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Volume 43
Issue 1055

"In the Latter Days"

Part 1 of 2

by — Melvin Johnson (1897–1979)

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Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days (Genesis 49:1).

Key Points:

The "latter days" signify a distinct, prolonged future era in Israel's history, not merely a brief end-time period.....8861
Israel will be restored as a covenant nation of twelve tribes, with land allotments designated by tribe.....8864
Israel will face a period of apostasy in the "latter days," followed by divine correction.....8864

Haggai and Zechariah prophesy the construction of a future temple with greater glory than Solomon's, signifying Israel's renewed relationship with God.....8865
Revelation depicts a composite "beast" ruling over global political, economic and religious systems, supported by "Babylon the Great," symbolizing a corrupt supranational institution.....8867

The patriarch Jacob was speaking from his death bed to his twelve sons, and these last words of his have been preserved as a prophecy for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. There is no intention here to dwell in particular on that prophecy, but rather to consider the peculiar significance of the Hebrew 'achāriyth (akh-ar-eeth)¹ which Jacob used in this instance, rendered here as "in the last days."



His covenant relations with that nation. It is an era distinguished from Israel's ancient national history and is appropriately called "the latter days" – not as if it were to be her **last** days, but because it presupposes a *previous* era of **former** days characterized by the law and the prophets. That previous era extends back to the time of Moses and forward from thence to include the time of John the Baptist, last of the ancient Hebrew prophets, though our Lord called him also "more than a prophet" (Matthew 11:9-13; Luke 16:16).

This term is found in some sixty passages of the Hebrew Scriptures where 'achāriyth is rendered in various ways, though seldom "in the last days" as we find it here in Genesis. More often and more accurately it is rendered as "the latter days" ... "latter" instead of "last." The same 'achāriyth appears as "the latter days" in Numbers 24:14, which we shall consider here later, then again in Deuteronomy 4:30 and in eight further passages; it also appears as "latter end" in seven others.

"The latter days" or "latter end" is found to be a substantial era of Israel's future history after God renews

Israel's future era of "the latter days" is widely misunderstood as if it were only some relatively brief period between the completion of "this current era" (Romans 11:5) and the beginning of a new millennium at our Lord's personal revelation to Israel. While it is true that there is where the latter days of Hebrew prophecy apply, they are not just a brief period at the end of this eon. "The latter days" constitute rather an
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1. [Editor:] SEC, H319.



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Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
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- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice,

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 - union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6);
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independent era, an extended season, to follow this current era, and these "*latter days*" terminate with the fulfillment of Pauline prophecy at I Thessalonians 4:15-17.

At some further time thereafter, a time not now revealed, Israel's prophetic era of "*the latter days*" will begin, and we are about to observe why it must embrace a long span of premillennial history which draws near to a close when our Lord returns to Mount Olivet and reveals Himself to Israel (Acts 1:11; Zechariah 14:4), though it may also extend briefly beyond – long enough to include what Isaiah terms "*a conclusive and decisive accounting*" (Isaiah 10:23; Romans 9:28, CV) that appears to coincide with the completion of those 2300 literal days of Daniel 8:13-14, which necessarily extend 1010 days beyond those 1290 days that intervene between the removal of the Levitical "*daily sacrifice*" and the setting up of a certain "*abomination of desolation*" (Daniel 12:11-13).

The fact that the era of "*the latter days*" does constitute an extensive period of future history is supported by much Hebrew prophecy, more than we could adequately consider in present available time

and space. There is, however, one aspect of prophecy we can more briefly observe which by itself should establish that "*the latter days*" is an era of its own when Israel, as a covenant nation, will be living and serving under a Levitical priesthood of a future and long-enduring law economy, to be superseded by the Melchisedec priesthood at our Lord's personal return to Israel (Hebrews 7:11-12).

All of this becomes further apparent when we note that Israel's resettlement in the promised land at "*the latter days*," after they are first restored to covenant during an intervening period in some prophetic "*wilderness*" (Ezekiel 20:33-42), is also coincident with a contemporary revival of other ancient nations in "*the latter days*" – nations not now existing, as such, but who were contemporary to Israel during her former era of the law and the prophets. Present descendants of those former nations cannot be ethnically identified now until they are divinely restored as future nations, because now their ancestral lines are obviously even more obscure than those of the present descendants of Israel; yet prophecy shows that they will be reestablished as nations to experience a future span of history under their former national names.



