekiel 39:9-10), this must indicate not modern weaponry but wooden implements-fashioned by people at the end of the Millennium who will be without military technology and hardware.

But there are problems with this view. For one, Gog and Magog in Revelation 20 are said to be from the four corners of the earth and therefore apparently represent people of all nationalities. In Ezekiel 38, it is clear the forces are of specific ethnicities and associated with a particular northern region.

Notice also what God says to Gog in Ezekiel 38:17: “Are you not the one I spoke of in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel? At that time they prophesied for years that I would bring you against them” (NIV). How then could Ezekiel 38 be a postmillennial reference, as none of the prophets appear to have mentioned this in any other prophecy (unless it was simply not recorded)-the only reference being in the New Testament book of Revelation?

(Granted, there do not seem to be any other references to an invasion early in the Millennium either. Yet the destruction of Gog’s forces at that point in time may simply be part of the fulfillment of God’s general prophecies of calamitous judgment accompanying the Messiah’s coming. Indeed, if Gog is a leader of Edom, which seems possible given that the western Turks may have blended to some degree with those of the East and that Gog may be short for Agog or Agag, there may be more specific prophecies regarding him-that is, those that foretell Edom’s great downfall at the time of Christ’s return.)

A more serious objection to Gog’s invasion in Ezekiel being postmillennial is that it evidently occurs soon after the return of Israel to the Promised Land-not after they have dwelt there for a thousand years. Notice Ezekiel 39:7: “So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not let them profane My holy name anymore.” Clearly, if the Israelites had been living under Christ’s rule for a thousand years at this point, this statement would not seem to make any sense.

Notice also: “So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day forward” (verse 22). Yet at the end of the Millennium, Israel will already have been living under God’s covenant for a thousand years, wherein “no more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know [Him], from the least of them to the greatest of them” (Jeremiah 31:34). It thus seems to make more sense to view verse 22 as applying to a time early in the Millennium. (It’s interesting that up to this point, many Israelites are still confused about the identity and character of

Jesus Christ and the unlimited extent of His power. It appears that up to this time they have not yet fully and reverently submitted to His rule.)

By the end of the Millennium, the gentiles too will know the Lord-indeed, they will know Him throughout most of the Millennium, for of Christ's 1,000-year reign we are told that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). And yet Ezekiel 38-39 presents the defeat of Gog as resulting in the gentiles coming to know God. It appears, then, that the defeat of Gog described in Ezekiel must come during the early part of the Millennium.

Further, God says that in the wake of Gog's defeat "the Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity" (39:23)-that is, this is the point at which the nations would come to understand it. "Then," He continues, "they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who sent [the Israelites] into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land...And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel" (verses 28-29). Again, it seems obvious that this is describing events that take place shortly after Christ's return.

Indeed, the arrangement of Ezekiel's final chapters may have some bearing here. God spoke of giving His Spirit to His people after the return of Christ in Ezekiel 36. Ezekiel 37 continues on that theme. Though it briefly flashes forward to the period after the Millennium to show that even all the Israelites who have died will ultimately receive the same opportunity, the story flow then returns to the beginning of the Millennium, when the nations of Israel and Judah are at last fused together as one nation. Continuing with that flow, it would appear that the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38-39 will come next in time order-followed by that of chapters 40-48, concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its temple and the reorganization of the Promised Land, events that will also transpire early in the Millennium.

Of course, many of Gog's forces will evidently be destroyed when Christ first returns. For Revelation 16:14-16 says that "the kings...of the whole world" will gather at Armageddon for the "battle of that great day of God Almighty." Yet, understanding the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38-39 to come early in the Millennium, it is evident that only part of Gog's army will be present in the Holy Land to be destroyed at Christ's coming. It seems likely that vast numbers will yet be stretched across Eurasia-apparently what remains of the 200-million-man force described in Revelation 9. Sometime after Christ smites the forces gathered against Him (which, again, would necessarily include only part of Gog's forces), perhaps even a few years later, the remainder of Gog's forces then marches down for the onslaught described in Ezekiel. (This is consistent with the fact that when Jesus returns, He will not bring the entire world into instant compliance with His way. Rather, Isaiah 2:2-4 and Zechariah 14:16-19 demonstrate that there will be a period of bringing the nations into line through both instruction and disciplinary measures.)

