

VOLUME VII: The Doorway Papers

hidden things of God's revelation

AMAZING INSIGHTS FROM BIBLE FACTS

SECOND EDITION

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HIDDEN THINGS OF GOD'S REVELATION: Amazing Insights from Bible Facts
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Editors: E.M. White and R.G. Chiang

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PREFACE TO VOLUME VII

This volume of the Doorway Papers, like Volume VI, contains a variety of topics not specifically related to a theme. Yet second thought suggests that the nature of these biblical studies are such that most of them seem to give particular insight into God's ways with men in history and revelation. Here can be found surprising sources of delight. Each provides further proof that Scripture has infinite resources to challenge both the mind and the heart of the student who takes time to study even some of its less promising portions — the genealogies, for example.

The amazing thing is that Scripture has equal appeal to the unsophisticated mind of a child and to the revered scholar alike, the one being stirred in his imagination and the other challenged in his intellect — often while studying the very same passages. Bearing everywhere the hallmarks of true inspiration, its words are for children, its thoughts are for men. No other such book as this was ever written.

The sequence of these papers are presented here in virtually a reverse chronological order, taking the reader from the present New Testament age further and further back into the Old Testament and the distant past.

The first paper, "The Silences of God," is so titled quite intentionally because I believe there are several different kinds of silence, all of which may challenge the faith of the child of God. There is the silence of displeasure, the silence of mercy, the silence of discipline, the silence of rebuke, the silence which is God's right whenever He chooses not to explain: but there is never a silence of admitted wrong, of acknowledged defeat, or of indifference. And there are two classes of silence, the private and the public. All these are grist for the mill. And the circumstances of the silences of God in the face of human suffering over the past two thousand years are given particular attention . . . along with the evidence that God is once again beginning to break that long silence in certain highly significant ways.

The second paper, "The Harmony of Contradiction," is a beautiful illustration of how wise God is in His mode of illuminating the heart and mind by using a method that at first seems confusing or unnecessarily complicated. In the Gospels this has provoked the writing of "harmonies", a supposed improvement on the original. But in the end the original proves vastly superior in its power of communicating profound truths about the person and the character of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The third paper, "Some Striking Fulfillments of Prophecy", might very well have been titled, "A Tale of Two Cities," since this is really what it is. The illustrations could be put on slides and used to show, along with the text, that certain prophecies of a most unusual kind were made and fulfilled in such

circumstances that the fact of long-range detailed prophetic insights is absolutely unquestionable.

The fourth paper, "Some Remarkable Biblical Confirmations From Archaeology," is a survey of certain less commonly reported details of confirmatory evidence, particularly relating to the earlier portions of Genesis and tending toward strengthening the faith of those who prefer to accept the statements of Scripture in a precise literal sense rather than in a generalized one. As will be seen, it is quite possible that this evidence now carries us back to Adam's immediate family—almost therefore to the very threshold of man's creation.

The fifth paper, "The Genealogies of the Bible," is a study intended to demonstrate that some of the apparently most dry and uninspiring parts of Scripture contain food for the soul as well as stimulation for the mind. The important thing is that we should rediscover the delight of Bible study even in these portions which we are tempted to bypass. They are, after all, as much part of the Word of God as Isaiah 53 or the first chapter of John's Gospel or I Corinthians 13 or Revelation 22.

The sixth paper, "A Translation of Genesis 1:1 to 2:4 With Notes," reflects my own understanding of what the Creation Week really signifies: namely, a reconstitution of a world desolated in judgment just when man was about to be introduced to assume dominion over it. In a period of six days, working creatively at a highly accelerated rate, God restored the environment in one particular region of the world that was chosen to be the cradle of the race, making it a garden paradise. It was intended that Adam should expand the boundaries of this paradise until, with God's help, the whole earth would become a scene of beautiful harmony and peace. As I see the situation, the week of creation was thus a time of restoration and re-ordering after a catastrophic judgment, the details of which are not given in any depth except to tell us that ruin and desolation had existed (Genesis 1: 2) when the process of recovery began in Genesis 1:3.



PART I

THE SILENCES OF GOD

[Doorway Paper #23, first issued 1971]

Our God *shall* come, and shall not
keep silence. . . .
Gather my saints together unto Me;
those that have made a covenant
with Me.

Psalm 50: 3,5

Introduction

When we survey the evidence of the overruling providence of God in the course of human history, we soon discover some periods in which His activity was more than ordinarily manifest, and other periods in which He seems to have withdrawn and allowed things to take their course—usually to the distress of His people and to the rapid deterioration of society as a whole. These periods of comparative withdrawal may usefully be referred to as the *silences* of God, and it is in this sense that we speak of silence here.

These periods of silence can be viewed on the one hand in respect to mankind as a whole, and on the other hand with respect to the individual in particular. Probably every child of God has had the distressing feeling at one time or another of being abandoned by the Lord. No longer does he receive answers to prayer, no longer does he sense the Lord's presence in the daily round: the heavens seem as brass and the wonderful promise, "when they call I will answer," rings hollow. At such times not merely does he receive a *no* as an answer, he receives *no answer* whatever.

Then there is the broader aspect of the silence of God. It is His seeming indifference, at times, to the needs of human beings when appalling suffering overtakes them. Countless millions of people have suffered because of famine or war or drought or disaster in circumstances in which it hardly seems appropriate simply to say they *deserved* it. At such times, thoughtful men do not become atheists because they find it irrational to believe in a spiritual world which is above and beyond demonstration by ordinary means; rather, because of emotional insult, the feeling that if God is really such a Being as we His children claim Him to be, He could not possibly remain silent He would have to act manifestly, mercifully, savingly, publicly.

So this brings me to a second aspect of such silence. There is a public silence, and there is a private silence. There is, on the one hand, that silence of God marked by the total absence of any manifest and public display of His power. And there is, on the other hand, the silence an individual may experience. The former may last for centuries, indeed for millennia; the latter is temporary, though nonetheless distressing for the child of God. This distinction between public and private silence is an important one in the present context, because it is the former kind of silence and not the latter that we have in mind throughout this discussion. When God acts or fails to act in the private life of an individual, the circumstances may never be known to anyone else. When God gives a public manifestation of His power, the situation is entirely different. In this situation, the whole world may become aware of it, or at the very least a whole community, willy-nilly.

But the silence of God, viewed as public manifestation of His presence, may take several forms. There may be an absence of miracle, or there may be an absence of revelation: or there may be an absence of judgment, in which circumstance the wicked prosper and the righteous perish and heaven does not intervene.

Between the closing of the canon of the Old Testament with the Book of Malachi and the birth of Jesus Christ, there was a period of some four hundred years in which God added nothing to what was written in the Old Testament Scriptures, nor was any prophet apparently inspired. In this period some remarkable events occurred in world history which suggest that God's silence in this respect was no accident. It seems that it was not until Paul's visit to Athens did the significance of this period of silence become clear to him, as we shall see.

After the martyrdom of Stephen we have a second period of silence of another kind. The Gospels are filled with a record of signs and wonders, and Acts opens with a continuation of these phenomena. Yet signs and wonders soon begin a steady decline in frequency, until by the end of Acts they are rare and no longer observed even in circumstances in which they had been prominent only a few years before. This comparative scarcity of manifest demonstration of the power of God to act in miraculous ways has continued almost up to the present time. But in recent years there is some evidence that signs and wonders are once more being manifested publicly in displays of God's power to act. It is as though after Stephen's death, silence was imposed gradually until it was almost complete for nearly two thousand years. And now God is once again beginning to speak as He did in New Testament times.

The same may perhaps prove to be true of God's activity in judgment. When the church was first founded and began to grow, there is evidence that even the children of God who were disobedient were apt to be punished suddenly and dramatically. As the years went by, such sudden judgments became rarer until they appear to have virtually ceased. As we look at the history of Europe during the past sixty years, it seems that wickedness is still unpunished in any such dramatic way as it was in Acts and in some of the earlier epistles. The appalling cruelties against individuals which characterized both world wars and the period between them—not merely in Germany and Russia, but in other parts of the world such as China also—seem to have gone largely unpunished. Now and then we hear of individuals who were marvellously saved from gross personal indignity and suffering, but in the background we know that millions were not. Men cried out against their oppressors, but heaven was unhearing. And even the saints did not escape these indescribable tortures of both body and soul. Although they must undoubtedly have been comforted by the Lord in the midst of their fiery furnace, the fact remains that their *oppressors went virtually unpunished*.

It is this fact which I want to underscore, that judgment in any sudden way has been largely suspended. And not only judgment of the *wicked*, but even judgment of those who, knowing the Lord's saving grace, have preferred rather for their own safety and advantage to betray the Lord and to side with the world against the family of God. In the New Testament, during the infant period of the church's growth, there are numerous references to the swift judgment of God which fell upon those who, knowing the Lord, nevertheless betrayed Him in one way or another. Such judgments, beginning with the instant death of Ananias and

Sapphira, are intimated throughout Paul's epistles, but they become less and less frequent; in one case, at least, the judgment threatened by Paul appears never to have been realized during Paul's own lifetime. We shall look into these in the third chapter, but for the moment it is necessary only to observe that such things do not occur apparently at the present time except upon very rare occasions indeed. I know of only one instance. There does not appear as yet to be *any* break in the silence of God in *this* respect; but we do seem to be witnessing the re-appearance of some other kinds of signs and wonders in our day which, I believe, are highly significant.

The reasons for these different kinds of silence are well worth some reflection – and this is the object of this Paper. Such reflection sheds a wonderful light on certain otherwise puzzling phenomena of the past and the present alike. Indeed, we are led to believe that there is one often overlooked evidence that the coming of the Lord draws nigh.

My purpose is to explore in this Paper the idea (by no means a new one) that the *public* manifestation of signs and wonders is always directly connected with God's covenant relationship with Israel, and that these signs and wonders (which include the giving of revelation, the performing of miracles, the gifts of healing and of tongues, raising of the dead, the effecting of great deliverances, the imposition of sudden judgment and divine vindication) have all waxed and waned as this covenant relationship has been strengthened or weakened by Israel's national behaviour.

By the term "covenant relationship" is intended this: that God chose the nation of Israel out of all the other nations to become the special vehicle through which He would reveal Himself to mankind. Through their national history He demonstrated how He will judge the world and how His providence operates to reward righteousness and punish wickedness in society. Through His dealings with individuals within the nation He demonstrated how He is willing and able to enter into the personal lives of those who seek His face in the daily round. Through their prophets He demonstrated how history is, and will always be, a record of the unfolding of His purpose. Through their appointed system of worship He showed what He requires of men in their moral behaviour and how He will deal with sin both in judgment and in redemption. Through them came the Scriptures: and through them came the Saviour who is yet also to be King and Lord of all. Throughout their history He gave them assurance that this unique covenant relationship was real and effective by constantly stepping into the normal course of events and acting in a miraculous and wonderful way both in deliverance and in judgment. So much a part of His covenant relationship was the performance of these signs and wonders throughout their history, that it became part of Jewish mentality to demand them from anyone who claimed to be in any special way an emissary of God.

As this covenant relationship was strengthened or weakened, so signs and wonders increased or declined in number. Whenever Israel's behaviour was such that the covenant relationship was held almost completely in abeyance, at such times signs and wonders virtually ceased. Where divine interference in a publicly manifest way *would* not be, or *could* not be, or was not *allowed* to be a testimony to Israel, it has been withheld in any *public* sense; for as we shall see, the Gentile nations, unlike the Jewish people, have never been moved or impressed by such

signs and wonders to anything like the same extent. Much is explained in the light of this circumstance that is otherwise unaccountable in the dealings of God, not only with His children, but with the Gentile world as well.



Chapter 1

Four Centuries of Silence

In the four hundred years which immediately preceded the birth of Jesus Christ, God allowed mankind to conduct a unique experiment. In these years there was made the profoundest search for the meaning of life which the human intellect is ever likely to make. This search took place not only in Greece, where the circumstances are probably most familiar to Western readers, but also toward the East, in India.

It was a time when exceptional individuals were engaged in a quest for ultimate truth under peculiarly favourable conditions. And it was a period when God remained silent, in which He contributed no further light by means of *revelation* from the time that Malachi had put away his inspired pen (somewhere about 400 B.C.) until a Child was born in Bethlehem and "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." By the search for *truth* in this context, I have in mind the search for the meaning of life, a meaning which cannot be found until man has first come personally face to face with his God.

It was in this special sense, I believe, that Paul spoke of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as being only "in the fulness of time" (Galatians 4:4). It was this same circumstance, I think, which led him to exclaim after his visit to Athens—as though with sudden insight—that it was only after (in the wisdom of God) men by wisdom had not known God, that it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (1 Corinthians 1:21). Let us examine briefly the events of these four hundred silent years, first in Greece and then in India.

The Golden Age of Greece

It is almost universally conceded that the period from Pericles to Aristotle marked the highest point in human history in terms of pure intellectual achievement. Yet it was followed within a few hundred years by what must surely have been one of the darkest and most appalling periods of history for free man and slave alike. It ended in a situation, during the time of the Roman Empire, in which the elite of society came to look upon suicide as the only logical escape, while the slave could scarcely hope for the privilege of even this much control of his own life.

Farrar wrote some years ago of even the more honourable segment of society of this time:

Its marked characteristic was despairing sadness, which became specially prominent in its most sincere adherents. Its favourite theme was the glorification of suicide, which wiser moralists had severely reprobated, but which many Stoics praised as the one sane refuge against oppression and outrage.

It was a philosophy which was indeed able to lacerate the heart with righteous indignation against the crimes and follies of mankind, but which vainly strove to resist – and which scarcely even hoped to stem, the ever-swelling tide of vice and misery. For wretchedness it had no pity; on vice it looked with impotent disdain [...].

Even for those who had every advantage of rank and wealth, nothing was possible but a life of crushing sorrow ended by a death of complete despair.¹

Both Zeno and Cleanthes (his successor in the School of Stoics) committed suicide. Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny, Seneca, and many other writers of the times underscored the frequency of suicide under the empire. In Trajan's time, suicide had become almost a national pastime; the number of Latin phrases to describe it accordingly multiplied to an extraordinary degree! The more violent solution was essentially Roman, but even in Greece it had led to such a total resignation to the "bludgeonings of chance" that men in the end either sought to escape the hurts and cruelties of fate and the boredom of life by allowing themselves no feelings whatsoever (which is Stoicism), or by abandoning all restraint and adopting a policy of eating and drinking and being merry and living only for the pleasure of the moment (which is Epicureanism).

Meanwhile in India, by a different route, the same basic problem led to a rather similar kind of pessimistic solution – the goal being individual extinction, not by suicide, but by the destruction of all personal desire, the achievement of *Nirvana*. This was the annihilation of individual identity (which is Nihilism).

Such, then, was the fruit of philosophy uncorrected and unenlightened in its development by revelation. The search for the meaning of life was a dismal failure and resulted in almost universal pessimism. The answer was suicide or abandonment of all self-restraint or the negation of all human responsiveness. It was really the annihilation of man as man, while God was both unknown and unknowable.

Looking back upon those centuries – which at the outset seemed to hold such promise for so many reasons but which ended up in such a sad denial of everything rewarding that life has to offer when lived as God intends it to be lived – one cannot help but feel that this disappointing experiment was allowed to run its course while God deliberately remained silent, only that He might show once for all the inability of man to discover the meaning of life by the mere exercise of his own intellect and without the aid of revelation. Only then did God break in on the darkness and reveal the truth in the face of Jesus Christ. Only then did He send forth His Son to reveal Himself to man, to show man the reality of his own fallen nature, to demonstrate to man his true potential as originally created, and to set forth the way of salvation whereby that potential might be

1. Farrar, Frederick W., *The Early Days of Christianity*, Burt, New York, 1882, p.10, and footnote.

recovered once again and realized in a meaningful life. Only then was hope restored to a world which seemed to have accepted hopelessness as an inescapable fact of life.

For all the profoundness of his search, man had not been able to diagnose correctly his own sickness and the consequent sickness of society. Nor had he been able, for all his searching, "to find out God." The end of his search had led only, as Paul observed, to the erection of an altar to God *Unknown* (Acts 17:23).

What happened, then, that such promise brought forth so little that was either comforting or reassuring or helpful to man as he faced the central issues of his existence, leading rather only to a weary and disillusioned Pilate asking, with little hope of finding the answer, "What *is* truth?" (John 18:38).

It began indeed with great promise. Probably no period in history witnessed such a sudden liberation of the human mind from stifling and restrictive devotion to the orthodoxies of the past. Only in the last century of our own times have we witnessed a similar rejection of all that has hitherto seemed so reasonable and meaningful in our world view. The age of Pericles which initiated the Golden Age of Greece provides some striking parallels in many ways. It could indeed be that both periods will prove to share this in common also, that they are harbingers of a sudden breaking of the silence of God: that God will again burst upon an unexpected world, only this time not in the quiet way of the stable in Bethlehem, but with a shout and the mighty trumpet of the archangel.

Pericles (490-429 B.C.) epitomized his age. He was a general of no mean caliber, a scholar, a philosopher, a patron of the arts, and a great orator. Will Durant speaks of the society in which he lived as being one of extraordinary ferment:

No age has ever rivalled that of Pericles in the number and grandeur of its philosophical ideas, or in the vigour and exuberance with which they were debated. Every issue that agitates the world today was bruited about in ancient Athens, and with such freedom and eagerness that all Greece except its youth was alarmed.²

For reasons which it is not necessary to enter into here, circumstances had contrived to turn Athens into a working democracy while Sparta had remained essentially an aristocracy. In Athens the climate was such as to favour the freest possible exchange of ideas and to encourage every form of art, especially public debate and monumental civic architectural embellishment. It was a golden age indeed, spent in an environment that was naturally beautiful and healthful in every way for the privileged who were free.

In due course, unfortunately, the Athenians became missionary-minded with respect to their own democratic way of life and soon engaged to convert neighbouring Sparta. The Spartans were rugged individuals, accustomed to a military discipline, despising the effete Athenians and their profitless discussions: and they took violent exception to the superior pose of their neighbours. The end

² Durant, Will, *The Life of Greece*, Part II of *The Story of Civilization*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1939, p.349.

result was at first a disaster for Athens. The Athenians sought to improve their neighbours by force, and in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.) their missionary zeal, coupled with their irresolution, reduced them to a state of material impoverishment from which they recovered only in part—their land being laid waste, their olive orchards (upon which so much of their wealth had depended) being almost totally destroyed, and their pride subdued. The struggle itself engendered in them a certain corruption of spirit, as so often happens in wars between relatives.

Something sinister crept into Athenian life, as it did in Rome once the Empire was established. For somewhat the same reason, victor and defeated alike were affected with the same blight. Losing the sense of honour—for the war between Athens and Sparta had become more and more vicious and nasty (as Shakespeare said, "The nearer in blood, the nearer bloody")—people no longer behaved honourably, but masked their behaviour with fine words. The former love of serious discussion was debased to ingenious dispute, by which the most despicable actions were made to appear noble. It became more important to win the argument than to arrive at the truth—as must sometimes seem to be the case in our own legal wranglings today. Those who loved wisdom and sought it for its own sake were replaced by those who sought only to *appear* to be wise, and the legitimate tactics of the sophists degenerated into mere sophistry. Men became cynics. But not all men: for there was one who sought to restore integrity and he, Socrates, was made a martyr for his pains.

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle

We know very little of Socrates except through the eyes of others. He wrote nothing. His methods of arguing and his conversations are recorded for us by Plato, who was his pupil for many years. We assume that Plato has left us a true picture.

In appearance Socrates was anything but handsome. To some extent he almost reminds us of Paul in this respect! The only description we have tells us that in outward appearance he was "grotesque." He was stout but not tall, with prominent eyes, snub nose, broad nostrils, and wide mouth. Plato says nevertheless that he was all glorious within, the most righteous man of his age.³

Socrates' great contribution was not in the answers he gave, for he is not recorded to have given a single answer of his own to the stream of questions he proposed. His great contribution was rather in his method. To every question asked of him, he turned the tables on his questioner and propounded a further one in return! He simply demanded the right to ask, to challenge, to probe, to doubt. He became the first exponent in Greece of a personal morality, an individual integrity based rather on private conscience than on public behaviour. It was *this* which finally exasperated his own countrymen of the older generation and led to the demand that he be put to death as a dangerous and unorthodox corrupter of youth.

As we have noted, sophism had become sophistry. War had degraded the free spirit of inquiry of a former generation into a wrangling over words: method had

3. Plato: *Epinomis*. viii, 326.

become of greater importance than content, and winning an argument than discovering the truth. It was possible to prove that black was white by a series of graded misrepresentations, each of which was too subtle to be exposed by the less sophisticated. Socrates sought to undermine all this by challenging *every* supposedly logical conclusion. He did not challenge the reality of the gods, nor the value of piety and religious exercise. He sought to purify rather than ridicule. But in spite of his intentions, he succeeded in subtly shifting the direction of argument from man's relationship to the gods and his destiny, to "What is man?" He converted a corrupt religious orthodoxy into an exhilarating humanism. He converted sin into mere ignorance, which sufficient education could correct. He made the search for truth of greater importance than the search for holiness.

Nevertheless, under his influence and through the minds of his disciples, the forms of argument and analysis were honed to a new kind of precision, and the Greek language became the most perfect vehicle of logical expression. It became, in fact, the instrument whereby the religious perceptiveness of the Old Testament saints was woven by Paul through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit into a Christian theology. As Barr has shown,⁴ Hebrew could never have become the language of theology in the sense that Greek did; and but for this transformation, the whole fabric of Christian faith would have remained experience-oriented and, being unstructured, its impact outside the Hebrew nation would have remained uncertain and cloudy. The Christian faith swept the Mediterranean world because it was cast in a Greek mould, in a language whose capacity for the conveying of compulsive logic was to a large extent perfected by the Sophists and by Socrates and his successors, Plato and Aristotle

Yet, even while this refining process was going on, the subject matter of philosophy drew steadily away from the objective of truth which had been conceived by the Old Testament prophets in experiential form. Pindar at the opening of the fifth century B.C. had accepted the oracle of Delphi piously;⁵ Aeschylus defended it politically; Herodotus, about 450, criticized it timidly; Thucydides, at the end of the century, openly rejected it. As Durant says, "The Sophists must not be blamed or credited for all of this; much of it was in the air [...] their role in the deterioration of morals was likewise contributory rather than basic."⁶ But the Sophists unwittingly quickened the disintegration of the old order.

Had the trends of the time continued until intellectualism had discredited itself by its own corrupt practices, all might have been different. The old orthodoxies *might* have returned, purified and "modernized" perhaps, but essentially as before. But Socrates by his very integrity had the effect of destroying the old faith by his honest questionings, while substituting in its place, not a new faith, but entirely new lines of inquiry which turned men's attention (via Plato, 427-347 B.C.) first of all to the question of the nature of man rather than his destiny: and then (via Plato's pupil, Aristotle [384-322]) to the nature of the universe rather than its purpose.

Socrates died in 399 B.C. Plato eulogized him as "truly the wisest, and justest, and best of all men whom I have ever known."⁷ Yet this same Socrates initiated

4. Barr, James, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, Oxford, 1961, chaps. 2 and 9.

5. Durant, Will, *The Life of Greece*, Part II in *The Story of Civilization*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1939, p.361.

6. *Ibid.*, p.362.

7. Plato, *Phaedrus*, last line.

a purely philosophical movement, entirely divorced in the end from any religious association, which left men without faith, without hope, and without any certainty whatever except that the only wise course was to doubt everything. Centuries later, his followers were to gain almost universal assent to the fatal idea that human intellect is capable of discovering the whole truth (in which "truth" can be equated with our current phrase, "the ultimate meaning of life"), not by the exercise of *faith* but by the exercise of *doubt*, a principle underlying the methods of scientific inquiry today.

The Greek concept of human nature which identified sin with ignorance and saw education as the answer to all individual and social ills is still with us—in spite of centuries of dismal failure in its application. It utterly defeated their search for a social Utopia, and when transplanted into Roman thinking, the results were not merely equally futile but even more disastrous for reasons we may now look at briefly. And insofar as Western man still seeks to build his Utopias along the lines of the Greek idea, the same tragic error continues to repeat itself with the same disastrous results. The amazing thing is that the dialectic method, which Socrates received from the Sophists who preceded him, was passed down through Plato to Aristotle, who turned it into a system of logic so complete that it has remained essentially unaltered for two thousand years. Yet basically the whole tremendous adventure had proved a failure. As Durant has put it so effectively:

Every hypothesis had been conceived, aired, and forgotten; the universe had preserved its secret, and men had grown weary of a search in which even the most brilliant minds had failed. Aristotle had agreed with Plato on only one point—the possibility of acquiring ultimate truth. Pyrrho voiced the suspicions of his time in suggesting that it was above all on this point that they had both been mistaken.⁸

Pyrrho was born at Elis about 360 B.C. His pupil, Timan of Phlius, sent Pyrrho's opinions abroad into the world in a series of Satires:

These opinions were basically three: that certainty is unattainable, that the wise man will suspend judgment and will seek tranquillity rather than truth, and that, since all theories are probably false, one might as well accept the myths and conventions of his time and place. Neither the senses nor reason can give us sure knowledge: the senses distort the object in perceiving it and reason is merely the sophist servant of desire, i.e., "the plaything of bias."⁹

There are no certainties: the same gods exist or do not exist, according to the different nations of mankind. Indeed, *nothing* is quite true. Even life is an uncertain good. Such broadness of mind, which today we seem to feel must be applauded, had the logical effect of leading to complete mental confusion.

8. Durant, Will, *The Life of Greece*, Part II in *The Story of Civilization*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1939, p.642.

9. *Ibid.*

Arcesilaus, one of the followers of Plato, introduced complete skepticism into the thought of his day by setting up shop for himself and lecturing one morning for one opinion and the next morning against it, proving each so well as to destroy them both!

But Aristotle had a *special* part to play in this stream of influence, due to the fact that he became a tutor of Alexander the Great.

Alexander the Great (ruled 336-323 B.C.)

In a work that has become a classic of its kind, Edward S. Creasy, speaking of the influence of Alexander on subsequent human history, observed:

The lasting importance of Alexander's conquest is to be estimated, not by the duration of his own life and empire, or even by the duration of the kingdoms which his Generals after his death formed out of the fragments of that mighty dominion. In every region of the world that he traversed Alexander planted Greek settlements and founded cities in the populations of which the Greek element at once asserted its preponderance [...].

Such was the ascendancy of the Greek genius, so wonderfully comprehensive and assimilating was the cultivation which it introduced, that within thirty years after Alexander crossed the Hellespont, the Greek language was spoken in every country from the shores of the Aegean to the Indus and throughout Egypt—not, indeed, wholly to the extirpation of the native dialects, but it became the language of every court, of all literature, of every judicial and political function, and formed a medium of communication among the many myriads of mankind inhabiting these large portions of the Old World [...].

The infinite value of this to humanity from the highest and holiest point of view has often been pointed out, and the workings of the finger of Providence have been gratefully recognized by those who have observed how the early growth and progress of Christianity were aided by the diffusion of the Greek language and civilization throughout Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, which had been caused by the Macedonian conquest of the East.¹⁰

It is almost impossible to overestimate the importance of Alexander's conquests as a catalyst to prepare the world for the coming of the Lord. It is equally important to bear in mind that he came upon the stage of history at the very height of the great Greek intellectual adventure, for he had Aristotle as his tutor. But it is no less important to remember that what he conveyed to the rest of the world in terms of Greek thought was not so much a finished system of philosophy which had discovered at long last answers to the most profound questions which trouble men (questions regarding personal significance, the

10. Creasy, Edward S., *Decisive Battles of the World*, Volume X in *The World's Great Classics*, Colonial Press, New York, 1900, pp. 61-62.

meaning of life, human destiny, and the nature of God), but rather a spirit of openness and doubt. It was a spirit of openness to new ideas which laid aside the narrow-minded and highly localized religious views that had hitherto characterized the Middle East, where every nation had its own gods and priestly rituals and rigid orthodoxies. But it was also a spirit of doubt which in the end replaced all the old assurances and certainties that had half-satisfied man's religious instincts in the past. Alexander destroyed this religious insularity, not by encouraging disrespect for the old ways and the old deities, but by spreading abroad a spirit of tolerance for new ideas and new philosophies of life.

Alexander drew together the East and the West in an entirely new way by an amalgamation of populations: not by uprooting people as the Assyrian and Babylonian monarchs had done, but by inviting the colonization of each new conquered region by those from other regions previously within his jurisdiction. There came about an extraordinary mixing of the races as a consequence. Through the dissemination of Greek as a common tongue—as Durant has put it—"a cultural unity was now established which lasted in the eastern Mediterranean for almost a thousand years. All educated men learned Greek as the common medium of diplomacy, literature and science."¹¹ A book written in Greek could be understood anywhere in the Middle East or around the Mediterranean Sea by anyone who could read; a cursive script developed and became more or less standardized, replacing the multitude of different orthographies that previously existed.

The unification of this world, especially during the time of the Roman Empire, made travel possible both for business and for pleasure. The enormous number of slaves who flooded the market also allowed the mass production of books. One educated slave would read aloud to twenty others, who would transcribe his words and thus multiply copies of the great works of antiquity, until libraries both private and public became almost commonplace. It has been said that the facilities for education were actually more widespread from around 200 B.C. onward than they were in 1850 A.D.¹² Even newspapers, likewise transcribed by hand by slaves, came to be published, thus making possible the wide dissemination of news. One daily paper was published in Rome, called *Acta Diurna*, i.e., "Daily News."¹³ The papyri show us how common writing was, even among ordinary folk; and Romans of any distinction either had their sons educated by Greeks who not long ago had been slaves, or by sending them to the University of Athens, or Antioch or Tarsus and elsewhere. Both Cicero and Horace were thus educated. The Roman conquests extended the influence that Alexander had initiated, because of the extraordinary number of slaves on the market, especially during the period of Augustus and his successors. The peoples whom they conquered were sold into slavery, and a very large number of these people were better educated than those who purchased them. Such slaves often became the tutors of their masters and their children. The numbers of individuals involved are extraordinary.¹⁴ Ten thousand might be sold in a single day in Rome. Caesar actually sold 63,000 Gauls on a single occasion. In

11. Durant, Will, *The Life of Greece*, Part II in *The Story of Civilization*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1939, p.600.

12. Angus, S., *The Environment of Early Christianity*, Duckworth, London, 1914, p.15 footnote.

13. *Ibid.*, p.16.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 38.

Athens there were 400,000 slaves to 20,000 free men. In Rome there were probably 650,000 slaves at least, and it is estimated that there were more than 60,000,000 slaves in the Empire. Augustus himself personally left over 4,000 slaves in his will! Since Eastern slaves tended to be more educated than their masters, under the Romans such men had the opportunity of bettering themselves and often purchased their freedom. Hundreds of thousands did not achieve this desirable goal, of course, and their lot was truly appalling, since they had no status of *any* kind. They were merely "things" and were fed to beasts to entertain the populace with as little thought as men fed scraps of meat to their dogs. Yet those who were educated were in sufficient numbers that they effectively prepared the way (by educating the children of wealthier Romans) for the dissemination of Greek culture and the preparation of a seedbed for the literature of the New Testament. The publishing of books became so common that the multiplication and spread of the Gospels and Epistles could actually be taken for granted and could occur remarkably quickly.

Durant points this out:

The stream of books now swelled to proportions unknown before [...]. In the book shops that crowded a district called Argiletum [...] impecunious bibliophiles furtively read snatches of the books they could not buy. Placards on the walls announced new titles and their cost [...]. Books were exported to all parts of the Empire or were published simultaneously in Rome, Lyons, Athens and Alexandria. The Roman author, Martial, was pleased to learn that he was bought and sold in Britain [...].¹⁵

One of the greatest of all libraries was that founded by Ptolemy in Alexandria. It is probable that there were over a half-million volumes in its holdings. Polybius tells us that libraries were quite common in the second century B.C.¹⁶ Augustus himself established two libraries in Rome.

Another significant effect of Alexander's conquest – an effect not nearly so evident in the Roman conquests which came later – was the liberation of the colossal fortunes hoarded by oriental despots, and their release as productive wealth and as a means of establishing a leisure class which became patron of the arts. Many of these patrons travelled widely, and indeed, cosmopolitanism reached its height during the time of the Empire. As wealthy men may travel in style today, so they travelled then in safety and over established routes. And as they travelled, many of them read – like the modern traveller on plane or train. So was the eunuch travelling and reading, whom Philip led to the Lord (Acts 8:28). Numerous bodyguards were not required. Those who carried the gospel could walk or ride or travel by boat with every assurance of reaching their destination. And Paul could, with confidence, convey money from one city to another, or have a friend bring him books and parchments from some distant town.

15. Durant, Will, *Caesar and Christ*, Part III of *The Story of Civilization*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1944, p.234.

16. Angus, S., *The Environment of Early Christianity*, Duckworth, London, 1914, p.18.

Free speech seems to have been permitted everywhere, and oratory was always praised.¹⁷ In addition, the cynics who formed one division of the Stoics of Socrates' time seem to have made popular a kind of preaching ministry as they wandered from place to place, challenging the artificiality of their own culture. In spite of what one might suppose to the contrary, there was a great tolerance in religious matters. Only later, when the republic had become the Empire and the authority of the Senate usurped by autocratic individuals like Augustus (63 B.C.-A.D. 14), did it become dangerous to have personal opinions in such matters—and even then the danger existed for the most part in the larger cities. In the country and in the provinces there was still much tolerance and openness toward new ideas.

