



Britain beyond the rivers in Africa

Nigel Bernard

IN ISAIAH 18 we read the following words: “Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia: that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!” (vv. 1,2). The people who are “scattered and peeled” are the Jewish people. When Christ returns and is King in Israel the Jews will be brought to the Land on a scale that will dwarf the initial regathering we have witnessed in the past century.

Foremost in bringing the Jews back to the land will be the ships of Tarshish: “Surely the isles shall wait for Me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far” (60:9). The “land shadowing with wings” would seem to be the same power as Tarshish. But how can Tarshish be said to be “beyond the rivers of Ethiopia”? And, furthermore, are there signs in the earth at present that point towards the preparation for the fulfilment of this prophecy?¹

The word “Ethiopia” translates the Hebrew word *Cush*. When discussing Isaiah 18 Brother Thomas identified two areas to which this referred:

“The reader must bear in mind, that there are two separate and distinct regions known in scripture by the name of Cush; the one, in Asia and now called Cushistan: the other, in Africa, styled Abyssinia and Ethiopia. The latter is at the southwest extremity of the Red Sea; while the Cush of our text is at the north end of the Persian Gulf, where it is watered by the Tigris and Euphrates, and now lying partly in Persia, and partly in Turkey”.²

Brother Thomas concentrated on the northern area in his interpretation, but there is no reason why ‘Cush’ should not also apply in this prophecy to the area in northeast Africa. In this article we will consider this latter location in relation to current events.

If a traveller moves “beyond the rivers of Ethiopia” he heads out west and south into the African continent. As the nineteenth century developed, brethren witnessed the British power of Tarshish extending its wings into this area. Brother Walker wrote of this:

“And now, far beyond these Ethiopian ‘rivers of Cush’ (as far beyond as India is from the Euphrates and Tigris), the shadowing wings are spreading over Cape Colony, Natal, and the newly-annexed South African Colonies of the Orange River and the Transvaal”.³

These words were written at the height of the British Empire. Looking back now they may seem a little naïve and short-sighted. After all, the British Empire has been consigned to history, and, apart from some impact on the Commonwealth countries, Britain has lost her influence in Africa. However, if the power in Isaiah 18 is the British power of Tarshish, then we would expect to see a resurgence of British involvement in Africa beyond the “rivers of Ethiopia”. At the present time this is exactly what is happening.

A feature of the present British Government has been an extraordinary emphasis in its foreign policy in its concern for Africa. A recent article in the *Economist* has highlighted this. It states: “Britain’s interest in Africa, which long ago turned from colonial ambition to wilful neglect, may be changing again. Surprisingly, this government is interested in the dark continent”.⁴ Mr Blair has spoken out at the United Nations at the failure of the developed world to help Africa. The current Labour government has been seeking to encourage British companies such as

1. For a detailed discussion of this prophecy see “The land of the shadow of wings” by P. Wale in *The Testimony*, Nov. 1990, p. 422, reprinted from *The Testimony*, Apr. 1937, p. 142.
2. *Eureka*, Vol. 3, p. 598.
3. *The Ministry of the Prophets—Isaiah*, R. Roberts and C. C. Walker, p. 333.
4. “Into Africa”, *Economist*, 24 Feb. 2001, p. 35.

Marconi to help the poor in Africa. Britain has won commendation from support agencies for its backing of debt relief for many African countries. Moreover, bilateral aid (aid given by one country directly to another) from Britain for Africa has increased from £346 million in 1997-8 to a present total of £499 million, with the countries with historical ties to Britain tending to benefit the most.

The article goes on to highlight further the new commitment of Britain to Africa by considering the role of Britain in Sierra Leone: "The most dramatic sign of Britain's commitment to Africa has been the deployment of several hundred soldiers to Sierra Leone to train and equip

that government's army and to deter more rebel attacks on the capital, Freetown".

Of course, it would be wrong to overstate the British involvement in Africa, and it may change if the government changes. However, we do know that when Christ returns there will be a power in existence whose wings are spread beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, and which will bring the Jews back to Israel by sea. By giving much-needed aid to Africa, the wings of Britain are providing a measure of help for this continent. Current events provide evidence for the providential preparation of Tarshish for her role in bringing "a nation scattered and peeled" back to Israel.

Will we be ready when Christ returns? —The sequence of events (1)

Carlo Barbaresi

A CONSIDERATION of the way in which Christ will return can have a bearing on whether we are ready for his coming. Jesus said: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15). If Jesus is to come as a thief, we can easily be caught unawares. Hence Jesus's words: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mt. 24:44).

The phrase "as a thief" means that Jesus will return with the world at large not being aware of it (v. 43). But his household should be aware: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5:4-6).

There are two views with regard to the return of the Master. One is that when he returns the judgement will take place at Sinai and he will come up from the south with the immortal saints to Jerusalem. This view has been held by brethren for over a hundred years. The other view is that Christ will return to Jerusalem and the judgement will take place there.

This latter view requires that the Gogian invasion will take place before Christ returns, whereas

with the former view the invasion will not take place until after Christ has returned. If we are expecting this invasion before the Master returns we could be caught unawares. There is a very helpful booklet by the late Brother Graham Pearce entitled, *How Will Christ Come? The Way to Jerusalem*,¹ in which he deals with the arguments for these two views. For any reader who would like to look at the arguments analytically, this booklet is well worth obtaining. Another valuable book on this subject which should be read is *The Mystery of the Covenant of the Holy Land Explained* by Brother John Thomas.²

I propose in this series of three articles to look at the sequence of events on the basis that the judgement takes place at Sinai prior to the Gogian invasion. The view that the judgement will take place at Sinai is based on three scriptures which we shall now consider.

From Sinai to Jerusalem

The first passage is Deuteronomy 33:1-3:

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1. Obtainable from Brother Don Pearce, 76 High Street, Hillmorton, Rugby, CV21 4EE. Price £2.50 post paid.
 2. *The Mystery of the Covenant of the Holy Land Explained* is bound with other works in the book entitled *Contending for the Faith*, obtainable from Sister (Mrs) Carol Middleton, 17 School St., Dunchurch, Rugby, CV22 6PA. Price £8.25 post paid.