What then of the seemingly archaic military equipment? Certainly ancient weaponry has been used in other end-time passages to represent modern war implements. Yet does the fact that these armaments are used as fuel for fire for seven years mean none of them can be metal or modern? Many guns and rifles, and most notably the AK-47 assault rifle so popular in third world nations, have wooden stocks. Consider also that there are many flammable elements to even jeeps, tanks and jet planes-not least of which is their fuel. The fuel and reserve fuel for thousands upon thousands of military vehicles is staggering to contemplate. Small quantities of material can be used as a fire starter-and there would be vast quantities available. Furthermore, consider all the possessions of an enormous military force on the move-this one perhaps two thirds as large as the current U.S. population. There would be an unimaginable amount of burnable material for the few million Israelites then living in the Promised Land. Also, perhaps new technology, whether invented by man or given by God, could allow even metal to be converted to usable energy.

Of course, it should also be mentioned that a vast Eurasian army would have not only well-trained troops with sophisticated equipment but also huge numbers of poorly outfitted infantry and cavalry. Among hordes of Chinese peasantry and third-world Muslim jihadis, it would not at all be surprising to find large numbers of wooden spears, clubs, crossbows, wood-handled machetes and sabers-even hoes and pitchforks.

So if it is describing a later episode than Ezekiel 38-39, why does Revelation 20 mention Gog and Magog? As already noted, these names seem to be used there in a representative sense for a Satan-led force coming from all nations at the end of the Millennium. It may be that the great invasion of Gog and Magog that occurs near the beginning of the Millennium is being viewed as a forerunner of the postmillennial invasion. The first was a multinational force. The later will be as well-though encompassing even more nations. It may even be that Gog and Magog will constitute the largest portion of this final rebellious force. Some, it should be noted, see numerical significance to the use of Gog and Magog in Revelation, explaining that the words numerically add up to 70, a number the Jews see as representative of all nations (as 70 nations are listed in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10). Or given that Gog and Magog can perhaps mean “dictator” and “dictatorship” respectively, perhaps that is the parallel. In any case, the invasion of Ezekiel 38-39 does not appear to be the invasion of Revelation 20, though there is apparently some tie between them, if only a figurative one.

By the defeat of Gog’s forces, God says He will set His glory among the nations-they will know His great power and majesty. The Israelites will come to know Him as their personal Savior and Protector. And the gentiles will see that as well-leading them, at last, to desire to become God’s people too.

1 John 1 (Adam Clarke’s Commentary)

<http://studylight.org/com/acc/>

Chapter 1

The testimony of the apostle concerning the reality of the person and doctrine of Christ; and the end for which he bears this testimony, 1-4. God is light, and none can have fellowship with him who do not walk in the light; those who walk in the light are cleansed from all unrighteousness by the blood of Christ, 5-7. No man can say that he has not sinned; but God is faithful and just to cleanse from all unrighteousness them who confess their sins, 8-10.

Notes on Chapter 1

Verse 1. That which was from the beginning ?That glorious personage, JESUS CHRIST the LORD, who was from eternity; him, being manifested in the flesh, we have heard proclaim the doctrine of eternal life; with our own eyes have we seen him, not transiently, for we have looked upon him frequently; and our hands have handled-frequently touched, his person; and we have had every proof of the identity and reality of this glorious being that our senses of hearing, seeing, and feeling, could possibly require.

Verse 2. For the Life was manifested ?The Lord Jesus, who is the creator of all things, and the fountain of life to all sentient and intellectual beings, and from whom eternal life and happiness come, was manifested in the flesh, and we have seen him, and in consequence bear witness to him as the fountain and author of eternal life; for he who was from eternity with the Father was manifested unto us his apostles, and to the whole of the Jewish nation, and preached that doctrine of eternal life which I have before delivered to the world in my gospel, and which I now farther confirm by this epistle.

Verse 3. That which we have seen and heard ?We deliver nothing by hearsay, nothing by tradition, nothing from conjecture; we have had the fullest certainty of all that we write and preach.

That ye also may have fellowship with us ?That ye may be preserved from all false doctrine, and have a real participation with us apostles of the grace, peace, love, and life of God, which communion we have with God the Father, who hath loved us, and given his Son Jesus Christ to redeem us; and with his Son Jesus

Christ, who laid down his life for the life of the world and through whom, being God manifested in the flesh, we have union with God, are made partakers of the Divine nature and dwell in God, and God in us. Verse 4. That your joy may be full. ?Ye have already tasted that the Lord is good; but I am now going to show you the height of your Christian calling, that your happiness may be complete, being thoroughly cleansed from all sin, and filled with the fulness of God.