Yet for all this exchange of ideas and freedom of thought, there were no certainties about the great issues of life. It was a time of great disillusionment and pessimism. The scholar had replaced the prophet; reason had taken the place of revelation. As a consequence, morality probably reached the lowest ebb it has ever reached among people who were otherwise civilized. Hope was virtually non-existent. The solution sought by those representing the old nobility of the republic was almost universally accepted as suicide. And for the rest of the population, the innumerable multitude of men without faith or money or education or any kind of personal integrity or freedom, it was to live like animals, demanding bread for life, and an endless round of circuses to help them forget it. Each new spectacle dulled their senses until they urged the authorities to even more desperate attempts at satisfying their hunger for thrills and excitement. Whole battles were re-enacted in the arenas in which men slaughtered each other by the thousands. So removed from any moral sense was to the religious sentiment of the day that the greatest massacres were reserved for the hungry populace on *religious* holidays.¹⁸ And the best seats, the front seats, were reserved for the holiest vestal virgins. Angus remarked:

In studying the religious life of the Graeco-Roman period one is first struck by its religious destitution and by the earnest striving after a new faith.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ could not have come at a better time to find men in a serious mood [...] A crisis in religious life had occurred when the idea of a strictly local god was shattered and with it the traditional culture and the national faith.¹⁹

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

18. *Ibid.*, p.43. "Gladiatorial games were introduced 264 B.C. under the pretext of religion: they were defended as a means of sustaining the military spirit, like duels in Germany. Gladiatorial shows were given at the public games and at the banquets of the rich. The combatants were slaves, criminals or captives; later even freemen entered the arena, so great was the glory of successful combat. Exhibitors vied with each other in the numbers exposed to slaughter. Caesar put 320 pairs up at once; Agrippa caused 700 pairs to fight in one day at Berytus; under Augustus 10,000 fought; Titus, 'the darling of the human race,' put up 3000; Trajan amused Rome for 123 days by exhibiting 10,000 captives in mutual slaughter. Rome's holiest vestals had seats of honour in the arena. Claudius liked to witness the contortions of the young gladiators."

19. *Ibid.*, p.68.

In a curious way, it came about that the morality of the gods became lower than that of the worshippers. Thus religious faith, *per se*, ceased to have any potent influence on moral behaviour. Not every man was thus degraded, however, and not infrequently one sees in the literature of the day a growing sense of hope that there might yet come by some process of incarnation some Great One who would right wrongs, who would provide certainties where there were none, who would show men how to live and what to live for, and who would rule the world in righteousness and restore the old ways. In Virgil, both in the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*, we meet with a conception of a Messiah.²⁰ There is no difficulty in supposing that he derived these beliefs from an Eastern source, either from a Greek version of Isaiah, perhaps, or from the Jewish Sibylline Books. The Romans could hardly have had so much to do with Syria from the second century B.C. onward without learning something of Jewish messianic hopes. Moreover, in the library at Alexandria was a copy of the Old Testament in Greek written specifically at the request of Ptolemy and supposedly produced by seventy or seventy-two Jewish scholars, whence its name "the Septuagint." According to Tacitus, the majority of the Jews were persuaded that the time was drawing near for the Orient to get the upper hand again and that from Judea should come the future ruler of the world; Suetonius wrote that an ancient and persistent idea was circulating that the rulers of the world in the future should arise from Judea. There is no question that Cicero strongly believed in a Messiah who would put the world straight, a belief which he almost certainly obtained from well-to-do Jewish friends who formed part of the community in Rome.

Certainly the stage was being set around the Mediterranean. It remains only to be seen what had been happening during these years to the East, in India.

The Rise of Philosophy in India

Europe has drawn its inspiration from west of Mesopotamia and owes very little to the culture of India and the Far East. From Babylonia, via the Sumerians, we derived much of our original technology; from Palestine, our spiritual heritage; from Greece, our philosophical insights; and from Rome, much of our legal and administrative expertise. We are apt to suppose that to the east of Mesopotamia little happened either in the realm of technology or philosophy. Actually a great deal happened.

In China, technology followed a course of development which would astound most Western readers if they but knew the levels of sophistication which it achieved while we, for our part, were still barely civilized.²¹ But the Chinese did not engage in philosophy in the true sense of the word. They were intensely practical, and the idea of pursuing truth for its own sake did not appeal to them.

20. Messianic hope: Taylor Caldwell, in her masterly study of Cicero under the title *Pillar of Iron* (Doubleday, New York, 1965), presents an intriguing and quite accurate picture of how widespread this hope was among educated Gentiles. See also S. Angus, *The Environment of Early Christianity*, Duckworth, London, 1914, pp. 137-38, for a discussion of this point.

21. Chinese technology: for a useful and fairly detailed study of this, see A. C. Custance, "The Technology of Hamitic People," Part IV, "The Part Played by Shem, Ham and Japheth in Subsequent World History" (chapter 3), and "A Christian World View: The Framework of History" (chapters 4 and 5), Part V, all in *Noah's Three Sons*, vol. I of *The Doorway Papers*.

They loved wisdom only in a canny sort of way, as an aid to personal success or social acceptance or political advancement.

The people of India, however, had a natural philosophical bent which engaged them in contemplation of the deepest and least immediately practical mysteries of life.²² They reflected upon the nature of the gods and the problem of evil and human destiny, subjects which interested the Chinese scarcely at all. But unlike the Chinese, the people of India were virtually without any drive for technological improvement beyond barely getting by.

Hence it came about that neither in China nor in India did "science" arise, for science results only from the application of truly philosophical speculation to a sophisticated technology. Philosophy and technology must be married before science can emerge.²³ Thus Western culture, which was the child of such a wedding, advanced so remarkably as to cast the philosophical achievements of India and the technological achievements of China into almost total shade. We grow up, for the most part, with little or no awareness of the Indian powers of philosophical penetration on the one hand, or the Chinese capacity for invention on the other. Only in comparatively recent times has this awareness begun to stir, especially in relation to ancient Chinese civilization, largely as a consequence of Needham's massive—one might say, encyclopaedic—work on the subject, in process of publication by the Cambridge University Press.²⁴

It is the philosophy of India, however, that concerns us here, and more particularly that part of it which came into being during these same silent centuries in which we have traced very briefly the course of Greek and Roman philosophical development.

As the striking resemblances among the Aryan languages admitted little doubt that they have all sprung from one source, so the religions of the various branches of the Aryan race appear to have had at one time a common faith.²⁵ It is generally agreed that the chief deity, "the God of Heaven," was acknowledged by the Greeks, Romans, and Hindus to be wise, powerful, good, and supreme. Moreover, He bore a kind of relationship to the human race which is best described by the title "Heavenly Father." The people of India derived their religious faith initially from Persia and with it a profound involvement and concern for the great problem of evil, the problem of human suffering. Indeed, Hindu philosophers were even more specifically engrossed, not so much in the problem of suffering, as in the problem of *undeserved* suffering. Their whole object was to find some way of mitigating human tragedy by giving meaning and value to grief and pain. According to Maritain, they went astray at the very outset, being misled by the dualism of Zoroaster which came to them from Persia.²⁶ It led them to suppose that there was no escape from evil, no possibility of a heaven of bliss hereafter, no ultimate triumph of good over evil. And so they sought,

22. Indian philosophy: see specifically A. C. Custance, "The Part Played by Shem, Ham, and Japheth in Subsequent World History," chapter 3 in Part I, and "A Christian World View: The Framework of History," chapter 4 in Part V, all in *Noah's Three Sons*, vol. I of The Doorway Papers.

23. The emergence of science: see A. C. Custance, "A Christian World View: The Framework of History," chapter 4 in Part V in *Noah's Three Sons*, vol. I of The Doorway Papers.

24. Needham, Joseph, *Science and Civilization of China*, Cambridge University Press, 1954 and ff.

25. On this see A. C. Custance, "Primitive Monotheism", Part II in *Evolution or Creation?* vol. IV of The Doorway Papers and "The Trinity in the Old Testament", Part V in *The Virgin Birth and The Incarnation*, vol. V of The Doorway Papers.

26. Maritain, Jacques, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, Sheed and Ward, New York, 1955, p.43.

instead, to find means of accepting evil in such a way that it no longer proved an insupportable burden to the human heart and mind.

About 500 B.C. an Indian philosopher named Guatama, later to be named Buddha (which means "the enlightened one"), spent a lifetime reflecting upon the problem of how man could find peace in the face of inescapable evil both within himself and in the universe. Having no revelation of God to guide him such as exists in the Old Testament, he became wholly dependent upon his own intellect and powers of reason. To him the answer to the enigma of suffering was not to be sought in any appeal to a Saviour-God, but rather by finding a way of reaching such a state of abnegation of human desire in any form that the soul ceases to have any real selfhood of its own with which to react to the hurts of life. The objective was to annihilate individuality.

Man should seek, Gautama held, so to sublimate his own will that by the end of his life there would be no part of his self left to suffer. Since such a state was exceedingly difficult to achieve wholly within a single lifetime, the individual was almost certain to die with a residuum of individuality still remaining. The sufferer was therefore destined to be reincarnated and to begin a new existence with that residuum. If through that second life he was less successful in reducing what remained of self, he might enter a third life with even more—and as a consequence, be more subject to the pain of living than he had been two lives ago. The object was so to live that in each subsequent life the self would be progressively reduced until the final goal was reached in which it ceased altogether. In some mystical way such a soul was re-absorbed into the universe in such a form or state as to be totally immune to further suffering. Perfection was to be achieved by annihilation of the individual as such. This was Nirvana.

To us this seems a terribly pessimistic view of life. Gandhi himself said, "I do not want to be re-born."²⁷ The philosopher Bhartri-hari said: "Everything on earth gives cause for fear, and the only freedom from fear is to be found in the renunciation of all desire."²⁸ Thus Indian philosophy, which started centuries before Buddha with a concept of God as the "God of Light," ended up first ignoring His existence and then denying it. The search for truth unguided by revelation led to a complete pessimism and even the denial of the worth of existence itself.

The Vedas which originated with a hardy Aryan race to the north were full of optimism. But Buddha, representing the same racial stock five hundred years later, denied even the value of life. Some centuries later still, the *Puranas* presented a view of life as totally pessimistic as it seems possible for man to conceive. Philosophy unguided by revelation led Rome into the same pessimism.

When God is publicly silent and no longer steps in to correct man's unaided reasonings about his own nature and destiny and relationship with Himself, then hope decays in human society as a whole. And when God is privately silent, *personal* hope also weakens and decays. It is the *silence* of God that is our basic problem. When the righteous or the innocent suffer unaccountably, when the wicked prosper, when prayer is unanswered and the heavens are as brass — when God seems to be dead — then human suffering becomes totally meaningless and all we are left with is a search for escape. By Stoicism or Epicureanism in Greece,

27. Gandhi: quoted by R. Rolland, *Prophets of the New India*, New York, 1930, p.49.

28. Bhartri-hari: quoted by Will Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage*, Part I of *The Story of Civilization*, Simon and Schuster, 1935, p.517.

by suicide in Rome, by annihilation in India, men have sought to come to terms with the problem.

Human reason in India, like human reason in Greece, when left to its own resources discovered less and less about God, until He became in Greece merely Unknown (Acts 17:23), and in India denied altogether. It may not be so surprising, therefore, that a modern educational system fashioned by intellectuals having little faith in revelation but great faith in the powers of the human intellect should have produced in increasing numbers thousands of young people who have lost their way, and in their bewilderment turn again to the "wisdom" of India in their search for escape. Indian philosophy proves more congenial in that it reflects their own despair. It is not that God is dead, it is only that God is silent: and total silence is virtually the same thing.

Conclusion

Can we not discern in all this that God had a purpose in terminating a long succession of inspired writings some four hundred years before He broke through the gloom in the person of Jesus Christ as a light to lighten the Gentiles? It was that man might discover for himself how total is his inability to arrive at truth in spiritual matters, in things that concern his own destiny and his relationship to God. Only at the end of this period of silence, after that in the wisdom of God, men "by wisdom knew not God" (1 Corinthians 1:21), did God send forth His Son. He came only "in the fulness of time" (Galatians 4:4), when the time was ripe, and not before. He came when both Greeks and Romans had been reduced to erecting an altar to the Unknown God (Acts 17:23). Never will man be able to say that the Incarnation was not necessary, that man would in time have been able to "find out the Almighty unto perfection" (Job 11:7), given sufficient intellect.

But in this interval some positive gains accrued, in that the Mediterranean world was knitted together with a common language of culture (Greek), a common system of law (Roman), and with avenues of travel and transport in safety opened up throughout the Empire. The way was prepared for the great missionary endeavour of the early church, and even the ministry of travelling preachers had already been established as a precedent for the journeys of Paul and Peter and the other apostles. There is evidence, too, that the liberal policies of Alexander the Great and his successors had engineered a climate of opinion favourable to new ideas which had not existed at any time previously. Provincialism in the realm of religious faith centred in strictly national deities had been broken down. One consequence of this was that almost all men were left without any certainty in their religious faith, with the sole exception of the Jewish people, who, by reason of their study of the prophecies of Daniel regarding the near approach of the coming of their Messiah, were living in an atmosphere of great expectation. This expectation is indicated in Luke's Gospel (3:15); if we are to judge from Latin authors of that period, it was an expectancy shared by many Gentiles of a more thoughtful mien. These latter had been stimulated by the tremendous increase in the circulation of books, among which were important parts of the Jewish Scriptures. This literary activity naturally prepared the way for

the spread of the gospel in printed form. It was a time of preparation, yet it was a time in which God had remained silent.

God had remained silent, both in the sense that He gave no public manifestations of His power or presence, and in the sense that He had withheld any further revelation in written form. The records we have from the apocryphal books which treat of the experiences of the Jewish people during this interval reinforce this silence in view of the fact that despite their desperate struggle to maintain some kind of national identity and their extraordinary sacrifices in terms of loss of life, it does not appear that God intervened on their behalf even when the circumstances seemed most proper for such intervention nor were any inspired writings added to the Old Testament Scriptures.

One must conclude that God's covenant relationship with this people which had been sustained from Genesis to Malachi was for these four hundred years, suspended. And its suspension was accompanied by the cessation of any public manifestation of His presence or power.

And then, suddenly, a heavenly host announced to a few shepherds the birth of the Messiah



Chapter 2

The Silence is Broken

The moment we enter the New Testament, the silence is broken, the heavens burst into an Allelujah chorus to announce the birth of the promised Saviour-Messiah, and the covenant relationship of God with Israel which has been in abeyance for four hundred years (though by no means abrogated) is suddenly made active once again. God broke his silence gently at first. A few shepherds learned the wonderful news of the Lord's birth in a lowly stable, and a few Magi made a long journey to greet the newborn Child, only to return another way, never to be heard of again. Herod brought a time of grief to mothers in one little district in Palestine as foretold in the Old Testament, but then for thirty years there was almost complete silence again.

The time of the foretold presentation of Messiah to his people, as revealed in Daniel 9:24-27, was not yet fully come. The period of 483 years from the issuing of the edict to restore and rebuild Jerusalem had not altogether run its course, though it was so nearly over that the Jewish people were already beginning to look for the appearing of their King. Simeon and Anna, seeing the Child in the temple, had wonderful visions for the future (Luke 2:25-38), but even the miraculous events surrounding his birth were somehow kept secret from all but a few.

Then suddenly, about thirty years later, when much of the excitement of these earlier days had been lost with the passing of time, a prophet like Elijah began calling the nation to repentance.

And so John the Baptist, as the Messiah's forerunner, appeared like a prophet of old in the desert. We are told that excitement and expectancy were by now so great (Luke 3:15) that people flocked to him to be baptized "for cleansing" as a symbolic way of bearing witness to their readiness to receive their King. Yet, when Jesus presented Himself, John was guided by the Holy Spirit to identify Him only as the Lamb of God, the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, rather than as the promised Messiah of Daniel 7. This must have puzzled even John himself: but we know now, of course, that Jesus was soon to validate His title as Messiah by the signs and wonders which He was to perform in great numbers. It was clear that God had begun once more to deal directly and manifestly with His people, and John's ministry signalled the picking up again of an active covenant relationship by the revival of the prophetic office entirely in the manner of the Old Testament, as though such a one as Elijah had appeared again in Israel (John 1:21).

It is evident for a number of reasons, moreover, that while the more thoughtful of the Jewish people were clear enough in their own minds, from a

study of the Scriptures, as to the nature of the mission of the Messiah, they were not as clear about the identity of the Suffering Servant whose coming they also anticipated from Isaiah 53. They could not reconcile the two, because the King was clearly coming to rule, whereas the Suffering Servant was clearly coming to die. They knew from Scripture that the Lamb was to be cut off (Isa. 53:8), though not for Himself. But because of their rather imprecise views regarding the resurrection, they did not see that the reconciliation of these two opposite roles for a single individual was quite possible if he were to be raised from the dead to become King only after being offered as the Lamb. And it appears that even John was confused on this point.

John seems to have had no doubt that Jesus was the Lamb. But from his prison cell he subsequently sent to Him and asked Him whether He really was the promised King or whether Israel was to look for some other person to come in that capacity (Matthew 11:2ff.). Jesus sent word back to him which was full of meaning, pointing out to him that all the promises of healing and cleansing and other miraculous signs which were to accompany the Messiah according to Isaiah 35:4-6 had *manifestly* been performed by Him during the past months. Jesus did not rebuke John for his doubts, a circumstance which I think is significant and from which we may draw a further conclusion—namely, that the Lord Himself was quite aware of the problems which even believing Jews had in reconciling in His person the two roles He was playing. I think that Jesus was sympathetic to the confusion also of those who opposed Him—in spite of the virulence of their hostility—and that this sympathy was indeed the basis of His prayer from the cross that his Father would forgive them their terrible decision to put Him to death, in that they did not really know what they were doing (Luke 23:34). This fact is also noted by Paul (I Corinthians 2:8): "For had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Moreover, in Peter's second sermon after the Crucifixion he reiterated the same thing when he said, "For I am aware, brethren, that ye did it in ignorance" (Acts 3:17).

The circumstance is not without interest, because it suggests that the scribes and Pharisees and the rulers in Israel were not perhaps at first as inexcusably obstinate as we tend to assume. Three times John mentions in his Gospel that there was a division among them (7:43; 9:16; 10:19). Evidently there was not unanimity in rejection. In fact, in John 12:42 we are told that there were many believers even among the chief rulers. In John 8:28 I think the implication of the Lord's words could well be that they really did not recognize Him as Messiah, for He said that after they had crucified Him, *then* they would know that He was. Among those who may have been in the favouring party must be numbered Nicodemus, of course: but it appears that even Gamaliel tended to share Nicodemus' view. This seems reasonably clear from the record of Gamaliel's words in Acts 5:34-39, in which this very famous "teacher" in Israel tries to warn his colleagues that, while they are quite right not to accept too readily the claims of anyone as being the Messiah—several impostors having quite recently pretended to be so—yet they should not fall over backward in the opposite direction "lest perhaps they should be found even to be fighting against God." They were no longer acting in ignorance. This is quite clear from their own admission in Matthew 27:64 that if the Lord's body were stolen from the tomb by the disciples in order to be able to say that the Lord had risen from the dead, then

"the last error shall be worse than the first." Thus whatever may have been true of their reasons for rejecting their Messiah before the Crucifixion, there is no doubt that their subsequent action in persisting in their rejection of Him after Stephen's sermon was totally inexcusable and had a profound effect upon their covenant relationship with God and its attendant signs and wonders.

The signs and wonders which the Lord had been performing and to which He drew John the Baptist's attention, had begun within three or four days after John had officially presented Him as the Lamb of God. However, the *first* miracle which occurred in Cana of Galilee does not appear to have been performed in any sense as demonstration of His Messiahship. It was performed rather because of a sudden private emergency occurring at the wedding of a friend (John 2:1ff.). All the circumstances surrounding this first miracle seem to me to bear out the fact that Jesus was not performing it as part of His official presentation of His credentials as Messiah. And it is for this reason, I think, that when Mary first pointed out to Him the embarrassing situation which had occurred at the wedding, He replied to her in such a way as to indicate that it was not the proper place for Him to perform such a miracle. "Signs and wonders" were credentials—credentials not appropriately presented before their time, to the wrong audience, and entirely in a *private* situation. Credentials must always be presented to the right people, at the appropriate time, and before the proper witnesses. Hence His words (John 2:4): "Mine hour has not yet come."

We may gather from the Lord's conversation with Nicodemus in John 3, however, that other miracles had been performed in such circumstances as to fulfill the requirements in this respect. This man Nicodemus, a prominent member of the ruling class of Jews, was clearly aware of some of these miraculous activities, for he said (verse 2) "No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." From this we may conclude that the Lord had now officially begun to present Himself to the authorities as the promised Messiah by fulfilling the conditions which ranked first in their estimation as validation of that claim.

In John 5, we have a particularly good illustration of this. Here was a paralytic who apparently neither expected nor asked for healing from this gentle rabbi who engaged him in conversation. Unasked, Jesus nevertheless healed him completely. He then instructed him to take up his bed and carry it away, even though He knew it was the Sabbath day and such an activity was strictly forbidden. This whole event seems to me to have been a test case, at most a provocation, to provide opportunity for Him to present His claims officially before the authorities. I do not think one can read from verse 17 onward without concluding, as many commentators have done, that the Jewish authorities were so appalled by the audacity of His claims that they called Him to account before some kind of court. The record of His "defence" seems to have been reported for us from verses 19 to 38. There are reasons for this opposition. First, it will be noticed that throughout these verses only, the first person pronoun ("I" or "me") is not used as it is everywhere else in this chapter; every remark is recorded as though by an observer, a kind of "Jewish Hansard." In the second place, there are very subtle but highly significant references to certain events made by Daniel regarding the Messiah, not the least of which is that His name would be "Son of Man"; it happens that when the Lord refers to Himself thusly in verse 27, He quotes

precisely from the Septuagint of Daniel 7:13, which in this instance does not say "*the* Son of Man," which would have been a title, but simply "Son of Man" without the article, which therefore identifies it more as a name than a title. This is the only occasion in the New Testament in which the definite article is omitted when the phrase is used.

In such a court, when a capital offense was being tried, the accused could only be condemned "by the mouth of two witnesses or more," and accordingly he could exonerate himself only by the mouth of two witnesses or more (Deuteronomy 17:6). The offense for which Jesus was being tried was indeed a capital one, i.e., one which demanded the death sentence if guilt were established. The whole situation arose not merely because He had challenged Jewish authority by instructing the paralytic to carry his bed contrary to law, but—far more serious—because He had claimed God as His very own Father. The Jewish belief in the fatherhood of God was common. It was based on Malachi 2:10: "Have we not all one father?" Had the Lord used the words "*our* Father" rather than "*My* Father worketh hitherto," it is quite possible His only offense would have been the instructions given to the paralytic regarding his bed. What really appalled the Jewish authorities was not only His reference to God as "My Father" (John 5:17), but what must have been His emphasis on the word *My*. That this seems to have been the case is borne out by their accusation in verse 18 that He had not only broken the Sabbath, but had claimed that God was His "very own Father" (so the Greek). For them, this was too much: it was outright blasphemy.

And so the court called Jesus to account for his words. In his defence, He insisted not merely that his mission was divine, but that He Himself was divine. He claimed that He always saw eye to eye with the Father (verse 19), that *nothing* was hidden from Him (verse 20), that He would even raise the dead (verse 21), indeed, that in the great resurrection of the dead which they themselves believed in, it would be His voice which would bring them forth (verse 25). He claimed to have life in Himself (verse 26) and that it was He who would be the Judge of men when the great accounting came. He told them, in fact, that He was acting both for God and as God—an unthinkable claim for mere man.

Perhaps it was then that they demanded of Jesus two witnesses. He brought forth at once, as His first witness, John the Baptist, whom they themselves had already openly admitted. But He said He had a greater witness yet in that no matter what He decided to do, God would support Him in it. He was about to perform such signs and wonders with such implications that if his Father were not with Him, God Himself would judge Him at once. One of these signs was that He would manifestly demonstrate his power to forgive sins, a power no man could claim—only God. In Luke 5:24 He demonstrated that it was as easy for Him to say to a cripple "Thy sins be forgiven thee" as it was "Rise up and walk." The effect was precisely the same, which it could never have been unless his Father fully supported *both* claims.

Apparently the Jewish authorities were so astounded by what He was proposing that they seem to have decided that they ought not to call Him to account until the second witness had been allowed to validate Him or condemn Him. In other words, the miracles which He performed were to have a double purpose: first, the alleviation of suffering; but even more importantly, the confirmation of his claim as Messiah. Jesus again and again drew attention to this

fact, more particularly when some special feast brought the authorities to Jerusalem. Thus, in John 10:22-26, as Jesus walked in the temple of Solomon's Porch at the time of the Feast of the Dedication, the Jews came round about Him and said, "How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I told you, and ye believe not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But ye believe not [...]." In short, He was saying that although they demanded a second witness and He had constantly provided this witness, yet they still did not believe. It was clear that their preconceptions and their prejudices were not going to allow them to evaluate the evidence rightly. God had not merely *broken* His silence, He had done so and was indeed shattering it! Yet they could not understand.

As long as such signs and wonders were being performed, God was actively demonstrating the reality of his covenant relationship with Israel. Once that active covenant relationship began to be undermined because of their rejection of Him as the Lord's Messiah, however, then signs and wonders became less and less frequent. Jesus, having by his miracles brought the authorities to the point where they must decide one way or the other, it seems that these authorities became divided into two camps—on the one hand those who saw the challenge as a threat, and on the other those who saw it as a promise. It is clear that those who saw it as a threat ultimately predominated and soon reached the point where they positively decided that this so-called Messiah must be stopped. They determined to put Him to death. And as soon as that decision had been taken in the higher courts of the nation, Jesus was at once aware of it (John 11:53, 54). From that moment He performed no more signs and wonders openly, publicly, in front of them, in demonstration of his claim as their promised King. He took steps to prevent those who were directly involved in miracles from publicizing them. Matthew describes the circumstances thus (Matthew 12:14-16):

Then the Pharisees went out and held council against Him, how they might destroy Him. But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew Himself from thence and great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all; and charged them that they should not make Him known.

But there was one notable exception, the raising of Lazarus. It was his final and conclusive demonstration to them that the dead would indeed hear his voice and come forth out of their graves. No other miracle could possibly have carried as much weight in validating his claims in the eyes of the Jews. The circumstances surrounding this tremendous event are very special and require looking into.

It will be realized that the Lord had already raised two people from the dead. Again, the circumstances are highly significant. If we go back almost to the beginning of his ministry, we find Him first of all restoring to health a nobleman's son who was "*at the point of death*" (John 4:47). It appears that the next miracle of this kind was the raising of Jairus' daughter, who died *while He was on the way* to her home (Mark 5:35). The third incident is found in Luke 7:11-18, where the young man was actually *being carried out to be buried* (verse 12). We are told that when He delivered the young man alive to his mother, "there came a great fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet is risen among us' and

'God hath visited His people'" (verse 16). The news of this event spread throughout Judea and all the region roundabout in a way that the other two "raisings" had not done. Each miracle had surpassed the previous one.

Nevertheless, despite what may appear to the contrary according to our standards of judgment, the Jewish authorities may not have attributed the significance to these miracles that we might. The reason for this is that they commonly believed a man was not truly dead until the body had started to decay. This belief is shared in many parts of the world,²⁹ and it may possibly have arisen because on occasion, people who are pronounced dead revive. At any rate, because the initiation of decay was accelerated or slowed up by environmental conditions and in order to simplify the problem of making an official decision as to when "death" was certified, it was usual to state that a person was truly dead only after the third day.³⁰ The Jews could therefore have argued among themselves that neither Jairus' daughter nor the widow of Nain's son were really dead: Jesus had merely revived them; He had not actually raised the *dead*.

It is this circumstance which explains the Lord's behaviour when He heard that a beloved friend, Lazarus, was dead. In John 11 we are told, first of all, that Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus (verse 5). We know therefore that what He was about to do was not for any lack of concern when it is recorded very specifically that He stayed where He was for two more days and only after that, said to his disciples, "Let us go [...]" And so He arrived in Judea too late to anticipate Lazarus' death. There is no escaping the fact that He knew Lazarus would die before He arrived there for He said (verse 15), "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him." At this point Thomas, who realized full well that the Jews were now out to destroy Him said heroically, "Let us go, too, that we may die with Him."

By the time the Lord arrived at Bethany, which was quite near Jerusalem, He was told (though, of course, He knew it well) that Lazarus "had lain in the grave four days already" (verse 17). The rest of the story need not concern us in the present context, except to note that the body had by now begun to decay (verse 39).

And then the dead heard His voice! Had He merely said, "Come forth!" who knows how many might have risen from their graves. But He called Lazarus by name, "and he that was dead came forth." And this, to the Jewish authorities, ought surely to have been the final validation. That it wasn't so only demonstrates the extraordinary extent to which prejudice and preconception can darken our understanding.

The common people however, do not seem to have been quite so blind. Very soon afterward they welcomed Jesus triumphantly into Jerusalem, as He fulfilled the last prophetic vision concerning the Messiah: "Behold, thy King cometh, riding on an ass" (John 12:15). Yet, their adulation was soon undermined by the authorities.

The trial that followed must surely have been unique in history, since without realizing what they were doing, the rulers exactly fulfilled the conditions in the

29. Three days in the grave: see A. C. Custance, "If Adam Had Not Died", Part III in *The Virgin Birth and the Incarnation*, vol. V of The Doorway Papers, Zondervan Publishing Company.

30. Note that in Revelation 11:7-11 the two witnesses are left lying in the streets for three days before their enemies allow themselves to rejoice over them, but half a day later God raised them to life again from the dead, just when their enemies thought they were in the clear.

choosing of any sacrificial lamb which was to be slain according to the Mosaic law. Without intending to do so, they demonstrated clearly from the evidence that the Lamb of God was absolutely "without blemish" (Acts 13:28), and then they condemned Him to death. In doing this, they precisely fulfilled the purposes of God and opened the way for personal salvation for all who should avail themselves of the sacrifice of the One whom they had rejected. At the same time, rejecting their own Messiah, they committed national suicide. Yet there was no alternative: it had to be this way.

And so they were given one more opportunity to recover their identity as a chosen vessel. God graciously provided a reprieve, giving them one last chance to repent and acknowledge the Lamb of God as their Messiah after all.

This reprieve was foreshadowed in one of Jesus' parables, the parable of the man who had a fig tree planted in a vineyard and who visited this fig tree three years in succession but found no fruit on it. The owner said to the gardener: "Cut it down, why does it encumber the ground?" But the gardener said, "Leave it for one more year and let me give it some special treatment during that interval, and then if it still does not bear fruit, let it be cut down" (Luke 13:6-9).

As we have shown elsewhere, the fig tree seems to stand, in the chronicles of Israel, for her religious history — the history of her priestly caste and her temple and its ritual. The vineyard consistently depicts her political and geographical history. Within this vineyard there existed a fig tree, i.e., within the nation there existed a religious core, more particularly epitomized by the temple complex (see the paper "Three Trees and Israel's History," Part II in *Time and Eternity*, vol. VI, The Doorway Papers, Zondervan Publishing Company).

Now, as far as we know, the Lord's official ministry appears to have involved three Passovers, exclusive of the last one at which He presented Himself as the Lamb. When He was twelve years old, He visited the temple during the Passover (Luke 2:41-50), but I do not think this visit can be included as part of his official ministry since He had not yet been presented to the nation by his forerunner, John the Baptist. But after his identification by John, we find Him visiting the temple at the time of the Passover (in John 2:13-16) undoubtedly, like the owner of the vineyard, expecting to find fruit on the fig tree. What He found instead was a den of thieves. The zeal with which He cleansed the Temple on this first occasion was not without effect, because it appears that one year later, when He must certainly have visited the temple a second time, no such action was called for (John 6:4). If there was no fruit, at least it had not again become a den of thieves. But human wickedness recovers quickly after redress; upon the third occasion of His visiting the "fig tree," the old iniquitous situation was once more everywhere evident, and it became necessary to take the same remedial action and cleanse the temple afresh. This occasion followed his triumphal entry into the city after the raising of Lazarus (Matthew 21:12-17). Significantly, it was immediately after this that He cursed the *barren* fig tree (verses 18-20). Thus the owner of the vineyard had visited his fig tree for three years and found no fruit upon it: but the gardener — and in this case both the Owner of the vineyard and the Gardener were one and the same Person — determined to leave it one more year, on probation as it were.

During that probationary year, after all the events of Jesus' crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension, Peter stood up and explained to the Jewish people

in Jerusalem the true significance of those terrible days. He assured them that if they would even now repent and turn to the Lord, He would come back to earth as their glorious King and fulfill the second part of his predicted ministry, restoring to them their promised spiritual glory. Thousands of Peter's Jewish listeners, seeing the signs and wonders which accompanied the ministry of the apostles, turned to the Lord in repentance and faith, and they filled the temple with their joyful presence (Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:42).

Yet for all that, the heart of official Judaism was somehow hardened in its resolve to hold fast to the disastrous course they had embarked upon. In his preaching, Peter was at pains to point out to them (Acts 10:38) that the very miracles which had signaled the Lord's ministry from beginning to end were proof that God was with Him, that He was indeed their Messiah. But when Stephen addressed them gathered together as a kind of official body, and when he recounted to them how consistently throughout their history they had betrayed their calling, disobeyed the Lord's instructions, murdered his messengers, oppressed his people, and lived in defiance of their holy calling—at that decisive moment they refused to listen. Instead of acknowledging the truth of Stephen's message, they utterly rejected his words and, as Scripture puts it, "gnashed on him with their teeth." And with their rejection of his words went their final rejection of the Messiah in whose name he appealed to them. When in their fury they turned on him and stoned him to death, the die was cast. No longer could they plead ignorance. Stephen was the messenger whom they sent afterward saying, "We will not have this man to rule over us" (Luke 19:14), and the Lord stood to receive the first Christian martyr (Acts 7:56).

From that moment Israel was laid aside. For a while, individuals continued to enter the blameless family of God through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, which many of them had probably taken part in. But the testimony to the nation as a whole had essentially come to an end, and slowly a divine silence settled over the world as God's active covenant relationship with Israel was once more held in abeyance. The silence this time was not to last a mere four hundred years: it has already lasted for nearly two thousand.

Postscript

One of the Old Testament "signs" was the existence of men who spoke as they were directed to do so by God Himself. The very last prophetic statement uttered in Israel was made by Caiaphas. It sounded the death knell of their Messiah, but it also ended their existence as a nation. It is recorded in John 11:49-51:

Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation.



Chapter 3

Silence Again: For Nineteen Centuries

It may be wondered why, if the fig tree was now condemned to be cut down, it was not cut down immediately. For reasons which are partly discernible in Scripture, God saw fit to delay the Judgment for a period of forty years, the period from the final rejection of the renewed offer until the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Titus in A.D. 70. During this interval the performance of signs and wonders steadily declined. Miracles of healing, supernatural deliverances, dramatic and instant judgments, and the gift of tongues gradually ceased to be the commonplace events associated with the ministry of the disciples and apostles, until by the end of Acts they are either no longer recorded or they had, in fact, ceased altogether.

