

# Will we be ready when Christ returns?

## —The sequence of events (2)

Carlo Barbaresi

**I**N THE [first article](#) we showed that there are grounds for believing that there will be a fifty-year period between the return of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom. Also we saw that the Word of God indicates that there will be a forty-year wilderness period in which Israel will be regathered back to the Land. On the basis that the first event to take place at the return of the Master will be the judgement of his household (1 Pet. 4:17), this would take place within the first ten years after Christ's return.

### The judgement seat of Christ

It is a necessary and sobering exercise for us to remember that we must all stand before the judgement seat of Christ. He said: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Mt. 12:36,37); and: "For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad" (Mk. 4:22).

The Apostle Paul said: "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5); and: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). In Romans 14 he said: "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (vv. 11-13).

These are very heart-searching words. Truly, "who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap" (Mal. 3:2). Hence the words of the Apostle Paul: "Ex-

amine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. 13:5).

### The time period of the judgement

The writer is of the opinion that the judgement could occupy a period of a year or more. Ezra 10:15-44 records that it took ninety days for four men to judge over a hundred men. If each of the saints has his or her own guardian angel or there is one angel over several saints, and these angels initially go over each saint's life with them, with the final verdict being given by the Lord Jesus Christ out of the book of life, then this could reduce the time taken. It would seem from the Scriptures that there are two books, one in which the daily acts of the saints are recorded, which could occupy more than one book, and then the book of life, in which will be recorded only the names of the righteous saints, all other names being blotted out of this book. Brother Thomas considered that the books signified the Spirit as the remembrancer. This may be so, but the important point is that our lives will have been recorded and the names of the faithful will be in the book of life.

One suggestion is that the judgement could occupy a period of seven years, divided into two halves of three-and-a-half years each, after the pattern of the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus. The judgement itself could occupy three-and-a-half years, followed by a honeymoon period, in which the faithful bride is united with her bridegroom. The latter half will also be occupied in preparing for the Kingdom, and preparing the battle strategy for the conflict with the combined forces of Gog and the papacy. It is noteworthy that Samuel and David prepared for the kingdom before David sat on the throne (1 Sam. 19:18; 1 Chron. 9:22).

### The sending forth of Elijah

At some stage Elijah will be sent forth to gather the dispersed of Israel. At what stage will this take place? If forty years are required to gather

Israel back to the land, then Elijah must go forth within the first ten years from the return of the Master. Therefore we read in Malachi 4:5,6: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD [Yahweh]: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse".

The object of Elijah's mission will be to turn the heart of the children of Israel back to the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The word "before" has the sense of 'in the face of' or 'in the presence of'. It is rendered with this sense in Malachi 3:14,16. There is a reason for this which we shall comment on later. With regard to the prophet's mission, Jesus showed to Peter, James and John that the work of John the Baptist was typical of the future work of Elijah; nevertheless he assured them: "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed" (Mt. 17:11,12).

There is reason to believe that Elijah will be sent forth, not only after the resurrection and judgement but also after the battle of Armageddon. Hence our reason for believing that 'before the great and terrible day of Yahweh' means '*in the presence of that day*'. The reason for this is found in Isaiah 66:15-20:

"For, behold, the LORD [Yahweh] will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the LORD [Yahweh] plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD [Yahweh] shall be many . . . it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see My glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD [Yahweh] out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD [Yahweh], as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD [Yahweh]".

The words we want to emphasise in that passage from Isaiah 66 are, "I will send those that escape of them unto the nations". This is amplified in Zechariah 13:8,9: "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD [Yahweh], two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The LORD [Yahweh] is my God". The last words of the above quotation are a play on the name of Elijah (*cf.* 1 Kgs. 18:39). We conclude that "those that escape" of Isaiah 66 are the refined third of Zechariah 13, and that from this third men will be selected to go forth with Elijah on his mission.

### The second Exodus

Elijah's mission will be a very great work, which will occupy a period of forty years (Mic. 7:15). As Moses led Israel through the wilderness, so will Elijah gather the dispersed people of Israel from the four corners of the earth, through the wilderness of the people to the holy mountain Jerusalem, as an offering unto Yahweh. The greatness of this work is shown in Ezekiel 20:33-38:

"As I live, saith the Lord GOD [Yahweh], surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: and I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD [Yahweh]. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD [Yahweh]".

