

floor have survived. One segment shows a stretch of the Jordan River with a notation in Greek capital letters, "Ainon near Salem", on the west (lower) side. With the difference of only one letter, this clearly indicates the equivalence of "Salem" on the mosaic and "Salim" in John 3:23.

Despite the difficulties, which are minor (see box), we would seem to have one exciting answer to two Scriptural puzzles, the identity of Melchizedek's city Salem and the Salim where John baptized. "Salem" or "Ænon near to Salim" appears in a natural position along the route which would have been taken by Abraham in the rescue of Lot and his family.

John Carder
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Reply

Brother Carder has raised some interesting points in proposing an alternative site for Melchizedek's Salem. It is notable, however, that it relies heavily on very late, Christian era, accounts, which are notoriously unreliable (compare the identification of many sites supposedly related to the life of Jesus by Constantine's mother Helena during the same period).

Without repeating the points made in my previous reply, it is important to note that Psalm 76:2 would be fairly meaningless if Salem and Zion were in fact totally different places. Both verse 1 and verse 2 of the psalm clearly employ parallelism to reinforce their meaning, and emphasise that God's dwelling is in Jerusalem (cf. 132:13,14). Furthermore, verse 3 states that it was "there" (singular) that God defeated the enemies threatening His city. The Septuagint translation bears the subtitle, "Song on the Assyrian", and the context of the psalm is very clearly the destruction of Sennacherib's army and the deliverance of Jerusalem by the angel of the Lord (Isa. 37:35,36).

The distinction Brother Carder claims between the forms 'Salem' (in Jerusalem) and 'Yerushalayim' (in the Massoretic text) is a technical one, but his conclusion is not supported by, for example, the discussion of the name of Jerusalem in the *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Places* (editor, Bimson).

Finally, the typical connection between Melchizedek, king of Salem, and the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 7:1-3) seems to be weakened if Salem is not to be identified with Jerusalem, "the city of the great King".

David Burges

Germany—neither Gomer nor Magog

There is little more frustrating in Bible study than to try to relate the most ancient to the most modern. This we do when we think about Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras, and their descendants, catalogued in Genesis 10, in terms of the twenty-first century. This tends to be further complicated when we find that almost every commentator uses the Greek Septuagint.

The next complication comes when Ezekiel adds Gog to the list; we are told in 1 Chronicles 5:4 that Gog is the son of Joel of the tribe of Reuben, with no indication who this Joel is among the dozen or so listed by *Young's Concordance*. We can be reasonably sure that this Gog has no more relationship with the "Gog [of] the land of Magog" of Ezekiel 38:2 than does "the chief prince [Hebrew *rosh*] of Meshech and Tubal" of the same verse with Rosh the son of Benjamin in Genesis 46:21.

It is now a little over fifty years since I attended a well-illustrated lecture in a village school room in northeast Scotland on our traditional exposition of Ezekiel's fascinating prophecy of the last days. How many times since have I seen intelligent Christadelphian lecturers refer to the fact that Moscow is due north of Jerusalem? At about the same time I was being taught Latin by translating Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars* into English. At twelve years old, the history was far more interesting than the drudgery of learning Latin, and much more informative.

Caesar did not call that particular Celtic tribe in eastern France Keltoi or even Celti. He knew they called themselves Gauls, and transliterated the name into Galli, and their territory into Gallia. The Gauls, like their eastern kinsfolk the Galatians, were Celts, but that does not mean that the Celts were necessarily Gauls, Gaels, Galatians or Galicians, any more than they were Erse, Bretons, Icenii or Celtiberians! As Brother Nigel Bernard has pointed out ([Mar. 2003, pp. 85-89](#)), the centre of Celtic civilisation was in the upper Danube (Ister) valley. Historical atlases generally show the Celtic tribes being spread out across Europe from Eire to Hungary, occurring most densely in Switzerland and Austria. Where then is Gomer?

In AV and RV versions of the Bible, maps of Babylonian and Assyrian times show Gomer in the centre of Anatolia (modern Turkey), often equated with the Cimmerians. This was at one

time Hittite territory. The Cimmerians had been driven out of Central Asia by the Scythians. These nomadic horsemen helped the Medes destroy Nineveh, later pushed into Persia and the eastern Mediterranean, and were bought off by the Egyptians in 595 B.C. after rampaging through Anatolia as far as Sardis, destroying the Cimmerians in the process. Later, around 275 B.C., after the Persians had destroyed all traces of Scythian invaders, the king of Bithynia hired Celtic mercenaries from central Europe to help him against Antiochus's Syrians. They came, they won, and they stayed. These Celtic warriors became known as Galatians to the Greeks, according to Josephus. The territory in which they settled was, obviously, Galatia, and geographically the same as that of the ancient Cimmerians, or Gomer.

It is rather odd that Christadelphians, who pride themselves in their Bible knowledge, would interpret Josephus's reference to the Galatians as proving that Gomer is France, when all the Scriptural evidence places the Galatians in Turkey; after all, Josephus was almost contemporary with Paul, and there is no question where Paul placed the Galatians.

A further consideration of the same section of Josephus's writings (let us not take things out of context) would show that most of the descendants of Japheth in Genesis 10 finish up around the Aegean Sea coast and in Asia Minor. Meshech became Cappadocia, Tarshish is Cilicia with its capital Tarsus, Togarmah is Phrygia, Tubal is Iberes, whether in Spain (Iberia) or Georgia we are given no clue. It might be noted also that nowhere in their writings do Josephus or Paul refer to Gog or Rosh. There is, on the other hand, a reference to the Scythians in Colossians 3:11, which may be a reflection of their incursions from the east into Turkey many years before.