But just as there was a tapering off of these signs and wonders when God's covenant relationship with Israel was suspended, so as the time draws near for that covenant relationship to be revitalized again with the *return* of the Messiah, once more we begin to detect, with increasing frequency, the re-appearance of signs and wonders. This phenomenon is indeed, I believe, one of the most promising and encouraging evidences that the coming of the Lord is near again.

Let us examine this situation a little more carefully.

When the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven and was received out of their sight, the disciples returned to Jerusalem *rejoicing* (Luke 24:52). A strange reaction this was, surely, to the departing of One so dear to them and so important to them. But just before He left them, He had made a wonderful promise, the promise that they could perform signs and wonders even greater than those He had performed Himself – the fulfilment of a prophetic statement made to them earlier (Mark 16:17,18). These signs and wonders were to include healing the sick, casting out devils, and speaking with tongues. It was as though a reprieve for Israel had been granted and one last gracious effort was to be made by a tremendous public display of divine power to persuade the Jews that the Lord was indeed their Messiah.

The opening of the ministry of Peter and the other apostles must have been so astounding in its immediate impact as virtually to defy adequate record. In Acts 5:12-16 it is written:

And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people [...] (and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women) inasmuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and

laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them who were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed *every one*.

It should be remembered that these were Jews. There were no Gentile believers yet. The ministry of the apostles was still a testimony to Israel; Peter in his first sermon (Acts 2:14) specifically addressed himself to them and appealed to their Old Testament Scriptures for an explanation of the extraordinary events taking place – including the speaking in tongues as a testimony of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon men and women alike.³¹ Evidently the people who heard Peter were deeply moved by his words. When Peter said, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made this same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Messiah" (Acts 2:36), the Jews had at once asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" From that day on, signs and wonders were continually performed by the apostles with a view to turning their hesitant inquiry into firm conviction.

But something else was also happening which must have made the perceptive in Israel doubly aware of the validity of the claims these men made for their Messiah. This is the fact that men were not merely being blessed in remarkable ways, but also *punished very suddenly*. The falling of sudden judgment upon wicked men had been part of the Old Testament record. The most remarkable example was probably the fate of Korah and those who under his persuasion rebelled against the authority of Moses. The account of this event is given in simple but dramatic words in Numbers 16. When Moses knew the full circumstances of the matter, he challenged them as follows (verses 28-33):

And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind.

If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth and swallow them up with all that appertain unto them, and they go down alive into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord.

And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground craved asunder that was under them:

31. Although there is no unequivocal evidence of speaking in tongues in the Old Testament, it is sometimes argued that such an event occurred in connection with Saul (1 Samuel 10:6-9). This passage has all the earmarks of a genuine conversion experience, accompanied by anointing by the Holy Spirit. The end result was that Saul became a new man, and the overt evidence of this was in his giving vocal expression, which is termed "prophesying." It is reasonable to suppose that such prophecy would be an insufficient sign of anointing unless it involved something more than merely foretelling the future. In Acts 2:17, Peter quotes Joel 2:28f. and seems clearly to be equating the word *prophesy* in this passage with the experience of speaking in tongues which was then causing so much amazement (Acts 2:11, 12). If Saul began to speak in an unknown tongue, and if this was interpreted by the onlookers as a sign that Saul was now one of the prophets, this suggests that the prophets were known among other things as people who had upon occasion the gift of tongues.

and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, with their dwellings and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.

They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.

Thus was the authority of Moses as the Lord's spokesman demonstrated. Another example may be observed in the case of Er and Onan (Genesis 38:6-10). A similar thing happened with Peter in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, whose deaths were just as dramatic and sudden. The effect of it was that "great fear came upon all the church and upon as many as heard these things" (Acts 5:11). Later on, the apostle James, writing to the Hebrew Christians who had scattered after the first persecution began, seems to have been reflecting the same experience when he warned his readers not to grudge one against another lest they, too, be subject to the same kind of immediate and public divine condemnation: "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door" (James 5:9).

We encounter another example of instant judgment in Acts 12:20-25. Upon this occasion Herod, dressed in royal apparel and sitting on a throne, made a speech to a large number of people who had caused him some displeasure. In their anxiety to mitigate his wrath, we are told that the people gave a shout saying, "It is the voice of a god and not of a man." And "immediately the angel of the Lord smote him because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost." The acclaim must have gone to his head, and although he may not have died on the spot, he was *instantly* struck down with some terrible disease that terminated his ugly reign.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, addressing himself as James had done to the Jewish people who had been scattered, warned them that they had been witness to very many proofs that the Lord Jesus was indeed the Messiah, having seen the signs and wonders performed not only by the Lord Himself, but by the apostles afterward. Thus he wrote (Hebrews 2:3,4):

How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation which at first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him, God also bearing them witness with both signs and wonders and with diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will?

After the great sermon in Acts 2 and some notable miracles in Acts 3, Peter was called to give an account before the Sanhedrin and asked by what power or by whose authority he was doing these things. It was a turning point in the life of Israel as a nation: the authorities, rather than repenting of their former decision to crucify their own Messiah, now set themselves more determinedly than ever to justify their actions and to silence all opposition.

Some days later, Stephen made his final "presentation" on behalf of their Messiah before high priest and the council . . . and they murdered him.

From that time forward, signs and wonders began to decline. Speaking in tongues appears to have become less and less frequent, as did miracles of healing

and also dramatic and instantaneous judgments. We can trace this decline throughout the Book of Acts until, in Acts 28:25 and following, there seems to have come a terminal point in this respect. Paul said (verse 28), "Be it known therefore unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and that they will hear it." With this, the Book of Acts comes to a close, and we find no further instances of healing recorded in any of the Epistles to follow. The active covenant relationship of God with his people Israel had come to an end for the present. As a consequence, signs and wonders which were the customary demonstration of the reality of that covenant were no longer granted to them. The kingdom has been taken from them and given to the Gentiles, who will bring forth the fruits thereof until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (Romans 11:25).

But it is only for a season; for as Hosea prophesied (3:4,5):

The children of Israel shall abide many days without a *King*
and without a *Prince*, and without a *Sacrifice* [...]

Afterwards shall the children of Israel return and seek the
Lord their God and David their King, and shall fear the Lord and
His goodness in the latter days.

Let us trace now, briefly, the course of events after Israel had "sent" Stephen to heaven as their official notice of rejection, so fulfilling Luke 19:14.

In these early wonderful days, very special protection of the apostles had been granted by the Lord. When their exasperated enemies had seized them and had thrust them into the common prison, the Angel of the Lord had come by night and opened the prison doors and brought them forth so simply and so wonderfully that the whole event is recorded in only two verses (Acts 5:19, 20). The next morning they were back preaching in the temple as though nothing had happened, while the officers themselves were not even aware that their prisoners had escaped. At a later date, when Peter was imprisoned by Herod and under sentence of death the very next day, the same thing happened again. Acts 12:6-10 has the story in its remarkable detail:

Peter was sleeping between two soldiers bound with two
chains, and the keepers before the door kept the prison, and
behold the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined
in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side and raised him up,
saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself and bind on thy
sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment
about thee and follow me. And he went out and followed him;
and wist not it was true that was done by the angel, but thought
he was dreaming.

When they were past the first and second guard they came
unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city which opened to
them of its own accord: and they went out and passed on
through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

Paul also experienced a similar wonderful deliverance (Acts 16:25ff.), though he did not actually leave the prison until he had established the dignity of his own person as a Roman citizen.

Now the important thing to observe here is that such deliverances occurred only in the earlier years of the ministry of the apostles (including Paul), and they did not occur later either in Peter's case or in Paul's. Peter was martyred without deliverance and undoubtedly after some indefinite period of imprisonment. Paul shared the same fate—though in his case we *know* something of the details of his imprisonment: in short, we *know* that he was imprisoned and not miraculously set free. Why the change? Why did God at first move heaven and earth to set his witnesses free, but in the end leave them to their fate? No doubt their martyrdom was to his great glory and perhaps, at the beginning, imprisonment would have totally hindered their ministry. But in Paul's case at least, imprisonment did not have this effect. Indeed, we owe some of the great epistles to this circumstance. Yet I think there is another reason.

I believe that the answer is probably that this kind of dramatic deliverance was still one of the signs and wonders which the Jewish people needed in order to convince them individually, if not as a nation, that Jesus Christ really was what He claimed to be. Once it became apparent that nationally the Jews would not accept this testimony, then God began to turn to the Gentiles. But Jewish *believers* would probably have refused to accept the Gentiles into the commonwealth of Israel unless signs and wonders had continued as a validation first of Peter's ministry and then of Paul's ministry, demonstrating to them that this "new thing" was acceptable in the sight of God. It is clear that one of the surest and simplest signs in this connection was the gift of tongues. When Peter went to the home of Cornelius and preached the gospel to a Gentile family for the first time, "the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God" (Acts 10:44-46).

Thus it was that God accommodated signs and wonders to the need of the early Hebrew Christians in such a way that they would find it possible to accept Gentile believers as having really been brought into a similar covenant relationship with God. In view of all their background it seems likely that this was the simplest and most appropriate way in which to carry forward their understanding of the things which were beginning to happen, the transfer of the kingdom from Jew to Gentile. Moreover, since Paul was soon to become the great missionary to the Gentiles, it was necessary that some signs and wonders should become known as having accompanied *his* ministry also. There is little doubt that Paul himself had spoken with tongues as a validation of his calling (I Corinthians 14:18), and there were some striking cases of sudden judgment (Acts 13:6f.), raising of the dead (Acts 20:9-12), casting out demons (Acts 16:16-18), deliverance in prison (Acts 16:25f.), from the bite of a viper (Acts 28:3-6), and many miracles of healing (Acts 19:11, 12; 28:8, 9). Only by such shared experiences was it possible for the middle wall of partition which had hitherto rigidly divided Gentile from Jew to be broken down (Ephesians 2:14). Paul could therefore validate his own ministry to the Gentiles in front of those Hebrew Christians who must at first have had serious doubts. He refers to this when writing to the Romans (15:18, 19):

For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem, and round about Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of the Messiah.

Wherever he went, until we come to the crucial point in Acts 28, Paul still preached first to the Jewish people (Acts 13:46; 17:2, 3; 18:4). And as evidence of his propriety in then turning to the Gentiles, he could point out that the same gifts which had been granted to the Jewish Christians were now being granted by the same Holy Spirit to the Gentiles (1 Corinthians 12:1-11). Not only were the Jewish believers called upon to accept the Gentiles as having enjoyed a like experience, but the Gentiles themselves needed assurance that their experience was of the same nature as that of the Jewish believers. Assurance was needed on *both* sides. Signs and wonders served this purpose for both. Thus Paul wrote to the Gentiles (2 Corinthians 12:12) "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among *you* in all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds." The Gentiles themselves were thereby convinced that a like Christian experience was now granted to them. Once this conviction was well established, such signs and wonders were no longer essential: they were not necessarily absent entirely, but they were not essential for conviction.

As time went on, conversions among the Gentiles seemed to depend less and less upon miracle. In fact, in one place where Paul preached and performed a notable miracle, the effects of the miracle were entirely undesirable. Having healed a man at Lystra in response to faith (Acts 14:9), the local residents were at first so amazed and impressed that they tried to make Paul and his co-worker Barnabas into gods (verse 12). When Paul and Barnabas insisted that they were not gods but men like themselves, the crowd instantly became hostile, and with a little persuasion from certain Jews of Antioch and Iconium, Paul was stoned and left for dead. It seems clear from this time on that miracles no longer played the part of validation which they had when God's covenant relationship with Israel was active.

This fact is borne out in another striking way. We have spoken of the manner in which, as part of these signs and wonders, judgment had been apt to fall very suddenly upon those who, for one reason or another, were tending to undermine the testimony of the apostles to the reality of the Lord's claim for Himself. In the earlier epistles to the Gentiles, and even in the later epistles, to the Jewish brethren scattered abroad, there are a number of intimations that when those who had become members of the household of faith, and had openly declared themselves as such, fell into evil ways which brought reproach upon the name of the Lord, judgment was likely to fall upon them swiftly, especially when the apostles themselves called upon the Lord so to act. It happened, of course, with Ananias and Sapphira. This is a clear example. But there are a number of intimations: and it is worth just examining these briefly, because toward the end of his life it appears that Paul could no longer depend upon the Lord to act in judgment in the same immediate way whenever he (Paul) called upon Him to do so.

Consider the implications of 1 Corinthians 11:29, 30. Here we have a picture of the young church, some of whose members were evidently making the Communion service an occasion for irreverence, provoking Paul to write:

He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh condemnation unto himself [...] for which cause a number are weak and sickly among you and many *sleep*.

There is no doubt as to the meaning of the word *sleep*. The Lord had taken these people home. In a similar manner, James wrote to the Hebrew Christians to advise them to take upon themselves the duty of correcting the behaviour of those among them who, knowing the Lord, nevertheless were bringing reproach on His name. Thus he wrote (James 5:19, 20):

Brethren, if any of *you* do err from the truth and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turneth the sinner back from the error of his ways shall save a soul from *death*.

Not all were thus persuaded and rescued from judgment, for in 2 Peter 2-1 we read that false teachers "who privily brought in heresies which were to be condemned" by denying the *Lord that bought them*, had brought upon themselves "swift destruction."

In writing to the Christians in Rome, Paul said (Romans 8:13):

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall *live*.

I'm sure that the promise did not have reference to eternal life, but for this we certainly do not obtain by our own efforts in mortifying the deeds of the flesh. Paul was surely speaking of escaping the punishment of sudden destruction. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews was speaking in the same vein when he wrote (12:9):

Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us and we gave them reverence. Shall we not rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and *live*?

Christian behaviour may not always have been so extreme that the Lord found it necessary to act in swift judgment, for as John says (in 1 John 5:17) while "all unrighteousness is sin, there is a sin *not unto death*." Nevertheless the effect of only slight misbehaviour, while the church was still as it were an infant in stature, was sometimes such as to lead *weaker* brethren into more grievous sin, with the correspondingly greater penalty – that they were removed. Thus Paul wrote in Romans 14:14, 15:

I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself, but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy *brother* be grieved with

thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. *Destroy not him* with thy meat *for whom Christ died*.

In pagan worship it was customary to take offerings of meat or live animals to be slaughtered in reverence to the idol. The priests lived off the sale of this meat to the public, after it had been presented. In these special "market places" (referred to as "the shambles") the best meat could either be purchased or actually eaten on the spot at reduced cost. Poorer Christians apparently took advantage of this supply of cheap food in order to save money, but they thereby tended to give the impression that they were condoning the offering of sacrifices to idols. This was becoming a cause of stumbling to younger Christians. Whereupon Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 8:10, 11):

For if any man see thee who has knowledge sit at meat in an idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak be emboldened to eat these things which are offered to idols; and through thy knowledge [i.e., you knowing what you are doing] shall the weak *brother* perish *for whom Christ died*?

Much more serious seems to have been the tendency for the Christian community in Corinth, that most wanton and morally degraded of all cities, to accept the low standards of behaviour of the community and, even worse, to allow themselves still greater liberties – perhaps on the grounds that they were not under the law. Paul wrote to them (1 Corinthians 5:1-5):

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and a kind of fornication which is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And you are puffed up and have not rather mourned that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you [...].

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such an one unto Satan *for the destruction of the flesh* that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have no way of knowing precisely how soon sudden acts of judgment began to become less frequent. Looking at the date of the epistles which contain such references as these, one has the feeling that later epistles refer to such judgments rather as possibilities than certainties: they seem to remain as certainties rather longer in the epistles to the Hebrew Christians, and perhaps this is not so surprising. Among Gentiles on the whole, threats of sudden destruction seem seldom to have had the force of persuasion that signs and wonders had with the Jewish people. As Paul said, in effect, the Jews seek a sign: the Greek-speaking Gentiles are more concerned with rationalization (1 Corinthians 1:22).

At any rate, it seems to me that we do have some evidence that even this sign of "sudden judgment" was beginning to pass out of the church's experience in the later epistles of Paul. As is apparent from the above references, Paul was quite

assured in his own mind that if he but handed over some particularly disobedient individual to Satan for the destruction of the body as a warning, God would honour his action. But we find in 1 Timothy 1:19, 20 that he was concerned with some who were by their behaviour and persuasive powers leading weaker Christians to make "shipwreck" of their faith, "of whom were Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan," as he says. But one year later, Alexander at least was still at large, unhindered in his destructive activities (2 Timothy 4:14, 15). This would be about A.D. 66. Thirty years later, even the small remaining groups of Hebrew Christians were no longer experiencing such sudden judgments, if we are to be guided by the implications of 3 John 9-11, where the behaviour of some members of local churches was atrocious, and yet unchecked by any divine intervention. Even Paul's ministry of healing seems to have failed toward the end: as in the case of Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:27) and of Trophimus (2 Timothy 4:20).

It would seem, therefore, that little by little all the signs and wonders which marked the ministry of the Lord and the early witness of the apostles – miraculous healings, speaking in tongues, extraordinary deliverances, and sudden judgments – were becoming rare indeed. They had persisted until the Jewish authorities had finally made their choice and rejected their Messiah, and they continued with less and less frequency once the transition had been made from an exclusively Jewish church to a predominantly Gentile one. We do not know positively that miracles became less common, nor speaking in tongues: we can only judge by the fact that they receive almost no mention in the later epistles. A great "silence" gradually descended upon the world in so far as any *public* manifestation of divine power and interference in human affairs was concerned. Indeed, the silence seems all too frequently to pertain now even in the matter of the experience of the individual, and the fact proves to be a stumbling block in the minds of many thoughtful people.

Sir Robert Anderson has written eloquently on this circumstance. He observed:

If in the days of His humiliation, a poor crippled child had been brought into His presence, He would have healed it. And I am assured that His power is greater now than it was when He sojourned on earth and that He is still as near to us as He then was.

But when I bring this to a practical test, it fails [...] this poor afflicted child must remain a cripple. I dare not say He cannot heal my child but it is clear He *will* not.³²

In the days of his presence on earth in Palestine, geographical and physical barriers prevented many from coming to Him for healing. On one occasion only by breaking up the roof could He be reached (Mark 2:1-5). So there were limitations to his ministry. But now the situation is entirely different. He said, "Lo, I am with you even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). He is everywhere now. And one would therefore suppose that miracles ought to be occurring

32. Anderson, Sir Robert, *The Silence of God*, Pickering and Inglis, London, 11th edition, no date, p.24.

everywhere in the world with even greater frequency than ever. But we meet with silence for the most part.

Men may intellectually reject the concept of God as being contrary to reason, but *emotionally* men are more likely to reject the concept of God because, did He exist, He could not but act on man's behalf in the face of many of the tragedies of life. To quote Anderson once again, writing in the last century:

If it were merely on behalf of this or that individual that God failed to interfere, or on one occasion or another, belief in His infinite wisdom and goodness ought to check our murmurings and soothe our fears. And, further, if as in the days of the Patriarchs even a whole generation passed away without His once declaring Himself, faith might glance back and hope look forward amidst heart searchings for the cause of His silence. But what confronts us is the fact, explain it how we may, that for eighteen centuries, the world has never witnessed a public manifestation of His presence or His power.³³

We may not entirely agree with Anderson that the world has witnessed no public manifestation of His power. There have been events affecting the lives of thousands of people which seemed to those who witnessed them to have the stamp of divine Providence upon them: the unusual dead calm of the English Channel, for example, during the last war when it came time to recover the Allied Forces from Europe after the first great setback. But the millions of Jews and great numbers of their sympathizers who were put to death without mercy during the same war shrink these few possible examples of Providence into comparative significance. In the presence of the stern and dismal facts of history, the expectancy of miracle in the days of the early church had faded away, for God seems to have become passive and often unavailable to such an extent that to many He is for all practical purposes non-existent. Because of the absence of divine activity in a *manifest* way which all men can see, God appears indeed to be dead. Even the most earnest believer must wonder sometimes why God is so silent.

One cannot help but mark the contrast even in Acts between the early and the later chapters. Measured by years, the total period embraced is comparatively brief: but in terms of divine intervention, the end of Acts seems to belong to a different age from the beginning.

It is so easy to suppose that because the child of God is so highly favoured, so very specially the object of the Father's concern, if he will only walk in the Lord's way he will always prosper and be preserved from harm and delivered in distress. The Lord often does deliver, and as Sir Robert Anderson said, He always *can*. But certainly He does not always do so. As Gresham Machen said, after quoting Paul's triumphant cry, "If God be for us, who can be against us?":

These words constitute a veritable battle cry of faith; they might have served as the motto for countless heroic deeds.

³³. *Ibid.*, p.9.

Trusting in the God of Israel, men fought mighty battles and won glorious victories; the Lord of hosts is a powerful ally.

Jonathan thought so, when he and his armour-bearer made that foolhardy attempt upon a garrison of the Philistines. "There is no restraint to the Lord," he said, "to save by many or by few." David thought so, with his five smooth stones from the brook and his great boasting adversary. "Thou comest to me," he said, "with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel." Elisha thought so, when he and his servant were shut up in Dothan. The Syrians had sought to take his life; he had revealed their plans to the king of Israel; and at last they had caught him fair. When the servant of the prophet arose in the morning, the city was all surrounded by the Syrian hosts. "Alas, my master," he said, "how shall we do?" But the prophet was not dismayed. "Open his eyes," he said, "that he may see." And the Lord opened his eyes, and behold the hills were covered not only by the Syrian armies, but also by the fiery horses and chariots of God's protecting care. The apostles thought that God was a powerful ally, when they testified in the council of the Jews: "We must obey God rather than men." Luther thought so on that memorable day when he stood before kings and princes, and said—in substance if not in word—"Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God help me. Amen."

In these great moments of history the hand of God was revealed. But alas, the thing is not always so plain. Many prophets as true as Elisha have been surrounded by the armies of the aliens, and no fiery horses and chariots ever put in an appearance; five smooth stones from the brook, even when slung bravely in the name of the Lord of hosts, are not always able to cope with modern artillery; many men of God as bold as Peter, as sturdy as Luther have testified faithfully to the truth, and, being unprotected by the favour of the people or by wise Gamaliels or by friendly Electors of Saxony, have gone to the stake for their pains. Nor does it always seem to be true that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. Persecution sometimes seems to be crowned with a tragic success. As when pure religion by the use of physical weapons was largely stamped out of Italy and Spain and France, so often the blood of the martyrs seems to be shed in vain. What is true, moreover, in the large arena of history is also true in our workaday lives. Sometimes, in times of great spiritual crisis, the hand of God is revealed; there has been a signal answer to prayer; deliverance has come in wondrous ways when expected least. But at other times prayer just as earnest seems to go unanswered, and faith seems set at naught.³⁴

34. Machen, J. Gresham, *What Is Faith?*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1946, pp.66f.

It is proper for the child of God to accept this fact, to follow Job's example, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him!" (Job 13:15). This is surely triumph indeed. The Lord told his disciples that two sparrows were sold for far less than a single cent! Yet "not one of them falls to the ground without your Father" (Matthew 10:29). Not one of these tiny creatures whose value seems so small falls in its flight without what? Without our heavenly Father *knowing* it, or without our heavenly Father *permitting* it? Both surely. He must *know*. He could *prevent*. This much is absolutely certain. But evidently there are times when He doesn't prevent. Can we trust Him for ourselves—even when we fall to the ground? Throughout the intervening centuries since these words were spoken, countless numbers of the Lord's children have learned that God may allow us to fall to the ground while still asking us to trust Him. It is a hard, hard lesson.

This silence has persisted for almost two thousand years, and its otherwise unaccountableness has often been one of the most distressing problems for Christian philosophers. "When they call, I will answer" has been in some way and to a very large extent replaced by "The heavens shall be as brass". Privately, the life of the believer may be as filled with divine interferences as any chapter of the Old Testament or the Gospels, but *publicly*, even in Christian nations or those nations which at times in their history have some right to call themselves such, the display of God's power in the performance of miracles, of healings, of deliverance, of sudden judgment, of speaking in tongues has been absent. I do not mean that men have not been wonderfully saved and that individual Christians have not had marvellous experiences of the Lord's providential care throughout these silent centuries. What I do mean is that millions have been persecuted and slaughtered and languished in prison: and millions of innocent people—men, women, and children—have suffered untold agonies: yet, while the wicked have gone unpunished, God has seemingly been deaf to their cry. It is one of the great problems of the church age, that God should remain apparently unmoved by human suffering.

Perhaps a little light, then, is shed on this tremendous problem in view of what has been said thus far about the special covenant relationship which God established with Israel. As we have already seen, it was prophesied that Israel should be for many days with neither priest nor king, cut off from God in a very special way because of their rejection of the Messiah. It is during this time of suspended covenant relationship that such signs and wonders are in abeyance. It is a striking thing that forty years elapsed between their final rejection of the Lord by the martyrdom of Stephen and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Titus.

The number *forty* in Scripture represents a time of suspended judgment. Jonah warned Nineveh it would be destroyed in forty days (Jonah 2:4). The wilderness wanderings occupied forty years (Numbers 32:13), and Jeremiah was called to warn the Jews of the coming destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar just forty years before the blow fell. It seems to me that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews was aware that this time of pending judgment was nearly come for the nation in Palestine. He could speak of the daily sacrifices still being offered in the temple (Hebrews 7:27; 10:11), so we must assume that the veil of the temple which had been rent when the Lord died (Matthew 27:51) had in the meantime been repaired again. Nevertheless he pointed out that the old order was just about to

come to an end, that the order which was even then decaying and waxing old was about ready to vanish (Hebrews 8:13). It is not without significance that the Book of Acts appears to end only a few years before this Judgment overtook the Holy City and the temple. This marked, in short, the point at which God imposed upon Himself the virtually complete silence which He has since maintained with respect to "signs and wonders".

It marked something else also. With the demolishing of the temple and the practical destruction of Judaism in Palestine, the Hebrew tongue, the language of the Old Testament, became virtually a *dead* language. With the death of the Hebrew tongue, the whole culture which went with it passed into abeyance. With its passing, the basis of the Old Testament covenant ceased to have any spiritual meaning. Such is the close bond between culture and language.

With the passing of the temple and the priesthood and an order of worship which had, in a real sense, localized God as a national deity in much the same way that the Gentile nations had localized their gods previously, the confining nationalism of Judaism was finally destroyed. In a similar way Alexander had broken down the religious nationalism of the Gentile world; only he had done it more peaceably. For Israel, due to their strong attachments to Jerusalem and the temple, a more drastic remedy had been required.

For some reason, the Gentile nations, unlike the Jews, never seemed to have asked for any very manifest demonstrations of the reality of their gods. On the other hand, it is clear that Israel's history had so profoundly influenced the *Jews* in their thinking that signs and wonders had become the hallmark of the reality of their covenant with the Lord. This was never true of the Gentiles. We may suppose that the performance of miracles would be a strong argument to unbelievers at the present time, but experience seems to show that this is not really the case. If any clear demonstration of this should be required, it is surely to be found in the events predicted in the Book of Revelation for the end of the present age. For here we read, especially in chapter 11, of all kinds of signs and wonders more dramatic and more awesome even than those which at times the children of Israel had witnessed, and yet the record foretells that the nations do not repent. I think we must assume that although there is every appearance that the silence of God in the face of human suffering allows men to confirm themselves in their unbelief, if God were habitually to manifest Himself as He did in earlier days the effect would not be to lessen unbelief but only to harden it. The greater the display, the more determined would be their unbelief, as the events in the Book of Revelation seem to show.

Prospect?

But now it is difficult to read contemporary reports of the current "religious scene" without becoming aware of the increased interest in and renewal of some of these signs and wonders again. We not only hear more and more frequently of a recurrence of the phenomenon of speaking in tongues, but we also begin to see the re-appearance of faith-healing on a new scale. Here and there through the centuries there have been reports of miraculous healings, and particular places have gained notoriety by reason of them—Lourdes, for example. There can be little doubt that there is *some* truth in these claims, whatever way we may choose

to account for them. By and large, however, the few individuals who were healed among the many who went, were deliberately seeking healing for themselves. What has been happening more recently is that people are now being healed who were not specifically seeking healing, who by their own testimony did not even have faith, and who in not a few instances, for all their being healed, still did not at once become believers. This is a circumstance that has been authenticated a great number of times in the case of the ministry of the late Kathryn Kuhlman.³⁵ It is therefore a recurrence of something which must have been comparatively common when our Lord was present on earth: for example, only one of the ten lepers is ever heard of again and there is no reason to assume the others actually took the Lord as Saviour. The paralytic beside the Pool of Siloam did not even recognize the Lord at first when He found him in the temple. A careful reading of a number of these New Testament healings will show that men were healed sometimes without any requirement that they believe, and they went away healed without any expression of personal faith. Furthermore, we are reading now quite frequently of people who have been healed in their own homes, caught almost unawares, whose experience remarkably parallels some of the New Testament instances.

In the matter of speaking in tongues – although there is much controversy still as to the meaning of it—it can hardly be doubted that the phenomenon superficially parallels the experience of the early church in Acts subsequent to Pentecost, especially at Corinth. The parallelism suggests that it was a real phenomenon, whatever it means. And coupled with the increase in healings, it may surely be taken as an evidence that signs and wonders are beginning once more to be displayed as public manifestations of the reality of God's power and presence. Could it be that the purpose is to warn the Jewish people that the time of their rejection is drawing to a close? Could it be that it is an invitation to them to look once more to their own Scriptures, and to study the times and the seasons, for the coming of their Messiah again may be drawing nigh?

What a wonderful thing it would be if we who know the Lord should see these signs, and perhaps some of the other signs that were once part of God's witness to Israel, being fulfilled increasingly in order to advise us that we should begin to prepare ourselves for the second coming of our Lord – in the same way Israel was told by John the Baptist to prepare themselves for His first coming.

There is no question that just before Jesus' return there will be a tremendous recurrence of signs and wonders. Revelation 11 is a striking illustration of this, foretelling as it does great judgments and mighty spectacles in the sky and on the earth such as man has never witnessed in the past. Yet characteristically, it seems as though the Gentiles will be largely unmoved by them all – terrified perhaps, but not driven to repentance or faith. Signs and wonders seldom have engendered saving faith among *Gentiles*. They have only confirmed or encouraged a faith that was already alive. For Israel as God's special people, they served only to validate the constancy and reality of his covenant relationship with the nation as a whole. Whenever that relationship has been in abeyance, they have ceased. This, I believe, accounts for God's silences.

The first period of silence lasted only 400 years. Perhaps this was all the time it required for the civilized world to lose entirely the restraining and corrective

35. Kuhlman, Kathryn, *I Believe in Miracles*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1969.

influence of the light of the Old Testament before plunging into almost total darkness and despair. It was time for God to enlighten man further. The light of the New Testament was so much more brilliant than that of the Old, that it has taken almost two thousand years, or five times as long, for the same process of degeneration to bring the world to the sad position it was in when the Lord came the first time. Surely the coming of the Lord draws nigh once again.



Part II

THE NECESSITY OF FOUR GOSPELS: CONTRADICTIONS AS ESSENTIAL PART OF REVELATION

[Doorway Papers #26 and #27, first issued 1969]

The harmony existing in the New Testament is not sufficiently manifest on the surface to have been the product of designing men: it is far more profound than the inelastic verbal agreement of mere copyists.

Introduction

When I first became a Christian, there came into my hands three small volumes by different authors dealing with what can most simply be described as "difficulties" in the Bible. Each author dealt usefully—and always interestingly—with passages in Scripture in which there appeared to be conflicts between statements made elsewhere in the Bible.

Perhaps because of the way my mind worked at the time, I was tremendously concerned with statements which my college mates often made to the effect that no one in his right mind could believe in verbal inspiration once he realized how frequently Scripture contradicted itself. As a young Christian with a very firm belief in the inerrancy of the Word of God, I was disturbed by this challenge because, although my sceptical friends never seemed to know where these contradictions really were, I was fully persuaded that they must have ample grounds for their statements. As a consequence I devoured the substance of these three little volumes and felt myself in due time very well-equipped to deal with their accusations if the opportunity arose again. But as so often happens, for one reason or another, that opportunity never came. I suspect in the first place they were not really convinced that the issue was of any importance in any case. Moreover, I rather think that if I had been able to produce, at the drop of a hat, a completely indisputable answer to each challenge they raised, I should still not have been any nearer to persuading them to what I believe.

It seems to me, now, that finding answers in this way is important enough to the young Christian who already believes, but it is apt to be an exercise in futility when dealing with a total skeptic. There may be times when it is important to stand up for the Truth and combat error simply because error should be combatted whenever possible. This makes a man's unbelief inexcusable when he has been shown with certainty that the grounds for it are false. But he will not be converted to the Truth unless he already has a prompting by the Holy Spirit in this direction.

Yet the existence of contradictions is undeniable, and to ignore them is a mistake. In my own experience it has never failed to be a blessing to my own soul to face up to these problems and try to resolve them. I am inclined to believe that many of them have been allowed—probably it would be even truer to say that they have been designed of God—that they might be a source of blessing and deeper understanding to all who will seriously attempt their resolution.

Certain kinds of "difficulties" of this nature in Scripture are easily recognized and comparatively easily resolved. Another class of contradictions requires a much more sophisticated approach, as I hope to show in this paper, but it is an approach that is intellectually exciting and well worth the effort of serious thought. There remains a small group of contradictions which we seem at the

present moment to have insufficient information to resolve. But it is important to know that not one of these, to my knowledge, touches upon anything basic to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

These classes of contradiction may be usefully summed up under four headings:

1. Those which appear to have arisen *because of error in transcription*, especially where numbers are involved in the Old Testament;
2. Those which are *more apparent than real* and have steadily diminished in number as our knowledge of the background of events in Scripture has increased;
3. Those which appear to have resulted where *conversation* in one language has been *reported in another language*, for example where the original statement in Aramaic has subsequently been rendered into Greek by two or more different writers – as in the Gospels;
4. Those contradictions in reports by individuals who are independently setting forth what was done or what was said, and whose disagreement does not arise because of the use of a different language but for some other reason which appears to render the *contradiction* as in no way accidental but by *design*. This again is particularly true in the Gospels.