Verse 5. This then is the message ?This is the grand principle on which all depends, which we have heard of, FROM him; for neither Moses nor the prophets ever gave that full instruction concerning God and communion with him which Jesus Christ has given, for the only-begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, has alone declared the fulness of the truth, and the extent of the blessings, which believers on him are to receive. See John 1:18.

God is light ?The source of wisdom, knowledge, holiness, and happiness; and in him is no darkness at all—no ignorance, no imperfection, no sinfulness, no misery. And from him wisdom, knowledge, holiness, and happiness are received by every believing soul. This is the grand message of the Gospel, the great principle on which the happiness of man depends. LIGHT implies every essential excellence, especially wisdom, holiness, and happiness. DARKNESS implies all imperfection, and principally ignorance, sinfulness, and misery. LIGHT is the purest, the most subtle, the most useful, and the most diffusive of all God's creatures; it is, therefore, a very proper emblem of the purity, perfection, and goodness of the Divine nature. God is to human soul, what the light is to the world; without the latter all would be dismal and uncomfortable, and terror and death would universally prevail: and without an indwelling God what is religion? Without his all-penetrating and diffusive light, what is the soul of man? Religion would be an empty science, a dead letter, a system unauthoritaded and uninfluencing, and the soul a trackless wilderness, a howling waste, full of evil, of terror and dismay, and ever racked with realizing anticipations of future, successive, permanent, substantial, and endless misery. No wonder the apostle lays this down as a first and grand principle, stating it to be the essential message which he had received from Christ to deliver to the world.

Verse 6. If we say that we have fellowship ?Having fellowship, communion, with God, necessarily implies a partaking of the Divine nature. Now if a man profess to have such communion, and walk in darkness—live an irreligious and sinful life, he lies, in the profession which he makes, and does not the truth—does not walk according to the directions of the Gospel, on the grace of which he holds his relation to God, and his communion with him.

The Gnostics, against whose errors it is supposed this epistle was written, were great pretenders to knowledge, to the highest degrees of the Divine illumination, and the nearest communion with the fountain of holiness, while their manners were excessively corrupt.

Verse 7. But if we walk in the light ?If, having received the principle of holiness from him, we live a holy and righteous life, deriving continual light, power, and life from him, then we have fellowship one with another; that is, we have communion with God, and God condescends to hold communion with us. This appears to be the intention of the apostle; and so he was understood by some versions and MSS., which, instead of, with each other, have, with him. Those who are deeply experienced in Divine things converse with God, and God with them. What John says is no figure; God and a holy heart are in continual correspondence.

The blood of Jesus Christ ?The meritorious efficacy of his passion and death has purged our consciences from dead works, and cleanseth us, continues to cleanse us, i.e., to keep clean what it has made clean, (for it requires the same merit and energy to preserve holiness in the soul of man, as to produce it,) or, as several MSS. and some versions read, will cleanse; speaking of those who are already justified, and are expecting full redemption in his blood.

And being cleansed from all sin is what every believer should look for, what he has a right to expect, and what he must have in this life, in order to be prepared to meet his God. Christ is not a partial Saviour, he saves to the uttermost, and he cleanses from ALL sin.

Verse 8. If we say that we have no sin ?This is tantamount to 1 John 1:10: If we say that we have not sinned. All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; and therefore every man needs a Saviour, such as Christ is. It is very likely that the heretics, against whose evil doctrines the apostle writes, denied that they had any sin, or needed any Saviour. In deed, the Gnostics even denied that Christ suffered: the AEon, or Divine Being that dwelt in the man Christ Jesus, according to them, left him when he was taken by the Jews; and he, being but a common man, his sufferings and death had neither merit nor efficacy.

We deceive ourselves ?By supposing that we have no guilt, no sinfulness, and consequently have no need of the blood of Christ as an atoning sacrifice: this is the most dreadful of all deceptions, as it leaves the soul under all the guilt and pollution of sin, exposed to hell, and utterly unfit for heaven.

