

has hitherto been interpreted as describing either a form of radiation sickness aftermath or the effects of direct exposure to thermonuclear, cometary or asteroidal impact blast. If Zechariah is describing the extended results of extensive volcanic activity, then there is the possibility of an extended time frame for the pouring out of God's judgements upon the wicked.

Other aspects of this prophecy may explain why Israel itself does not seem affected by this plague. The volcanically expelled gases afflicting Iceland in the 1780s appear to have been heavier than the earth's atmosphere and would therefore have concentrated in lower areas. Upon the return of our Lord, the great earthquake centred at Jerusalem will not only form a high mountain on the city's site but will also raise the land of Israel to form a high plateau. This would elevate the

Israeli survivors of Armageddon above the miasma affecting surrounding areas, and spare them of most, if not all, the effects of the noxious gases, especially from fluorosis.

It appears that the Jerusalem earthquake will be accompanied by fairly extensive dislocation of the earth's tectonic plates, and probably by the eruptions of numerous volcanoes throughout the world. There is evidence of lava emissions which cover thousands of square miles in the Snake River country of northwestern United States, and in the Deccan of the Indian subcontinent. Similar emissions may occur during the time of Armageddon, not only weakening nations opposing Christ but also allowing Christ and his brethren to organise the internal political and social structure of the kingdom of Israel for the Millennial Age. The return of the Jews to the Land from the Gentile

nations would bring them into more healthy environs, possibly speeding up their recovery from any effects of the eruptions which they may be suffering from.

The spate of earthquakes in various places throughout the globe would seem to be generally weakening the border regions of the world's tectonic plate structure in preparation for the great dislodgements to come at Armageddon. Even now, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes are having noticeable and sometimes catastrophic effects on faraway areas. The simultaneous disruptions throughout the planet will have repercussions beyond any experienced since the Genesis Flood as the age of righteousness is entered with Christ at its head. May we be found worthy to escape these things through the grace of our Lord Jesus.

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Family life in the Lord — with some cultural connotations

Trevor J. Hughes

EARLIER THIS YEAR I returned with other members of the UK CBM team from our Easter visit to Kenya. This year the Conference and a series of regional Bible Schools focused upon 'Family Life in the Lord'. Our foundation texts were, "a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24; *cf.* Mt. 19:5) and "Honour your father and your mother" (Ex. 20:12; *cf.* Mt. 15:4).*

Development of the theme included character studies, both good and bad examples, from Scripture. The extended family and ecclesial life were considered alongside Paul's teaching on unity and responsibility to Christ and to each other in Ephesians 5 and 6. Much self-examination and heart-searching evoked a spiritual atmosphere,

with exhortation to us all to lead lives worthy of our high calling in Christ Jesus.

We all discovered that we are much more the product of our own culture than we would probably wish to admit. "Why did a man of faith like Abraham have so many wives?", was a question very pertinent to African culture, yet one which would be unlikely to be raised in societies where polygamy is prohibited. Old Testament customs and rites, such as arranged marriages, the setting of a bride price, the redeeming of a brother's seed, and circumcision, are all issues which have to be sensitively considered in a country where such traditions still prevail. For many, obedience to

* Quotations from the ESV.



A typical Christadelphian family in Kenya.

the Truth as it is in Jesus requires a break from age-old tribal customs, but making this break can bring conflict, persecution or exclusion from extended family or tribal groups.

Yet the Anglican Church is finding tough opposition from its African adherents to its changing views on homosexuality and ordination of women priests. Neither concept fits comfortably into traditional African tribal culture.

“That He might seek a godly seed” (Mal. 2:15)

The appeal of true Christian standards to our African brethren and sisters and to our young people attending the Bible Schools, however, brought concern, respect and enthusiasm for the teaching of Jesus and his apostles. The position of a wife who submits to her husband “as to the Lord” is seen as elevating her from a culture where the man rarely sees his wife as the “helper fit for him” (Gen. 2:18). This, of course, is in the context of the greater command placed upon husbands to “love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Eph. 5:25). Godly respect, and tender, loving relationships, need to be prayerfully and carefully developed.

The practical issue of limiting the size of our families engaged discussion on the ethical issues involved. Was it right to bring too many children into the world if we cannot afford their upkeep and welfare? In Kenya, particularly in the rural communities, the command for children to obey their parents is one more readily accepted than in our Western culture. From an early age children have household duties delegated to them, which they seem to accept and obey without demur.