It was my original intention to present this study as two separate papers, one dealing with contradictions as a phenomenon of Scripture, and the other dealing with the reasons for the existence of four rather than only one inspired Gospel record. It soon became apparent, however, that it was far better to combine the two papers and present them as one.

Part of this paper, as will be evident to any informed reader draws very heavily upon the works of others. But the other part of it particularly chapter 2, is, I believe, a somewhat new approach that underscores the fact that a large number of so-called contradictions are not really contradictions at all but essential to revelation. If they were removed so completely that a "harmony of the Gospels" came to be established as a substitute for the four Gospels we now have, the sum total of revelation would be diminished beyond measure and we should be spiritually impoverished. The very fact that every attempt thus far to produce such a harmony has proved unsatisfactory seems to me sufficient evidence that this kind of truth can only be stated in contradictory terms, a fact which demonstrates the necessity of contradiction in Scripture.



Chapter 1

The Nature of Contradictions

It is my purpose in this chapter to set forth the nature of the evidence that contradictions really do exist, that statements are made in one part of Scripture which cannot by the ordinary laws of logic be made to agree with other statements made in Scripture. But I also want to show that these contradictions--far from undermining the claim made by Paul when writing to Timothy that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16) -- actually confirm the fact of inspiration in a unique and undeniable way in every instance, except for one class which we shall consider briefly under the first heading.

1. Contradictions which appear to have arisen *because of errors in transcription.*

The majority of contradictions in this category have to do with numbers. Despite all the research by Hebraists from early Christian times to the present, we are still not absolutely certain that we understand fully the system of enumeration used in the Old Testament. The New Scofield Bible states, in commenting upon I Chronicles 11:11, that there are barely twenty-five cases where numbers in one part of the record do not agree with those repeated elsewhere. Sometimes this is clearly due to our failure to understand the system of reckoning employed. Thiele's study, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, is an excellent example of how a proper understanding can bring reconciliation where it had previously been thought impossible.¹

But some contradictions remain. For example, in 2 Samuel 10:18 David is credited with having destroyed 700 enemy chariots. In I Chronicles 19:18 the record of the same event credits him with having destroyed 7000 enemy chariots. On this, H. P. Smith proposes that the difference resulted from the desire on the part of a later chronicler to enhance the extent of David's victory. On the other hand, of course, since the Scriptures were copied by hand, the original could have been misread. It could, in other words, be simply a copyist's error. Curiously, people who have a low estimate of inspiration are much more willing to attribute errors of this kind to ulterior motives than to simple, unintentional mistakes. It is ironic that Dr. Smith himself, when dealing with the text of 2 Samuel 10:6 lists the

1. Thiele, Edwin R., *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, University of Chicago Press, 1951.

number of Tob's fighting men as 1,200, whereas the actual text says that there were 12,000! Was this due to ulterior motives? Or was it perhaps not even Dr. Smith's error at all, but the error of a typesetter?²

There are some extraordinary cases of typesetting errors even in modern Bibles. I have an older edition of the Scofield Bible. One day I noticed a typographical error in the printing of Psalm 119; it has been corrected in the newer edition. The reader will recall that this psalm is divided into as many sections as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each section is then headed with a Hebrew letter followed by a conventional spelling-out in English of the way this letter is pronounced. Curiously, in the older Scofield Bible, the section headed by the word *Yod* (vv. 73-80), lacks the Hebrew character! This is interesting because it is the one letter in the Hebrew alphabet to which the Lord made specific reference in Matthew 5:18 when assuring his listeners that the Scriptures should never fail. The *jot* of Matthew 5:18 is the missing *Yod* of Psalm 119:73. Which only goes to show that with the best intentions in the world – and I am sure that tremendous care was taken by the publisher – omissions of this kind can occur. It escaped the notice of everyone who had to do with the publishing of this particular edition.

Sometimes such contradictions appear to exist because the text has not been read with sufficient care. Such a case is 2 Samuel 24:24 where a purchase involved a price of 50 shekels of silver that in I Chronicles 21:25 reappears as 600 shekels of gold. The purchase was made from a man whose name is given in 2 Samuel as Araunah and in I Chronicles as Ornan. The two names are variants only and refer to one individual: but the first account concerns only the purchase of a threshing floor, whereas the second account has to do with a far more extensive piece of ground which in due course became the temple court.

One needs to be very careful in reading parallel accounts to make sure that there is not in reality a significant difference in the circumstances. Richard D. Wilson said that he once asked a man how many people lived in a certain Southern city.³ The man told him there were 40,000. Subsequently he felt the figure must be in error when he saw the size of the place and so he asked a second man who told him that there were 120,000. In due course he found that the population consisted of 40,000 whites and 80,000 blacks.

At times the huge numbers given in Scripture for the number of camels, for example, or other animals possessed by a man like Abraham are so large as to be almost incredible and have likewise been attributed to copyists' errors. But as we show in Part IV of this volume, there are very precise modern parallels which suggest that no exaggeration whatever is involved. Sometimes the number of dead after a battle seems equally unbelievable,⁴ yet one has only to read the travels of Marco Polo to discover that battle losses of this order are by no means unknown from earlier times, and *enormous* herds are still owned by wealthy ranchers.

2. Smith, H. P.: quoted by E. F. Harrison, "The Phenomena of Scripture," in *Revelation and the Bible*, edited by Carl F. H. Henry, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1958, p.241.

3. Wilson, Richard D., *Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly?* Sunday School Times Co., Philadelphia, 1922, p.53.

4. A brief but very useful article on this aspect of the problem is found in *Eerdmans' Handbook to the Bible*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1973, pp.191-92.

Others have questioned the numbers involved in the ages given for the pre-Flood patriarchs.⁵ But here again, there is good reason to reserve judgment in the light of modern knowledge and the predictions being made with increasing frequency by authorities in the life sciences.

In concluding this brief survey, it is important therefore to note first of all that some copyists' errors do exist. But it is equally important to note that merely because some particular number seems greatly out of proportion to our way of thinking, we should not on that account assume it is a copyist's error unless we have the means of checking it against some other parallel part of Scripture which strongly suggests that such an error does exist.

2. Contradictions which are *more apparent than real*.

Because this class of contradictions has steadily diminished as background knowledge has increased, we do not need to spend much time upon it. However, one example will be useful as an illustration.

In the New Testament we may note that according to Matthew 20:29, the Lord restored sight to a blind man by the wayside as He was *leaving* Jericho; but according to Luke 18:35, the miracle actually occurred as He was *approaching* Jericho. The fact is that there were two Jerichos—the ancient one which was destroyed by Joshua and which would occur at once to every Jew's mind as *the* Jericho; and a second one situated about one and a half miles from the first one which had been rebuilt by Herod and turned into a kind of summer residence for Roman officialdom and would therefore be in the Gentile mind *the* Jericho. Somewhere between the two, a blind man received his sight. As is well-known, and as we shall have occasion to explore in a slightly different way, Matthew wrote his Gospel for Jewish readers, whereas Luke wrote his for Gentile readers. This kind of "disagreement" when observed between the three Synoptic Gospels is vitally concerned with an aspect of revelation that is the subject of the last chapter. These contradictions are certainly more apparent than real.

3. Contradictions which appear to have resulted where there may well be a case of *translation from one language to another*, as for example, where the words of Jesus, presumably spoken in Aramaic have come to us through the Greek.

It seems to me highly improbable that the Lord spoke in Greek although it is certain that many Jewish people in Palestine at the time were quite able to do so. On a number of occasions we know indeed that the Lord used Aramaic, since here and there His actual words are recorded in that language (e.g., Mark 5:41). There is also good reason to believe that Matthew's Gospel was originally written in Aramaic, although the text we are familiar with appears in Greek and is presumably, therefore, a translation of an original in Aramaic.

This raises the question as to whether a translation has the same inspired authority as an original. The usual answer to this is no. But in the present instance there may be a rather special circumstance involved since Matthew himself may

5. "Longevity in Antiquity and Its Bearing on Chronology," Part I in *The Virgin Birth and the Incarnation*, vol.V of The Doorway Papers, Zondervan Publishing Company.

in fact have been responsible for both the Aramaic *and* the Greek versions. Was he inspired in the writing of both of them? Some people believe that there is a numerical structure to Scripture of a kind which they feel cannot be accounted for except by assuming verbal inspiration; these persons hold that this applies equally to Matthew's Gospel in the Greek Version as it does to the rest of the New Testament. On this basis, therefore, one must assume that the Greek text of Matthew is equally inspired. On the other hand, an Aramaic Version also exists,⁶ which may well have been the first New Testament Scripture, an inspired account written expressly for the dispersed Jews in the East who embraced the Christian faith after the great gathering in at the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:41, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.").

Eusebius tells us in his *History of the Church* (3:39) that one of the very early writers, Papias, held that Matthew wrote or arranged the current sayings of the Lord which had gradually accumulated by word of mouth from those who had heard them firsthand, and set them forth "in the Hebrew dialect", i.e., Aramaic. Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* 3:1) says that Matthew wrote an account of the gospel among the Jews in their own dialect. Origen, according to Eusebius, held the same view also. Jerome (see *Catal.* 3) says that "Matthew composed the Gospel of Christ in Hebrew [i.e., Aramaic] letters and words, but it is not made out who it was who afterwards translated it into Greek"; he adds, however, that this text was preserved in his time in the Caesarean Library. In the 1883 edition of the *Schaff Herzog Religious Encyclopedia* under the heading "Matthew," the writer, after discussing the relationship between this original Aramaic Gospel of Matthew and the Greek edition, observes:

We prefer to hold to the opinion that a Hebrew [i.e., Aramaic] Gospel of Matthew did exist and that our canonical Gospel [i.e., the Greek one] is a reproduction and enlargement of it by *his own hand* [emphasis mine].

It may seem as though we are stretching a point unduly to suggest that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Aramaic and then in Greek and that he was equally inspired in both. Yet we have interesting examples of both ancient and modern authors who wrote first in one language and then translated their own works into another language. Inspiration was lacking in these examples, of course, but the circumstances are much the same and show that such a thing is possible. Josephus wrote his *Wars of the Jews* in Aramaic and then rewrote it in Greek.⁷ More recently, a Hebrew scholar, A. S. Yahuda, wrote a learned work on the Old Testament first in German and then in English.⁸

6. Matthew's Gospel in Aramaic: see an interesting discussion of this matter by Asahel Grant, *The Nestorians*, Murray, London, 1841, pp.168f. The author believes that these people were remnants of the tribes taken into captivity who did not go back to Palestine. See also J. E. H. Thomson, "The Readers for Whom Matthew wrote his Hebrew Gospel," *Transactions of the Victorian Institute*, vol. 54, 1922, p.178-99. Thomson believes that the Aramaic Gospel of Matthew is not merely a translation of the Greek but an independent version.

7. Josephus' *Wars of the Jews* in two languages. See also J. E. H. Thomson, ref. 6, p.179.

8. Yahuda, A. S.: referred to by D. M. McIntyre, "The Synoptic Gospels and Their Relation to One Another," *Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, vol. 65, 1933, p.123.

The latter admits freely that he found it difficult merely to translate his own work, and the result was that he set forth exactly the same information but recast in a more appropriate form for the second language. Thus some of the reports which Matthew gives us of the Lord's words spoken originally in Aramaic have, still under divine inspiration, been preserved for us in Greek – and presumably, therefore, in a form which is not precisely their original one. What we have is not the kind of transcript of the Lord's words which a tape recorder would have left us, but rather that kind of record which the Holy Spirit was pleased to give us through the instrument of a man's mind translating as he wrote. There is no need to abandon verbal inspiration even though the actual words that appear in the Greek text were probably not the actual words spoken by the Lord. By avoiding a slavish insistence upon the recording of His precise words, the text we have provides us rather with an enlarged insight into what the Lord was telling us.

Matthew's Aramaic Gospel was written for dispersed eastern Hebrew Christians to whom Aramaic was most familiar. Presumably his Greek version was written for *western* Hebrew Christians dispersed around the Mediterranean, to whom Greek was more familiar. As a matter of fact, the existence of the Aramaic version seems to have been almost unknown to the latter. As a consequence, Matthew occasionally reports sayings which incorporate some of the original words (assuming that even Greek-speaking Jews would be familiar with them). For example, when our Lord rode triumphantly into Jerusalem the people said, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; *Hosanna in the highest*" (21:9). In reporting this same incident, Luke tells us that the people said, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and *glory in the highest*" (19:38). Of course, it is possible that some said one thing and some another; but it seems to me equally likely that Matthew, well aware of his readers' Jewish background, could afford to use the word *Hosanna*, whereas Luke, who was similarly aware of the background of his Gentile readers, would avoid an Aramaism and use a word equally appropriate but much more intelligible to them. Luke was still divinely overruled in his choice of the equivalent word, and plenary inspiration is just as necessary to ensure this.

In his introduction to *The Gospels from the Aramaic*, George M. Lamsa suggests that there are a few places where a statement is made by the Lord according to our Greek texts which would be more meaningful if we assume that the original Aramaic was misunderstood by some transcriber into Greek. It seems possible that a number of the Lord's sayings were preserved orally by the disciples in their original form, and that people like Luke sought out these personal recollections and incorporated them into his manuscript. There is no reason why this should not have been true in the New Testament as it was in the Old Testament, whence a number of then-existing documents were quoted to form part of Scripture, which documents have long since disappeared. The Book of Jasher, for example, is referred to in connection with Joshua's long day. Luke may have made use of some of many well-known sayings of the Lord. Lamsa suggests that the word *camel* is rather like the Aramaic word meaning *heavy rope*, and that it was this to which the Lord made reference as being "difficult" to thread through the eye of a needle (Luke 18:25). I am aware there are some who believe that one of the small

gates in the wall of the city was referred to as "the eye of a needle," imposing a similar problem for the camel driver.⁹

Another example may possibly be found in connection with the Aramaic word for "talent." By a very small slip of the pen, this could be mistaken for the Aramaic word which means "a province." Thus in Luke 19:13, 17, and 24 it is conceivable that what the Lord really said to the man who had invested his talent successfully was that he would be made responsible, not for more "cities," but for more "talent." According to Lamsa the two words may be so written that only the placing of a single dot distinguishes between them. I'm not sure how true this surmise really is, but it is worth noting. Yet I must confess that this kind of explanation makes me uneasy because, rightly or wrongly, I feel that it challenges the rather necessary assumption that our Greek text has been preserved faithfully. It is true that we *do* have some cases where variants occur, and alternative readings do exist. But in these two cases there is no such textual evidence. It is simply human surmise with no documentary evidence to support it.

Furthermore, there are a number of cases in the Gospels where a conversation is reported by two different authors. The wording is often not precisely the same in the two reports. The change can be in word order and sentence structure or in vocabulary. Simple omissions of words in one report need not trouble us. But when different words or sentence structure are used, we have a problem. Does verbal inspiration mean that a particular statement made by the Lord must always be set forth identically as a tape recorder would reproduce it? Or is it sufficient that we have the sense of what the Lord intended? If this is allowable, could it not be that verbal inspiration relates rather to the inspired purpose of each evangelist in presenting his record? The choice of actual words would then be subservient to the plan of his Gospel and the background of his readers, but still divinely inspired. The multifaceted meaning and significance of the Lord's recorded conversations would be faithfully preserved.

The Holy Spirit therefore overruled the choice of words which each Gospel writer employed so that exactly that message would be conveyed which was required to communicate the truth to each group of readers. Thus we have to free ourselves of the idea that a tape-recording of the actual words used by a man is of greater importance than what he is seeking to communicate. I am persuaded that every word which Jesus uttered was in fact so pregnant with meaning that it was simply impossible to set it forth as a simple verbal transcript. His sayings have come to us through several minds, each of which, receiving the same original utterance, filtered and distilled it under divine inspiration so that more of its depth has come through to us *by reason of* apparent contradictions (and not *in spite of* them) than could possibly have been communicated in any other way.

In the section that follows, and indeed in the rest of this paper this important truth is first of all illustrated from Scripture and then explored in the light of what we now know about the means by which we communicate to one another the truths we perceive.

4. Contradictions occurring in reports by individuals who are independently setting forth what was said or what was done, and whose disagreement does *not*

9. Lamsa, George M., *The Four Gospels According to the Eastern Version*, Holman, Philadelphia, 1933: camel vs. cable, p. xi; talent vs. province, p.xi f.

arise because of the use of a different language but for some *other* reason which appears to render the contradiction in no way accidental but *entirely by design*.

From what has been said thus far, the reader will gather that I'm not greatly in favour of so-called harmonies of the Gospels. To my mind, it is analogous to taking three or four photographs of one individual from slightly different angles and attempting by superimposing the negatives over one another to print a single picture. Unless they are all precisely the same, the final portrait would be far less clear and meaningful than any one of the originals taken singly. Yet the originals are all genuine portraits of the same person and cumulatively add up to a total view. There is, of course, a difference in the present context between a visual portrait and a "portrait" drawn in words. To this extent, the analogy is quite unfair, because we assume that if someone said something, there is only one way of "accurately" recording what he said – no matter from what angle we approach the speaker. That is, we make a faithful transcript of his words.

This is a reflection of Western man's peculiarly developed sense of truth, which stems rather largely from our tremendous dependence upon a written text. Whether a man means what he says doesn't seem to us as important as the actual words he uses. So you often hear someone in an argument complain, "But you said [...]" To which the reply generally is, "But that's not what I meant [...]" Thus, while we give lip service to the principle that what we mean is more important than the words we use, we are still persuaded that a man's actual words must at all costs be transcribed rather than his intended meaning.

This places us in an embarrassing position. If we argue strongly for verbal inspiration (I'm thinking of the Gospels at the present moment), we are at the same time being forced to acknowledge that the Lord's statements are often differently reported by different writers. Some must therefore have reported *incorrectly*? If we impose upon God our own insistence that truthful reporting is limited to the recording of a man's actual words, then we are forced logically to admit that in many places the Gospel records were *not* verbally inspired – because the fact is that the Gospel writers often do not agree upon the words He actually used. But if we once recognize the fact that it is the Lord's meaning that is of fundamental importance, then we are free to allow the Holy Spirit to put into any Gospel writer's mind just those words which will preserve for us intelligibly exactly what the Lord intended by them. And since His meaning was always so much more far-reaching than any single mind could comprehend, what He was communicating in His conversation had to be set forth in several different ways. And to be absolutely certain that in this transcription no error in meaning would be introduced, the Holy Spirit inspired the words that were to be used by each Gospel writer in his report. So it has come about that what to our superficial way of thinking may appear as very loose or even contradictory reporting is actually an essential part of the inspiration of Scripture. In this sense, contradictions are a necessary part of revelation.

It may be argued that in some instances we must not suppose contradictory reporting, but rather that the statements of each of the Gospel writers are to be put together in order for us to recover the whole truth. An analogy is to be observed in the inscription on the cross, where the total wording may be recovered by combining what each writer has recorded. In Matthew 27:37 the

inscription is stated as follows: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." In Mark 15:26 it appears as "The King of the Jews." Luke 23:38 has it, "This is the King of the Jews." And in John 19:19 it is given, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

There are two ways in which one can deal with these four accounts. The first is to say simply that each writer was led to pick upon only part of the total inscription, the part he recorded being appropriate to the purpose of his Gospel. Putting them all together produces the following: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Out of this total inscription one can extract any one of the four Gospel accounts. They are, therefore, in this light assumed to be additive. The second alternative is that since the title was written, as we are told specifically, in Greek and Latin and Hebrew, the wording adopted by each Gospel writer was that which appeared in the language most familiar to him. Matthew recorded what was written in Hebrew, Mark in Latin, and Luke in Greek. It is also possible that the total inscription was in all three languages, but this seems to me a little less likely. John, writing somewhat later in time, comes nearest to putting down the total inscription.

One further point in the same connection is worth noting. Matthew, seeing the situation through the eyes of a Jew and writing for Jewish people, refers to the inscription as an "accusation." Luke writing for those who would hardly see the significance of the inscription in these terms, simply refers to it as a superscription. Mark, who wrote for the Romans, notes that it was both a superscription and an accusation. John, who saw perhaps more clearly with the passage of time, looked upon these words as having much greater significance than merely standing as an accusation or a superscription. He refers to it as a "title."

I believe that this principle of adding together cannot be applied in more than a few cases except by some rather artificial reconstructions. However, one or two further examples may be worth observing. For instance, Matthew 15:28 reads "Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: Let it be unto thee even as thou wilt [...]." At this point we may add Mark 7:29 which reads, "For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter." And the record is then completed by Matthew: "And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Additively, Matthew and Mark give us a complete picture.

Another case is found at the time of Jesus' trial, in the following way:

Matthew 20:19:	"mocked [...]"
Luke 18:32:	"[...] and spitefully entreated and spitted on"
Matthew 20:19:	"[...]and scourged."

Clearly there is no contradiction of fact here, so this is not what I mean when I speak of contradictions. What I do mean is illustrated in the following. In speaking to the Pharisees and other religious authorities, Jesus said, according to Matthew 26:55, "Ye laid no hold on Me." According to Mark 14:49, His words were, "Ye took Me not." According to Luke 22:53, He said, "Ye stretched forth no hands against Me." It is clear that if any one of these is reporting accurately, as we commonly define accurate reporting, then the other two are reporting inaccurately. That each of these sentences has fundamentally the same meaning is quite evident, however, and since I personally believe in verbal inspiration, I am convinced that each writer was inspired to record the Lord's words as he did. I

think we must assume in that case that in some way which may not be immediately apparent, the difference in wording was deliberately chosen by the Holy Spirit to preserve the unique character of each of the Gospel portraits as a whole. In some cases, which we shall return to in the last chapter, we can see why there were differences: in this particular case the reason is not clear to me at the moment, but I am certain that there is a perfectly good reason.

Here is another example. In Matthew 21:2, which has to do with the Lord's commission to certain of the disciples to go and bring the ass upon which He was to ride into Jerusalem, Matthew records His words as having been "straightway ye shall find [...]"; Mark (11:2) "as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find [...]"; and Luke (19:30): "at your entering ye shall find [...]" Clearly these are the same statements in intent, and equally clearly they cannot be merely added together to evade what appears, superficially, as contradiction. The Greek text is not precisely the same in each case. If these purport to record the identical conversation, we must assume that the strict recording of *words* has been replaced by a reporting of *intention* because this was of greater importance.

We have another such example in Matthew 19:26, where the Lord's words are given as "With God all things are possible." Luke 18:27 records this same statement in the form, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

The next illustration shows precisely what I mean. In Mark 5:41 (in the Authorized Version), Jesus is said to have raised Jairus' little daughter with the Aramaic words, "*Talitha cumi*." Luke 8:54 gives the Lord's words on the same occasion as having been "*he pais egeire*" (in the Greek ἡ παῖς ἐγείρε). No person could possibly use these two entirely different speech patterns at the same time, although they both mean the same thing—"Maiden, arise"—the first is Aramaic (טליתא קומי) whereas the second is Greek. It is reasonably certain that Jesus used the former words, since He spoke Aramaic. The Holy Spirit who inspired the writing of both Mark's and Luke's accounts clearly intended us to know the *meaning* of Jesus' words rather than the *sound* of them.

There are many occasions upon which the *general* intent is the same, though the way the intention is expressed is deliberately different. In Matthew 18:8 the Lord is reported as saying, "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut *them* off." But Mark 9:43 reports these words as "If thy hand offend thee, cut *it* off." The quotation from Mark includes no reference to the feet. The rest of each of these two sentences makes it clear that the omission is intentional: Matthew continues, "It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire"; Mark finishes the verse, "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into hell."

It seems unlikely that these two passages are intended by the Holy Spirit to be combined in the way that we might combine Matthew 15:28 and Mark 7:29 (refer to page 57). In the former case a combination adds to our total understanding, whereas in this case nothing is added. On the other hand, if—as I shall try to show in the last chapter—Mark was laying emphasis upon the Lord as an exemplary Servant, then it may well be that the stress is upon the servant's hands rather than upon his feet. A lame servant could still be a good one; but from the point of manual labour—that is, for service as we ordinarily think of it—a servant without hands is virtually useless. Thus, possibly the omission here

is deliberate and is in keeping with the special object and character of Mark's Gospel.

One further illustration of contradictory reporting is to be found by comparing Mark 5:19, 20 with Luke 8:39. This is an account of the healing of the maniac of Gadara, who desired immediately to become part of the Lord's entourage. However, Jesus said to him, "Go home to thy *friends*, and tell them how great things the *Lord* hath done for thee." Luke puts the Lord's instructions as follows: "Return to thine own *house*, and show how great things *God* hath done unto thee." There is disagreement in the instructions, in the one case to go home and tell his own friends, and in the other to tell his own house. But even more important, there is this divergence in wording by the use of the word *Lord* as opposed to *God*. There is no contradiction in meaning; but there is in terms of the actual words spoken. If we insist that the only truthful reporting is what a tape recorder would provide, then which word would the tape have recorded? I think it is also worthy of note that the healed man, according to Mark, went home and began to publish how great things *Jesus* had done for him. Mark makes no attempt to excuse the man for his disobedience, for in point of fact he was not being disobedient, since Jesus is indeed both Lord and God (John 20:28).

I cannot refrain from referring in this context to Luke 17:16, the story of the healing of the ten lepers. One of them returned to say, "Thank you." Luke records what happened: "When he saw that he was healed, he turned back and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at *His* feet, giving thanks." It seems to me that unless one makes the assumption that Jesus is God, the writer would have been led to make it quite clear that the feet were not God's feet. The fact is that they *were* the feet of God.

It will be noted that these contradictions in reporting chiefly concern words spoken by the Lord. I have not made an exhaustive study of the evidence, but my impression is that when Scripture reports the words of man (for example, Matthew 11:3 and Luke 7:20: John the Baptist speaking), this kind of free paraphrasing is not allowed. In short, the words of men are reported consistently without contradiction because such words never have the inexhaustible content of meaning as the words of God have. Even when the Lord Himself is quoting what man has said, He quotes the words precisely (cf. Matthew 11:19, "The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.", and Luke 7:34, "The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!").

As we shall see, it is often quite as important to note what is omitted as it is to observe what is included. Matthew frequently judges the Jewish people very harshly and does not hesitate to set forth the severest strictures which Jesus pronounced against His own people. By contrast, the other writers are more gentle and omit many of these strictures. Evidently it seemed proper to the Holy Spirit that one who was not writing to the Jewish people specifically should not be encouraged to emphasize their wrongdoing; but in Matthew's Gospel written for Jews by a man who was himself one of their number, it was appropriate.

Enough has therefore been said to establish the fact that there are clearly contradictions in reporting which the Holy Spirit has not merely *allowed* to appear in the text, but has, to my mind, deliberately introduced because by them something more has been revealed than would have been possible by slavishly repeating on every occasion the same precise wording. Every attempt to remove these inconsistencies by artificially combining them or by excusing as errors of transmission inevitably robs us of part of the total revelation which God intended. For this reason I believe harmonies of the gospels can be dangerous. In fact, experience shows fortuitously that they never have been successful in any case.

While we thus say that the *meaning* is the important factor, it is still true that meaning cannot be conveyed without words. Thus it needs to be underscored that to give the true meaning according to the mind of the Holy Spirit, inspiration of the wording was required. This is all the more essential where the record is *apparently* contradictory.



Chapter 2

Which Portrait is the True One?

It is of the greatest importance to everything that follows in this paper that the difference between Truth and Reality should be clearly borne in mind. It is a basic principle in philosophy that truth is perception of reality, and not reality itself. What follows in this chapter should perhaps clarify this issue somewhat by the use of a series of illustrations directly relevant to the subject. How we perceive and what we perceive are two distinctively different things, and no two people perceive the same object in precisely the same way. The object itself is the reality. What we call "truth" is not the object itself, but how our mind perceives it.

Looking up into outer space we see here and there stars which form a triangle or a square or perhaps even a letter – like **W**, for instance, in the constellation of Cassiopeia. From the point of view of objective reality, these particular stars in Cassiopeia are simply hung in space. When we, who use the capital letter **W** inherited from the Romans, say that these stars form a **W**, we are stating a truth; yet the truth lies not in the fact that the stars are so arranged, but rather that we see the arrangement as a **W**. This is our perception. The Hebrew who knows only the Hebrew alphabet or the Chinaman who knows only Chinese characters would not perceive the form of a **W**, because this particular configuration has no meaning to him whatever. Thus it is "true" that these stars in Cassiopeia form a **W**: but it is only true for us because we happen to perceive it this way. The truth is not the same as the reality. Truth is something perceived – in this case the constellation of stars (arbitrarily named Cassiopeia). Reality remains, whether it impinges upon any man's consciousness or not.

Truth must therefore often vary according to the consciousness of those who become aware of the reality. This does not mean that there is no absolute Truth. It only means that in certain areas where perceptions differ, not all will perceive the truth in the same way. Such forms of truth as these, which are in some sense "culturally relative," are not *moral* truths; but they are important to us individually, because they relate to our view of life and history and the physical world about us – and they are important also in our assessment of one another as persons.

What this means is that when any man becomes conscious of some event or circumstance or person, the event or circumstance or person will strike his consciousness in a very individual way. He does not perceive the vision that he may happen to be sharing at the moment with other people in precisely the same way that they perceive it. Each of us looks out upon the world and perceives it uniquely. We see the many things as *we* are, not as *they* are.

There are countless illustrations of this important truth. The painter Ludwig Richter relates in his memoirs how once, when he was in Tivoli as a young man, he and three friends set out to paint the same landscape.¹⁰ They were all firmly resolved not to deviate from nature; they wished to reproduce what they had seen as accurately as possible. Nevertheless, the result was four totally different pictures, as different from one another as the personalities of the artists. From this experience, Richter concluded that there is no such thing as objective vision, and that form and colour are always apprehended according to individual temperament.

Is an objective view possible? In a manner of speaking, it is. It would be a colour photograph. The purist will object to this, and his objection is perfectly justified: but for the present purposes the statement may be allowed to stand. The really important point is that each of those young artists – and it is worth noting that there were four of them – was determined to paint only what he saw, yet each ended up with a unique record.

It might be argued that scenery is not the same as portraiture. But here again we have plenty of evidence that what each artist perceives when painting a single subject may lead to an apparently contradictory series of portraits.

I think it is providential that we have four portraits of a United Nations hostess, Maria Lani, painted by four well-known artists.

Figure 1 is the "objective" view of the camera. Now, without looking at Figure 2 to see how she was perceived by certain artists, it is worthwhile studying this camera portrait and trying to estimate for oneself what kind of person Maria Lani really was. If you take the time and trouble to write down what you think of her as a person, judging solely of course by this photograph, you may be surprised to find that perhaps one or possibly even two of the other artists felt as you do – but not all of them.

Next we have pictures by Goerg, by Braque, by Matisse, and by Rouault. It would be unfair to try to state expressly what each artist was seeing in Maria. But Braque seems to have been persuaded that she was a woman who was really hiding behind a facial mask; Matisse, that she was a



Figure 1: Maria Lani in a photograph.

10. Ludwig Richter's four pictures: Ernst Cassirer, *Essay on Man*, Yale University Press, 1948, p.145. Similarly Arthur Eddington (*The Nature of the Physical World*, Cambridge, 1930, pp.316f) points out that the scientist's description of a stream is a purely arbitrary one, even though it enables him to do certain things with it successfully. But it is quite possible that the artist's description may be far more effective and conceivably much more reliable, according to Eddington.

woman with a sharp incisive character, sharp in the sense, not of unkindness, but rather of penetration. Rouault seems to have seen Maria as inwardly a woman in some torment. And what shall we say of Goerg? Our method of reproduction will undoubtedly have lost to the viewer some of the original quality of these paintings; but this much is quite clear, namely, that each artist was honestly trying to portray the person whom the camera has shown us objectively in a single, instantaneous fragment of time.

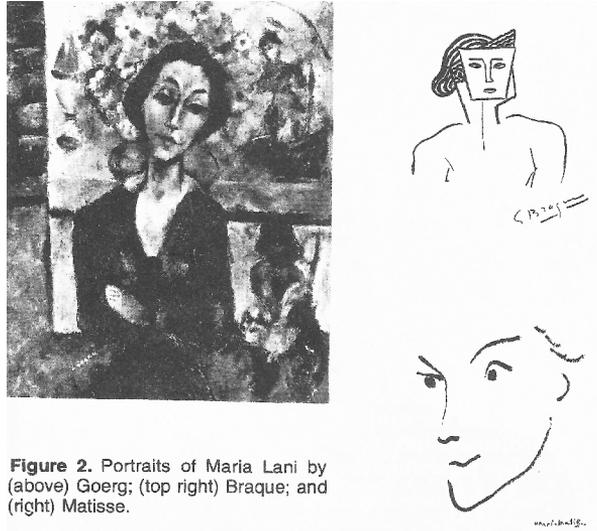


Figure 2. Portraits of Maria Lani by (above) Goerg; (top right) Braque; and (right) Matisse.



Figure 3. Portrait of Maria Lani by Rouault. Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago.

These four artists knew Maria as a living person. The camera lens and photographic plate "knew" her only as a thing reflecting light. Here is the difference between Truth which is perception and Reality which simply is the thing perceived. Once again, we have *four* pictures to tell the truth.

The medium of expression so far has been graphic art. Does this still apply when portraiture is in words? Cassirer has this to say:

No example is more characteristic and instructive in this respect than the change in our portrait of Socrates. We have the Socrates of Xenophon and Plato; we have a Stoic, a skeptic, a mystic, a rationalistic, and a romantic Socrates. They are entirely dissimilar. Nevertheless, they are not untrue, each of them gives us a new aspect, a characteristic perspective of the historical Socrates and his intellectual and moral physiognomy.

Plato saw in Socrates the great dialectician and the great ethical teacher; Montaigne saw in him the anti-dogmatic philosopher who confessed his ignorance; Friedrich Schlegel and the Romantic thinkers laid the emphasis upon the Socratic irony.

And in Plato himself we can trace the same development. We have a mystic Plato, the Plato of neo-Platonism; a Christian Plato, the Plato of Augustine and of Marsillio Ficino; a rationalistic Plato, the Plato of Moses Mendelssohn; and a few decades ago we were offered a Kantian Plato.

