

to eight standard double tennis courts is 726 square metres *smaller* than the area of the altar if the measurement is in reeds. Only a very small area around the perimeter of such an altar could be used without special heat-proof conveyors of complex and sophisticated design.

If we assume that this altar is on the top of a very high mountain, and that people from all nations will be able to offer sacrifices there, we are faced with the prospect of thousands of animal carcasses being dragged up the hill daily in the *holy of holies*, exposed to the view of observers, whether inside or outside the sanctuary.

Whatever work is done around such an altar, and whoever does the work, the most holy place will have been profaned. Any officiating priest would be able to enter the holy of holies without any preparation in the way of sacrifice on the

altar of burnt offering before entering the temple itself, even the holy place. This is obviously quite contrary to all the principles of the Mosaic Law, a law which emphasises holiness, and which is to be reinstated in the latter days in remembrance of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ instead of looking ahead to it.

The holy of holies of old had no windows, no natural light. It was filled with the glory of Yahweh, the *shekinah* glory, and the high priests had to use a censer as a smoke screen to prevent them from being blinded by the intensity of light. To say that the future equivalent of that sacred place is a mountain in the open air, circled by a ring of buildings and topped by an altar visible daily in broad daylight to any passer-by, is in my view a misinterpretation of Scripture and a contradiction of the unchanging nature of the Deity.

Your Letters



The fulfilment of Daniel 11:40-45

In his article "Daniel's time of trouble" ([Mar. 2005, p. 93](#)) Brother Tony Benson refers to the Turkish Empire as being "the king of the north" of Daniel 11:40-45 which came to its end at the time of the First World War. This view, though not widely held, appears to be growing. The severance of any direct link between these verses and Ezekiel 38 and 39 changes some generally held concepts of latter-day events, and, as one who has long held the view that Turkey fulfilled the "king of the north" role and the Saracens that of "the king of the south", I would like to make some observations:

- 1 The supposition that there is a coming conflict between Gog and the Tarshish powers is based on the view that they are respectively the king of the north and the king of the south of Daniel 11:40-45. This idea cannot be found in other scriptures, including Ezekiel 38 and 39 and Revelation 19. Psalm 72:10, "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents [to Christ]", seems to suggest that the Tarshish powers are wise enough to "Kiss the Son . . . when his wrath is kindled but a little" (2:12).
- 2 Daniel 11:41, "these shall escape of his [the king of the north's] hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon", is said to link with Israel's fugitives sheltering in Moab at the time of Gog's invasion, as per Isaiah 16:4. However, modern versions do not support the AV rendering of Isaiah 16:4, and Isaiah 15 and also Jeremiah 48 depict Moab herself as being in dire straits.
- 3 The sequence of events in Ezekiel 35-39 is that the 'Islam' problem is to be solved before the Gogian descent; see chapters 35 and 36. Israel is first to be made desolate by the nations round about (as confirmed by Joel 1 and 2), and this is followed by God's judgements on these same nations, as per Joel 3. Ezekiel 28:24-26 confirms this order of events very clearly.
- 4 It is, we suggest, this initial conflict which brings Christ's intervention, when he comes to "save the tents of Judah first" (Zech. 12:7), perhaps following the pattern of his forefather David who reigned over Judah only for seven years before reigning over all Israel. This leaves the northern portion of the land in which the later disposal of Gog takes place, when he comes against a people "that dwell safely . . . without walls, and having neither bars nor gates" (Ezek. 38:11).
- 5 Daniel 11:45 presents a problem if it refers to Gog's future invasion. It is unthinkable that Gog will be allowed to "plant" his forces

in Jerusalem. "To plant" carries the idea of planting a tree, which can live for centuries. It was the Turkish 'tree' which was uprooted in 1917, having been planted there hundreds of years before.

Raymond Hughes
Dudley

The genealogies of Jesus

May I comment on the well-researched and very interesting article by Brother Ed Form of the above title (Apr. 2005, p. 129)?

Matthew begins with the words: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David". Luke writes: "Jesus . . . being (as was supposed [*nomizō*]) the son of Joseph . . ." (3:23). Young's Concordance gives the meaning of the word *nomizō* as 'to reckon as law'. Some of the contexts

in which this word occurs seem not to warrant this precise definition, but would we be justified as reading Luke 3:23 as evidence that Joseph, when registering the birth of Jesus, named him as his own son? And if he did, it follows that Jesus, like Joseph, would be legally of the house and lineage of David. And if Joseph was the last in the line of David, then Jesus would lawfully be heir to the throne.

One thing is certain. If the Most High, Who rules in the kingdom of men, had not moved Caesar Augustus to make that decree when he did, Jesus would have been born in Nazareth and not, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Micah 5:2, in Bethlehem, the city of David. Nathanael asked, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (Jno. 1:46). It certainly came out of Bethlehem Ephratah.

Don Harrison
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Lessons from the life of Elijah

12. "Come near unto me" (1 Kgs. 18:29-35)

Stephen Whitehouse

The prophets of Baal having failed to bring fire from heaven, it is now time for Elijah to call on God to do so. He prepares by taking actions designed to remind the people of God's desire that all twelve tribes of Israel should be united in worshipping Him.

FOR SIX LONG HOURS on Carmel, without intermission, the prophets of Baal had sought their god. But their cries met with no response; no tongue of fire descended to lick up the flesh of the offering. All was quiet except for the sounds of anguish emanating from the self-injured prophets of Baal.

"When midday was past"

Elijah was tolerant, and patiently observed the foolish efforts of the prophets of Baal until "midday was past" (1 Kgs. 18:29). Quietly he had surveyed all before him with indignation and disdain. Yet, at the same time, how his heart must have been ready to break with compassion for his people!

The false prophets watched the sun rise to the apex of its climb and then saw it steadily decline on its parabolic path. Since Baal was viewed as

the sun god, once midday had past his powers began visibly to withdraw as the sun continued to dip in the western sky. All hopes of Baal's answer were declining with it. Yet they were so intent on calling down fire from heaven that they behaved against all natural reason and logic. They would not cease, for now "they prophesied [*naba'*]" (v. 29) aloud.

The word *naba'* can be understood as meaning 'to prophesy under the influence of a divine spirit' or 'as a false prophet'. They were not prophesying at all, merely babbling under the heavy influence of a false religious doctrine. The RSV captures their frantic behaviour quite beautifully: "they raved on". The picture is so vivid: as the sun gradually descended, their behaviour became increasingly hysterical.

This continued "until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice" (v. 29). The cutting, dancing and extensive bouts of moaning persisted till the appointed time when both the burnt and meal offerings were offered up by the priest (Num. 28:3-8; cf. Ex. 29:38) in the temple at Jerusalem. But why did Elijah wait till this moment? In symbol, he was attempting to unite the two kingdoms as one. As the high priest handled the burnt offering