Rightly Dividing Israel's Prophetic Kingdom – With Special Emphasis on the Overlooked Pre-Millennial "Kingdom of the Heavens" (A Comprehensive Compilation)

Editors: Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., André Sneidar

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There are enormous amounts of prophecy that were given to Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures that are yet to be fulfilled. Most believers simply follow some version of Christendom's eschatology, futilely attempting to force the enormity of Israel's prophetic scene into a few extremely abridged time periods. From this shallow vantage point, it is believed that more time has passed in God's ages than remains. This couldn't be further from the truth. Multiplied millennia remain, more than have yet transpired, for the fulfillment of all of the glorious plans that God has revealed in His Word. Far from being near the "end" of something prophetic, the span of God's eonian plan is immense, and our placement is early in its timeline. Much more of God's prophetic program remains than man's feeble eschatologies allow.

The intention herein is to present an alternative view to the confusing message of the traditional Evangelical concept of prophecy, thus opening the door to a consideration of the idea of a Pre-millennial Kingdom as the fulfillment of many of God's promises to Israel to have their kingdom in the Earth.

All of the material in this book, taken together, is a wonderful resolution to the confusion of the conventional religious theology that has muddled the minds of sincere Bible students for centuries. While we may live in the Secret Administration, that doesn't necessarily mean that God's Word regarding His plans for Israel must be a mystery to us.



This is something we ought to recognize as being even more phenomenal than the future identity of Israel's individual tribes, which prophecy clearly affirms, although we are not told how even that can be and will be accomplished. After a previous era of her former days when Israel first had been a nation of twelve distinct tribes, we know she went into captivity, and we are told from her own Scriptures that she will be restored as a future nation of the same twelve tribes.

The Lord bringeth back the captivity of His people (Psalm 14:7).

Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents (Jeremiah 30:18).

Future descendants of Israel will be restored to the promised land according to their designated tribal allotments (Ezekiel 48), and those among them who then will serve in the Levitical priesthood must be no others than the sons of Zadok (Ezekiel 48:11) who was the tenth generation from Aaron, the great grandson of Levi (I Chronicles 6:1-8). Therefore, when the future identity of the tribe of Levi is somehow re-established by a divine foreknowledge not now revealed to us, only those males of thirty years and upward who are also from the lineage of Zadok will be acceptable as priests from all of Levi's descendants.

Yet prophecy is equally clear that other nations, such as Moab and Ammon who were nations at the time of Moses, are also to be restored as future nations under their former national names "*in the latter days.*"

Thus, we read, for example,

I will bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days (Jeremiah 48:47).

I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon (Jeremiah 49:6).

I will bring again the captivity of Elam (Jeremiah 49:39).

Moab and Ammon were descendants of Lot, and the nation of Elam from the lineage of Shem (Genesis 10:22) was apparently the predominant power in lower Mesopotamia as far back as the time of Abraham (Genesis). These former nations will be restored as nations in a future era of "*the latter days,*" just as Israel will be restored to become once again God's exclusive covenant nation.

In that prophetic era of "*the latter days*" all other nations will both rise and fall. They will experience first, a time of peace and prosperity together with Israel; then, a further period of wars, famines and pestilence contemporary to the time of Israel's future apostasy. Unlike all other nations, Israel will survive as a nation which both the law and the prophets affirm with emphasis:

I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt (Leviticus 26:45).

Though I make a full end of all nations whither



The Sovereignty of God

by — George Addair

The trend of the centuries has consistently been that of the exaltation of man and the abasement of God. Many feel that the Creator has delegated His rule and authority to the use or abuse of the creature. They have reduced God and His Divine office to the extent that multitudes of people now have only a superficial conception of Him.

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I have scattered thee;² yet will I not make a full end of thee but I will correct thee in measure and will not leave thee altogether unpunished (Jeremiah 30:11).

Israel will survive her apostasy “in the latter days” after she receives her necessary deserved correction.

She will be born anew out of Zion's last travail; a nation then born in a day (Isaiah 66:8-9; Zechariah 3:9).

Balak, king of Moab in the time of Moses, was deeply grieved to hear of Moab's ultimate fate at the hands of Israel in some prophetic time then dimly distant. “... I will advertise thee,” said Balaam the prophet,

what this people [Israel] shall do to thy people [Moab] in the latter days. ... I shall see Him but not now ... there shall come a Star out of Jacob, a Scepter shall rise out of Israel and shall smite the corners of Moab ... (Numbers 24:14, 17).

Prophecy also indicates, as we shall find here later, why Moab and Ammon together with Edom (of Esau) will first escape the future fate of other nations, but afterward Moab together with Ammon and Edom will become victims of Balaam's prophecy “in the latter days.”

Yet much earlier in that era of those “latter days” Gentile nations and Israel will be living at peace with each other and Gentiles will be blessed for their blessing of Israel, even as God made promises to their father Abraham on behalf of his seed (Genesis 12:3). It appears that some Gentile nations then will be actively assisting Israel with her future reconstruction work, much as Persian kings did in post-exile days after the Babylonian servitude, though conceivably on a much larger scale.