The truth is not in us. ?We have no knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus, the whole of which is founded on this most awful truth-all have sinned, all are guilty, all are unholy; and none can redeem himself. Hence it is as necessary that Jesus Christ should become incarnated, and suffer and die to bring men to God.

Verse 9. If we confess our sins ?If, from a deep sense of our guilt, impurity, and helplessness, we humble ourselves before God, acknowledging our iniquity, his holiness, and our own utter helplessness, and implore mercy for his sake who has died for us; he is faithful, because to such he has promised mercy, Psalms 32:5; Proverbs 28:13; and just, for Christ has died for us, and thus made an atonement to the Divine justice; so that God can now be just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.

And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ?Not only to forgive the sin, but to purify the heart.

OBSERVE here, 1. Sin exists in the soul after two modes or forms: (1.) In guilt, which requires forgiveness or pardon. (2.) In pollution, which requires cleansing.

2. Guilt, to be forgiven, must be confessed; and pollution, to be cleansed, must be also confessed. In order to find mercy, a man must know and feel himself to be a sinner, that he may fervently apply to God for pardon; in order to get a clean heart, a man must know and feel its depravity, acknowledge and deplore it before God, in order to be fully sanctified.

3. Few are pardoned, because they do not feel and confess their sins; and few are sanctified or cleansed from all sin, because they do not feel and confess their own sore, and the plague of their hearts.

4. As the blood of Jesus Christ, the merit of his passion and death, applied by faith, purges the conscience from all dead works, so the same cleanses the heart from all unrighteousness.

5. As all unrighteousness is sin, so he that is cleansed from all unrighteousness is cleansed from all sin. To attempt to evade this, and plead for the continuance of sin in the heart through life, is ungrateful, wicked, and even blasphemous; for as he who says he has not sinned, 1 John 1:10, makes God a liar, who has declared the contrary through every part of his revelation; so he that says the blood of Christ either cannot or will not cleanse us from all sin in this life, gives also the lie to his Maker, who has declared the contrary, and thus shows that the word-the doctrine of God is not in him.

Reader, it is the birthright of every child of God to be cleansed from all sin, to keep himself unspotted from the world, and so to live as never more to offend his Maker. All things are possible to him that believeth; because all things are possible to the infinitely meritorious blood and energetic Spirit of the Lord Jesus. See the notes on the parallel passages in the margin; and particularly in St. John's gospel, John 1.

Chapter 2

He exhorts them not to sin; yet encourages those who may have fallen, by the hope of mercy through Christ,

who is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, 1,2. He who knows God keeps his commandments; and he who professes to abide in Christ ought to walk as Christ walked, 3-6. The old and new commandment, that we should walk in the light, and love the brethren, 7-11. The apostle's description of the different states in the family of God; little children, young men, and fathers; and directions to each, 12-15. A statement of what prevails in the world, 16,17. Cautions against antichrists, 18-23. Exhortations to persevere in what they had received, and to continue to follow that anointing of the Divine Spirit, by which they could discern all men, and know all things necessary to their salvation, and proper to prepare them for eternal glory, 24-29.

Notes on Chapter 2

Verse 1. My little children My beloved children; the address of an affectionate father to children whom he tenderly loves. The term also refers to the apostle's authority as their spiritual father, and their obligation to obey as his spiritual children.

That ye sin not. ?This is the language of the whole Scripture; of every dispensation, ordinance, institution, doctrine, and word of God. Sin not-do not run into ruin; live not so as to promote your own misery; be happy, for it is the will of God that ye should be so; therefore he wills that ye should be holy: holiness and happiness are inseparable; sin and misery are equally so.

And if any man sin ?If, through ignorance, inexperience, the violence of temptation, unwatchfulness, sin, and grieved the Spirit of God, do not continue in the sin, nor under the guilt; do not despair of being again restored to the favour of God; your case, it is true, is deeply deplorable, but not desperate; there is still hope, for—

We have an advocate with the Father ?We still have him before the throne who died for our offences, and rose again for our justification; and there he makes intercession for us. He is the righteous; he who suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Do not, therefore, despair, but have immediate recourse to God through him.

Verse 2. And he is the propitiation The atoning sacrifice for our sins. This is the proper sense of the word as used in the Septuagint, where it often occurs; and is the translation of asham, an oblation for sin, 8:14\ \. chattath, a sacrifice for sin, Ezekiel 44:27. kippur, an atonement, Numbers 5:8. See Clarke on Romans 3:25. and particularly See Clarke on Luke 18:13. The word is used only here and in 1 John 4:10.