We may smile at all these different interpretations, yet they not only have a negative but also a positive side. They have all in their measure contributed to an understanding and to a systematic evaluation of Plato's work. Each has insisted on a certain aspect which is contained in his work but which could only be made manifest by a complicated process of thought. When speaking of Plato in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant indicated this fact: "[...] it is by no means unusual," he said, "upon comparing the thoughts which an author has expressed in regard to his subject [...] to find that we understand him better than he understood himself."¹¹

In short, we have a better understanding—I think it is safer to say a more complete understanding—of the Lord by reason of the four Gospels than we would have had if some super author had left us with only one Gospel combining the substance of the others. And I think it is remarkable how frequently it happens that to make the composite picture complete, four portraits, not less and not more, seem best suited. It is as though three portraits provide us with a three-dimensional picture in space and one more is required to complete the picture in time. In the present case the three Synoptic Gospels seem clearly to be within the single framework of space, while the fourth seems to add the time dimension—opening with the words, "In the beginning [...]."

There is one other point of view from which we may approach this subject, and it involves us in a brief consideration of the nature of stereoscopic vision. Stereoscopic sight involves the use of two eyes spaced a sufficient distance apart

11. Cassirer, Ernst, *Essay on Man*, Yale University Press, 1948, p.180.

that views are obtained from two slightly different angles of vision. The mind in some mysterious way combines these two views, different as they are, into a single picture that has depth. Stereoscopic vision thus allows us to perceive the relative distance of objects from us regardless of their size. We can manage after some time of training to estimate these distances with only one eye. We do this by a very rapid assessment of the relative size of the objects which naturally appear to be smaller as they recede into the distance. We learn to gauge distance because of size. For every object, the mind somehow preserves a kind of standard reference dimension. Two eyes make this particular form of mental exercise unnecessary, and our gauge of distance becomes much more accurate—exceedingly accurate, in fact, at close range. It allows us to touch something without missing it by coming short, or without stubbing our finger by over-estimation

An ordinary camera takes only one picture, and it is flat. We "read" it in depth because we learn so to read it. Children do not automatically recognize that things in the distance appear smaller, and they therefore draw distant objects as large as near ones. They are being more truthful, but we find it a disturbing way to present reality to the eye because it is not the way we customarily perceive it. I have a stereoscopic camera which has two lenses and takes two simultaneous pictures, the spacing between the lenses being the mean distance between the human eyes (65mm). A special viewer is required, but the effect is marvellous. One sees everything in the round, whether it be a few trees receding into the distance or even a fly trapped by the camera in midair. The fly hangs in space. An entirely new dimension is added to the photograph.

A simple experiment can be performed by anyone who will sit down in his living room and sight across a chair or an object on the table to the wall behind it. By closing one eye and then the other, it will be seen that the nearer object shifts its position specifically with respect to some more distant object in line with it. Each eye therefore is giving a slightly different picture of the same scene, and the mind is able to integrate them into a single view which has depth. However, because our eyes are set in a horizontal plane, we have this stereoscopic vision only in a horizontal plane and not in a vertical one.

We can obtain stereoscopic vision in the vertical plane by lying down on a couch so that the eyes are in the vertical with respect to each other. But now we lose stereoscopic vision in the horizontal plane. Thus, to obtain vision in depth in every direction we would actually have to have four eyes. I think that in Nature certain creatures may have been provided with this facility, not by being given four eyes, but by being given the habit of bobbing the head up and down very rapidly every so often. If we assume that their central nervous system is designed to accept this sudden shift in the vertical direction, stereoscopic vision might be achieved both horizontally and vertically. Birds that live and feed in shallow water while standing much of the time out of the water must be able to compensate, when they strike for food in the water, for the refractive index: and it is possible that they are able to correct for this by the rapid bobbing up and down of the head. I have no research evidence for this, but discussion with some ornithologist friends indicates that it is a very real possibility.

Virtually everyone has had the experience of watching a dog intently putting his head first on one side and then on the other. The movement is a rather delightful one. It seems to me that it, too, may serve to enhance the dog's total

perceptive capabilities in depth, because it increases its range of stereoscopic vision above the mere horizontal plane to which most animals are normally limited.

At any rate, whatever may or may not be valid in the above observations regarding animal vision, it is certain that to obtain 100 percent perception in depth, we would have to have four eyes and a mind designed to unify the four points of view. Both are required, for otherwise we should be in effect imposing photographs shot from different angles upon each other and trying to obtain a single print from the composite. The result would undoubtedly be a blurred image. There are some diseases known to man in which even the images from the two eyes we have are not fused, and a conflicting double image has to be eliminated by preventing the light from entering one eye—or in a few cases by a mental process which is learned and by which one picture of the two is somehow ignored. Only special circumstances enable us to create a harmonious picture out of "conflicting" material. The process is in the mind.

Reverting to our consideration of the four Gospels, it is only due to special circumstances that we are able to create a harmonious picture out of apparently conflicting records. The process here is a spiritual one. Just as God has designed our minds to accept the conflicting evidence of our two eyes that we might gain more complete vision, so God has designed our spirits that we may somehow accept the conflicting evidence of the four Gospels so that we might gain more nearly perfect understanding. Just as the visual input to the mind is perfectly integrated without our being aware of any conflict, so do we for the most part read the four Gospel accounts without being aware that *they* are in conflict. And finally, just as by upsetting our vision we can make ourselves aware of the divergence of the two pictures received by the eyes, so we can if we wish become aware of the conflicts between the Gospel accounts. In physical health we are not aware of any conflict between the eyes, nor in spiritual health are we disturbed by any conflict between the Gospels. By a virtually unconscious process we "integrate" and gain in depth of vision. Years ago, Principal Cairns wrote, with true eloquence,

In the narratives of the Evangelists, the impossible is achieved. The living Christ walks forth and men bow before Him. Heaven and earth unite all through: power with gentleness, solitary greatness with familiar intimacy, ineffable purity with forgiving pity, unshakable will with unfathomable sorrow. There is no effort in these writers, but the character rises till it is complete. It is thus not only truer than fiction or abstraction, but truer than all other history, carrying through utterly unimaginable scenes the stamp of simplicity and sincerity, creating what was to live forever, but only as it had lived already; and reflecting a glory that had come so near and been beheld so intently, that the record of it was not only "full of grace," but of "truth."¹²

Subsequently the same writer concludes by saying,

12. Cairns, Rev. Principal. "Christ the Central Evidence of Christianity," *Present Day Tracts*, Tract No. 3, vol.I, Religious Tract Society, London, 1883, p.9.

The difficulties of the Gospels from divergence are as nothing compared with the impression made by them all of one transcendent creation; and for my part, if I rejected inspiration, I should have reason to be still more astonished [...]. The very diversities so often appealed to as an objection to this conclusion really strengthen it and prove that writings which can so bring forth the one out of the manifold have in them not only truth but inspiration.¹³

I cannot leave this aspect of the subject without one further observation. In the previous chapter we underscored the difference between what a man actually says and what a man really means. In drawing a portrait with brush or pen, it is equally important to distinguish between what a man looks like and what he really is. Those who have had occasion to do portraiture will know that if the subject is prepared to pose for long enough, the superficial facial mask tends to relax unconsciously and one slowly finds oneself drawing or painting the *real* character rather than the superficial one.

I had occasion to draw a well-known businessman. The drawing was to be a presentation to him by the family. I had sufficient time with him to be able to draw him as he was inwardly: and standing out from the page, rather surprisingly, was a somewhat different and less pleasant character than the man whom one saw in a casual encounter. Several persons who had little or no respect for his integrity as a businessman, said in effect, "Hmmm [...] that's him all right." He was not, to those who knew him well, a pleasant man to have to deal with in business. I hardly need to say that his relatives turned the picture down. So I ended up in possession of one of the best portraits I have drawn, technically speaking—and one of the most worthless! I still have it . . .

One of the greatest figures of Michaelangelo's time was Lorenzo the Magnificent. As a man of very great wealth, a patron of the arts, a person of integrity, charm, intelligence, and wisdom, he became Michelangelo's patron. When Lorenzo died, Michelangelo carved the figure which adorned his tomb in the Medici Chapel in Rome. I have redrawn the head of this reclining figure, which in the original is carved out of marble (Fig. 4). My pencil drawing cannot, of

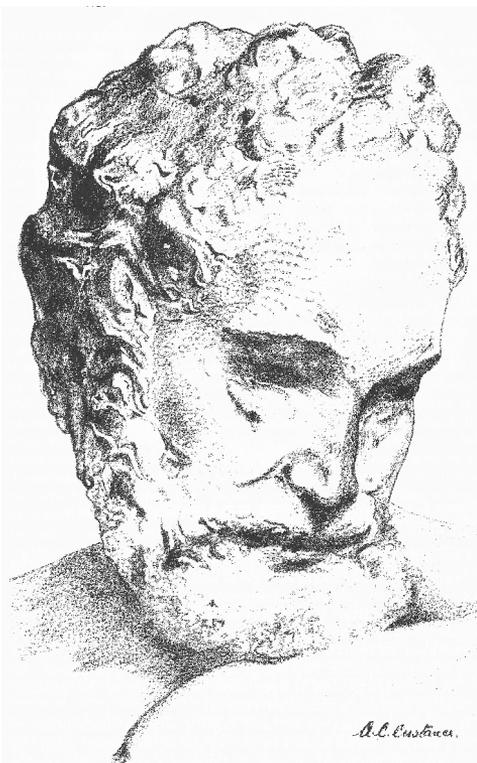


Figure 4. Lorenzo the Magnificent: a drawing by the author from the carving by Michelangelo.

13. *Ibid.*, p.11.

course, do credit to the original, but it does show something of the genuine greatness of Lorenzo's character.



Figure 5. Lorenzo the Magnificent: from a medallion attributed to Niccolò Fiorentino, circa 1490.

However, we happen to have both a written description of Lorenzo and a portrait from a medal struck in his honour. Both the written and the pictorial images of Lorenzo's visual appearance agree in this, that he struck the eye as rather a mean character with little manifest greatness, with no physical presence that was immediately impressive, with a slight deformity in his back, and with a nose and mouth that gave him a rather "untrustworthy" look. I have redrawn the medallion, and it requires some stretch of the imagination to equate it with Michelangelo's beautiful tribute to his benefactor (Fig. 5).

Which is the true portrait: the one which portrays how Lorenzo looked, or the one which

portrayed what he was? Michelangelo preferred the latter and although *his* portrait contradicts the other one, they are both true portraits, but from different points of view. To give the complete picture of reality, it is necessary to perceive reality in different ways so that what may appear to be two different statements of the truth may really only be one. It seems likely that with our minds constituted as they are, contradictions will always be essential to the perception of truth, particularly truth about a person.

There is a tremendous difference between knowing the facts and perceiving the truth. Contradictory evidence is likely to confuse the man who seeks only to know the facts, but contradictory statement is often the only way in which truth may be represented. In our present state of knowledge it is customary to say that light is to be described both as corpuscles and waves. Under certain circumstances it behaves as though it were composed of discrete particles which have some kind of mass and are subject to gravitational forces. At other times its behaviour is best explained by viewing it as having some kind of nonmaterial wave form. The two views are seemingly irreconcilable, which means that the "facts" are contradictory. But scientists have learned to live with this contradiction, since the most complete picture seems to depend upon both contradictory views being accepted at the same time. Even in science therefore, the statement of the truth may demand the use of contradictory terms.

One of the wonders of the Gospel story is that so few people in reading the four Gospels year after year ever become aware of the "contradictions" which are to be found between them. The fact is that we have been given spiritual vision that

enables us to see a single picture of the Lord which, although it is presented from four different points of view, reaches us without disharmony. The skeptic is like the man with faulty vision whose mind cannot resolve these four views except by a very deliberate effort and even then only by some artifice. The Christian, on the other hand, can by an equally deliberate process – as though he were closing one eye at a time – separate out these different pictures and study them profitably in isolation without at the same time destroying his power to see the unified whole. Of such a nature are these four gospels that, as Rousseau said, the inventor of such a Character as they present would be even more astonishing than the Character Himself. It is undoubtedly true.

The portrait of the Lord Jesus which emerges from the combined impact of the four Gospels demonstrates indeed that fact is more amazing than fiction, that creative imagination is no match for inspired record of truth. Here truly is an uncreatable figure. Albertus Pieters, in his wonderful little book, *Divine Lord and Saviour*, has a quotation from the work of Carnegie Simpson which captures something of the sheer beauty and splendour of the Saviour.

They [the Gospels] do not merely affirm His stainlessness, which were easy. They *exhibit* it, which it were simply impossible to do except from the life. We have there what Jesus said and did in all kinds of circumstances and on all manner of occasions – in public and private, in the sunshine of success and the gloom of failure, in the houses of His friends and in face of His foes, in life and in the last great trial of death. It is the detailed picture of a man who never made a false step, never said the word that ought not to have been said, never, in short, fell below perfection. Such a portrait is of necessity a true portrait. It simply can not be an idealized picture. That which is so above human criticism is not less above our conception [...]. Only one thing accounts for their being able to do it. That is simply veracity. They had a model, and they copied it faithfully. And because, first, the model was faultless, the reproduction, being faithful, was perfect too.¹⁴



14. Pieters, Albert, *Divine Lord and Saviour*, Revell, New York, 1949, p.96.

Chapter 3

The Basis of a True “Harmony”

That the three Synoptic Gospels were divinely inspired to appeal uniquely to three different classes of readers has been recognized from the earliest Christian times. Many are the clues to be found in each Gospel which reveal to the eye of faith the particular group of people for whom the record is specially intended.

It is usually held that Matthew wrote for the Jewish people, Mark for the Romans, and Luke for the Greeks. John wrote for all men. I am sure this is an essential part of the truth. But I believe there is an even more distinct and special kind of directive in each of the three Synoptic Gospels which I want to explore briefly now.

According to Genesis 9 and 10, Noah had three sons. The first, Shem, was the father of the Semitic people of whom the Arabs and the Hebrew people of the Old Testament formed the most permanent part, although the Assyrians and Babylonians and some others had their roots here also. Shem was also the father, therefore, of the Jewish nation in the time of our Lord's earthly ministry. Ham was the second son, according to Genesis 9:18, and he became the father of a very widely dispersed and diversified segment of the world's population who, for one reason or another, are considered to be distinct from both Semites and Indo-Europeans. It is not customary today to group them together in the way Indo-Europeans are, but I am persuaded that Scripture views them all as representatives of the family of Ham.¹⁵ The third son listed was Japheth, and I do not think that anyone is likely to quarrel with the statement that his descendants are today essentially represented by the Indo-European people.

These three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, are listed in this order in Genesis 10:1, where their descendants are shown, and these three families of descendants seem to have been preserved as distinct entities in the purposes of God throughout history in several unique ways. For example, we know that Abraham had three wives. The first of these was Sarah, a daughter of Shem: the second was Hagar, a daughter of Ham (being an Egyptian): and the third was Keturah, who according to Jewish tradition was a daughter of Japheth.¹⁶

Three groups of people came specifically looking for the Lord. The first group comprised the shepherds, who obviously represented the family of Shem. The third group are introduced into the Gospel story rather unexpectedly: they were

15. Custance, A. C., "A study of the Names in Genesis 10," Part II in *Noah's Three Sons*, vol. I in *The Doorway Papers*, Zondervan Publishing Company.

16. Keturah a Japhethite: see Reubeni Jalkut, remarking upon Genesis 26:2 and 36, quoting a Midrash to the effect that Keturah was a daughter of Japheth (see Louis Ginsberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, vol. 5, 1955, p. 265, note 309).

Greeks who said, "Sir, we would see Jesus" (John 12:21). They represented the family of Japheth with particular appropriateness, since the Greeks traditionally trace themselves back to an ancestor whom they called "Japetos." There is no question that Japetos and Japheth are the same individual. One other group came looking for Jesus, and this group comprised the wise men. That these wise men were of the family of Ham can be demonstrated, I believe, with a measure of certainty.¹⁷ As in every other instance where this trilogy is found, the order is always the same—Shem, Ham, Japheth.

Each branch of the race took a specific part in the Crucifixion. The moral responsibility was accepted by Israel (Matthew 27:25, "Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children."); the physical burden of carrying the cross was imposed upon a Cyrenian, a child of Ham (Luke 23:26, "And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus."); the executive responsibility was assumed by Japheth, who was represented by the Romans since they alone could perform it (Matthew 27:26, "Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified."). There is substantial evidence that Simon of Cyrene was the same individual referred to in Acts 13:1 as bearing the same name "Niger," i.e., "black man." F. F. Bruce considers that in this passage in Acts both Lucius and Simon Niger are intended to be of Cyrene.¹⁸ As a black, Simon or Simeon of Cyrene belongs within the family of Ham.

And finally, the Gospel was preached first to Shem, then to Ham, and lastly to Japheth: to Shem in Acts 2:22 ("Ye men of Israel"), to an Ethiopian of the family of Ham in Acts 8:35, and to the centurion Cornelius of the family of Japheth in Acts 10.

History shows that from within the family of Shem has sprung the world's spiritual and religious insight, both true and false. From the Hamites have sprung the great civilizations which formed the foundation of the modern world, as well as its basic technology in every field of human endeavor. From the Japhethites the world has received its great philosophical systems. The contribution of Shem combined with that of Japheth led to theology, and the contribution of Ham combined with that of Japheth led to the development of science, for the first results when philosophy is applied to religious truth and the second when philosophy is applied to technology. In Volume I, Part V, "The Framework of History" explores the concrete evidence for these things as they have slowly become apparent from the study of a very substantial body of historical data. Part IV of Volume I, combined with Part V, traces back to their Hamitic origin some three hundred basic technological processes or techniques or inventions upon which our modern civilization rests. There is no field of technology that cannot ultimately be traced back to this extraordinary watershed.

I believe that the three Synoptic Gospels were written in a special way for these three families: Matthew for the family of Shem, Mark for the family of Ham, and Luke for the family of Japheth. Let us look at the evidence for this. As we do so, it will help to bear in mind that the family of Ham has served mankind in an

17. This is done by the author in Part I, entitled, "The Part Played by Shem, Ham, and Japheth in Subsequent World History" in *Noah's Three Sons*, vol. 1 of the Doorway Papers, Zondervan Publishing Co.

18. Bruce, F.F., *The Spreading Flame*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1953, p.102.

essentially *practical* manner, just as Shem has served in a *spiritual* capacity and Japheth in a philosophical or *intellectual* capacity. Shem has cared for the needs of man's spirit, Ham for the needs of his body, and Japheth for the needs of his intellect.

We have already seen something of the evidence that Matthew wrote for the Jewish people. We do not know for certain that the author was Matthew, but tradition is strongly in favor of this view and there is also internal evidence which seems to support it. It is virtually certain that the Levi of Mark 2:14f. and Luke 5:29 is none other than Matthew. This man invited the Lord to a meal, as Matthew himself records (Matt. 9:9,10). Now, when recording this incident, both Mark and Luke state that Levi invited the Lord to his house; but Matthew, in his account of Levi's invitation, does not say that Jesus came to *his* house but simply to *the* house. In other words, the writer, Matthew, invited the Lord "home." It is generally felt that this simple but important little clue confirms the tradition that Matthew and Levi are one and the same person, the author of the Gospel which bears Matthew's name.

Tradition also tells us, as we have already noted in chapter I of this paper, that Matthew wrote his Gospel first for the Hebrew Christians who were scattered abroad, many of whom had been saved at the time of Pentecost and many more probably by the testimony of those who first came thus to know the Lord in Jerusalem. Subsequently Matthew rewrote his Gospel, still under inspiration, as I believe, in Greek. Both these editions are known in one way or another, the Greek being of course the one which we have recognized in the Western world.

Because Matthew was directing his words primarily to Israel, his Gospel is characterized by many observations of special interest to that people. To begin with, Matthew traces the genealogy of Jesus Christ back to Abraham, and no further. Moreover, he traces the line through Joseph because it was through Joseph that the legal status of Jesus as the Promised Seed, the Son of David, and the coming King was established. Although Jesus was not the son of Joseph strictly speaking, yet Joseph fulfilled according to the law the two essential requirements for the establishment of his legal paternity by giving to Jesus His name and by teaching Him a trade.

This aspect of Matthew's Gospel contrasts notably with the genealogy given by Luke, for Luke does not stop at Abraham but traces the line right back to Adam — the father equally of Jew and Gentile.¹⁹ Again, both these Gospels contrast with Mark, who gives no genealogy whatever and does not even provide his readers with any information as to Jesus' birth and family origin. Remembering that Mark was writing with the object of presenting a picture of Jesus as the "Servant *par excellence*" it is only in keeping with this object that he passed over any detail which did not contribute directly to that role. It is not important to know the genealogy of a servant

Mark plays a significant part in the events of those days and is mentioned on a number of occasions in Acts and in Paul's Epistles. It would appear that Mark himself — called "John Mark" — became a servant to the leaders of the early church (Acts 13:5 and 2 Timothy 4:11), and as though he felt this to be his special calling, he alone (Mark 1:20) of the Gospel writers mentions that there were also servants in the little ship from which James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were called to

19. Custance, A. C., "The Genealogies of the Bible," Part VI in *Hidden Things of God's Revelation*, vol. 7, The Doorway Papers, Zondervan Publishing Co.

follow the Lord. Similarly, as though it was from this word of the Lord that he received his commission, it is he alone (Mark 9:35) who adds the phrase, "and servant of all" to the Lord's rebuke of the disciples who were disputing who should be greatest when the Lord came into His own. In his Gospel, unlike the other Gospels, Mark records only twice that Jesus was directly addressed as Lord, and even one of these (Mark 9:24) is considered of doubtful authenticity.

Again, in Mark 13:32, after the statement of Jesus, "[...] no man knoweth," he adds the words, "not even the Son." Perhaps this addition struck a chord in Mark's mind because though He were a Son, yet He is here being presented as a Servant, and elsewhere this Servant had said, "The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth" (John 15:15). Mark contains no arraignment of the nations, no woes pronounced with the authority of a judge, no simple parable where Jesus' lordship is revealed, and no saying about the twelve legions of angels which the Lord might have commanded by His authority to come to His assistance. These examples of omissions are every bit as significant as those statements which are uniquely included. And just before His ascension into heaven, where Matthew has recorded the words "All power is given unto Me," Mark simply says, "Go ye into all the world." Even here he is not satisfied until he has completed the picture of this One who fulfilled the role of the perfect Servant by noting that they went forth and preached everywhere "the Lord working with them" (Mark 16:20).

Matthew's Gospel is filled with back references to fulfilled prophecies that validate the claims of Jesus as the promised Messiah of Israel. The number of such prophecies to which reference is made has been estimated as anywhere from forty to sixty, depending on how one makes the count.²⁰ Certainly there are far more such fulfillments to which the reader's attention is drawn here than in the other Gospels. And Matthew alone uses a unique phrase in this connection, namely, "that it might be fulfilled which was written. . . ."

Similarly Matthew refers to the Holy City and the Holy Place, whereas Luke refers only to Jerusalem or the temple. Interestingly enough, not only in view of Matthew's profession as a tax gatherer but in view also of the subsequent history of the Jewish people down through the centuries, Matthew goes out of his way to deal with matters of money or of precious stones or treasures hid in a field or pearls of great price (13:44-46), all of them forms of portable wealth. Matthew alone refers to the story of the tribute money found in the fish's mouth (17:24-27). Matthew alone supplies details of the financial resources which the Lord assured the disciples they need not concern themselves about (10:9). And it seems that even in the matter of loans, he had a special interest, for only he records the parable of the unforgiving servant (18:23-34).

Luke's Gospel contrasts with the other two in a number of striking ways. At the beginning he gives us the three Songs of Praise at the time of Jesus' presentation, and all three refer to blessing to come to Gentiles as well as to Jews. Even in recording the song of the angelic hosts, Luke gives a more complete account of their words: "Unto you [Israel] [...] and to all people [...]" (2:10,11). Again, in reporting John the Baptist's call to repentance, Luke alone adds John's words, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God" (3:6). At the close of his account, only Luke records the circumstance of the penitent thief. Perhaps Matthew could

20. McIntyre, D. M., "The Synoptic Gospels and Their Relation to One Another," *Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, vol. 65, 1933, p.123.

not appropriately record this, because to the Jewish mind anyone who was crucified was condemned eternally without hope.

Both Matthew and Luke record the circumstances relating to the virgin birth of Christ. The records differ in a significant way. It is generally held that Matthew records the course of events from Joseph's point of view, whereas Luke records the course of events from Mary's point of view. This seems completely appropriate, since Matthew, being a tax collector, by traditional training would also be a lawyer. In fact, his other name, "Levi," may simply have been his title, "Lawyer." Perhaps Matthew was the legal member of the "team" as Judas was the financial one. Thus it would not be unnatural for Joseph, who was more concerned with the legal aspects of Jesus' birth, to have discussed his own experiences with Matthew.

It is sometimes argued that Joseph was dead before Matthew had become a disciple, and on this account it is felt unlikely that Joseph would have spoken to Matthew about the matter at all.²¹ I am inclined to think that the opposite is more likely to be true: namely, that Joseph might very well have discussed the matter with Matthew as one *not* belonging to the circle of believers. In matters of this kind, Matthew might well have given Joseph a much more patient and understanding hearing, and have been far less ready to judge or condemn than some of the other disciples. The non-Christian lawyer sometimes proves to be wiser in his judgments upon moral issues that touch Christian life than the Christian lawyer is. At any rate, there is no reason at all why Joseph may not have gone to Matthew as a man to his friend, regardless of religious convictions: and it is not impossible that Matthew's knowledge of the circumstances may actually have prepared his mind, as he saw the Lord's wonderful work, to accept the Lord's call the moment it came to him and apparently without question.

By contrast, since Mary was naturally more concerned from a woman's point of view, she would be more likely to share her experience with a physician, namely, Luke. Moreover, because Luke is writing for the Gentiles by contrast with Matthew writing for the descendants of Shem, it was not unnatural for him to place the emphasis upon those circumstances which showed that Jesus was the Son of man by His birth in a unique way rather than the Son of Abraham in a legal sense. Although the title "Son of man" is by no means unique with Luke, it is certainly a summary of his emphasis just as the title "Son of God" summarizes the emphasis in John's Gospel, and "Son of David" in Matthew's Gospel. In Mark the emphasis is not upon the Son, but upon the Servant.

In keeping with John's portrayal of Jesus in His divine nature, it is appropriate that we do not have a genealogy comparable to that of either Matthew or Luke but neither is a genealogy entirely lacking as it is in Mark. John takes us back into eternity and traces the Lord Jesus in His divine pre-existence with the Father.

Thus we have Jesus presented to us in four distinct portraits: as the Promised King, as the Servant of the Lord, as the Son of man, and as God Incarnate. In the symbolism of the Old Testament we meet these four figures under the guise of the cherubim. These "living ones" are described in Ezekiel 1:10 as having four faces.

21. Matthew's pre-Christian experience: the incident of the healing of the paralytic (Matt 9:1-8) took place before his call, as all three Synoptic Gospels agree, in Capernaum where Matthew's home and business were, and there were many people present. Perhaps he shared the emotions of the crowd who were very much moved by the incident (v. 8). At any rate, it was an event that immediately preceded his call.

the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle. The first of these symbols is clearly the picture that Luke provides, the lion is the King of Matthew's Gospel, the ox is the servant of Mark, and the eagle is the One from heaven of John's Gospel. There are four interesting exclamations, as it were, in the Old Testament that bear out this same fourfold portraiture: "Behold thy King" (Zechariah 9:9); "Behold My servant" (Isaiah 42:1) "Behold the man" (Zechariah 6:12); and "Behold your God" (Isaiah 40:9). The context of each exclamation underscores the significance of the wording used.

Considered in this light the Gospels portray in one person four completely contradictory types, as contradictory as one could possibly imagine. On the one hand we have a conquering King whose presence is so overpowering that His bitterest enemies were afraid to lay their hands on Him. His most devoted followers cast themselves at His feet with a sense of utter unworthiness. And even a condemned criminal in the agonies of his dying turned to Him – marred almost beyond recognition by all that He had suffered in the preceding hours – and acknowledged Him as Lord. Yet this same King is presented to us as a Servant without pedigree. Nowhere is He said to have assumed a superior position. Everything He did was a service, and Mark's record is characterized as are none of the others by a certain sense of immediacy. Again and again Mark uses the words *straightway*, *immediately*, *forthwith*, *at once* – terms that must have been drilled into the mind of every slave. How extraordinary to portray One who was "every inch" a King as One who at the same time was the perfect Servant, and do so without apparent contradiction!

But perhaps the greatest mystery of all is how in one person could be combined both man and God. Logically it is impossible. Man is not God by reason of his very limitations: and God is not man because there are no limitations with God. How, then, can they be combined? Yet they were. Many books have been written on this tremendous problem, and it does not appear to me that it is possible to produce a logical reconciliation. One volume which comes to mind that seems to approach as nearly as we may hope is titled *One Christ*. In this work by Frank Weston,²² the basic solution which the author seeks to explore in depth may be summed up, perhaps, as follows: The Lord Jesus Christ, being God made Man, had infinite power. He never surrendered this power while He walked on earth. Rather, He used that infinite power to suppress the very use of it wherever its use would have been inappropriate to the assumption of perfect manhood.

One thing is certain, and this is that the figure who appears before us in Luke's Gospel is the perfect man: not man made God, but man as God intended man to be. The wonder is that in John's Gospel we are clearly in the presence of the very One who, having already been set forth successively as King and Servant and perfect Man, now is pre-eminently set forth as God Himself.

Even the order in which these records have been preserved for us seems to have been appropriately arranged, so that opposites come together. The King is followed by the Servant; Man is followed by God. One might suppose it would be more appropriate for literary balance, since the King precedes the Servant, to have God precede Man. But the three Synoptic Gospels appear together in the order in which they do, seemingly to reflect the fact that the human race has been viewed throughout Scripture as constituted of three families derived respectively from the sons of Noah in the order in which they were born.

22. Weston, Frank, *One Christ*, Longmans Green, New York, 1907.

It seems to me that when we contemplate such a revelation as the Incarnation, our comprehension is so limited, so circumscribed, that it could only be presented to us in contradictory terms. Because of our very limitations, contradictions became a necessary element of revelation.



Appendix

Further Examples from the Gospels

Here some further examples of Gospel passages in which apparently the same reported speech is set forth by different writers in significantly different words, as discussed in chapter 1 of this paper. The meaning is essentially the same in many cases, but not in all. For instance, "good things" cannot precisely be equated with "the Holy Spirit," nor can "the kingdom of God" be precisely equated with "the kingdom of heaven."

How we hear is not really the same as *what* we hear, nor "having" the same as "seeming to have." Yet the respective writers were undoubtedly inspired to employ the actual words they did.

Mark 2:5 / Luke 5:20: "Son..." / "Man..."

Matthew 9:4 / Mark 2:8 / Luke 5:22: "Wherefore..." / "Why..." / "What..."

Mark 2:18 / Luke 5:33: "Thy disciples *fast* not..." / "... *eat*..."

Matthew 9:15 / Mark 2:19: "Children... *mourn*" / "Children...*fast*"

The new piece of cloth in the old garment: stated differently in Matthew 9:16, 17
/ Mark 2:21, 22 / Luke 5:36-39.

Matthew 11:11 / Luke 7:28: "Kingdom of *heaven*" / "kingdom of *God*"

Matthew 7:11 / Luke 11:13: "*Good* things" / "the *Holy Spirit*"

Mark 9:19 / Luke 9:41: "Bring *him*..." / "Bring *thy son*"

Mark 4:24 / Luke 8:18: "*What* ye hear" / "*How* ye hear"

Mark 4:25 / Luke 8:18: "Which he *hath*" / "Which he *seemeth to have*"

Matthew 3:11 / Mark 1:7: "Shoes to *bear*" [carry] / "Latches...*to undo*"

Part III:

**SOME STRIKING FULFILMENTS
OF PROPHECY**

[Doorway Paper #13, first issued 1962]

In contrast:

How many of these Chaldean prophecies do I remember being repeated to Pompey to Crassus (and to Caesar himself!) according to which not one of these heroes was to die except in old age, in domestic felicity, and in perfect renown: so that I wonder that any living man can yet believe in these impostors, whose predictions they see falsified daily by the facts and results.

— Cicero,
De Divinitate, xlvii

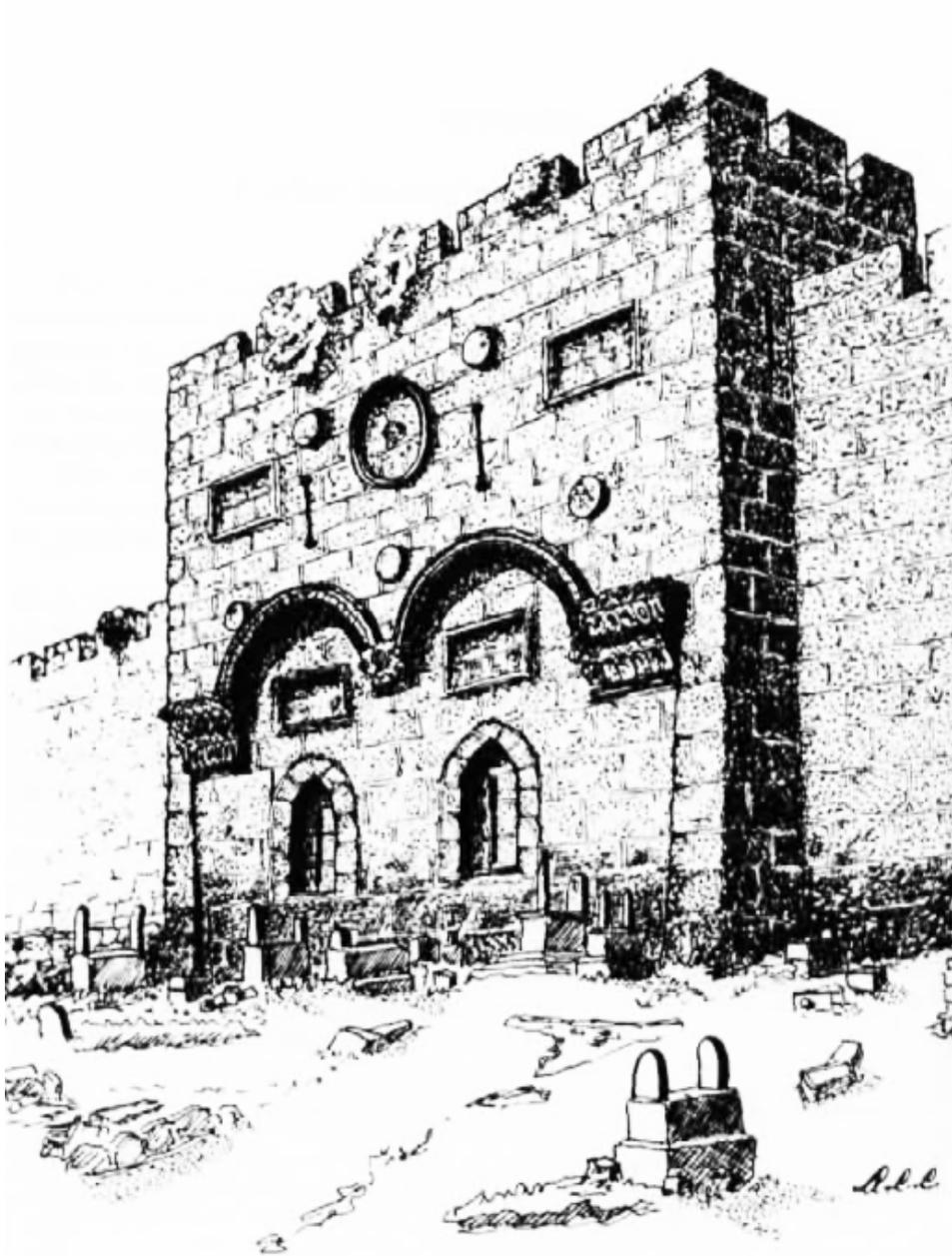


Figure 6. The Golden Gate that has been “shut”.