This is dramatically portrayed by the vision which appeared to Zechariah who prophesied in post-exile days, as did also the prophet Haggai, when Jeshua and Zerubbabel were about to begin the

2. Any Gentiles reconstituted as nations in the millennial era or later will share the blessings of God's covenant with Israel only if they honor and obey Israel's God-given law. Gog and Magog will be destroyed as nations, due to their post-millennial revolt (Revelation 21:24; 20:8-9).

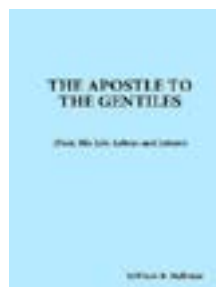
building of a new temple after their return from Babylon. The prophecies of those days by Zechariah and Haggai are obviously focused on a then-future reconstruction and a temple of far greater glory. This is clearly implied where Haggai refers to a new “house” that will excel the glory of the former, to which he adds,

“And in this place will I give peace” saith the Lord of hosts (Haggai 2:9).

The temple which the people of Judah built in those former days was definitely not greater than the previous temple, and it was followed by wars rather than peace. Yet meanwhile the prophet Zechariah relates a remarkable vision to indicate a most cooperative attitude on the part of certain Gentile nations at some prophetic future time. “Then I lifted up mine eyes,” he said,

“and behold four horns,” And I said unto the angel that talked with me, “What be these?” And he answered me, “These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.” And the Lord showed me four carpenters. Then said I “What come these to do?” And he spoke saying, “These are the horns which have scattered Judah ... but these are come to fray [or help] them, to

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cast out the horns [the powers] of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it” (Zechariah 1:18-21).

Thus, the prophet had foreseen a distantly future time when the (symbolical) “horns” of Gentile power first will have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem as though to the four corners of the earth; yet after Israel’s future exodus from all nations and their reoccupation of the promised land, the Gentiles then as carpenters will come to a previously scattered Israel and help her rebuild!

The prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are focused especially on that part of “*the latter days*” after Israel (then long restored) begins once again to apostatize; yet those two prophecies were seen and heard by Daniel and John from two widely separated perspectives of time, long past and far future. What Daniel reveals from Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, his own visions and a messenger’s interpretation, is all parallel to the revelations received by John on Patmos when he had been transported in spirit to the Lord’s day (Revelation 1:10) which other prophecy locates at or near the last extremity of “*the latter days*” (the Hebrew *‘achäriyth*). Thus what Daniel had perceived only from the distant past, John was privileged to see and hear from a time so far future that he must “*turn about to look for the voice which spoke*” (Revelation 1:12, CV). What still remains to us as prophecy is what John saw and heard as if it were already history.

While Daniel revealed that the great image that the king had seen was relevant to four successive world kingdoms, beginning with Babylon as the head of gold, he still prefaced the entire revelation by saying first that God had thus made known “*what shall be in the latter days*” (Daniel 2:28). While the kingdoms symbolized by gold, silver, brass and iron would successively rise and fall, Daniel’s interpretation requires also that they shall **co-exist** at a future time, for he reminded the king that in his dream he had seen the image standing until all of its parts were “*broken to pieces together*” (:35).

Then when Daniel himself had seen a vision of four beasts which were explained to him as representing

four kingdoms symbolized by a lion, bear, leopard and a mysterious ten-horned monstrosity [Daniel 7], it becomes enlightening to note that in some late 42 months of the latter days, all of these characteristics reappear in one future symbolic beast with mouth like a lion, feet like a bear, body like a leopard and ten horns (Revelation 13:1-2). In Daniel’s vision the fourth beast had certain features in common with the great image; brass for the nails and iron for the teeth, two metals identified with the great image whose midsection was of brass, but it had legs and feet of iron (7:19).

The fourth beast also shared one unique feature with something that Daniel was to see in a further vision. On the fourth beast it was a strange little horn which came up among the ten and displaced three of them. In his further vision Daniel saw two domestic animals, a ram and a goat, which were explained to him as meaning Persia and Grecia respectively [Daniel 8]; the two kingdoms which succeeded Babylon in that order, as history also confirms. The goat in Daniel’s vision had first a notable horn which later was broken (commonly associated with Alexander, “*the first king*”) and in place of that horn came up four others. Then from one of those came forth a little horn very remindful of the one which appeared on the fourth beast of Daniel’s previous vision.