And not for ours only ?It is not for us apostles that he has died, nor exclusively for the Jewish people, for the whole world, Gentiles as well as Jews, all the descendants of Adam. The apostle does not say that he died for any select part of the inhabitants of the earth, or for \@some out of every nation, tribe, or kindred\@; but for ALL MANKIND; and the attempt to limit this is a violent outrage against God and his word.

For the meaning of the word which we here translate advocate, See Clarke on John 14:16.

From these verses we learn that a poor backslider need not despair of again finding mercy; this passage holds out sufficient encouragement for his hope. There is scarcely another such in the Bible, and why? That sinners might not presume on the mercy of God. And why this one? That no backslider might utterly despair. Here, then, is a guard against presumption on the one hand, and despondency on the other.

Verse 3. And hereby we do know that we know him ?If we keep the commandments of God, loving him with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves, we have the fullest proof that we have the true saving knowledge of God and his Christ. The Gnostics pretended to much knowledge, but their knowledge left them in possession of all their bad passions and unholy habits; they, therefore, gave no proof that they had known either God or his Son Jesus-nor is any man properly acquainted with God, who is still under the power of his sins.

Verse 4. He that saith, I know him ?This is a severe blow against those false teachers, and against all pretenders to religious knowledge, who live under the power of their sins; and against all Antinomians, and false boasters in the righteousness of Christ as a covering for their personal unholiness. They are all liars, and no truth of God is in them.

Verse 5. But whoso keepeth his word ?Conscientiously observes his doctrine, the spirit and letter of the religion of Christ.

Is the love of God perfected ?The design of God's love in sending Jesus Christ into the world to die for the sin of man, is accomplished, in that man who receives the doctrine, and applies for the salvation provided for him. This seems to be the meaning of the apostle.

That we are in him. ?That we have entered into his spirit and views, received his salvation, have been enabled to walk in the light, and have communion with him by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 6. Abideth in him ?He who not only professes to have known Christ, but also that he has communion with him, and abides in his favour, should prove the truth of his profession by walking as Christ walked; living a life of devotion and obedience to God, and of benevolence and beneficence to his neighbour. Thus Christ walked; and he has left us an example that we should follow his steps.

To be in Christ, 1 John 2:5, is to be converted to the Christian faith, and to have received the remission of sins. To abide in Christ, 1 John 2:6, is to continue in that state of salvation, growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 7. Brethren, I write no new commandment It was ever the command of God that men should receive his light, walk by that light, and love him and one another.

Verse 8. Which thing is true in him and in you ?It is true that Christ loved the world so well as to lay down his life for it; and it was true in them, in all his faithful followers at that time, who were ready to lay down their lives for the testimony of Jesus. The darkness is past ?The total thick darkness of the heathen world, and the comparative darkness of the Mosaic dispensation, are now passing away; and the pure and superior light is now diffusing its beams everywhere. He does not say that the darkness was all gone by, but, it is passing away; he does not say that the fulness of the light had appeared, but, it is now shining and will shine more and more to the perfect day; for the darkness passes away in proportion as the light shines and increases.

Verse 9. He that saith he is in the light ?He that professes to be in Yeshua, even in the lowest degree; and hateth his brother-not only does not love him, but wills and does him evil, as the Jews did the Gentiles; is in darkness-has received no saving knowledge of the truth; and, whatever he may pretend, is in heathen ignorance, or even worse than heathen ignorance, to the present time, notwithstanding the clear shining of the light of the Gospel.

Verse 10. He that loveth his brother ?That is, his neighbour, his fellow creature, whether Jew or Gentile, so as to bear him continual good will, and to be ready to do him every kind office; abideth in the light-not only gives proof that he has received, but that he walks in him, that he retains the grace of his justification, and grows therein.

And there is none occasion of stumbling in him. ? And there is no stumbling block in him; he neither gives nor receives offence: love prevents him from giving any to his neighbour; and love prevents him from receiving any from his neighbour, because it leads him to put the best construction on every thing. Besides, as he walks in the light, he sees the stumbling blocks that are in the way, and avoids them; every part of his path being illuminated. Many fall into sin because they do not see the snares that are in the way; and they do not see the snares because they either have not received, or do not abide in, the light.

