

have to drop the pretence and make the choice. At this point the "old man" will come to the fore. But there is a real danger that we will make the wrong decision, and that is why brethren and sisters continue to leave the Truth even in these last days. What we need to do is to serve only God at all times. Then, when the time of testing comes, we will not have to make a decision

whom to serve, for we will already have made that decision.

As we continue to see the signs in the earth showing that the return of Christ is near, it is increasingly important that we do not forsake the meetings, on Sundays or during the week. Rather, we should be exhorting each other more and more as we "see the day approaching".

Your Letters

Was Zacharias deaf as well as dumb?

I was interested in the article by Sister Joan Lewis, looking at the faith of Elisabeth ([Nov. 2005, p. 410](#)), in which she makes the reasonable assumption that Zacharias was deaf as well as dumb, based presumably on Luke 1:62, "And they made signs to his father" when asking Zacharias what he should call his son. In 1997 my eyes were opened to an alternative understanding. I found myself under medical orders not to speak, and used a pad of paper to communicate. I was astonished at the number of people who made signs to indicate that they would like to have my pen and paper to respond to what I had written. I was not deaf, and although they knew that, they still made signs that they wanted to write their answer down. Since that time I have been able to identify with Zacharias, as human nature has not changed!

Norman Yuile
Dundee

The "him" in Daniel 11:40

Whilst thanking Brother Nigel Bernard for his interesting article on Turkey ([Nov. 2005, p. 423](#)), I would like to make brief comment. Brother Bernard refers to the "him" of Daniel 11:40 as being Turkey but does not pause to explain why. I find this difficult to follow when the "him" of verse 40 is obviously the "him" of the context, that is, verses 36-39, which verses are generally accepted as applying to Rome.

In fact we can find nothing in these verses which could possibly apply to the Muslim anti-Catholic Turk. In the outworking purpose of God, the Turks humbled the once mighty Roman Empire in the east, which the Brotherhood's traditional view of Revelation 9:12-21 amply confirms. Whilst the Turks took much of the Roman territory, they never took on Rome's characteristics, descriptions or actions as described in verses 36-39 of Daniel 11. Hence my difficulty in relating the "him" of verse 40 to Turkey.

Raymond Hughes
Dudley

I thank Brother Hughes for his letter. I would agree that the "him" in verses 36-39 applies to Rome. However, this prophecy relates more to Rome's military power and territorial gain in the east rather than the religious power which was to develop in the city of Rome in the west. In Daniel 7 there is the "little horn" which represents the Roman Catholic system, but in Daniel 8 there is another "little horn". It is this little horn that corresponds to the "king" in Daniel 11:36.

This horn, the little horn of the goat, "waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land" (8:9). The little horn of the goat refers to the development of Roman influence in the east. The Times Atlas of World History describes this as follows: "Meanwhile, Rome had been drawn into the eastern Mediterranean. She defeated the Hellenistic monarchs of Macedon (197 BC) and Syria (190 BC), but refrained for half a century from extending her direct rule. At length in 146 she added Macedonia to her provincial system. In 133 BC Attalus of Pergamum bequeathed his kingdom, which became the province of Asia" (p. 87). This power came between, and superseded, the Seleucid king of the north and the Ptolemaic king of the south.

The "him" in Daniel 11:40 relates to a power whose location (not necessarily religion) corresponds to that of the king in verse 36. At the time of the end this power is Turkey, and the former Ottoman Empire. Yet, as Daniel 11:40 shows, at the time of the end the king of the south and king of the north also reappear. As the time of the end progresses, the king of the north comes against "him" and takes over his territory. In so doing, the king of the north takes on the mantle of the little horn of the goat. In taking over the eastern Mediterranean the king of the north will be a latter-day equivalent of the Eastern Roman Empire, based in Constantinople (Istanbul). For this reason, this power is symbolised as the dragon in Revelation 16:13.—N.B.

Jesus' "perfect sacrifice"

I have read Brother James Willey's* article "The 'Why' question" (Dec. 2005, p. 473) with great interest and would like to pose two questions:

- 1 Have we Bible authority for using the phrase "perfect sacrifice" as properly defining Christ's atoning work? I know it is part of Christadelphian jargon, and Brother Willey uses the phrase no fewer than four times in his article. Various words (Hebrew and Greek) are used quite often to present the ideas of 'perfect' and 'sacrifice'; but never in a direct way, so

far as I can see, are the two brought together as "perfect sacrifice". So, are we properly empowered to do so?

- 2 Jesus himself resisted the idea that he was "good" during his natural life (Mt. 19:16,17) and no doubt had in mind the "sin-stricken nature" to which Brother Willey refers. Is there not an incongruity in equating 'sin's flesh' with perfection? And is not perfect (either on Jesus' part or ours) an adjective that can only be applied to flesh by God's grace after, but not before, resurrection from the dead and/or final judgement?

I am simply asking the questions.

Bill Guy
Preston

In referring to Jesus' "perfect sacrifice", are we not thinking of his perfect obedience, resulting in a perfect character? Although he bore our imperfect nature, he overcame that nature to become the sacrifice acceptable to God. Hebrews 5:8,9 says that Jesus "learned . . . obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him", and 2:10 speaks of him being made "perfect through sufferings". As such he was the perfect sacrifice.—T.B.

* We apologise for misspelling Brother Willey's name as Wiley in the article itself.—T.B.

Understanding Revelation 12

2. The interpretation of Revelation 12:1-4

David Green

In the first part of this study we looked at the general meanings that can be attached to the symbols used in Revelation 12, and the history of the relevant political and religious events relating to the time of fulfilment indicated by the vision. We are now in a position to begin to fit the details of the vision recorded in Revelation 12 to the historical events outlined in the first article.

BEFORE WE OFFER a detailed interpretation of Revelation 12:1-4, we will look at three matters:

- The structure of the vision
- The dual aspect of the woman
- The dual aspect of the dragon.

The structure of the vision

An important structural characteristic of the apocalyptic visions needs to be considered. This feature is that the Divinely purposed end may be revealed first, before the details of the political, military and religious changes that are involved in bringing about that result. A good example of this occurs in Revelation 11:15-17. Here the end result of the seventh trumpet is announced first before the seven last plagues of God's wrath are revealed that bring about that Divinely determined end (15:1; 16:1).

Similarly, in Revelation 21:1-8 we are shown the final result to be attained at the end of Christ's millennial reign, when there is "no more sea" (v. 1), that is, no more mortal population.¹ In