Chapter 1

On the Choice of Materials

This paper is intended to serve as a miniature handbook for anyone who is provided with the opportunity of addressing a well-educated non-Christian audience on the subject of prophecy. The guiding principle in the choice of subject matter has been essentially this: that the body of the Paper shall contain examples of fulfilled prophecies which leave no shadow of doubt as to their validity. The validity involves two prime factors: (a) that the statement shall have been written long before the fulfilment of the event it foretells; and (b) that the fulfilment itself shall be so specific that its correspondence with the original prophetic statement is unquestionable.

Incidental to these two requirements are several considerations of lesser importance, but important nevertheless. For example, the prophetic statement must not be of such a general nature that it might conceivably have been the result of foresight on the part of an individual who was very wise and well-acquainted with the course of history in the past. A case in point might be Daniel 12:4 ("But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."). Another consideration is that the fulfilment was not the result of actions deliberately undertaken to guarantee it.

The fulfilled prophecies chosen for inclusion are given as full treatment as possible within the compass of this Paper so that anyone who decides to use them for the purpose suggested may have some measure of confidence that they understand the historical background sufficiently to avoid the appearance of superficial knowledge. Maps, plans, and photographs are provided, some of which could be reproduced perhaps in slide form.

A number of significant omissions will be observed, and this may be a source of some surprise. The factors governing our choice were such that a very large number of fulfilled prophecies had to be omitted. For example, unless the audience is willing to accept the Gospels as history, the extent to which the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies concerning Him will carry no weight. We have no proof other than the Gospels (and of course the Epistles) that the events of the Lord's life and death so perfectly satisfied the prophetic visions of the Old Testament. The Christian has no doubt about these things: but assuming one is faced with a neutral audience, this kind of evidence begs the question. The messianic prophecies are completely convincing to the believer. To the unbeliever they are much less so, often because the fulfilment can only be considered such if the original prophecy is viewed out of context or is given a

kind of dual interpretation. Hence, in view of the much more limited object of this Paper, they have been omitted from consideration — except for the one case of the stones of the temple which were to be "thrown down," according to the Lord.

Again, it would not be wise to refer to prophetic statements, the date of which could, according to higher critics, require them to be treated rather as hindsight than foresight — the future prophesied after the event! There might be theologians in the audience, and an argument about higher criticism would defeat the whole purpose of the presentation. Certain of the prophecies of Daniel, for example, might well be challenged by such people in this way. They would argue they were written after the event.

One further class of prophecies — namely, those dealing with the general rebuilding of Palestine — have also been omitted because it would be possible to argue that at least some of these promises of "restoration" have had minor and temporary fulfilments in the past (during the Crusades, for example). And it is still too soon to say with absolute certainty that the present events are an "ultimate" fulfilment — even though I personally believe they are. The Jewish people have "returned" before this. . . .

This would seem to narrow down the field drastically indeed. Yet I believe a strong argument is not made stronger by the addition of weak links. In order to gain some measure of assent from an audience, it is surely necessary to establish beyond a shadow of doubt that God is able to make prophetic statements giving details which could not possibly have been foreseen by human beings apart from revelation. Two or three dramatic illustrations establish the fact of prophecy as surely as two or three human footprints in the sand establish the fact a human being has passed that way. It is not the quantity of the evidence that counts, but the nature of it.

And what if we gain some measure of assent? Then perhaps it would be appropriate to point out that God has prophesied that certain things will most assuredly happen in the life of any man who will commit his soul into God's hands in God's appointed way. This is where the church can indeed foretell the future with confidence.



Chapter 2

Who Can Prophecy?

Before I present what I believe are a few instances of fulfilled prophecy that meet our stated criteria, it seems desirable to consider some thoughts about related matters. To begin with, there are a few rather remarkable instances of prophetic utterances by individuals who made no claims to divine inspiration. An educated audience may very well refer to these and question whether Scripture is unique in this respect, and it is important to know at least something about them.

Consider what is perhaps the most outstanding example in "modern times," the prophecies of Mother Shipton. This lady, whose real existence has been held in question, is said to have been an Ursula Shipton, who was born in Knaresborough, England, in 1488; married a Tony Shipton, a builder, in 1512; and died about 1560. She was not recognized apparently until in 1641 it was pointed out that she had foretold the death of Wolsey. She is then credited with having predicted the fire of London in 1666 and the Civil Wars. A published account of her utterances appeared in the seventeenth century, and probably the best-known and most remarkable of these is the following poem:

A house of glass shall come to pass,
In Merry England, but alas
A war will follow with the work
In the Land of the Bloody Turk.
And State and State in fierce strife
Shall struggle for each other's life.
Carriages without horses shall go
And accidents fill the world with woe,
And the centre of a bishop's see
In London, Primrose Hill, shall be.
Around the world thoughts shall fly
In the twinkling of an eye.
Through the hills men shall ride,
And neither horse nor ass astride.
Under the water men shall walk:
Iron in the water men shall float
As easily as a wooden boat.
Gold shall be found and shown
In a land that's now unknown.

Fire and water shall wonder do
 And England shall admit a Jew.
 Three times three shall lovely France
 Be led to dance a bloody dance
 Before the people shall be free
 Three tyrant rulers shall she see.
 Each sprung from a different dynasty:
 And when the last great fight is won
 England and France shall be as one.
 And now a word in uncouth rhyme
 Of what shall be in latter time.
 Women shall get a strange new craze
 To dress like men and breeches wear
 And cut off all their locks of hair,
 And ride astride with brazen brow
 As witches do on broomsticks now.
 Then love shall die and marriage cease
 And babies and sucklings so decrease
 That wives shall fondle cats and dogs
 And men live much the same as hogs.
 In eighteen hundred and ninety-six
 Build your homes of rotten sticks
 For then shall mighty wars be planned
 And fire and sword sweep o'er the land.
 And those who live the century through
 In fear and trembling this will do.
 Fly to the mountains and the glens
 To bogs and forests and wild dens.
 For tempests will rage and oceans roar
 And Gabriel stand on sea and shore
 And as he toots his wondrous horn
 Old worlds will die and new be born.
 In the air men shall be seen
 In white, in black, and also green.
 Now strange but yet they shall be true
 The world upside down shall be.
 And gold shall be found at the roots of a tree
 When pictures look alive and movements free.
 When ships like fishes swim below the sea,
 When men, outstripping birds, can scour the sky
 Then half the world deep drenched in blood shall die.

Many of these statements show remarkable foresight. Even if they are forgeries written much later in history than Mother Shipton, the poem has been known for probably one hundred years at least, and if one projects oneself back only this length of time, the statements are remarkable enough. The house of glass could conceivably be the Crystal Palace. The "admitted Jew" could have been Disraeli. That women should wear their hair short and "ride astride" would even

seventy-five years ago perhaps have been considered exceedingly unlikely. Submarines and movies and aircraft form part of the prophecy also.

In 1862 a *Life of Mother Shipton*, written by Charles Hindley, was afterward (1873) admitted by the author to have been a forgery. But this does not really tell us too much about when her prophecies were written and whether they were written by Ursula Shipton at all. Consequently, one really cannot take any position with respect to them except to point out once again that substantially in this form they have been known for a sufficient length of time to have some prophetic content. Yet an informed mind with keen insight into the course of events might have foreseen some of these changes. The prophecies which had to do with the life of Thomas Cardinal Wolsey and the city of London cannot be assessed, for we have no proof that they were ever predictions.

So much, then, for Mother Shipton: not a very satisfying account, but perhaps sufficient to leave one at least informed and therefore able to answer questions. Moreover, it is unlikely that anyone else in the audience will have any more information than this.

Another interesting prediction uttered in 1737 by the poet Thomas Gray—who is probably best known for his "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"—appeared in a poem under the title "Luna Habitabilis". The portion of the text which is of interest here reads as follows:

When thou shalt lift thine eyes
To watch a long drawn battle in the skies,
While aged peasants, too amazed for words,
Stare at the flying fleets of wond'rous birds:
England, so long the mistress of the sea,
Where wind and waves confess her sovereignty,
Her ancient triumphs yet on high shall bear
And reign, the sovereign of the conquered air.

This prediction, equally remarkable though it is, considering the date (and in this case undoubtedly authentic), might still very well be the result of a perceptive mind reflecting upon the future in the light of technical advances which were beginning to appear as the result of scientific inquiry even in those days. It is quite analogous to what Aldous Huxley has done in his *Brave New World*, and George Orwell in his *1984*. Each of these is a logical extension of present trends rather than prophetic in the biblical sense. As such, the authors took little risk on the whole in making them, for "coming events cast their shadows before."

By contrast, there are biblical predictions so specific in detail and so far removed from being merely logical extensions of the present, that only God, or someone who has opened his mind to another source of inspired knowledge that is wholly evil, would risk making them.

This distinction is a very important one. Yet it must be admitted that there have been examples of quite specific predictions made by gypsies (and others who obtain a livelihood by such means) which must be acknowledged. It would probably be wrong to attempt to explain—and almost inevitably to "explain away"—all the predictions of this nature that might be brought forward for discussion. However, not infrequently, if examined carefully they are found to bear the marks of very shrewd guesses made on the basis of information obtained

from the listener without his being altogether aware of it. Let me give one illustration and comment upon it in this light.

In her *Memoires* the Comtesse de Boigne (vol.II, pp.322-25) set forth a striking narrative which she received from her father, the Marquis d'Osmond (French ambassador to Great Britain), who was intimately acquainted with the Chevalier de X____, of whom she wrote, he being fully cognizant of the facts. The chevalier was lieutenant colonel of the regiment which the marquis joined in his youth. A man of striking personality and most amiable disposition, he was adored by his regiment; and being a relative of the marquis' family, the young officer and he were close friends from the first. When camping in a small German village during the Seven Years' War, a gypsy was brought into the officers' saloon after dinner. At first the chevalier remonstrated with his fellow officers, but finally yielded and allowed the gypsy to inspect his hand. After a close scrutiny she said, "You will advance rapidly in your military career; you will make a marriage beyond your hopes; you will have a son whom you will not see; and you will die from a shot before you have reached your fortieth year."

The Chevalier de X____, continued Madame de Boigne, attached no importance to these prognostications. However, when in a few months he obtained two successive promotions due to his brilliant conduct in the war, he recalled to his comrades the words of the fortuneteller. They recurred to his memory also when he married, some years afterwards, a wealthy young lady of good family.

His lady being near her confinement, he obtained leave of absence to join her. The evening before he set out he said: "My faith! All that the sorceress said is not true. I shall be forty in five days. I leave tomorrow, and there is little likelihood of a gunshot in perfect peace!"

He was detained on the way by an accident to the carriage in which he was travelling. He was invited by the officers of the garrison of the town, in which he was thus forced to remain a few hours, to join a hunting party, and he was shot by accident. He was badly wounded, though not mortally. While he lay under the surgeon's care a letter came for him, saying that his wife had been safely delivered of a boy. "Ah!" he cried, "the cursed sorceress was right! I shall not see my son!" He was attacked with sudden convulsions. Tetanus followed, and twelve hours afterward he expired just as predicted. His friends explained the end by the effect which the remembered prediction had upon his mind. But no such explanation seems possible of the other four predicted events—his rapid promotion, his fortunate marriage, the birth of a son whom he did not see, and his receiving the gunshot wound.

By way of comment on this story, and many others like it, I should like to make a slight excursion. Such a digression is allowable in this context only because it is not expected that the reader will use it for any other purpose than to stimulate his own thinking around the problem.

It is commonly acknowledged that women rather than men are gifted with a certain sense of premonition. Sometimes such premonitions are exceedingly specific. Although we shall run the risk of causing offense, a question may be asked, the answer to which might have considerable significance. The question is, Has there ever been a class of male witches? Have they traditionally always been female: and are they not always such in the Old Testament?

Primitive witch doctors might seem to be a contradiction of this statement, but actually they do not exist as fortunetellers at all. They are primarily concerned with the past and the present – not the future. The very idea of treating such a subject seriously may seem ridiculous, yet just by asking the question some further light may be obtained. As far as I know, the oracles of classical antiquity were female, and indeed one wonders whether the term *priestess* was not largely reserved in those days for women who had proved themselves to be possessors of a feminine intuition of unusual power and to some extent under control. We do not at all understand such powers; but if the stern warnings against resorting to them in the Old Testament have any meaning at all, they are evidence of real danger because of a real power. Why this should be largely if not entirely a feminine art, I have no idea; but I think it very dangerous to resort to people who have such powers – even in fun.

Even in those cases where it should be possible for man to predict the course of human events in the immediate future with almost complete certainty, the errors here have usually been considerable. It might be said to be a law that the more clearly the future can be predicted on the basis of present events, the less wise it is to attempt to do it! There are some striking illustrations of this. For example, in 1957 we had a general Federal election in Canada, the results of which were pretty well a foregone conclusion in everyone's mind. The two contending parties of major importance at this time were the Liberals and the Conservatives. The Liberals had been in power for so long that many of us could not remember any other government, and their position seemed absolutely secure. A few days before the election, *MacLean's*, which is known by many as Canada's national magazine and which is published in Toronto, committed itself to the following statement in an editorial:

For better or for worse, we Canadians have once more elected one of the most powerful Governments ever created by a free electorate. We have given that Government (the Liberals) an almost unexampled vote of confidence considering the length of its term in office [...].

This issue went on the stands even while the results of the voting were coming in. And what were these results? An overwhelming victory of the Conservatives, with such a majority of seats in the House that the word *landslide* would be considered mild as expressive of the change in public opinion! Over against this, we read again the words, "We have given that Government an almost unexampled vote of confidence."

One can well imagine how the editors of *MacLean's* felt as they compared their confident prediction with the events of history. They acknowledged the blooper! In the editorial of July 6, 1957, this prophetic howler reappeared as a heading, followed by these words:

The above collector's item, displayed prominently on our editorial page, began reaching readers of this magazine on the day after the recent federal election [...]. We consider it worthy of a place in our trade's Chamber of Horrors beside the newspaper headline and magazine covers which in November, 1948, greeted

Thomas E. Dewey as the new President of the United States some hours and days after he had been liquidated by Harry S. Truman.

The reference to Dewey and Truman requires this much explanation for those who are not familiar with the American scene at that time. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt died, Vice-President Harry Truman naturally assumed his position for what remained of the term of office. Unexpectedly he carried his responsibility remarkably well – but it was not commonly supposed that he could survive the next presidential election and stay in office. When election time came, many American newspapers were so absolutely certain that his opponent, Thomas Dewey, would be elected that they went ahead and had their front pages, not merely set up, but in many cases actually run off ready to hit the newsstand first thing in the morning: and they were completely wrong! Truman became President, and an awful lot of newspaper people worked overtime to get some kind of edition on the newsstand which was consonant with the facts. And remember that in both instances the prediction did not have to look ahead for centuries or even days, but merely hours.

If one can predict the course of natural events with such absolute certainty that eclipses can be clocked with precision almost any number of years ahead – and indeed science itself is based upon prediction – then why can one not do the same with human events, even when only a few hours away? Some have held that history is so determinate that given precise information about the present with no essential details missing, the whole of the future ought to be predictable. However, there is one great difference between history in which men and God take part and that in which only forces of Nature are involved. Natural history is repetitive, not always and absolutely so, but sufficiently so to allow one to extract the laws governing its behaviour to allow their use as a guide for the future. Human history is not repetitive. Like culture, it is cumulative. Experience grows, not only in the individual, but in societies and nations, so that no situation can ever be exactly repeated a second time. Consequently there is always something unpredictable, because a new element is added with every consecutive moment of unfolding.

Although it may appear a simple matter to predict what will happen a few years from now in some particular context, in actual fact it becomes more and more impossible as one tries to be more and more explicit. Generalizations are easy, and their fulfilment can be claimed when events bear any semblance at all to the prediction. But the mind somehow refuses to create any exact picture of the future. It sounds simple, yet the difficulty can be verified experimentally by anybody who is willing to make the attempt to put down on a piece of paper some striking event that he is prepared to state will happen on his own street or in his own home one year from the present – excluding natural events. If the one-year limit is too restricting, try ten years. If this won't work, enlarge your horizon to include your city, not just your street: or, if you like, take the world. I believe this simple test will demonstrate to any honest mind the sheer impossibility of predicting history in any specific detail unless one falls back upon making pretty safe assumptions about events linked directly to situations of which one is able to make reasonable "extensions". Biblical prophecies are not *this*, and the distinction is of fundamental importance. God may use, but is not bound by, the present when He predicts the future.

Before proceeding in the next chapter to those examples of fulfilled prophecies which seem to me to be as nearly as unchallengeable as one could hope for, it may be appropriate to explore for a moment the purposes of prophecy as it appears in Scripture.

The objective in this Paper is to anticipate as much as possible the kind of questions which an intelligent audience with some hostile members in it might raise in order to confuse the issue. Someone might very well say, "It seems to me that prophecy is a dangerous subject because people abuse it and try to predict the end of the world and ridiculous things like that." This criticism would be just and should be fairly met. Sometimes one can go to the enemy's side and with good humour take his weapons away from him and then, having done so, regain control of the conversation by pointing out what the study of prophecy is *not* intended to accomplish.

I'm sure prophecy is not intended to tell us the date when the world is coming to an end. As a humorous illustration of this, I recall a man who in about 1935 stood on Bloor Street in Toronto handing out leaflets declaring with absolute certainty that the world would end at midnight October 1. An unbelieving—but worldly wise—press photographer visited this gentleman's home about 11:30 the same evening and took a photograph of his front door. In the morning paper this picture appeared on the front page, and it showed the empty milk bottles with the proper supply of tickets already laid out on the doorstep to catch the milkman in the early morning hours!

Prophecy is not for such a purpose as this. But the study of it makes at least three contributions to the life of a Christian. In the first place, the fact of fulfilled prophecy serves as an assurance to the child of God and may serve as an assurance to the unbeliever that God is Master of the events of history. I say "Master" rather than "Determiner", because God sometimes *allows* events rather than explicitly ordaining them to happen, while remaining complete Master of every circumstance. In Isaiah 41:23 a challenge is made to the pagan world to demonstrate that their deities really are gods by predicting the future successfully. Scripture reads as follows: "Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods." The Lord in the New Testament (John 13:19) in effect made the same claim before the disciples when He said, "Now I tell you before it comes, that when it comes to pass, ye may believe that I am He." The "proof" followed a fulfilment—not preceded it.

A second use of prophecy is, to coin a phrase, to "tell the time". Note that this is to allow a reading of the *present* time—not the future. This distinction is important, because the attempt to "time" the future by studying prophecy has tended to bring its legitimate study into disrepute. There is a difference between reading the Word of God to discover from it the pattern of future events and subjecting it to microscopic examination in order to time them.

There is no question that the Lord is coming again and that events happening now give many of us the feeling that his coming may be soon. Nevertheless, the early Christians believed the same thing. Therefore, strictly speaking, I should myself use the word *soon* with care when making a public statement. The broad principle which Paul lays down is that we should be so cognizant of what Scripture has to say about the purposes of God for this world that when something suddenly happens that is illuminated by Scripture, we should be able

to recognize it for what it is and rejoice. It becomes a signpost which is legible only when you are abreast of it. But when you are abreast of it, you must be able to read it, since it will not usually be self-evident. The Lord rebuked the Pharisees and the city of Jerusalem, because when the time was right upon them, they simply did not recognize "this time" (Luke 12:56) of all times!

There is a third and less happy aspect of this matter, namely, that prophecy is sometimes a "ministry of condemnation." Men and nations may be warned, and if they pay no heed to such warnings, they are without excuse when judgment comes.

In conclusion one might say that the purpose of prophecy was not at all to enable us to write history before it happens, but (1) to assure us that God is omnipotent; (2) to give us clues as to where we are in the outworking of God's plan; and (3) to leave men who refuse God's warning without excuse.

Perhaps it would help in keeping things straight if we were arbitrarily to adopt the semantic principle that we reserve the term *prediction* for the foretelling of the future by extrapolating from present events, and *prophecy* when the prevision of the future in no way depends upon the course of current events. Strictly speaking, then, prediction could be the work of man without reference to divine inspiration, whereas prophecy would be something that only men inspired by the Holy Spirit could presume to do.



Chapter 3

Prophetic Fulfillments That Are Irrefutable: Or, A Tale of Two Cities

1. The Destruction of Tyre

The city of Tyre, modern Sûr, was one of the most notable coastal cities of Palestine. The name appears to be related to a Hebrew word meaning "rock." It was a colony of Sidon, and in Isaiah 23:7, 12 it is called a "daughter of Sidon" and stated to be even then very old indeed. The site comprised a small rocky island about a half mile from the shore, and a stretch of equally rocky shore. The city grew up in both locations. Figure 7 is a map of these sites as originally constituted. The topography has a special significance much later in history, as will be seen. The date of its foundation is not certain, though it was obviously later than that of Sidon, which is frequently coupled with it.

Tyre's fame exceeded that of Sidon, and it became a trading city of very great importance in the ancient Middle East. Herodotus described a temple of Hercules there and says this was built about 2,300 years before his time – which would place the beginning of the city as at least 2,700 B.C. if we assume that the temple was not erected in isolation. By modern reckonings with respect to the date of Abraham, this means that Tyre already had a hoary history of perhaps a thousand years before the patriarch began his journey toward Palestine.

About one thousand years after Abraham, in 590 B.C., the city became the subject of a pronouncement by Ezekiel of its coming doom. The prophecy reads as follows (Ezekiel 26:3-5,12,14):

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up.

And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock.

It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations [...].

And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water [...].

And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

To understand the significance of these prophetic statements, it is important to know something of the nature of this ancient settlement.

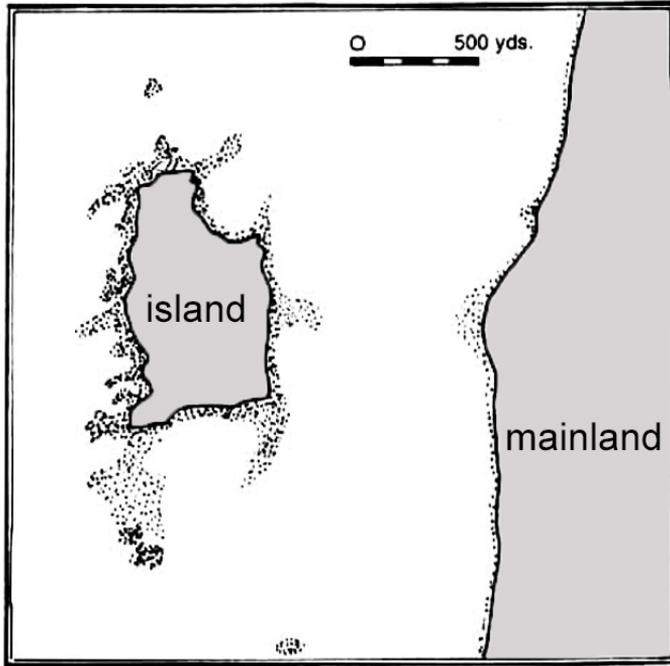


Figure 7. The island of Tyros in its original form.

It has not yet been determined whether the settlement along the coast or the one established on the island is the older of the two. The coastal city appears to have been extensive, stretching for a distance of some twenty miles along the shore, although only about seven miles of this constituted the city proper. The country around was fertile and well watered at first, but later it became necessary to bring more water in by an aqueduct, the destruction of which contributed to the downfall of the city. The island, on the other hand, as we have already noted, was quite small. A wall surrounded it which on the side facing the shore was 150 feet high; at each end of the island, north and south, was an excellent harbor, also fortified. The space within the surrounding wall was crowded with buildings which, because of the restricted land available, rose to a considerable height. The population may have reached as much as 40,000. During Roman times, though the city had been robbed of most of its might, there were still many-storied buildings in use.

Historical accounts of the time of the kings of Israel refer continually to Tyre and its powerful princes. One of these, Hiram, was a friend of both David and Solomon; the citizens of Tyre contributed their skills in the building of Solomon's

temple. In fact, Tyrians were always noted for their commercial activities and their technical achievements – and they were not given to war. They were traders and much preferred commerce to fighting. Isaiah 23:8 reports that their merchants were wealthy. They produced purple dyes, metal ware, and glassware; and like so many such people, they also trafficked in human beings (Joel 3:4-8; Amos 1:9,10). One of their trading posts, Carthage, in later years became a formidable rival to Rome.

Tyre's wealth excited the cupidity of successive oriental monarchs to whom from time to time they paid tribute for the privilege of being allowed to continue their way of life. In 877 B.C., both Tyre and Sidon submitted to the Assyrian Ashurbanipal and "sent him presents". Shalmanezar IV in 724 B.C. received the submission of the coastal city, but died before he could achieve the same from the island city, although in this case he was actually assisted by a Sidonian fleet. Sennacherib also brought the Tyrians into submission, but the city was not destroyed or plundered; after a checkered history involving Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, Tyre emerged with comparatively little harm and continued to enjoy great commercial prosperity with the decline of Assyria. According to Ezekiel 27, Tyre was soon trading with every country in the known world.

Nevertheless, Jeremiah prophesied Tyre's subjection under the Babylonians, whose empire succeeded the Assyrian (Jeremiah 27:1-11). In this prophecy, Jeremiah merely indicated that the Babylonian king should conquer the people of Tyre among other cities and countries round about. He added that those people who would submit under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him "will I let remain still in their own land, saith the LORD" (verse 11). Sidon submitted to Nebuchadnezzar and was accordingly treated with comparative mercy, its people being allowed to continue to occupy their land instead of being transported to Babylon, as was customary. But Tyre resisted.

It is not known for certain to what extent Tyre suffered from Nebuchadnezzar's attack which began in 585 B.C. Josephus tells us that Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city for thirteen years (*Contra Appion* 1.xxi), but exactly what happened at the end of the siege is not known.

The prophecy of Ezekiel (28:19 and 29:18-20) could be interpreted as meaning that the people were reduced to a sorry state, "every head made bald and every shoulder peeled" (29: 18). But it is virtually certain that during this long siege the people of Tyre little by little removed all their belongings – with their gold and silver and other treasures – across to the island. They had plenty of ships with which to make this transfer. Women and children were also evacuated. It has been suggested, therefore, that the above quotation from Ezekiel should be interpreted as a reference to the fact that the besieging soldiers were so long on the job as to have been chafed by their body armour and rendered bald by the passing of years!

This may seem far-fetched, but the fact is that because Nebuchadnezzar was performing a service for the Lord in bringing an end to an arrogant city, and because he evidently received no spoils from the city and therefore no payment for his service, he was given Egypt as a recompense. This statement will be found in Ezekiel 29:20. There was a Tyrian historian named Menander – who may have been biassed – who makes no record of actual plundering of the city by the king. Nevertheless, since he boasts about its resistance to Shalmanezar but not to Nebuchadnezzar, it seems by inference that the city must have capitulated in the

end. We now have only the authority of Jerome that Nebuchadnezzar found nothing worthy of his toil because it had all been transported. When the city fell, the nobility among the remaining inhabitants, unlike those of Sidon and in keeping with Jeremiah's prophecy, were taken away captive to Babylon. In subsequent years these same princes were from time to time invited by the Tyrians in the island city to come and reign over them, for this section of Tyre was never subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, but continued its commercial prosperity. Meanwhile, the coastal city was deserted and slowly fell into ruin, never again being resettled.

Almost three hundred years rolled by while the Tyrians plied their wares throughout the Mediterranean world. It seemed indeed unlikely that the old coastal city, which had long since tumbled into decay, would ever again be the object of a conqueror's interest. Normally one does not expect a deserted city to be "attacked." But Ezekiel's prophecy was not yet completely fulfilled: Tyre's stones, its timber, and the very dust of its deserted streets had certainly not been laid in the midst of the water. Nor did fishermen spread their nets to dry upon her tumbled columns.

Two hundred and forty years after Nebuchadnezzar's siege ended, Alexander the Great succeeded his father, Philip of Macedon, and at once began a tour of conquests throughout the Middle East—conquests unequalled for their speed of execution and masterful strategy, enormously heightened by the youthfulness of the young king himself. Marching into Asia Minor, conquering the mighty Persians and apparently quite invincible, he proceeded down the coast of Palestine until he reached the site of Tyre. This was now 333 B.C. Unwilling to pass on down into Egypt while leaving such a strongly fortified city with its powerful fleet in his rear, Alexander realized that somehow he must achieve mastery of the city.

Tyre was now a fortified island which it appeared could be captured only with the assistance of a fleet. The obvious fleet to use was that owned by the Tyrians themselves. So the young king politely requested permission to offer sacrifice to their main deity Melquath in the temple within the city walls. Nevertheless, the Tyrians realized that Alexander would not enter the city alone, but would take enough soldiers with him as a bodyguard that they would be in danger of being forced to surrender as soon as he had got within the walls. They rather sensibly refused his request.

With no fleet of his own and no possibility of capturing theirs, and with a greater determination than ever to subdue the city, Alexander at once set about entering the city by the only other means available to him—namely, the construction of a causeway from the shore to the island.

Materials were at hand in abundance. Spread along the shore facing toward the island were the ruined houses and palaces, temples and theatres of the old city which had been brought into ruin by Nebuchadnezzar. However, the task was no mean one. So great was the need for materials that the soldiers dragged timbers, columns, pieces of statuary, every single thing they could find to cast into the sea. At one point a great storm arose at sea and washed part of the mole away, much to the comfort of the Tyrians, who must have been assured that God was on their side. But the damage was repaired and the causeway was completed after seven months of diligent toil in which even the very dust of the city was scraped from the shore and thrown into the sea. In 332 B.C. Alexander entered the island city

and forever destroyed the insularity of the site of Tyre. According to Diodorus Siculus, eight thousand Tyrians fell fighting along the walls and another two thousand were crucified around the city by Alexander's soldiers. Women and children were sold as slaves to the number of at least thirty thousand. Alexander, after sacrificing to Melquath and establishing memorial games to be celebrated every five years (2 Maccabees 4:18), made a man named Baal-Amin, a member of the old royal house, regent of what remained of the desolated island city.

Tyre revived once more for a while and recovered some of its former prosperity. But little by little a long, slow decay set in until in modern times the population has dwindled to a few thousand. Our Lord visited the region (Matthew 15:21-31; Mark 7:24-31), and the people from the region occasionally attended on His ministry. Since those days, the island fortress passed from Moslem to Crusader and back into Moslem hands, and as a city of commerce it slowly passed into oblivion.

Such is the story of Tyre. What was once an island is now a peninsula, as shown in the map (Figure 8), the original causeway having served to trap drifting sand and debris, thus widening the connection with the shore. Today fishermen spread their nets on the proud ruins of Tyre, which barely rise above the waves: so has the prophecy of Ezekiel been fulfilled.

How unlikely it all was! What kind of human foresight would have enabled a man to foresee that a thriving city stretching for twenty miles along the shore, of which seven miles were densely populated and built up with large buildings, would one day be desolated and then laid in the midst of the sea, even its very dust? But it all came to pass. And the drama of these fulfilments is driven home in the illustration which has been given here (Figure 9) of fishermen actually spreading nets on Tyre's remains "in the midst of the sea."

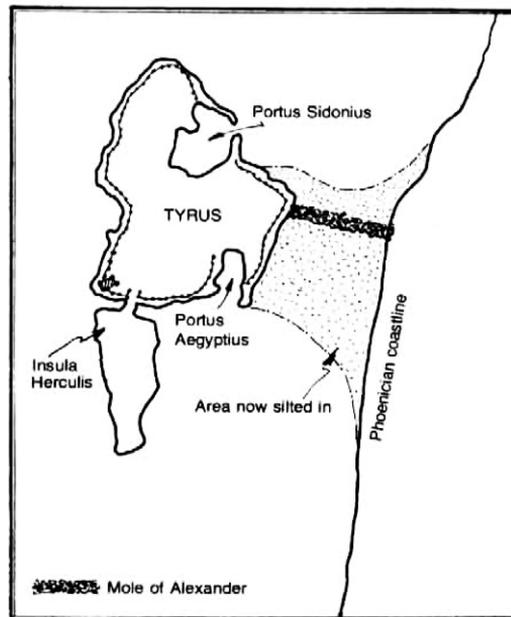


Figure 8. The peninsula of Tyre as it now is, showing also the ancient harbors.

