



## Correspondence

### The abomination of desolation

I would like to point out that the second table on page 368 of the article of the above title in the September issue contains an error of fact: the Saracens did not conquer Jerusalem in 627. In that year Jerusalem was in the hands of the Sassanids of Persia, who were forced in 629-630 to concede it back to the Byzantines from whom they had taken it. It was only after the death of Mahomet in 632 that the Saracens drove the Byzantines from Damascus (636) and then from the Holy Land, before taking Jerusalem in 638.

The table provides two interpretations of the 1,290 period of Daniel 12:11, which states: "from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days". As I understand it, the 1,290 years is not the duration of the abomination but the time it will take from the ceasing of the daily sacrifice to the time when the abomination is set up.

Verse 12 seems to indicate that the abomination will either last for the full 1,335 years following its being set up, or that it will be destroyed shortly before this period ends, and those who wait and come to the end of the 1,335 years will take part in a special blessing after the abomination is destroyed. I suggest that the 1,290 period began in 604 B.C. when Daniel was taken into exile to Babylon and was unable to take part in the daily sacrifices at Jerusalem; they were taken away from him personally. This period ended in A.D. 687 when the construction of the Dome of the Rock began, and 1,335 years further on brings us to 2022. This is, of course, virtually identical to the last of the three interpretations of the 1,335 period given in the table on page 369 of the article.

Regarding the article in the same issue, "Where did Noah's Ark land?" (p. 369), the map provided did not identify the river flowing westwards above Lake Van. I think this stream is the headwaters of the River Euphrates, and this provides an additional clue that Noah's Ark may have grounded between the upper Euphrates and the Upper Tigris Rivers, rather than on Mount Ararat itself.

*Comments on articles appearing in the magazine are always welcome, and should be addressed to the editor in whose section the article appears.*

The Tigris was the westward flowing river out of Eden, while it appears that the Euphrates flowed towards the east before the Flood. It would be natural for Noah to apply these names to the first two appropriately flowing rivers he encountered after the Flood, before it was eventually discovered that an entirely new and different river system had come into being in the post-Flood world.

*Robert Scott Thomson*  
Edmonton, Canada

*The year 627 seems to mark a significant point in Mahomet's struggle, aided by the men of Medina, to establish control over Mecca. In that year an attack by the men of Mecca against Medina was fought off, and one could date the rise of the power of Islam from this year.—T.B.*

### Jesus Christ and A.D. 70

I thank Brother Davison for his further comments ([Dec. 2001, p. 465](#)). In his first letter ([Oct. 2001, p. 394](#)) Brother Davison recorded his revulsion at the idea that "the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace . . . personally headed up the Roman forces" and was "responsible for . . . all these dreadful atrocities". He went on to write: "I find this idea foreign to Jesus's teaching in the New Testament".

In my reply I sought to show from Scripture that the Lord Jesus Christ manifests that same righteous character as his Father in showing both goodness and severity (Rom. 11:22). His Father's severity was shown, for example, in the cruel Assyrian and Babylonian conquests of the land of Israel. In Old Testament times the control of such nations was in the hand of angels (Dan. 10:13), but now all power has been given to the Lord Jesus, both in heaven and on earth (Mt. 28:18). Therefore, in a sense, it does not matter whether he was actually on the earth or in heaven; the terrible judgement that befell Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was under the control and direction of the Lord Jesus.

Thus I cited such scriptures as: "*he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire*" (Mt. 3:12); "*he will come and destroy the husbandmen . . .*" (Mk. 12:9); "when the king heard thereof, he was

wroth: and *he sent forth his armies*, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city” (Mt. 22:7)—all part of Jesus’s teaching in the New Testament.

However, that Jesus Christ did come invisibly in A.D. 70 I sought to show from Daniel 9:25,26, Matthew 10:23 and James 5:8,9. In Daniel 9:25,26 I believe that the prince of verse 26 whose people came and destroyed the city is the same as Messiah the Prince of verse 25 (who is obviously the Lord Jesus), and is the same as the “he” of verse 27, who confirmed the covenant. This better fits the context than Brother Davison’s view that the prince of verse 26 “is probably not Christ”.

Matthew 10:23 states that the persecuted apostles would not have gone over the cities of Israel “till the Son of man *be come*”. Brother Davison’s suggestions that this coming referred to events very soon after His resurrection does not fit the Lord’s warning to the apostles in the preceding verses that they would be delivered up to councils, scourged, brought before kings for his sake, and be persecuted from city to city “till the Son of man *be come*”. The idea that Christ came in judgment in A.D. 70 fits this quotation well.

James’s statement that “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh . . . behold, the judge standeth before the door” (5:8,9) is inspired, and therefore means that Christ came in judgement against those Jews who refused to repent, soon after the prophecy was given. Again, the idea that he came in A.D. 70 fits the context. I still maintain that if James’s words refer directly to the return of Christ, for which we pray and long, then he was wrong—the coming of the Lord was not nigh and he was not standing at the door. It would then have to be admitted that the apostles were misguided in their belief that the coming of Christ was nigh at hand in their era. That in turn would mean that at least some of their writings were wishful thinking rather than truth, which introduces the idea of partial inspiration.

An appreciation of the Greek word *parousia*, as used above by James, is also helpful. This word is translated ‘presence’ in, for example, 2 Corinthians 10:10 and Philippians 2:12, and both *Strong’s Concordance* and *Thayer’s Lexicon* confirm that it means ‘coming’ in the sense of ‘presence’ or ‘arrival’. *Parousia* is used in the disciples’ question in Matthew 24:3: “when shall these things be [that is, the destruction of the temple]? and what shall be the sign of thy coming [*parousia*], and of the end of the world [*aiōn*,

age, that is, the Jewish age]?” Jesus replied with a series of Jewish signs, for example, “the abomination of desolation” (v. 15), “in Judaea (v. 16), “on the sabbath day” (v. 20), as evidence of his “coming [*parousia*]” (v. 27). Unlike the angels’ description in Acts 1:11 of His *visible* return to restore the kingdom to Israel, to bring about the restitution of Israelitish things (3:21), his coming or *invisible* presence in A.D. 70 was to bring about the dissolution of Judah’s commonwealth (1 Cor. 10:11; 1 Pet. 4:7; 1 Jno. 2:18).

May I again commend the reading of *The Last Days of Judah’s Commonwealth* by Brother John Thomas, reviewed in this magazine in April 1999 (p. 118).

Russell Ebbs

### Israel’s dwelling safely

In reply to Brother Mark Whittaker’s letter (Dec. 2001, p. 464), may I make the following comments? Brother Whittaker makes a distinction between the use of the Hebrew word *betach* (often translated ‘safely’) in relation to the nation of Israel and in relation to other nations, saying that when the word is used of Israel the safety is of the Lord, but when used of other nations the safety (or confidence) is not of the Lord and therefore is not reliable.

Whilst this may be a general rule, there are exceptions; for example, Jeremiah 7:8, where the prophet addresses the nation of Israel: “Behold, ye trust [*batach*, the root word from which *betach* is derived] in lying words, that cannot profit”; or, in relation to the present discussion, Ezekiel states: “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for My holy name; after that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against Me, when they dwelt safely [*betach*] in their land, and none made them afraid” (39:25,26).

These verses clearly state that the nation of Israel trespassed against the Lord when they dwelt safely and none made them afraid. This surely cannot be referring to the time after their deliverance by the Lord Jesus Christ. The suggestion that Gog invades after their deliverance by Christ, and hence dwelling safely, is not supported by Ezekiel. Having described the Gogian invasion, the prophet says: “So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward” (v. 22). Before “that