Thus, since the brass and the iron of the great image reappears in the fourth beast of Daniel’s first vision, and since the strange “*little horn*” appears in both of Daniel’s two visions, it appears that all three revelations are interrelated in some particulars. Quite obviously they all have a factual basis in the ancient history of Babylon, Persia and Grecia, seeing that all of these former kingdoms are mentioned in the prophecy; yet when the messenger spoke to Daniel about all of this, he placed his first and foremost emphasis **not** on that historical background, but rather stressed the **purpose** of the vision; exactly when it applies:

... Understand, O Son of man, at the time of the end shall be the vision. ... in the last end [‘achäriyth, i.e., “in the latter days”] of the indignation (Daniel 8:17-19).



Here again we have the Hebrew for *"the latter days,"* though rendered slightly different as *"the last end of the indignation"* or *"in the latter time."*

Consequently, for at least some part of *"the latter days,"* this apparently requires a temporary restoration of former kingdoms like Babylon, Persia and Grecia; and from among those restored nations an evil man of destiny will emerge who will supersede certain other rulers, like the little horn in Daniel's visions which displaced certain others: and that one will for a time succeed in consolidating a world dominion which appears to John in vision as one composite beast having all of the characteristics which Daniel had seen separately as a lion, bear, leopard and a ten-horned monstrosity, the latter itself having the characteristics of more than one kingdom, for it had brass as well as iron.

John in vision sees that composite beast near the zenith of its glory to be followed shortly by its ultimate dissolution. It represents a great political world complex which in that day is ruled by the sixth of seven kings, five having fallen while another then must yet appear for *"a short space"* (Revelation 17:10). Then in a late 42 months one of those seven kings will return to power, far greater than before, after he is previously said to have been mortally wounded as though

by a sword; yet now, behold, he lives as though immortal and he revels in the whole world's acclaim (Revelation 13). His new reign becomes the eighth, though he, as a person, is one of the former seven (Revelation 17:11).

Until then it appears that the beast consists first of seven confederate powers, as denoted by seven heads, but also ten subordinate powers represented by ten horns which at first are not honored with crowns as they will be later in a final 42 months (*cf.* Revelation 13:1; 12:3). These subordinate powers seemingly will be pressing for their separate autonomies and for a very short time they, too, *"receive power as kings one hour with the beast"* (17:12) – apparently no more than 42 months.

Meanwhile, according to the revelations given to John, it appears that all political power together with all world wealth and commerce will be under the powerful influence and control of an evil supranational institution, religious or philosophical in character. This was envisioned to John as a woman of fabulous luxury called *"BABYLON THE GREAT"* (:5), and John saw the woman as being carried and supported by the beast; apparently therefore not a political power in itself but one which all political power

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must reckon with and recognize. John was told that the woman symbolically represents,

... that great city which reigneth **over** the kings of the Earth (:18).

The prophetic and typical counterpart for all of this is doubtless found in Zechariah 5, which refers to a “house” – like Israel’s temple was commonly called a house – but this one is identified with “wickedness” (:8). It will be built and designedly well established in the land of Shinar, the area where the ancient tower of Babel was built (Genesis 11:2).

(continued next issue)

— *Treasures of Truth*, Installment 1 (December, 1971) pp. 20-29
(edited)

Melvin Eugene Johnson (1897–1979)

Johnson, of Minneapolis, MN, had a “gracious, quiet spirit in teaching God’s good news by word of mouth and by the printed page, especially through the pages of the periodical, *Treasures of Truth*. We all long to manifest a greater measure of the disposition of Christ – ‘nothing according with faction, nor yet according with vainglory – but with humility, deeming one another superior to one’s self, not each noting that which is his own, but each that of others also’ (Philippians 2:3-4, Concordant). It pleased God to give Melvin a remarkable measure of this disposition, unto the edification of all who knew him.” – *Unsearchable Riches*

Johnson’s other material in the *Bible Student’s Notebook*:

- “The End is Not Yet,” [BSN 752](#);
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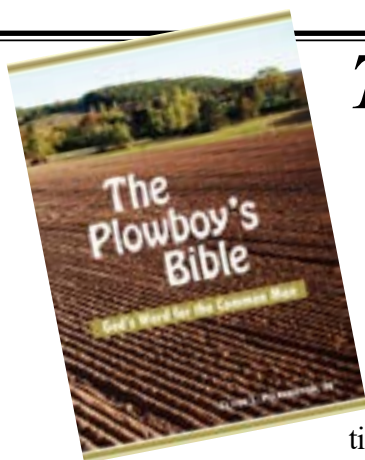
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Major: *Achārîyth*; Israel; Latter Days; Pre-Millennial Kingdom; Prophecy

LET NO ONE SAY,
THIS IS FATALISM.”
NAY, IT IS “GODISM”
IF I MAY REVERENTLY
USE SUCH AN EXPRES-
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A “FATALISM” THAT
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