Peter's application of Psalm 2 in Acts 4 to the opposition of the Jewish leaders to the teaching of the apostles as being another prophecy which had an application in the first century, but whose complete fulfilment still lies in the future.

Logical sequel

The remaining chapters are a logical sequel to the main thesis that has been established, that latter-day Edom stands for those Arab nations surrounding Israel who are hostile to her and plot her annihilation. The latter-day revival of Edom in the recent emergence of several Arab nations concurrent with the return of the Jews to their land is one of the unmistakable signs of the times. The fact that Israel has been outnumbered and ringed round by her enemies but never defeated is also taken as support for those Edom prophecies that speak, not of the defeat of Israel, but rather of the protection by God of His people.

Ultimately it will be those Arab nations themselves that will, under the good hand of the Lord Jesus, be brought to their knees and humbled, so that, if they will, they can praise God and be taught of the true Prophet like unto Moses.

Chapter 11, entitled "The final desolation of Edom", is largely a commentary on Obadiah verses 19-21, and is well worth a read. Although Edom as a political entity is to cease for ever, individuals from the Arab nations will undoubtedly submit to Christ, and Brother Allfree examines the relevant scriptures.

There is a short postscript with some thoughts about Ishmael. The book has no index, but there are frequent footnotes and references to works consulted. It is well produced, with maps and tables, and is warmly recommended to all who watch the signs of the times with hope in the Lord's coming, and who desire to understand the sure word of prophecy better.

Your Letters

The tear-bottle

Having just read the "PS" article "The tear-bottle" (Jan. 2006, p. 35), I thought that readers would be interested in the following from a book called *Strange Scriptures that Perplex the Western Mind*, by Barbara M. Bowen of the Bob Jones University, Greenville, South Carolina, USA. She and her husband must have spent several years in Palestine, as she speaks of living with Arab families in Bethlehem in 1933 and later of being in Jerusalem in the winter of 1937-38. This is as the item appears:

"Bathed His Feet With Tears"
(Luke 7:38)

"She began to wash his feet with tears, and wipe them with hairs of her head".

We find reference in many books to the custom of collecting the tears of the whole family and preserving them in bottles. Thus King David prays, "Put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?". Tear bottles have been found in very large numbers on opening ancient tombs. They are made of thin glass usually, although the very poor sometimes had just simple pottery bottles, not even baked or glazed. They were all made with a slender body, broad at the base, with a funnel-shaped top. Every member of the family owned a tear bottle and they collected the tears of the whole family.

When serious trouble or a death occurred in the home, all the relatives came and each one brought his tear bottle with him. As they wept and wailed, the tears rolling down their cheeks, each person took his or her tear bottle and gathered tears from the faces of all present.

This bottle was exceedingly sacred to them. It represented all the heartaches, sorrows and bereavements from the grandparents down to the small child. When a person died, his tear bottle was buried with him, as one of his most treasured possessions.

This helps us to a better understanding of what the woman did for her Master. She noticed the very discourteous way in which Christ was treated as a guest in the house of Simon the Pharisee.

He provided no water to wash the Lord's feet and no oil to anoint his head, so this poor woman, longing for forgiveness and a new life, took her tear bottle, poured the tears over his tired, dusty feet and wiped them with her long hair. A great

sacrifice indeed, done in love and gratitude to the Saviour. They could not be replaced and she might die without a bottle of tears to be buried with her in her tomb.

"She bathed his feet with tears".

Some years ago we saw a TV program in which a grave was unearthed, and when the stone coffin was opened, the body of a woman was found, dating back about 2,000 years. Buried beside her was a long slim glass bottle, just like the one pictured in this book. The speculation was that perhaps it had contained perfume, but maybe it was a tear bottle.

Margaret Walsh
Christchurch, New Zealand

The latter-day Assyrian

It has been a sound practice in our community for many years in the interpretation of latter-day prophecy to assume that if an ancient nation is no longer to be found on the map then the latter-day occupant of that nation's territory is being referred to by the prophet. On this basis, whilst Egypt is still Egypt and Lebanon still Lebanon, we read Edom, Moab and Ammon as referring to Jordan. The question I would like to put is, have we made a mistake in abandoning this practice when it comes to our interpretation of Micah 5?

We have in this latter-day prophecy a clear reference to the Lord Jesus in the first four verses, followed by the words, "And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land". The traditional view in the Brotherhood is that the Assyrian of this passage has reference to the Gogian confederacy from the north rather than to the modern occupant of ancient Assyria's territory, which is Iraq and western Iran. The following reasoning suggests that we have indeed made a mistake. One matter I feel sure we shall be fully agreed upon is that all the various facets of prophecy must harmonise.

The evidence is as follows:

1 **Isaiah 27:8-10.** Here we learn that "the iniquity of Jacob" is to be purged by an east wind. The prophet Hosea describes the Assyrian as the east wind (12:1). In Nahum 3:15-17 the Assyrians are symbolised by "locusts", whilst Moses in Exodus 10:13 informs us that the east wind brings the locusts. All this is useful information about the Assyrian, and guides us in our interpretation of the prophecy of Joel, where we read of God's locust armies entering the land of Israel. Returning to Isaiah 27, verse 10 also helps keep us on track in regard to the occasion of Jacob's purging "in the day of the east wind" when it says, "Yet the defenced [NIV, fortified] city shall be desolate". This cannot be Gog, who enters a land where the people are dwelling safely without walls, bars and gates (Ezek. 38:11), which means undefended according to Nehemiah 3.

2 **Isaiah 19:23-25.** Here we learn that the latter-day Assyrian is to become "a blessing in the midst of the land", along with Israel and Egypt; and note the words of verse 25: "Assyria the work of My hands". How can we possibly harmonise this passage with the declared end of the Gogian host, which is to be cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone (Rev. 19:20)?

3 **Zechariah 14.** This chapter has long been considered to describe the Gogian invasion, but this does not harmonise with other scripture. We know from Ezekiel 38:11 that Gog enters a land where the people are dwelling safely. This does not harmonise with Zechariah 14:11, where it is when the conflict is over that Israel is declared to be dwelling safely ("inhabited" is the same original word as "dwelling"). Verses 13 and 14 remove the difficulty by informing us that it was their "neighbour[s]" and "the heathen round about" who had been the cause of all the trouble. The conflict of Zechariah 14, we suggest, equates with Joel 1 and 2, and Ezekiel 35 and 36. The trouble comes not from the north but from the east, the invaders being the nations of Psalm 83, all of this being a conflict which will solve for ever the Jacob/Esau, that is, the Muslim, problem.

All this comes before Gog descends, to be destroyed on the territory of the ancient ten tribes of Israel. Remember that Jesus has already established his foothold in the south before Gog descends, for he comes to "save the tents [not tribe] of Judah first" (Zech. 12:7). The prophet Ezekiel, in a much-neglected passage, records the order of these events: "they shall dwell safely . . . when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them" (28:26).

It is possible to support the above reasoning with much more scripture evidence, but from the little given we are able to see that the Gogian confederacy in no way qualifies to fulfil the part