What applied to the Celts applies equally well to the Germans. During the middle of the first century B.C., Roman legions from Gaul crossed the Rhine and discovered that the inhabitants spoke an unknown tongue, were blonde rather than red-headed, and were not particularly friendly towards their southern neighbours. Attempts to form provinces east of the Rhine were short lived, and for centuries the border between Celtic and Germanic tribes was this river. Eventually the Rhine was crossed. The Goths that took Rome, the Vandals that settled in Spain and North Africa, and the Angles, Saxons and Jutes that redrew the map of Britain, were all Ger-

mans. The Celtic Gaels in Scotland refer to the 'German' Angles and Saxons as Sassenachs to this day. However, all that has been found in 'Germany' of the Scythians are a few tombs of their leaders. Since there have been similar sites found as far east as Mongolia, they are hardly evidence to identify Germany with Magog through the forays of these horsemen of the steppes into western Europe.

For centuries, mounted nomads followed the same westward path as the Scythians, familiar to the Greeks through trade along the Dneiper river. The Crimea still has towns with Greek names. How these Greeks came to relate Magog with the Scythians perhaps only Josephus knew, since he so informs us. The Parthians, who stopped the Roman advance into Persia, belonged to a Scythian tribe. Later tribes, such as the Kazars, Magyars, Tatars (Tartars) and Turks, all followed that path from the steppes, curving round to the south of Russia into Bulgaria and Romania, and their settlements are still on the map.

The fulfilment of Ezekiel's prophecy has been an enigma for centuries. But only comparatively recently has it been taken seriously, with the establishment of the State of Israel. How would the people of his day respond to his words? Was Magog a common label, even to the Greeks, for the Scythians, as Josephus suggests? Assyrian monuments place Meshech and Tubal together in eastern Turkey, as does Josephus, which again would make them familiar to Judah in the beginning of the sixth century B.C. The description of the army, an anachronism today, would also be a grim reminder of the recent invaders, turned back by Necho's grandson, during Ezekiel's lifetime.

The use of ancient tribal ancestors would be a similar anachronism to the people of Israel, but would be a warning to them and to many generations following of northern invaders who would attack Israel as a preliminary to the coming of Messiah. In other words, they would come when the time is right: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time . . . it will surely come, it will not tarry . . . but the just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:3,4; cf. Heb. 10:37; Rev. 1:3, etc.).

Ron Easson
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Reply

I would like to thank Brother Easson for his letter. He raises a number of issues, but I would make just a couple of observations.

Firstly, with regard to the Cimmerians, they are indeed sometimes linked with Gomer. Brother John Allfree, in his book *Ezekiel*, comments: "The descendants of Gomer are mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions as the Gimarraï who were known to the Greeks as the Cimmerii" (p. 396). Of these Cimmerii, or Cimmerians, Laing, in his book *Celtic Britain*, writes: "The Cimmerians swept down into Europe, swarming over the Hungarian plain to the Swiss lakes, and possibly even as far as southern France and Belgium" (p. 15). Laing identifies archaeological evidence for this from around 700 B.C. So, by the time Ezekiel gave his prophecy, the Cimmerians were firmly

located in western Europe. Some claim that the descendants of the Cimmerians in western Europe became part of the Celtic peoples.

Secondly, it is interesting to note what Young says in his concordance about Galatia: "The *Gallia* of the East; Roman writers call its inhabitants *Galli*, just as Greek writers call the people of ancient France *Galatia*". In the first century it was recognised that the Galatians in Anatolia were just an offshoot of the Gauls or Celts, known to the Jews as Gomerites, the main body of which was located in western Europe, particularly, as Young indicates, "ancient France".

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The mark and number of the beast (2)

David Green

IN THE FIRST article we outlined the beasts of Revelation 12, 13 and 17, and presented arguments for regarding the mark of the beast of Revelation 13:16,17 as being the sign of the cross. We complete our study by looking at the name of the beast and the number of the beast (vv. 17,18).

The name of the beast

From a Biblical point of view, a name implies "authority, character, rank, majesty, power, excellence, etc."¹ The attributes and characteristics of a person or an organisation are involved in the name it bears.

The sea beast has "a blasphemous name" (13:1, NKJV) or "the name of blasphemy" (AV) on his heads. The scarlet beast of chapter 17 is "full of names of blasphemy" (v. 3). This is because one of their chief characteristics is the blasphemous nature of their pronouncements and doctrines, by which God is dishonoured, and attributes and powers are claimed that belong to Him and to His Son Jesus alone. We are told that the sea beast "was given . . . a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies", and that "he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven" (13:5,6).

The same aspect is expressed differently in the book of Daniel, where we are informed that the little horn that has "eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things" will "speak great [pompous, NKJV] words against the most High" and in his declarations will presume "to change times and laws" (7:8,25). Some examples of these blasphemies are listed in Tables 1 to 3 opposite.

With regard to blasphemous teachings and practices, other examples would include the doctrine of the Trinity, the selling of indulgences and the worshipping of images of saints.

Why are the worshippers of the beast described as having "the name of the beast" (Rev.

1. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, under "name".
2. See *The Man of Sin*, p. 66, Ron Abel, Christadelphian Scripture Study Service, 1984, and *The Wicked One Revealed*, pp. 56-61, Frank Walker, Christadelphian Scripture Study Service, 1987.
3. *Popery: Its Character and its Crimes*, p. 298, William Elfe Tayler, Partridge & Oakley, London, 1851.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 215-22.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 282-96.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 292. The reference given is 'Dens., tom. v., p. 382'.