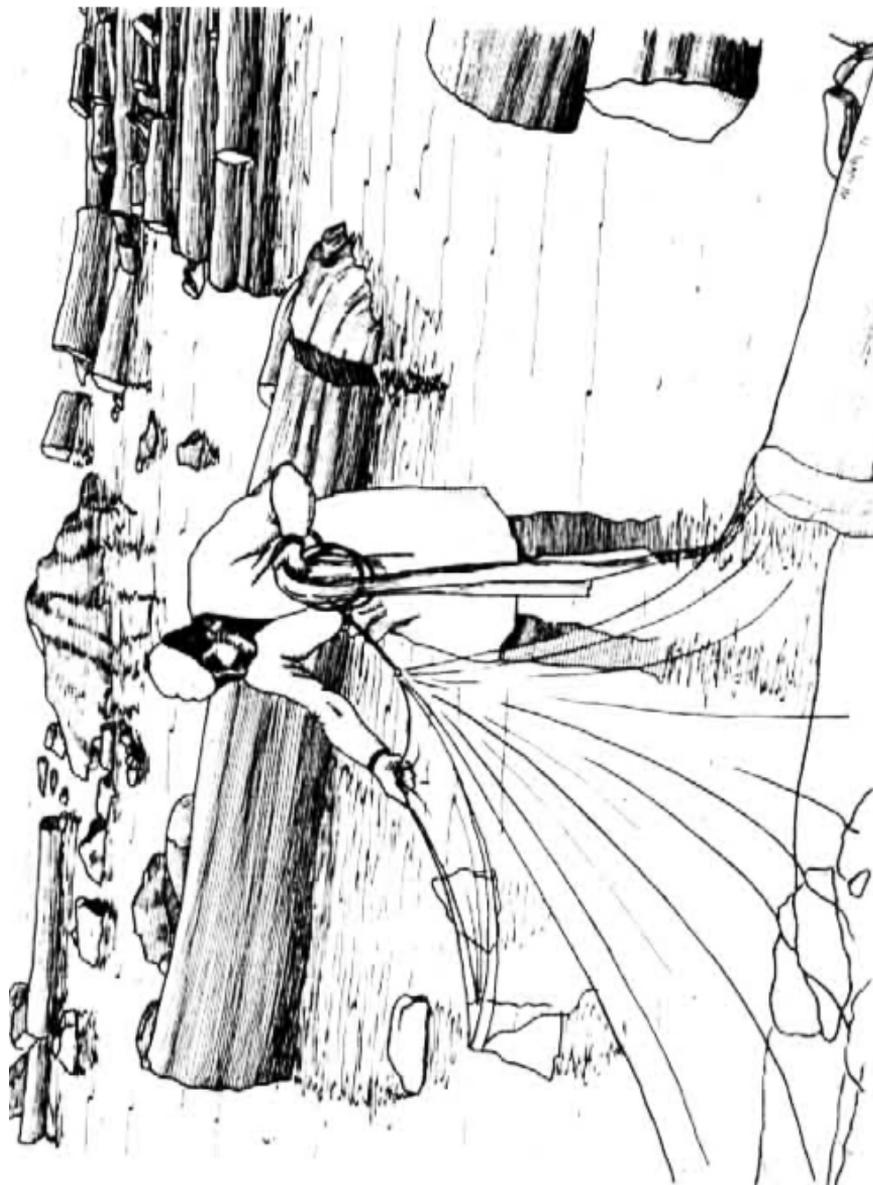


Figure 9. This drawing was taken from a photograph of a fisherman stretching his nets to dry on the remains of the coastal city of Tyre.

2. The Building of Jerusalem

In this "Tale of Two Cities," we have one set of prophecies concerned with the destruction of a city and a second set of prophecies concerned with the building of a city. Tyre was destroyed as foretold. The details of the "building" are just as specific and certainly as unforeseeable from a human point of view as were those governing the final eclipse of Tyre.

We shall consider four of the prophecies relating to the building of Jerusalem. In about 730 B.C., Micah wrote (3:12):

Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.

This prophecy was quoted by Jeremiah in about 609 B.C., but about three years later he added the following (31:38-40):

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner.

And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath.

And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.

About one hundred years later, Ezekiel made the following prophecy concerning Jerusalem (44:2):

Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.

Zechariah, one of the last prophets, wrote this prophecy concerning Jerusalem around 487 B.C. (14:10):

All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate, unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses.

All these prophecies have about them elements of surprise in the way in which they have been fulfilled so that it is scarcely possible for even the most sceptical listener, after being informed of the details, to suggest that such prophetic statements could ever have resulted merely from keen insight with regard to the future history of the city, or a happy coincidence turning a wild guess into an established fact.

The first statement has to do with "Zion," a name by which Jerusalem was often known in Old Testament times, and it will be well to undertake a brief survey of the known history of it. That Zion should be plowed as a field—even to this day—will then be seen in its proper light as a most extraordinary circumstance.

There is little doubt that the topography of the site of Jerusalem has been modified radically in one respect. These modifications go a long way toward explaining how it comes about that what is now a gently sloping expanse of plowed field and farmland falling away southward outside the walls of the present city was at one time the site of a notable stronghold built upon a hill, variously referred to as the Hill of Zion or Mount Zion or the Hill of Ophel.

In Figure 10 we have redrawn from several sources, and with the help of some details provided by Josephus, what was apparently the topography of Jerusalem when it was occupied only by a Jebusite fortress. This fortress was so strongly fortified that David had considerable difficulty in capturing it; indeed he succeeded, not by a frontal attack, but probably by making use of a passage which the Jebusites had cut through the solid rock leading from within the walls to an intermittent spring. The spring, Gihon, which was of fundamental importance to the citizens, was outside the city walls (2 Samuel 5:8). David made this fortress his headquarters, and to the north of the site across a small valley he built his palace and planned the temple which Solomon later erected.

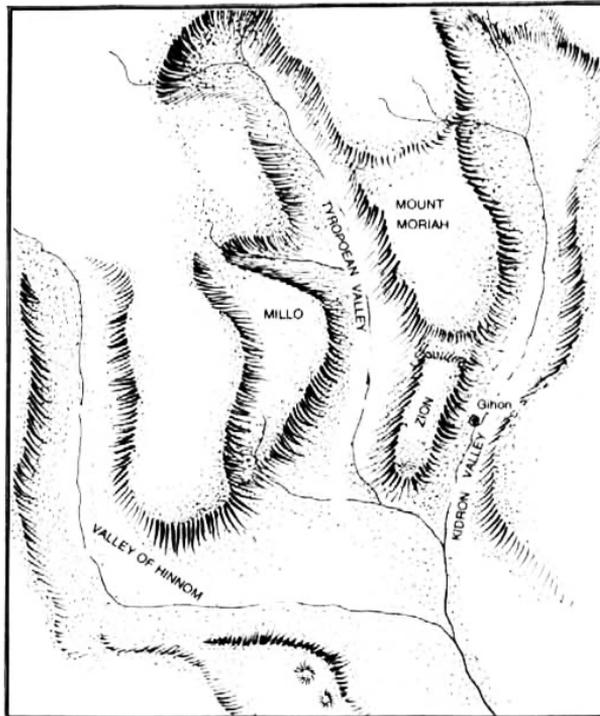


Figure 10. Probable topography of the site of Jerusalem.

Looking at an aerial view of modern Jerusalem, such as is shown in Figure 11, one sees to the south of the temple precincts the gentle slope leading down from the city wall and ending at the junction of the Tyropoeon Valley and the Kidron Valley. It is exceedingly difficult to visualize a slope of this kind being so strongly fortified as to defy not only David but many others who had attacked it. All around there now exist higher hills, and especially Mount Moriah, upon which the temple stands. In this aerial photograph the supposed boundaries of the Jebusite fortress which afterward came to be called the City of David and Mount Zion are indicated with a broken white line.

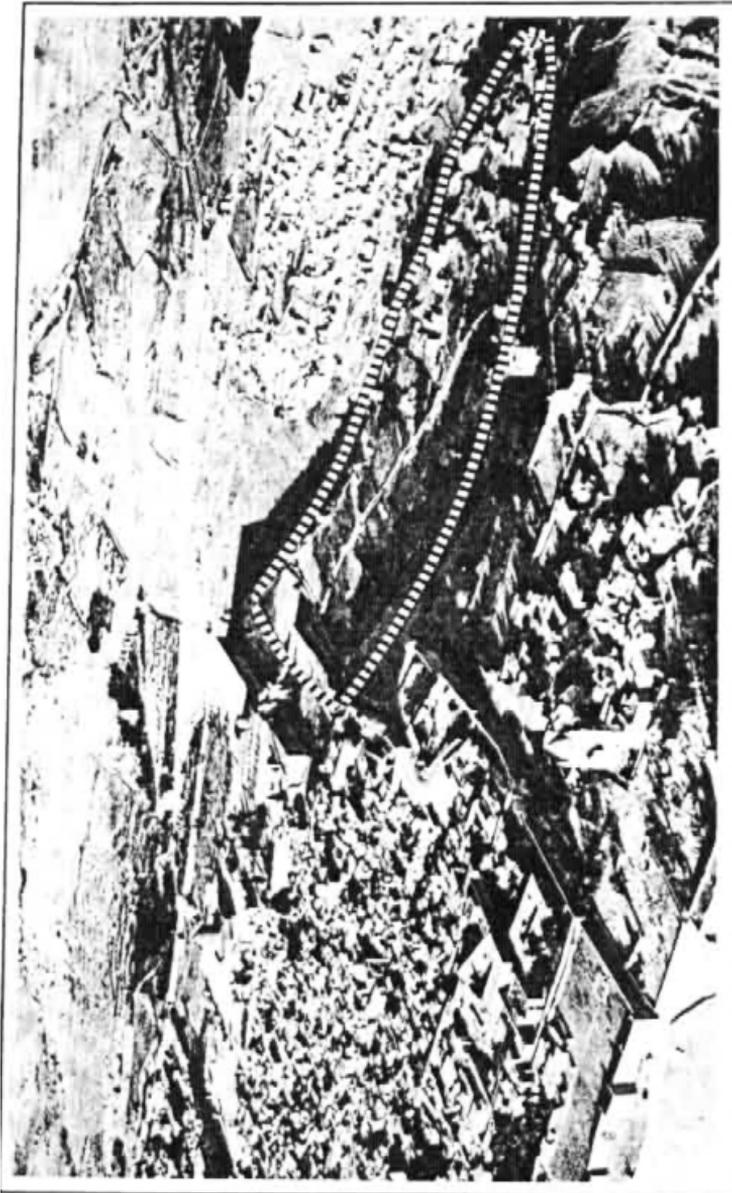


Figure 11. Aerial view of Jerusalem, with the site of ancient Zion marked by the dotted line.

A study of how this site came to assume the form it now has is instructive, since it shows how utterly unlikely it was that Zion should be uninhabited in the future and plowed as a field. It will be seen that Micah was rather like a man who looking at Manhattan Island and seeing it as the very hub of a capital city – upon whose site and in whose buildings were accumulated the traditional wealth and most treasured memories of a people whose history already stretched back over a thousand years -- was bold enough to say: "This island will become a mud flat with not a building upon it and virtually valueless as a piece of real estate."

A prophet who would stake his reputation upon such a prediction would not be taken very seriously by people who had strong emotional ties with the site in question and who knew it as one of the busiest sections of the city, crowded with people and buildings and strongly fortified. Yet, if allowance is made for the fact that the wealth of Jerusalem was not measured in money, it might be said that Micah's prediction was all the more unlikely: for people with a long history tend to treasure sites sacred to that history even more highly than sites which are only economically valuable.

David's city grew to the north and then to the northwest, encompassing more and more territory as the centuries rolled by. This is indicated in Figure 12. In plan C it will be noticed, however, that the city of David is no longer a separate, fortified entity. How does this come about? Archaeology has revealed that this area of presently plowed land contains a number of deeply buried foundations of structures which must once have formed part of the defence of the original city. Until these remains were uncovered, tourists were conducted to the *western* hill which is across the Tyropoean Valley to see the sights of Zion, the traditional city of David. It is now known that this was a mistake. When David attacked the fortress held by the Jebusites, he evidently made a breach in the north wall, a wall which must have run parallel to the wall that now marks the southern boundary of the temple site on Mount Moriah. The other three sides of the fortress were too high to be scaled; but here at the north end of a valley, of which there is no longer any evidence and which was not nearly so deep as the Tyropoean or Kidron valleys, the wall was not so high. But since both David and Solomon speak subsequently of going *up* to the temple, one must assume that the Jebusite fortress, which David left much as it was when it became his capital, was slightly lower than Mount Moriah.

One might ask, Why did the Jebusites choose a site dominated by higher ground to the north? The answer is that Mount Ophel or Zion was still clearly defined and therefore could be strongly fortified. And it had this paramount advantage over all other sites in the area, namely, an excellent water supply in the spring Gihon at its southern foot. This spring apparently welled up intermittently, and by means of a conduit, the Jebusites had been able to guarantee themselves a supply of water by dropping a passageway through the solid rock from within the walls to meet this underground system. These engineering works have all been excavated.

In the time of the Maccabees, when fanaticism rendered the temple site doubly precious, the city of David (which with the passing of the years had raised in level as other eastern cities did until it actually dominated the temple site) proved on more than one occasion to be a potential hazard where defence of the temple itself was concerne

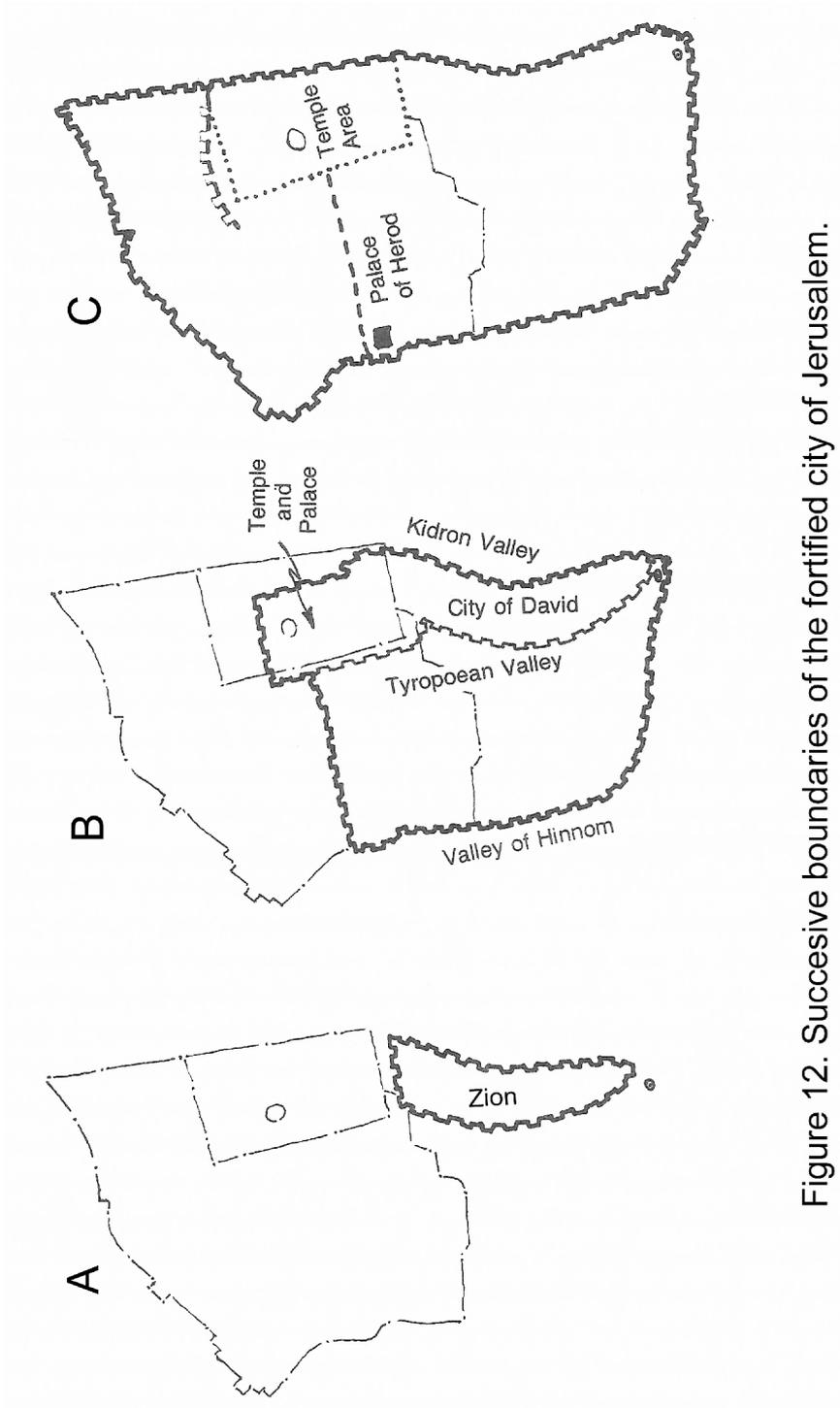


Figure 12. Successive boundaries of the fortified city of Jerusalem.

Accordingly it was decided by Simon Maccabee, high priest from 141 to 135 B.C. – who was both powerful and popular – that the ancient citadel of David should be removed and the very Mount of Ophel upon which it stood should be cut down until it stood below the level of the temple site. The Jews were called together, and the people, acknowledging the wisdom of Simon's proposal, set themselves to work and levelled the mountain! According to Josephus (*Antiquities* xiii, 7:7), working day and night without intermission, the people took three whole years to complete the undertaking. After this the temple was the highest of all buildings, and its site considerably higher than the surrounding territory. In this process of levelling off, the top of the hill was moved mainly toward the south, leaving a gentle slope and burying a lot of the old foundations. The small valley in between also disappeared completely.

So began the series of events which led to the complete fulfilment of Micah's prophecy. But not immediately. For the site was again occupied, and according to Josephus was still quite thickly populated between A.D. 40 and 70.

The final chapter in the dereliction of the site began with the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70. The people who dwelt in this part of the metropolis fled into the city or into the country. It is not certain whether Titus actually destroyed the deserted buildings of Zion; he may in fact have made use of them during the siege. At any rate, Jerusalem itself suffered a frightful devastation, and the slaughter of its people was unimaginably great.

The temple itself – though Titus actually tried to preserve it against being destroyed – was nevertheless put to fire. Its vast treasures were plundered, and as much as possible of the gold sheeting which covered the walls and doors and columns was removed by the soldiers. However, the heat of the fire was so intense that much of the gold was melted and ran between the stones of the building, which had been laid without mortar. For the next twenty-five years or more, men continued to pry these stones apart, one by one, to obtain the gold which they knew had run between them. And thus it came about the Lord's words were exactly fulfilled: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another" (Matthew 24:2).

But the nationalism of the remnant of the Jewish people once more led them to hope against hope that they could overwhelm the Roman garrison which had been left to guard what remained of the city and its people. They were incited to a fresh attempt to set up a free state by a man named Bar Kokhba, who pretended to be the Messiah. At this time the Romans were under the emperor Hadrian, who seems to have been one of the more benevolent emperors. But the Romans had had enough and it was decided that the city must be completely destroyed and so reconstructed as a new city with a different name, embellished with pagan temples, and dedicated to Jupiter in such a way that the old associations would be altogether obliterated. The Jews were rigorously excluded from the site. In A.D. 135, the rebellion having been put down and the city virtually levelled to the ground, Hadrian began the construction of a new city which was to be called "Aelia Capitolina." According to the Jerusalem Talmud (Ta'anith 4), the actual temple site was plowed by one named T. Annius Rufus.

Hadrian died in 138, and his adopted son, Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus, carried on the construction of the new Roman colony. An inscription of his has been preserved on a stone which was used as second-hand material some two hundred years later by Julian, who attempted to rebuild the temple.

At any rate, this new city was well fortified with a surrounding wall which, for part of its course—especially to the north and around the temple site—followed the old city wall. But on the south it appears to have been built along a line which marked where the defences of the Roman garrison were situated during the rebuilding of the city. The old city of David, the Jerusalem of many Old Testament passages, now lay completely outside the city walls and without any defences whatever, the great majority of its buildings being in a state of ruin.

Time completed the process. Little by little, open spaces between ruined buildings were cultivated and extended until they joined. Today it is occupied by plowed fields.

Between the prophecy of Micah in 730 B.C. and the fulfilment of this most unlikely prediction, a series of events occurred which surely nobody but God Himself could possibly have foreseen.

But the story of these disastrous times is not completed yet, for Hadrian's fortifications in the centuries that followed suffered with the ravages of time. What is now known as the Golden Gate was in such a state of dangerous disrepair by the time of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent that it no longer formed a gate at all. The road leading up to it—what at one time was probably a street connected to its inside entrance—had long since disappeared. It stood only as a seriously weak spot in the defences that still remained to the city, and in A.D. 1534 the sultan walled it up completely. In fact it appears to have been filled in across the entire depth of the wall.

The significance of this fact is that, although the superstructure is of later date, the foundations are undoubtedly those of the gate through which Christ entered Jerusalem in triumph a few days before his crucifixion. The gate by which the Lord, the God of Israel, entered in is now shut. And there is one circumstance which guarantees that the gate will never be opened as a thoroughfare again—as complete a guarantee as is conceivable. All along the wall at this section is a graveyard. For four hundred years it has been closed—closed by the act of a man who most assuredly had no intention of contributing to the fulfilment of prophecy. And the dead keep watch around it as though to assure the living that when God closes, no man opens. It is difficult to think of any other circumstance that could so effectively and so simply seal this gate against the future while leaving the structure so obviously what it really is for all to see.

So much for the past.

What of the future of this historic city? If any modern real estate agent had had the confidence that Jeremiah had in the word of the Lord as he pronounced it in chapter 31:38-40, he might have made a "killing" indeed. For Jerusalem has gradually been built up, tracing out exactly the lines which are here predicted. The extraordinary thing is that the most historic portion of the city, namely the "city of David"—which one might have supposed would be of prime interest in any long-range view of the city's development—is omitted from consideration altogether. By contrast, the ultimate growth of the city is predicted as moving toward the northwest, which encompassed among other things the Valley of Dead Bodies which would not normally be thought of as having a bright future in the real estate world.

In Jeremiah's time, the city seemed undoubtedly to be moving toward the south. But from Roman times onward, seven hundred years after Jeremiah, it

began a growth toward the north which in recent years has been greatly accelerated until his prophecy is now almost completely fulfilled. An excellent description of how this has come about is given by George T. V. Davis in his little book *Rebuilding Palestine According to Prophecy*. In Figure 13 we have provided a drawing of his map of ancient and modern Jerusalem in which each of the places mentioned by Jeremiah is identified. The arrows indicate the direction in which its growth has taken place. This map is taken from *Fulfilled Prophecies that Prove the Bible* by the same author.

Let us repeat Jeremiah's words: "[...] the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about [shall swing around] to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the field unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate towards the east [...]." As Davis rightly says, here is an Israelitish prophet daring to predict, with the precision of a surveyor, the exact building development in a great city which was not witnessed until hundreds of years after his words were penned. No other writer outside the Bible has ever attempted such a thing.

The first fact to notice about this prophecy is that the building of the city from the Tower of Hananeel to the Gate of the Corner, which was the Jaffa Gate, took place centuries ago and was in fact completed in our Lord's time. It was therefore part of the Holy City in a stricter sense, and the phrase "shall be built to the LORD" has added significance. This then was the first step in the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy. On the map which we have adapted from Davis there is a series of arrows moving counterclockwise and enclosing this area. A wall was built around this portion of the site by Nehemiah (about 445 B.C. – some 150 years after Jeremiah). This wall was known as the "second wall". Its original course is not absolutely certain, but all maps available to us indicate a fortification sweeping around much as is shown in Figure 13. Whatever uncertainties exist in this aspect of the matter, there is no uncertainty that Jeremiah exactly predicted the initial steps in the city's ultimate growth.

The next steps of development came much later. The "measuring line" was to "go forth over against it" (Jeremiah 31:39), a phrase which I think is intended to mean adjacent to it – the *it* being the previous stage of development, upon the Hill Gareb. After this, the line of buildings was to swing clockwise in a circuit ("shall compass about") to Goath. Included in this circuit of development were to be two rather unlikely sites, the Valley of Dead Bodies and the Valley of the Ashes. Both are indicated on the map. The circuit was completed when it had once more reached around unto the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east.

There is still a difference of opinion as to the location of Goath. Even Grollenberg's *Atlas of the Bible* (1957) states only that it was near Jerusalem. Davis says it is commonly accepted by those well-acquainted with the modern city of Jerusalem that Goath was some little distance west of the Hill Gareb, i.e., toward Jaffa (or ancient Joppa). At any rate, a new suburb has quickly built up in this district which previously was almost worthless land; a large tract of it was formerly owned by an orphanage, but has since been sold for millions of dollars.

The city then developed toward the Place of the Ashes, a great heap which probably represents the remains of animals used for temple sacrifices. The Valley

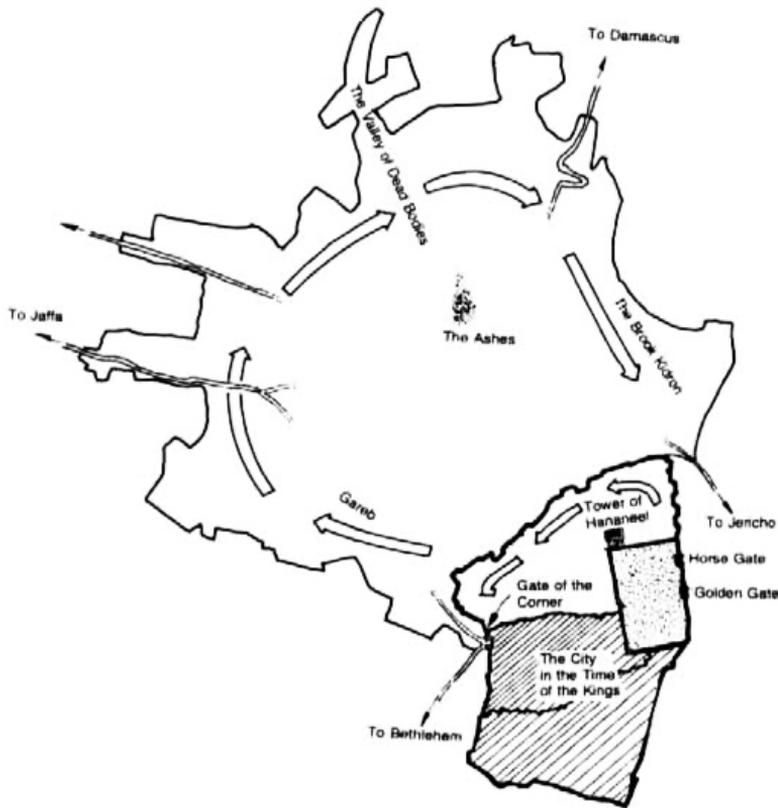


Figure 13. The growth of ancient and modern Jerusalem.

of Dead Bodies soon experienced the same development, as did also the land lying to the east encompassing all the fields stretching right up to the Brook Kidron and down again toward the old city and the Horse Gate.

The greater part of modern Jerusalem lies outside the walls of the old city that Jeremiah knew. Davis states that a few years ago the then president of the Chamber of Commerce in Jerusalem told him how only three years before a man had purchased less than an acre of land near the Hill Gareb for \$45,000; and only three years later refused an offer of \$145,000 for it. He mentions also a Christian Arab businessman in the city who with some partners bought a tract of land outside the city walls around 1925 paying \$80,000 for it. He and his friends built their homes there and found that ten years later the value of their property had increased to \$800,000.

How many men witnessing these events must have wished indeed that they had only had faith to trust the Word of God. That such has *not* been the case is both remarkable and instructive: apparently no real estate fortunes have actually

been made by exercising this kind of faith. One wonders why. The truth is, I think -- and this is why I suggest it is instructive -- that God somehow conceals many clearly stated prophetic truths from our vision until the event has been fulfilled. Neither the Jewish people as a whole nor the disciples themselves recognized at the time how completely the events of Jesus' life were fulfilling clear, straightforward prophetic statements. Only afterward did it become obvious.

To me, this is a reminder that we cannot predict the time before it comes, though we may be able to tell it in the passing of it.



Epilogue

Here, then, we have some predictions made about two cities in the Middle East, one of them to be torn down and the other to be built up. The circumstances surrounding the fulfillments of these predictions are such that the argument for the reality of fulfilled prophecies is proved to be perfectly valid as a clear demonstration that the men who set them down were instructed by One who had complete foreknowledge.

The evidence cannot be undermined by any of the usual "explanations" which are brought forward by those who argue against such things. There is, for example, no question of literary deceit in which, after the events had transpired, the pretended predictions about them are put back into the mouth of a prophet who is supposed to have lived long before. This would be prediction after the event.

For example, Higher Critics—partly because they make the assumption that prophecy in any specific sense is not possible—argue that Daniel's vision of four successive world empires (Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman) was really written by someone who lived after these powers had already appeared and then put back into Daniel's mouth so as to strengthen the faith of his Jewish brethren by proposing that these events were part of God's purposes and were fully foreseen. These "visions" were really penned, we are told, when the last world empire was already in the making and the other three had already passed into history. If one were to use Daniel's visions and their subsequent fulfilment as proof of the reality of fulfilled prophecy, it is almost certain that someone in the audience would raise the Higher Critics' objection, and a useless argument would result that would probably completely undermine the whole purpose of presenting the evidence in the first place. That is not the case with these two cities.

Second, the possibility that such prophecies as these were what might be called "inspired guesses" which happened to turn out to be correct is surely excluded. For example, in Luke 21:24 the Lord said, "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." To the Christian who needs no convincing, "trodden down" was a prophecy that has been fulfilled to the letter many times in the last two thousand years. To the non-Christian, it might well be taken merely as the insight of a wise man who could see that by its very position in the Middle East, at a kind of crossroads between world powers ranged around it, the city was almost bound to be subject to such vicissitudes. Again, the illustrations we have used are remarkable for their very unlikelihood.

Third, the events that transpired to bring about the exact fulfilment of these prophecies were, most assuredly, not deliberately undertaken in order to guarantee their fulfilment. It is hardly necessary to illustrate this further. The only

possible exception might have been the circumstances which led to the modern growth of Jerusalem: but as we have seen, the very people most likely to profit by deliberately sponsoring its fulfilment would be those desiring to exploit real estate values. And apparently these people did not—except in one or two cases, and rather by accident than design—make a "killing" when they might easily have done so. It does not appear that any group of people gambled on this prophecy in order to make money. All those who contributed to the fulfilment of the prophecies studied here did so apparently with no other intent than the expedient of achieving an immediate objective each of them had in view at the time.

Fourth, the original prophetic statements are so clear and straightforward that there is absolutely no question as to their having been specifically fulfilled in the events described. Not a few prophecies in the Old Testament take such a veiled form that a hostile mind might well object that the claim to their fulfilment could be argued at several different points in history. For example, Isaiah (7:14) declared that a virgin should conceive and that before the child should come to know the difference between right and wrong, the ruling king would be deposed. Every believer holds with the New Testament that this was ultimately fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ. But it may be argued that Isaiah's immediate reference was to a young child to be born of an unmarried girl living in his own day, for otherwise it could not possibly be a sign to Ahaz. It is, in fact, one of the reasons why the word translated "virgin" has also the meaning of an unmarried woman. Quite a few important prophecies have this element of dual fulfilment, so that if one wanted to, one might say they were really not very specific and might indeed have been fulfilled even more than twice. The prophecies we have illustrated are not subject to this criticism.

Finally, the fulfilment is there for anyone to see who has the means and the will to undertake the journey. The columns of Tyre lie in the water, and fishermen spread their nets. One can walk over the plowed ground which once was Zion. One can explore the suburbs of revived Jerusalem and observe for oneself the exact lines of its growth. Many specific prophecies were unmistakably fulfilled by the events of our Lord's life, but we have no proof of this except in the Gospels: and it is only begging the issue to expect this kind of evidence of fulfilled prophecy to be acceptable, since the proof of fulfilment is drawn from the very Scripture which we are trying to validate. It is analogous to defining a word with the word itself in the definition. The prophecies explored in this Paper require no more than the reasonable use of one's critical faculties in evaluating the evidence presented.

We are left, therefore, with no other alternative than to assume that a real communication took place between God and man—a communication which involved much more than merely a vague sense that God "is speaking to one" in the kind of way that poets and others say God speaks to them in Nature. In other words, there is a real possibility that the normally accepted channels for passing information and acquiring knowledge which exist in the natural order of things today is not the only means available. If this is true, it would surely be folly not to make at least some effort to explore personally the implications of some of the other prophetic statements which God has assured us will come true in the experience of any individual who fulfills the conditions.

These too are prophecies. Speaking of man's heart, Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come

in and will sup with him and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20). This is a promise of the closest possible fellowship within. And Jesus also said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).



Part IV

SOME REMARKABLE BIBLICAL CONFIRMATIONS FROM ARCHAEOLOGY

[Doorway Paper #39, first issued 1963]

As a matter of fact [...] it may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of Biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries. They form *tesserae* in the vast mosaic of the Bible's almost incredibly correct historical memory.

Nelson Glueck,
Rivers in the Desert,
Farrar, Strauss & Cudahy,
New York, 1959, p.31

Introduction

The arrangement of this Paper will no doubt strike the reader as a little odd. We start with Abraham, follow the threads of evidence from archaeology until the children of Israel capture Jericho, and then return to pre-Abrahamic days, to a consideration of events in reverse order leading back to the time of Adam and Eve. It may well be doubted whether there is such a thing as archaeological evidence going back this far, but in the context of this Paper what evidence there is may, I think, quite properly be referred to as archaeological. Now, what exactly is the purpose of presenting the evidence in this strange way?

The object of this Paper is rather more specific than merely to provide in small compass a review of the discoveries of the past seventy-five years or so which have demonstrated so clearly that the Higher Critics were completely wrong in the postulates upon which they erected their devastating theories. Nor is its purpose merely to entertain or inform by setting forth the remarkable way in which the minutest details of the biblical record have stood up whenever they could be checked against our new knowledge of antiquity. While both these objectives are good and while both have frequently been fulfilled ably by others¹ in recent years, there remains one question which has not yet been dealt with explicitly in such works. The question cannot yet be answered with completeness, but once it has been stated clearly it becomes apparent that we do have some light, and a careful search will undoubtedly increase this light. In the meantime, what we do know should be set forth as fully as possible because it is a well-known fact that a little light leads the way to further gains as people observe what it is that should be searched for. What, then, is the question?