Verse 11. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness ?He is still in his heathen or unconverted state; and walketh in darkness, his conduct being a proof of that state; and knoweth not whither he goeth-having no proper knowledge of God or eternal things; and cannot tell whether he is going to heaven or hell, because that darkness has blinded his eyes-darkened his whole soul, mind, and heart.

Verse 12. I write unto you, little children Beloved children, (See Clarke on 1 John 2:1.) those who were probably the apostle's own converts, and members of the Assembly over which he presided. But it may be applied to young converts in general; those who can call God Abba, Father, by the Holy Spirit: therefore he says of them, that their sins were forgiven them for his name's sake: i.e. on account of Jesus, the Saviour, who had died for them, and was now their Mediator at the right hand of God.

Verse 13. I write unto you, fathers ?By fathers it is very likely that the apostle means persons who had embraced Messiah on its first promulgation in Judea and in the Lesser Asia, some of them had probably seen Christ in the flesh; for this appears to be what is meant by, Ye have known him from the beginning. These were the elders and eye witnesses, who were of the longest standing in the Assembly, and well established in the truths of the Gospel, and in experience. But, him who is from the beginning, may mean Jesus Christ in the eternity of his nature, see John 1:1,2; but the sense is the same.

I write unto you, young men ?These were confirmed disciples of Messiah; persons who were well-grounded in the truth, had been thoroughly exercised in the Spiritual warfare, were no longer agitated by doubts and fears, but had arrived at the abiding testimony of the Spirit of God in their consciences; hence they are said to have overcome the wicked one, 1 John 2:14. They were persons in the prime of life, and in the zenith of their faith and love.

I write unto you, little children a very different term from that used in the 12th verse 1 John 2:12, which means beloved children, as we have already seen. This is another class, and their state is differently described: Ye have known the Father. If the apostle does not use these two words indifferently, four states instead of three, are here described:-

1. FATHERS, those who had been converted at the very commencement of Christianity, and had seen the eternal Word manifested in the flesh.
2. YOUNG MEN, youths in the prime of their spiritual life, valiant soldiers, fighting under the banner of Christ, who had confounded Satan in his wiles, and overcome him by the blood of the Lamb.
3. LITTLE CHILDREN, disciples of Christ, not of very long standing in the Church, nor of much experience, but who had known the Father; i.e. persons who had been made sons: God had sent the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, whereby they cried Abba, Father!
4. BELOVED CHILDREN. the most recent believers, and particularly those among young men and women who, from their youth, simplicity, openheartedness, and affectionate attachment to God and his cause, were peculiarly dear to this aged apostle of Messiah. These are represented as having their sins forgiven them on account of his name, that is, for the sake of Yeshua, or on account of his merit or worthiness.

Verse 14. The word of God abideth in you ?Ye have not only thoroughly known and digested the Divine doctrine, but your hearts are moulded into it; ye know it to be the truth of God from the power and happiness with which it inspires you, and from the constant abiding testimony of the Spirit of that truth which lives and witnesses wherever that truth lives and predominates.

Verse 15. Love not the world ?Though these several classes were so well acquainted with Divine things, and had all tasted the powers of the world to come: yet so apt are men to be drawn aside by sensible things, that the Holy Spirit saw it necessary to caution these against the love of the world, the inordinate desire of earthly things. Covetousness is the predominant vice of old age: Ye fathers, love not the world. The things which are in the world, its profits, pleasures, and honours, have the strongest allurements for youth;

therefore, ye young men, little children, and babes, love not the things of this world. Let those hearts abide faithful to God who have taken him for their portion.

The love of the Father is not in him. ?The love of God and the love of earthly things are incompatible. If you give place to the love of the world, the love of God cannot dwell in you; and if you have not his love, you can have no peace, no holiness, no heaven.

Verse 16. For all that is in the world ?All that it can boast of, all that it can promise, is only sensual, transient gratification, and even this promise it cannot fulfil; so that its warmest votaries can complain loudest of their disappointment.

The lust of the flesh ?Sensual and impure desires which seek their gratification in women, strong drink, delicious viands, and the like.

Lust of the eyes ?Inordinate desires after finery of every kind, gaudy dress, splendid houses, superb furniture, expensive equipage, trappings, and decorations of all sorts.

Pride of life ?Hunting after honours, titles, and pedigrees; boasting of ancestry, family connections, great offices, honourable acquaintance, and the like.

