No Small Stir?

The ‘prison epistles’ - those where Paul speaks of his prison status, carry the truth of a new revelation and a new dispensation (Eph. 3:3, 2). It is essential that the Bible reader has already encountered the apostle Paul in those epistles written during his missionary journeys, or as we sometimes say ‘the first seven epistles’. The book of Acts cannot be said to be a ‘gospel’ as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote, nor an epistle to any specific church or person as Romans or Titus. Yet, from Acts 13 to 28 the records there revolve around the apostle Paul and his epistles, written during the Acts period; these are congruous with his message or ministry; i.e. ‘saying none other things than those which Moses and the Prophets did say should come’, (Acts 26:22, 23); ‘Suffer’; ‘light to the Gentiles’ (Isa. 49:6). Neither of these truths are ‘New Testament revelation’ as such; BUT; ‘Ephesian’ truth, requiring as it does, some understanding of ‘gospel truths’, nonetheless is new to the New Testament, and no effort to ‘make Christianity understandable’ must blur the plain words of Paul i.e. ‘revelation’ and ‘dispensation’.

Let us be bold to realise that Paul moved from the ‘none other things’ to a position of endeavouring ‘to make all men see’, (Eph. 3:8, 9) something which had been hid from ages and from generations (Col. 1:26).

Michael Garstang

BIRMINGHAM Conference

A true time of fellowship around the word ‘Rightly Divided’ was experienced during the Birmingham Conference on 12th April last; when 10 'Bereans' gathered at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham. In spite of a later start than anticipated, comfy chairs, tea and coffee (thank you Wayne P.) helped until the ‘London Contingent’ arrived!

Alan Schofield took the first session and spoke on the great themes of election and predestination as made known in Ephesians chapter 1. What heart can remain unmoved when contemplating, that we are ‘Chosen in Christ before the overthrow of the cosmos’?
After a pleasant break for our sandwiches etc., plus more tea and coffee, Peter Ambrose convened our second meeting, where the themes of Doctrine and Dispensation as shown by Ephesians chapter 2, were considered.

Thanks go to those who journeyed from Preston, Chesterfield, Willenhall and West Bromwich to the conference, such labour is ‘not in vain ‘in the Lord’

FOUNDATION DAY

The Foundation Day Meetings at the Chapel of the Opened Book will this year be on Saturday May 31st. Meetings will be at 2:00pm and 4:45pm with refreshments provided between the meetings, the speakers will be Mr. Barry Marple and M. Garstang. We look forward to this opportunity of considering again ‘wherein we stand’ (1 Cor. 15:1).

THE PROPHETIC EARTH

The article below was written by Charles H. Welch in volume 39 of the Berean Expositor on pages 59 and 60 as an appendix to his article on Egypt in the same volume. Although written in 1957, the article has resonance with the world situation today.

‘... we draw the reader’s attention to a series of articles in volumes 36 and 37 of the Berean Expositor under the title ‘The prophetic earth’, which suggest that the prophetic earth does not extend further than that ruled over by Nebuchadnezzar and his successors; in other words from the Indus to the straits of Gibraltar. We quote:

‘It seems a sound argument to affirm that by reason of Israel’s lóammí condition at Acts 28, the time element in the history of the successive rulers from Nebuchadnezzar should cease to have a place, and it seems reasonable to believe that, when the prophetic clock again begins to tick, the parenthesis will be closed and the powers indicated in the two feet and the ten toes (which toes are symbols of the ten kings yet to reign with the Beast, at the time of the end) will reign, in the first place, over the same territory as was governed by their predecessors’.

The reference to ‘the kings of the East’ in Rev. 16:12 does not refer to the Far East as we speak of it today. The Greek word anatole is used of the home country of the wise men (Matt. 2:1). The corresponding terms in the Hebrew are mizrach which means ‘from the rising (of the sun)’ (Josh. 4:19) or qedem, a land, comprehending Arabian Desert, Ammon, Armenia, Assyria and Mesopotamia. This is the anatole of the Hebrews. To this region belong the kings of the East, for this Hebrew words malkhi qedem are found in Isaiah 19:11.
and are there translated ‘ancient kings’; but Pharaoh may be boasting here that he is descended from the kings of the East’.

Psalm 83:4 refers to ‘crafty counsel’ taken by those who are ‘confederate against’ Israel, and have said:

‘Come and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance’.

words that have been unconsciously repeated by Arab leaders and reported in our newspapers in our time. Then, we ask, is it accidental that TEN NATIONS of the Middle East are immediately enumerated?

Edom, Ishmaelites, Moab, Hagarenes, Gebal, Ammon, Amalek, Philistines with Tyre, Assur and Lot (Psa. 83:6-8).

The great powers outside the limits of the prophetic earth naturally play their part and exert a great influence, but just as the reference to the new heavens and the new earth in Isaiah is localized, and our attention is focused upon ‘Jerusalem’ (Isa. 65:17,18), or Millennial blessings are peculiarly associated, in the first place, with ‘all My holy mountain’, before the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord (Isa. 11:9), so the doings of the nations in the limited zone of the prophetic earth precede and anticipate the wider activities and judgments that follow.

We make no pretence to being ‘prophets’ and can only be guided by what is written, realizing that much is still ‘sealed’; nevertheless in 1952/3 we wrote:

‘Two items of peculiar interest are OIL and THE SUEZ CANAL, the oil fields of Iran and Iraq (Persia and Mesopotamia, so including Babylon) and the canal which passes through Egypt. It may well be that a ‘corner’ in oil and a command of the Suez Canal will make the rest of the world say of the last dictator:

‘Who is able to make war with him?’ (Rev. 13:4).’

[CH Welch] Editor
MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Throughout May, June and July 2014, the Ministry at the Chapel of the Opened Book (Wilson Street, London. EC2A 2ER) on Sundays at 11.00 a.m., will be, D.V., as follows:

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OTHER ENGAGEMENTS AT THE CHAPEL ARE:

**Wednesdays at 1:05 to 1:35 p.m.** Bible studies for anyone in the City at these times, for business or pleasure.

Chapel Telephone No. Monday to Friday 02072471467

Saturdays at 3:00 pm, on the first Saturday in each month, Meeting for discussion. Please contact Michael Garstang on the phone to confirm that the meeting will be held. 02084468902.

**OTHER BIBLE STUDIES**

Preston (3 Library Street) Second and Fourth Sunday at 3:15 and 5:15 p.m. (Phone 01772 702236).

PLEASE SEND YOUR NEWS, NOTES, INFORMATION AND ITEMS FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER TO:

Mr. Barry Marple, Orchard Close, 52A St. Mary’s Lane, LOUTH, Lincolnshire LN11 0DT as soon as possible and not later than 6th June 2014.