Yet in a world where wickedness prevails, whatever culture, tribe or people we may be from, we can observe how immorality destroys the very fabric of family life and loving relationships. So often we repeated the same response to difficulties experienced in practical issues: “The further we depart from the foundation principles which God has given, the greater the problems we bring upon ourselves”. A huge issue in Kenya is the problem of AIDS. Whereas in Western societies this deadly virus has mainly affected homosexual communities, in Africa entire communities are hugely affected, with an alarming number of orphans being left to become adopted, become street children or worse.

“What . . . God hath joined together” (Mt. 19:6)

So the subject of ‘Family life in the Lord’ could not have been more topical. The response from our brothers and sisters to our Bible studies was very much like the response to the Apostle Peter’s preaching of the gospel on the Day of Pentecost: “Brothers, what shall we do?” (cf. Acts 2:37). At the Bible School in one area it was unanimously agreed that a mass ceremonial wedding would be conducted for those whose marriages had not been registered or solemnised in covenant before God and their redeemer Jesus Christ. The young people, devastated by what they see around them in the growing number of orphans, were galvanised into the concept of holding Youth Camps to preach to their peers the better way in Jesus Christ.

And what lessons were there for those from the UK who had benefited from sharing in these studies? Sanctity of marriage had been the foun-

dation stone of all our discussions. Our African counterparts readily accepted the Divine benefits this confers upon family life in the Lord. From a culture which places greater values on the extended family, their insight into its development for the ecclesia was enlightening. “. . . the two shall become one flesh’. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church”. (Eph. 5:31,32).

On a visit where we encountered no fewer than four different ‘fellowships’ of Christadelphian origin from the UK, the question raised was most revealing: “As the Ecclesia of Christ, should we not uphold the same sanctity of fellowship with our Lord that is intended between a man and his wife?”. How incongruous our position is when we consider that the *raison d’être* for many such

‘fellowships’ has arisen over the very issue of marriage itself!

Yet it will be by God’s grace that we shall be included within the worldwide family when our Lord returns to the earth: “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” (Rev. 7:9,10). May we recognise now that it is from the Father that “every family in heaven and on earth is named”, that we may be “rooted and grounded in love” so that in His day we may be “filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:14-19).

The ark comes to Zion

Eric Marshall

The bringing of the ark to Zion is prominent in the Scripture record of David’s reign. Careful examination of the role of David in this reveals that David knew full well the significance of what he was doing and that he carried out actions which prefigured the work of his greater Son as king and priest.

THE ACCOUNT of David bringing the ark to Zion, recorded in 2 Samuel 6 and 7 and 1 Chronicles 13–17, seems to be straightforward. David’s expressed desire to bring the ark to Zion was accomplished, although failure to observe the specific requirements for handling the ark caused a temporary deferment of the project. However, as we read the records, in particular about David’s role, a number of questions emerge:

- What was the impetus for moving the ark? Was it a whim of David’s or was it by Divine direction? If the latter, was this already given in Scripture or was it by direct revelation?
- What had happened to the tabernacle after the ark had been captured by the Philistines?
- How are we to understand David’s role in this and other events, especially in the light of God’s condemnation of apparently very similar behaviour by Saul?

We will look at these questions in turn.

What was the impetus for moving the ark?

The move of the ark from Shiloh to Zion was a Divine choice. It arose from Israel’s persistent idolatry and the degeneration of the priesthood in Eli’s days: “For they provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, He was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: so that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men; and delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy’s hand” (Ps. 78:58-61).

Thus Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim was abandoned, and remained a stark reminder that God is a God of judgement (see Jeremiah 26:6). Its position was to be usurped by Jerusalem and Judah: “Moreover He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which He loved” (Ps. 78:67,68).

But how did David know this? It is clear from David’s action following the killing of Goliath that Jerusalem, then in Jebusite control, was of great interest to him, for he took Goliath’s head there (1 Sam. 17:54). It seems that he took it at that time rather than later. Maybe it was displayed as a sign of David’s intention to take Jerusalem, either on Israel’s behalf under Saul or when he became king. Presumably at some stage the head would have been buried, and thus the site was called Golgotha, the place of the skull (Mt. 27:33). If this