Is not of the Father ?Nothing of these inordinate attachments either comes from or leads to God. They are of this world; here they begin, flourish, and end. They deprave the mind, divert it from Divine pursuits, and render it utterly incapable of spiritual enjoyments.

Verse 17. The world passeth away ?All these things are continually fading and perishing; and the very state in which they are possessed is changing perpetually, and the earth and its works will be shortly burnt up. And the lust thereof ?The men of this world, their vain pursuits, and delusive pleasures, are passing away in their successive generations, and their very memory perishes; but he that doeth the will of God-that seeks the pleasure, profit, and honour that comes from above, shall abide for ever, always happy through time and eternity, because God, the unchangeable source of felicity, is his portion.

Verse 18. Little children, it is the last time ?This place is variously understood. This is the last dispensation of grace and mercy to mankind; the present age is the conclusion of the Jewish state, as the temple and holy city are shortly to be destroyed. But as there are many who suppose that this epistle was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, consequently the words cannot, on that supposition, refer to this. Others think that should be translated, a most difficult, perilous, and wretched time; a time in which all kinds of vices, heresies, and pollutions shall have their full reign; that time which our Lord predicted, Matthew 7:15, when he said, Beware of false prophets. And Matthew 24:11, 12: Many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many; and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. And Matthew 24:24: There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders. And Matthew 24:25: Behold, I have told you before. Antichrist shall come ?Who is this, antichrist? Is he the Emperor Domitian, the Gnostics, Nicolaitans, Nazareans, Cerinthians, Romish pontiffs, person, thing, doctrine, system of religion, polity, opposed to Christ, and to the spirit and spread of his Gospel, is antichrist. We need not look for this imaginary being in any of the above exclusively. Even Protestantism may have its antichrist as well as Popery. Every man who opposes the spirit of the Gospel, and every teacher and writer who endeavours to lower the Gospel standard to the spirit and taste of the world, is a genuine antichrist, no matter where or among whom he is found. The heresies which sprang up in the days of John were the antichrist of that time. As there has been a succession of oppositions to the Faith in its spirit and spread through every age since its promulgation in the world, so there has been a succession of antichrists. We may bring this matter much lower; every enemy of Christ, every one who opposes his reign in the world, in others, or in himself, is an antichrist; and consequently every wicked man is an antichrist. But the name has been generally applied to whatever person or thing systematically opposes Christ and his religion.

Many antichrists ?Many false prophets, false Messiahs, heretics, and corrupters of the truth.

Whereby we know that it is the last time. ?That time which our Lord has predicted, and of which he has warned us.

Verse 19. They went out from us ?These heretics had belonged to our assemblies, they professed the faith, and do so still; but we apostles did not commission them to preach to you, for they have disgraced the Divine doctrine with the most pernicious opinions; they have given up or explained away its most essential principles; they have mingled the rest. While, therefore, we acknowledge that they once belonged to us, we assert that they are not of us. They are not believers; we abhor their conduct and their creed. We never sent them to teach.

They were not of us ?For a considerable time before they left our assemblies they gave proofs that they had departed from the faith; for if they had been of us-if they had been apostles, and continued in the firm belief of the teachings, they would not have departed from us to form a sect of themselves.

That they were not all of us. ?They were not expelled from the assembly; they were not sent out by us; but they separated from it and us. None of them had been inspired as we apostles were, though they pretended to a very high teaching; but their separating from us manifested that they were not taught, as we were, by the Spirit of God. These false teachers probably drew many sincere souls away with them; and to this it is probable the apostle alludes when he says, they were not ALL of us. Some were; others were not.

Verse 20. But ye have an unction ?The word signifies not an unction, but an ointment, the very thing itself by which anointing is effected; and so it was properly rendered in our former translations. Probably this is an allusion to the holy anointing oil of the law, and to Psalms 14:7: God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness-he hath given thee the plenitude of the Spirit, which none of thy fellows-none of the prophets, ever received in such abundance. By this it is evident that not only the gifts of the Spirit, but the Holy Spirit himself, is intended. This Spirit dwelt at that time in a peculiar manner in the assembly, to teach apostles, teachers, and all the primitive believers, every thing requisite for their salvation; and to make them the instruments of handing down to posterity that glorious system of truth which is contained in the Scriptures. The chrism or ointment here mentioned is also an allusion to the holy anointing ointment prescribed by God himself, Exodus 30:23-25, which was composed of fine myrrh, sweet cinnamon, sweet calamus, cassia lignea, and olive oil. This was an emblem of the gifts and graces of the Divine Spirit. See the notes on the above place. And for the reason of this anointing See Clarke on Exodus 29:7.