As the rebels perished in the wilderness under Moses, so it will happen again in the second Exodus, and it will be the second generation of the Jews living at the return of the Master who

will enter the land and in whom Yahweh will be sanctified (vv. 41,42).

Where the nations refuse to let God's people go, no doubt judgements will be executed on them. Hence the words of Jeremiah 23:7,8: "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD [Yahweh], that they shall no more say, The LORD [Yahweh] liveth, Which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The LORD [Yahweh] liveth, Which brought up and Which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land". As there were plagues in the land of Egypt to let Israel go, which they have remembered ever since, so in the latter days there will be greater plagues upon the nations in order to deliver God's people. We conclude, therefore, that the forty-year period of regathering will be a period of judgement upon the nations, in particular upon Europe and the papacy.

#### The submission of Arab nations

After the judgement at Sinai, Christ and the saints will come up from the south. The first of the nations to submit to Christ will be the southern Arab powers. There is a sequence of events in Psalm 72:9-11:

- 1 "They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust";
- 2 "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts";
- 3 "Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him".

They of the wilderness, we conclude, will be the southern Arab powers. Hence the words in Habakkuk 3:7: "I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble". This follows the pattern of the first Exodus, see Numbers 31:1-12.

#### All nations against Jerusalem

There is a Scriptural reason for believing that the king of the south, Tarshish and her young lions (Britain and the Commonwealth), will be in Arabia at this time as she was in the Gulf War, and will challenge the king of the north, Gog, when he invades, with the words: "Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?" (Ezek. 38:13). Russia (Rosh in verse 2 in the RV)

will come down with the nations mentioned in verses 2-6, which will include Germany (Magog) and France (Gomer). Britain must in some way have come out of Europe by this time. The words of Daniel 11:40-43 will then be fulfilled:

"And at the time of the end shall the king of the south [Britain and the Commonwealth] push at him [challenge him?]; and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships . . . He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab [Jordan], and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps".

The Gogian host will enter the glorious land, conquer Jerusalem and then sweep down into Egypt. Will Moab (Jordan) escape because Tarshish is in occupation there? It is significant that the new King Abdullah of Jordan has a British mother, was educated at Sandhurst and has leanings towards the West. Those Jews scattered by the host of the king of the north will take refuge in Moab to fulfil Isaiah 16:4: "Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land".

It will be at this time that Christ and the saints coming up from the south will conquer Jerusalem, fulfilling the words of Zechariah 14:4-11:

"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. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD [Yahweh] my God shall come, and all the saints with thee . . . And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the

hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the LORD [Yahweh] shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD [Yahweh], and His name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses . . . Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited”.

### **The land transformed**

This earthquake will transform the land, forming an elevated plain in readiness for the temple to be built. The abominations of the apostasy will no doubt be destroyed to cleanse the site, thus fulfilling Micah 5:11-14: “And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strongholds . . . thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands . . . so will I destroy thy cities”.

Living waters will flow from Jerusalem towards the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea,

reversing the flow of Jordan so that it will enter the Mediterranean towards the north of the Land. This earthquake will cause amazing physical changes in the Land. It could coincide with the transformation of the wilderness spoken of in Isaiah 41:18-20:

“I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD [Yahweh] hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it”.

This miracle will demonstrate the mighty power of God, and will provide sustenance for Israel in their time of trouble. It will possibly be at this time that Christ will save Egypt from the oppressing northern power. We propose to deal with this in the final article, God willing.

[\(To be concluded\)](#)

## **Seeing is believing**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1 My eyes could see,<br/>My ears did hear,<br/>My tongue it sang away.<br/>The song was me,<br/>The sound was fear,<br/>The sight of me at play.</p>               | <p>2 Those eyes did see,<br/>Those ears did hear,<br/>That tongue spoke wondrously,<br/>Such heard my plea,<br/>And showed so clear,<br/>A better destiny.</p> |
| <p>3 My eyes now see,<br/>My ears do hear,<br/>My tongue still sings away.<br/>He died for me,<br/>So ends my fear,<br/>My tongue has learned to pray.</p>            | <p>4 Those eyes that see,<br/>Those ears that hear,<br/>That tongue that speaks so well,<br/>At Calvary<br/>Did conquer fear,<br/>In Holy Place now dwell.</p> |
| <p>5 Those blessed eyes,<br/>Those hearing ears,<br/>That tongue which spoke no ill,<br/>For me they died,<br/>For me their tears,<br/>And now my life they fill.</p> |  |

*Bill Guy*