Ye know all things. ?Every truth Of God necessary to your salvation and the salvation of man in general, and have no need of that knowledge of which the Gnostics boast.

Verse 21. I have not written, ?It is not because ye are ignorant of these things that I write to you, but because you know them, and can by these judge of the doctrines of those false teachers, and clearly perceive that they are liars; for they contradict the truth which ye have already received, and consequently their doctrine is a lie, and no lie can be of the truth.

Verse 22. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Yeshua is Messiah? ?Here we see some of the false doctrines which were then propagated in the world. There were certain persons who, while they acknowledged Yeshua to be a Divine teacher, denied him to be the Christ, i.e. the MESSIAH.

He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son, ?He is antichrist who denies the supernatural and miraculous birth of Jesus Christ, who denies Jesus to be the Son of God, and who denies God to be the Father of the Lord Jesus; thus he denies the Father and the Son.

Verse 23. Whosoever denieth the Son ?He who denies Jesus to be the Son of God, and consequently the Christ or Messiah, he hath not the Father-he can have no birth from above, he cannot be enrolled among the children of God, because none can be a child of God but by faith in Christ Jesus.

He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. ?

Verse 24. Let that therefore abide in you ?Continue in the doctrines concerning the incarnation, passion, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of the Messiah, which you have heard preached from the beginning by us his apostles.

Ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. ?Ye who are preachers shall not only be acknowledged as ministers of the assemblies, but be genuine children of God, by faith in the Son of his love; and ye all, thus continuing, shall have fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

Verse 25. This is the promise ?God has promised eternal life to all who believe on Yeshua. So they who receive his doctrine, and continue in communion with the Father and the Son, shall have this eternal life.

Verse 26. These things have I written ?Either meaning the whole epistle, or what is contained in the preceding verses, from the beginning of the 18th to the end of the 25th. 1 John 2:18-25

Them that seduce you. That is, the deceivers that were among them, and who were labouring to pervert the followers of Christ.

Verse 27. But the anointing which ye have received ?That ointment, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, mentioned 1 John 2:20, where see the note.

Ye need not that any man teach you ?The Gnostics, who pretended to the highest illumination, could bring no proof that they were divinely taught, nor had they any thing in their teaching worthy the acceptance of the meanest believer; therefore they had no need of that, nor of any other teaching but that which the same anointing teacheth, the same Spirit from whom they had already received the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. Whatever that taught, they needed; and whatever those taught whose teaching was according to this Spirit, they needed. John does not say that those who had once received the teaching of the Divine Spirit had no farther need of the ministry of the Gospel; no, but he says they had no need of such teaching as their false teachers proposed to them; nor of any other teaching that was different from that anointing, i.e. the teaching of the Spirit of God. No man, howsoever holy, wise, or pure, can ever be in such a state as to have no need of the Gospel ministry: they who think so give the highest proof that they have never yet learned of Christ or his Spirit.

And is truth ?Because it is the Spirit of truth John 16:13.

And is no lie ?It has nothing like the fables of the Gnostics. It can neither deceive, nor be deceived.

Verse 28. And now, little children, Beloved children, abide in him-in Christ Jesus. Let his word and spirit continually abide in you, and have communion with the Father and the Son.

That when he shall appear ?To judge the world, we may have confidence, freedom of speech, liberty of access, boldness, from a conviction that our cause is good, and that we have had proper ground for exultation; and not be ashamed-confounded, when it appears that those who were brought to Messiah, have apostatized, and are no longer found in the congregation of the saints, and consequently are not our crown of rejoicing in the day of the Messiah. Abide in him, that this may not be the case.

Verse 29. If ye know that he is righteous ?That God is a holy God, ye know also, that every one who doeth righteousness-who lives a holy life, following the commandments of God, is born of him, BEGOTTEN of him-is made a partaker of the Divine nature, without which he could neither have a holy heart, nor live a holy life.

This verse properly belongs to the following chapter, and should not be separated from it. The subject is the same, and does not stand in any strict relation to that with which the 28th verse concludes.