It can be introduced in the following way. When considering the events recorded in the Old Testament, it has generally been assumed that, by some kind of evolutionary principle, the ability of historians to set forth the facts as they really are without the introduction of fantasy and myth (and deliberate falsehood) has increased with the passing of time. Hence, one may have more confidence in those portions of the Old Testament which are late in point of time than one can have in the earlier portions. Operating within the framework of this kind of philosophy, the Higher Critics and others attached less and less credence to the Bible as they reviewed its earlier and earlier statements, until they reached the logical conclusion that Adam and Eve were pure myth.

But what happened when archaeologists began to dig? They actually began to find that more light was thrown by the spade upon the earlier portions of

1. For example, Joseph Free, *Archaeology and Bible History*, Scripture Press Publications Wheaton, Illinois, 1962; Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1954. Also, George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible*, American Sunday School Union, Philadelphia, numerous editions since 1916, which is valuable because it contains a large number of translations of ancient texts and tablets, but favours some Higher Critical views.

Scripture than upon the later portions. In fact, not long ago we knew more about the customs and habits of people in and about the time of Abraham than we knew about England in the Dark Ages. The progress of civilization led to the development of ways of recording events which were increasingly more convenient and handier, but less permanent. And the absolute monarchies of earliest times which were slowly replaced by more democratic governments made possible the erection of public works far more lasting than those of subsequent generations. The earlier tombs and temples and pyramids of Egypt tell us far more than the later ones, and the same may be said – generally speaking – of other parts of the Middle East. The consequence of this has been that most remarkable confirmations of seemingly incidental elements in the life histories of such people as Abraham and Joseph and Moses have in the providence of God been preserved from antiquity while the lives of later notables in the biblical record have received far less illumination.

Now, if we find that the very first patriarchs emerge with increasing clarity as real live persons whose biographies are now patently simple unadulterated fact, how far back beyond their days are we justified in saying that at this point in history we are beginning to enter the period of non-history? If Abraham was as real as he now appears to be, what about Noah? And if the same must be said of Noah, what about Lamech? Are these pre-diluvian patriarchs creations of someone's imagination – or real people? Beyond Lamech we discern Enoch, after whom the first city was named. Beyond him we stand in the presence of Cain – one generation removed from the very beginnings of humanity. Where, in this chain of people and their doings, do we lose contact with sane, sober history? A very large number of quite conservative scholars begin at this point to evade the issue. They admit freely that the reality of Abraham is unquestionable and that the events of his life are now certified beyond reasonable doubt. But when they turn their thoughts back several generations to Adam, he appears to them much less of an individual like ourselves – as though a hiatus in the record existed, creating an immense gap between the two. But Scripture is unaware of this gap, and not one of those who claim that modern anthropology demands a gap of some sort has ever been willing to specify exactly where it is.²

Although the evidence for those periods antedating Abraham is less substantiated than it is for those periods which follow his appearance, it is nonetheless not without importance. For what it is worth – and its worth will depend upon the bias of the reader to some extent – this evidence forms an essential part of this Paper.

For myself, I am fully persuaded that except for the uniqueness of his original constitution – a constitution which must have made him vastly superior in many respects to all his descendants – Adam was no less a person than Abraham. The events recorded of Adam's life and those of his descendants are to be taken as not less completely historical than those of the later patriarchs, for most assuredly the words and phrases and whole tenor of the record differs in no way from that of later portions of Genesis.



2. This fact is readily acknowledged by Bernard Ramm, for example, in *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1954, p.327.

Chapter 1

Abraham and His Princess

Along with Adam and Noah, Abraham surely stands out in one's imagination as a giant, head and shoulders above his contemporaries. He moved across the stage of history with the quiet dignity of a prince among men, men who knew his stature so well that he himself never felt the need (except in one circumstance) to protect himself.

Abraham's story occupies slightly over thirteen chapters of the Book of Genesis, a space greater than that given to anyone else³ and which in this context is more important still, consisting of a record filled with circumstantial details of such a nature that the possibilities of mis-statement, or the introduction of fictitious events and customs, of anachronous local colouring, and of wrongly identified or related individuals, are almost unlimited. Yet archaeology has confirmed or shed light upon these details in every particular. The confident assertions once made by the Higher Critics that Abraham was probably a fictitious figure (since his name had not appeared in any ancient inscriptions) have been proved completely wrong. The details of his life which were supposedly the invention of fertile minds who sought to give dignity to the "founder" of their own nation, the Jewish people, have been set in their true historical perspective. Time and again details of this record were declared to be in error. But no sooner had such positive declarations been made than God seems to have delighted to confound the experts by allowing the discovery of some evidence which not merely demonstrated the correctness of the narrative but even proved that the record itself must have been written at the time, since the circumstances shortly after were altered. This can be illustrated for several incidents in the life of Abraham.

Although this is not strictly the starting point of Abraham's story, I should like to begin with his stay in Haran. It is customary to look upon his stay here as an example of partial obedience. The Lord called him to go into the Promised Land, we are told; but he went only halfway. This may be a justifiable interpretation perhaps, but the text itself seems rather to indicate that Terah, his father, was the one who decided to make the first move. In Hebrews 11:8 it is said that Abraham, when he was called to go into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed. Genesis 12:1 indicates that the "call" came rather when Abraham was already in Haran rather than when he was in Ur. The text of

3. This is true if we exclude that portion of the text associated with Moses, which is really only a record of instructions given to him and by him and not strictly biographical material.

Genesis 11:31 reads, "And Terah took Abram his son and Lot [...] and Sarai [...]; and they went forth from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there."

Now, Haran was not just a city like any other city, but had a special significance for the traveller, a significance underscored by the fact that Haran bore a unique relationship to the city of Ur. In the first place, the name , Kahar-ra-nu, is not Semitic, being a derivation from the Sumerian word, *Kharran* meaning "a road".⁴ In a bilingual vocabulary this word is given as an equivalent of the Assyrian words *Daragu* and *Metik*, the first being related to the Hebrew , meaning "a road" or "a way"; and the second related to a further Hebrew word, , which means "to transfer", in the sense of transport. Kharranu is also an ideographic reading of the sign , the ancient form of which was , clearly representing a crossroads. It was, therefore, a city which derived its name because it lay on one of the great road junctions of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley and other roads from the north and west. Even today, from its various gateways roads branch off to Mosul, to Diarbeker, Berijik via Ofra to Balis and other places. In ancient times the roads from Carchemish and Nineveh and Babylon all met here.

But even more important, though these circumstances would be quite sufficient to explain why Terah settled here, is the fact that it was chiefly noted in ancient times as being the site of a well-known temple of the Moon-god, *Sin* – the same deity that was the divine patron of Ur. This temple was called , Bit-Khul-Khul, which is taken to mean "The House of Great Brightness", the reduplication being intended to signify superlative light. A cylinder of Nabonidus of Babylon, who was the father of Beltshazzar of Daniel's time, refers to it as "The House of Sin Which is Within the City of Kharran". He has occasion to mention it because he records his restoration of it. We find, therefore, a very close link of a special kind (i.e., religious) between Ur and Haran, so that Terah who worshiped this deity found himself very much at home.⁵

However, this is still not the whole story. For although one has a picture of gross paganism and obscene forms of worship associated with all Babylonian religions, there is evidence from an inscription of Nabonidus that even in his time, many centuries later, there were still men who saw through the corrupted outward forms an inner sublime truth. It was as though, as Paul put it in Romans 1:28, they held the truth (the Greek even allows the word *retained*) in unrighteousness, i.e., they still maintained fragments of an earlier pure faith encrusted with the corrupting influences of later centuries. At any rate, the

4. This is dealt with interestingly by W. St. Chad Boscawen, "Historical Evidences of the Migration of Abram," *Transactions of the Victorian Institute*, vol. 20, 1886, p.117-18. The information given is most complete.

5. There was a time when it was held by scholars that the Hebrew people originated not in Mesopotamia, Abraham's birthplace, but in Arabia. I do not believe that this latter view is any longer held with much conviction. Linguistic evidence is positively against it. For example, the Arabic word for "ostrich" is *na'am*, and Arabia is the home of this creature. But the Hebrew word for ostrich is *ya'en*. Similarly, the wild ox is called in Hebrew *re'em* which appears in Assyrian as *remu*. This word is also found in Arabic, but here it is applied to a quite different animal. The explanation of this is probably that the Hebrews and Assyrians shared the word for the same animals, but the Arabs, emigrating from a country such as Babylonia, carried the name with them into their new land but, finding no wild oxen there, applied it to another animal. See John Urquhart, *Modern Discoveries and the Bible*, Marshall Brothers, London, 1898, pp.311 ff. and 323 ff.

following prayer, the author of which was none other than Nabonidus himself, was found in the ruins of the temple of the moon-god, at Ur:

Oh Sin, Lord of the Gods, King of the Gods of Heaven and Earth, [and] God of the Gods who inhabit the heavens, the mighty ones, for this temple with joy at thy entrance, may thy lips establish the blessing of Bit Sagila, Bit Zida, and Bit Giz-nugal, the temples of thy great divinity. Set the fear of thy great divinity in the hearts of his people that they err not; for thy great divinity may their foundations remain firm like the Heavens. As for me, Nabonidus, King of Babylon, preserve me from sinning against thy great divinity, and grant me the gift of a life of long days; and plant in the heart of Bel-sarra-utzur [Belshazzar], the eldest son, the offspring of my heart, reverence for thy great divinity, and never may he incline to sin. With fulness of life may he be satisfied.⁶

Such, then, at a much later date was the spirit of one man worshipping in Ur and restoring a temple to this God of Gods in Haran. Long before, the spirit of worship may have had even purer and clearer light both in Ur and Haran, so that perhaps Abraham was not brought up altogether without the influences of some quite devout worship. And perhaps the very grossness and depravity of Canaanite religion, which would presumably be much better known among the people of Haran who were closer to it than the people of Ur a thousand miles away, discouraged Terah from going any further. But when Terah died in Haran, then the call came to Abraham to undertake by faith what his father had feared to do.

Abraham then set out from Haran taking with him his family and servants. Like Paul, he was a citizen of no mean city. The civilizations of both Ur and Haran were complex and well-developed. He was a city dweller originally and not unnaturally, therefore, he looked not for a country but for a city (Hebrews 11:10). His first settlement in the Land of Promise appears to have been uneventful and fairly brief, being terminated by a famine which led him to journey on into Egypt. As he entered this ancient land, he realized that his wife, being such a beautiful woman, might be a source of danger to himself since he supposed that some of the Egyptians in authority with whom he expected to do business would desire her for themselves and might take steps to have himself put out of the way.

Looking at a picture of women in Palestine of not so long ago who were veiled so that only their eyes show, one might wonder how the Egyptians would be able to "look upon her" and "see her". The critics jumped on this immediately and said, "This is a fairy story, a projection from a much later age when women had more freedom." The fact is that the monuments show that the later customs of the East were not those of ancient Egypt, whose women moved about freely and did not conceal their faces. Indeed, they dressed – to use a modern term – revealingly; their clothing was often quite diaphanous. Had this story been written centuries later by a Jew living in Palestine, he would surely either have added an

6. Given by W. St. Chad Boscawen "Historical Evidences of the Migration of Abram," *Transactions of the Victorian Institute*, vol. 20, 1886, p.113.

explanatory note saying why her beauty was so evident (for the benefit of his contemporary readers) or he would never even have imagined such an event.

The critics also pointed out that Abraham's suspicions regarding the intentions of the Egyptians seemed in sharp contrast to the known fact that at this particular period in their history, the Egyptians were quite open and friendly with foreigners.⁷ However, archaeology has shed a wonderful light on even this element in the story, for there has been found an ancient Egyptian papyrus, which is now in the British Museum, which is probably the oldest known bit of fiction (?) in the world.⁸ It is called "The Story of the Two Brothers". In this story, the Pharaoh sends two armies to fetch a beautiful woman by force and then to murder her husband. The king is not described as a tyrant nor a scoundrel, is beloved by his people and at his death passes unchallenged into heaven. The action is prompted by members of his court. It will be noticed in the case of Sarai that in similar manner it was the princes of Pharaoh who saw her (Genesis 12:15) and commended her to Pharaoh, who then took her into his house. And Abraham was treated very well, since the king imagined he was her brother only, and therefore her special guardian.

A word seems in order here about Abraham's statement that Sarai was his sister. Twice Abraham used this device to secure his own safety, and in the second instance (Genesis 20) he added by way of justification the rather cryptic statement that "indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother." What did he mean by this?

The background of this perfectly true observation is a little complicated but worth taking time to examine, because it only goes to show that there is no part of this early record which cannot be taken quite literally. This is a faithful record. It is exactly what Abraham could have said in view of what we now know about family relationships both of Abraham's time and even of recent times among non-Indo-European peoples.

In Genesis 11:25-27 we have the following genealogy:

And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters.

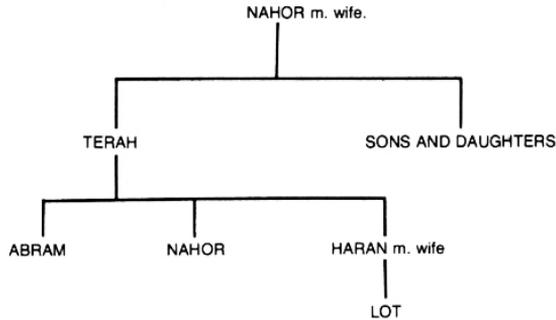
And Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot.

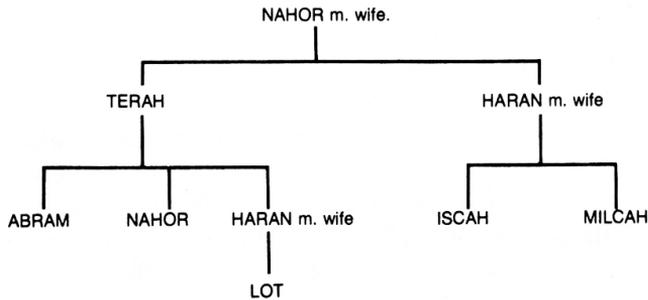
This can be set forth schematically as follows:

7. Joseph Free, in *Archaeology and Bible History*, (Scripture Press Publications Wheaton, Illinois, 1962) gives the evidence of this in some detail from ancient authorities (p.54, footnote 12).

8. Urquhart. John, *Modern Discoveries and the Bible*, Marshall Brothers, London, 1898, p.349.



Up to this point, the sons and daughters of Nahor who were Terah's brothers and sisters are not named, but information given in the following verses provides very good grounds for believing that one of these was named Haran. We shall examine this shortly, but for clarity we now modify the above genealogy as follows (verses 28, 29):



It will be noted that Terah's brother, Haran, had two daughters, Iscah and Milcah. The former of these, Iscah, was Sarah by another name. This identification is very widely agreed upon, was accepted in Jewish commentaries, and is assumed by Josephus in his *Antiquities* (Book I, vi, 5).

It may appear to the reader that large liberties are being taken with the text, but this is not really the case. Like many others, the Jewish people commonly accepted the principle that if a man's brother married a woman and subsequently died before the children were married, he took his brother's place and became in effect both her husband and the father of her children. This is the basis of the Pharisees' hypothetical question in Luke 20:27-38. If therefore Terah's brother Haran had died, the duty of becoming in effect the father of Iscah and Milcah would automatically devolve upon Terah. Terah's "new" children would then become sisters to his own sons and, when Abraham and Nahor subsequently married Iscah and Milcah, they would, socially, be marrying their own sisters. Genetically they were not, the two girls being cousins. However, they were a special kind of cousin, namely, "parallel cousins". The term has been invented by anthropologists to signify the following relationship: my *father's* brother's children are parallel cousins; by contrast, my *mother's* brother's children are cross-cousins.

In a Semitic society, the ideal wife for a man was one of his parallel cousins. Furthermore, where several sons existed and several female parallel cousins, it was assumed that the oldest son would marry the oldest girl and so on down the line. The expected wife for Abraham would therefore be his Uncle Haran's daughter of comparable age.

Now this seems a little complex, but it is particularly striking in this instance, because even today among many Arab tribes in all their love stories the man looks upon his paternal uncle's daughter as his "princess".⁹ This is the term by which he refers to her in his poetic moments. In Hebrew the word for prince is *Sar*, the feminine form of which is *Sara*, meaning "princess". The terminal possessive pronoun *my* is a long *i* so that Sara becomes Sarai meaning "*my* princess". This is how Abraham referred to his beautiful wife. Her name was Iscah, but he called her "My Princess" or Sarai.

Thus Terah's brother Haran, who predeceased him, is identified in verse 29 as the father of Milcah and Iscah, whereas Terah's son Haran, who also predeceased him, is referred to as the father of Lot (verse 31). Because his son Haran (no doubt named after his uncle) died prematurely, Lot became in a special sense the charge of Terah and subsequently of Abraham.

It is interesting to find that the American Indians adopted virtually the same forms of social responsibility.¹⁰ According to Lowie, the Seneca reckon the father's brothers as "fathers", exactly as Abraham and Nahor, reckoning Haran as a father, would look upon Iscah and Milcah as sisters. The same is true in Hawaii, where a single word exists for "father" and "father's brother", the two individuals being considered as standing in the same relationship simply because if the one dies, the other assumes his position.

So when Terah's brother died, Terah took his brother's wife and became the father of his brother's children. Because he was also the father of Abraham, this allowed Abraham to say with perfect truth (though with ulterior motives) that Sarai, his princess, was indeed his sister, being the daughter of his own father – but *not* the daughter of his own mother. There is, therefore, not the slightest element of invention here insofar as the record of Genesis goes. Genesis 11 gives us sufficient information, if carefully read, to see that there is nothing imaginary about the circumstance which so compounded Abraham's relationship with his own wife.

Only one further observation seems appropriate here. And that is, every brother in a society of this nature is given a particular responsibility for the sister who is next to him in age. He bears a special protective relationship toward her and must approve her husband. He will, moreover, be called upon to chastise her children if necessary – while the husband will not be allowed to do so. It was thus important to curry the favour of any brother who was manifestly the protector of the sister whose hand might be sought in marriage, in which position Abraham must have appeared in the eyes of Pharaoh. This is why Abraham felt sure of his own safety, and indeed of being favoured by Pharaoh or anyone else who might be in a position to desire Sarai. And it worked!

9. As reported to me personally by Ali Tayyeb, himself a native of the Muti Ali of Arabia, and referred to by Roland B. Dixon in this ethnographic study of this people published in 1926(?).

10. Robert H. Lowie, *Social Organization*, Rinehart, New York, 1948, p.62.

By contrast with the treatment that Abraham received, there is an early record of another visitor to Egypt who did not fare so well.¹¹ The papyrus recording this story was formerly in the Berlin Museum. It reports how a foreign artisan enters Egypt, only to find his ass seized by an inspector. He appeals to the governor, who in turn appeals to the King, Neb-ka-ra of the eleventh dynasty. The result is that the Pharaoh of the time seizes the foreigner's wife and children and orders so much food and water to be given to the artisan. This seems rather unfair, but apparently it was quite customary and was accepted as proper. In Abraham's case, it is evident that the Pharaoh was in a sense a God-fearing man, for when he discovered by divine intervention the true relationship between Sarah and Abraham, he rebuked Abraham for telling lies, restored him his wife, and sent him away unharmed.

And now with respect to the presents: sheep, oxen, asses, and camels. A German critic, von Bohlen maintained that some of the animals mentioned were quite unknown in ancient Egypt. The narrator, he argued, named animals from his own country which Abraham could not have received in Egypt. He said nothing of receiving horses, which were exceedingly plentiful in the valley of the Nile: but he speaks of receiving sheep – which are as rare as camels according to testimony from antiquity, he said – and asses were thoroughly disliked on account of their colour!

The fact of the matter is that on the monuments of the twelfth dynasty, sheep are pictured and were, therefore, well-known at the very time of Abraham's visit. Indeed, mention is made in inscriptions of large flocks forming part of the wealth of Egyptian nobility, and the god *Num* is frequently portrayed with a ram's head. As for the oxen, even the geologists (Lyell, for example) in their excavations found the bones of oxen at great depth showing that they had been known from very early times. Ameni, an official of the twelfth dynasty, boasts that as governor of the district of Sahour, he had collected a herd of three thousand bulls with their heifers. Indeed, the animal was worshipped

The critics fare equally badly with regard to the ass, which is to be seen pictured on the tombs of the Pyramids. It is represented on the most ancient monuments, and wealthy Egyptians possessed hundreds of them. Khafra-Ankl, a high court official of the builder of the second pyramid, at Gizeh, possessed 760 asses.

The camel, curiously enough – although it was employed in Egypt from remotest antiquity, being used for carrying merchandise and even apparently for entertainment (being trained to dance!) – was for some reason excluded from

11. Urquhart, John, *Modern Discoveries and the Bible*, Marshall Brothers, London, 1898, p.350. It may be pointed out that the treatment of the husband was possibly much less unpleasant to him than we might suppose. The famous Madame de Pompadour (cf. a book of that title written by Nancy Mitford, Reprint Society of London 1954) whose life was (if the word may be used in an entirely non-Christian context) "saintly" indeed despite her position as the mistress of Louis XV – was married to a man whom the King recompensed for the taking of his wife by providing him with complete social security. At the very end, when she was near the point of death, the church asked her to offer to return to him, which she did – though she loved the king with a completely genuine love. One must remember the "times" in which such things occurred. However, her husband was so free and "well off" that he refused her. There was no actual love in any case between the husband and wife. Perhaps the same was true in this case and the visitor to Egypt gladly surrendered his "wife" for a royal price.

representation on monuments.¹² It was not the only example of this, for hens, which were raised in large numbers, were similarly tabooed for portrayal.

Von Bohlen stated categorically that the horse was well-known and prized in Egypt and therefore the omission of any mention of it in this instance shows the writer's ignorance of the facts. Now, when Moses wrote, the horse was well-known and highly prized in Egypt. Were not the horsemen and their riders overwhelmed in the Red Sea? Then why the omission in this case? The fact is that we now know from the monuments that the horse was unknown in Egypt before the invasion of the Shepherd Kings, an event which occurred later than Abraham's visit. Pictures of horses appear for the first time among the hieroglyphic characters of the eighteenth dynasty. In fact, it is likely that the success of the Shepherd Kings was largely due to their possession of horses, which inspired terror in the hearts of Egyptians when they first encountered them. Thereafter horses became exceedingly plentiful. Thebes, Memphis, Hermopolis, and most of the great cities of Middle Egypt contained breeding studs. The possession of many horses was the hallmark of aristocracy, and indeed it appears that the Pharaohs encouraged the practice, rewarding the owners of well-kept stables and even punishing those who did not take care of their animals.

The absence of the mention of the horse is therefore one of the most valuable circumstances in connection with Abraham's visit in Egypt, for it indicates that this visit took place before the invasion of the Shepherd Kings, and about the time of the twelfth dynasty, which lasted from around 2000 to 1788 B.C. The Hyksos (Shepherd Kings) with their horses did not arrive until around 1600 B.C.

We have spoken of the amount of detail given in these chapters which deal with Abraham, and Genesis 14, recording his rescue of Lot, is certainly no exception. Names, places, and events are described so fully that no one but an eyewitness could have achieved the effect. Yet, because at the time of their writing the Higher Critics had seen no archaeological findings to support these details, nor inscriptions or tablets bearing the names of the chief characters, and no evidence that Elam (which figures so prominently in the story) ever held the dominating place in the Middle East which is ascribed to it here, they stated categorically that the *whole* story was a myth. But little by little they have been proved absolutely wrong: the story has been vindicated in every essential detail. And when this became undeniable, the characteristic reaction of the critics was to say with all the assurance in the world that a post-exilic writer who lived centuries later had done some research into Babylonian antiquities and come up with a reconstruction! It is possible, of course. But surely this is to adopt a policy of accounting for the evidence in the least likely way conceivable.

By way of background, it may be remembered that in Genesis 13 we have a picture of Abraham and Lot, both with enormous herds and flocks, finding their herdsmen in conflict when they settled too near to each other. By agreement Abraham and Lot parted company, the former remaining on higher ground to the west of the Jordan Valley, whereas the latter went down into the valley, which as exceedingly fertile, and settled toward Sodom. It may be mentioned in passing that the Land of Canaan does not seem to have been very densely populated at this time. As Abraham said, there was plenty of room for everybody. The cities were quite small, and their kings were really more like mayors or chieftains. The

12. Joseph Free made a special study of this question which he reported in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, University of Chicago, July, 1944, pp.187-93, under the title, "Abraham's Camels".

number of people involved in the subsequent conflict cannot have been very great, since Abraham set out in pursuit with only a few hundred men. This may come as a surprise, but it also helps to set the stage a little more realistically and to discourage one's imagination from picturing five huge armies under five powerful monarchs engaged in a life-and-death struggle with four equally large armies under four Jordanian Valley kings. There is evidence for this somewhat reduced picture from the figures which are given both of casualties and captives taken by a conquering pharaoh at a later period. C. H. Irwin points out that a pharaoh as late as Thotmes III in an account of his great battle at Megiddo (c. 1479 B.C.) records that only 83 men were killed and 340 taken prisoner.¹³ Of all the towns and fortresses of Syria which he captured, he took only 707 prisoners who were not slaves. These figures suggest that the engagements of enormous numbers of men in battle belong to a much later date in a history.

By contrast with these figures, the vast numbers of animals which were owned by Abraham and Lot (Genesis 13:2, 6) — running into thousands if Job 41:12 is any indication (14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 2,000 oxen, etc.) — may seem to be in error on the other side of the ledger. However, there are modern parallels. Zane Grey, no mean authority in this area, refers to a certain Colonel Maxwell who had an immense tract of land as a ranch which reached the zenith of its fame in 1861, stretching at its maximum some sixty-five miles!¹⁴ He employed about 400 men, mostly Mexicans. At this time, 1861, it was estimated he had 400,000 sheep, 50,000 cattle, and 10,000 horses. The number of other animals he never even bothered to estimate. David Livingstone reports a similar case from Africa,¹⁵ in which a certain Colonel Pires, who began as a servant in a ship, by hard work became the richest merchant in Angola, possessing thousands of cattle, and able in an emergency to appear in the field with several hundred armed slaves. He refers to this man as a "merchant prince" — a title surely reminiscent of Abraham. If the reader will remember the number of armed men whom Abraham assembled in Genesis 14, the number of men retained by Colonel Maxwell, and the number of men in Colonel Pires's establishment, the similarity is at once apparent. It suggests that all three men lived in rather similar circumstances. The implications of those verses in Genesis 13 which set the stage are therefore not the least bit unreasonable.

Like Maxwell and Pires, pioneers in new territory, Abraham expanded freely his settlement of the highlands west of the Jordan, and Lot went down into the valley with his great herds — neither of them being challenged by settlers already there.

Now, Genesis 14 records the campaign of an Elamite king in Palestine who captured Lot but was afterward, to use an army term, "thoroughly clobbered" by the patriarch, who took a dim view of the situation. Apparently the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah (cities in the Plain where Lot had settled) had been subject for some twelve years to a certain Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, to whom they regularly paid tribute. When tribute failed to appear at the proper time, Chedorlaomer crossed the Euphrates with an army and called to his support three other kings who had apparently also been subject to him in Babylonia: Amraphel,

13. Irwin, C. H., *The Bible, the Scholar, and the Spade*, Religious Tract Society, London, 1932, p.51.

14. Grey, Zane, *Fighting Caravans*, Grosset and Dunlap, New York, pp.143ff.

15. Livingstone, David, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, Harper, New York, 1858, p.460.

king of Shinar; Arioch, king of Ellasar; and Tidal, who is referred to as "king of the nations".

The Elamite king's campaign was a masterly one. He and his allies first attacked the nations in the north so as to leave no enemy in the rear, passed down east of the Jordan Valley, swept around by Mount Hor on the south, and then turned northward again through the territory of the Amalekites and the Amorites. Having carried everything before him, he suddenly appeared at the south end of the valley and attacked the cities of the Plain.

The route taken by the four kings, following this line parallel to and east of the Jordan, was fastened upon by the critics as evidence of the legendary character of the story. But in the course of time, archaeologists discovered a series of early and middle Bronze Age mounds, some of which were of considerable size, particularly at those places mentioned in the Bible — namely, Ashtaroth, Karnaim, and Ham. Here Dr. Albright¹⁶ discovered in 1929 centres of population which must have been thriving between 2500 and 1600 B.C., belonging to the Zuzims, the Emims, and the Rephaims. It is not certain whether these peoples had favoured the rebellion of their valley neighbours, but at any rate Chedorlaomer evidently considered them a sufficient threat that their cities were so devastated in the campaign it appears they were abandoned not long afterward and never re-inhabited.

In this route of attack, Abraham had naturally been bypassed, though undoubtedly he heard what was going on. Meanwhile, the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and the king of Admah (the present el-Damieh), the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (Zoar) joined forces and gave battle with these advancing forces from Babylonia in the Vale of Siddim. As Genesis 14:9 succinctly puts it, "four kings with five". It does conjure up in one's mind an enormous conflict — and for them, it undoubtedly was.

The story tells the sad result, for the five native kings were hopelessly put to flight and Chedorlaomer and his cohorts chased them up the valley and into the hills and spoiled them of everything they could lay their hands upon. The biblical account, which occupies only a few verses, nevertheless is vivid indeed: and Lot suffered with his neighbours, losing virtually everything he possessed.

Abraham heard that his "brother" had been taken captive, and he armed his own servants, 318 in all, and started after Chedorlaomer. The victors had such a head start that he did not overtake them until they had reached Dan, over 150 miles to the north. Having done so, he split into companies (one cannot divide three hundred men too many times!) and launched a surprise attack by night. And he won a resounding victory. The record says simply, he brought back all the goods and also brought again his brother Lot and his goods

So having reviewed the campaign, we may now examine the evidence from archaeology for the existence of these various kings. To begin with, the narrative allocates a superior position to Chedorlaomer, king of Elam. Not only was he able to command the support of three Babylonian kings, but also to collect tribute successfully for some twelve years from five vassal kings a thousand miles away in Palestine. As we have noted already, the critics were quite confident that at no time in history did any Elamite king exercise such unchallenged sovereignty over

16. Also reported by W. F. Albright in *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible*, Fleming and Revell, New York, 1935, p.133; and by the same author, in the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no.35, 1929, p.10 ff.

Babylon and Palestine. But it now appears that he did, that indeed at this very time Elam was supreme from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea and from the eastern borders of Persia to the Mediterranean.

Some of this evidence is indirect but rather interesting. An inscription of Assurbanipal, the grandson of Sennacherib, was found recording an early campaign into Elam in which, having captured the capital city of Susa, he succeeded in recovering a statue of the goddess Nana, which had been carried away from Babylon by a man named Kudur-Nankhundi, king of Elam, 1,635 years previously.¹⁷ By extrapolation, this would put the Elamite conquest of Babylon somewhere about 2280 B.C., or perhaps 200 years before Abraham entered Canaan. Moreover, the Elamites had also conquered Palestine. George Smith found a brick at Ur upon which was an inscription of a king called Kudur-Mabug.¹⁸ This man claims the title of Adda-Martu, literally, "Father of the Land of the Setting Sun", a title which according to Boscawen is equivalent to the Assyrian Sar Akharri, king of Syria.¹⁹ The same inscription gives him the title of king of Elam. Another inscription of his gives him the title of "Father of the Land of the Amorites", i.e., Palestine. Thus, from the number of inscriptions of his now known, he appears to have been an important individual. So Elam did at one time hold sway, and a king of Elam, as Genesis 14 indicates, could very well have undertaken the campaign recorded of him here.

Moreover, the biblical name of this monarch is composed really of two words, *Chedor* and *la'omer*. The first part of this name is a transliterate form of *Kudur*, common to the other two Elamite kings, whom Schrader terms collectively the "Kudurid" dynasty.²⁰ The second part of the name is undoubtedly to be identified with a word *lagomer* (the hard breathing in the Hebrew being represented by the guttural g) which in the form *La-ga-mar-ru* was the name of an Elamite goddess. "Chedorlaomer" is therefore a perfectly proper transliteration of *Kudur-lagomer*, which means literally "a servant of Lagomer." As a matter of fact, the Septuagint writes this name as "Chodollogomor." This takes care of one of the names, for it is found to be perfectly consonant with the titles of other Elamite kings and such a one might well have been as powerful as the Bible indicates.

It was not long afterward that evidence was found for the existence of a contemporary king whose name was Eri-aku of the city of Larsa.²¹ The word for city is *alu* in Babylonian, and the form *Ellasar* is perhaps simply "the City of Larsa." This is analogous to the form *Uru-salem* (Jerusalem) where *uru* is a Sumerian word for "city," so that the compound form really means "City of Salem". Thus Arioch of Ellasar is almost certainly the same as "Eri-aku of the City of Larsa". Moreover, this same Eriaku was the son of the Elamite king named

17. See also Eberhard Schrader, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, Williams and Norgate, London, 1885, p.122.

18. Urquhart, John, *Modern Discoveries and the Bible*, Marshall Brothers, London, 1898, p.366; and Schrader, Eberhard, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, Williams and Norgate, London, 1885, p.122.

19. Boscawen, W. St. Chad, "Historical Evidences of the Migration of Abram," *Transactions of the Victorian Institute*, vol. 20, 1886, p.100.

20. Schrader, Eberhard, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, Williams and Norgate, London, 1885, p.122.

21. Boscawen, W. St. Chad, , "Historical Evidences of the Migration of Abram," *Transactions of the Victorian Institute*, vol. 20, 1886, p.100.

Kudur-mabug.²² At least two inscriptions are known in which Kudur-mabug is said to be the father of Eriaku. One of these, which is now in the British Museum, is an address to the goddess of Zariunu in which Eri-aku, the Great One (Lugal) of Larsa, asks for the preservation of both himself and of Ku-du-ur Ma-bu-uk (i.e., Kudur-mabug), his father. Evidently the Elamite king, Kudur-mabug, appointed his own son as lord of one of his cities, who, as such, according to biblical usage, was quite properly referred to as "king of Larsa".

The situation is complicated a little by the existence of certain other inscriptions in which Kudur-mabug also refers to a son by the name Rim-aku,²³ a son who in a tablet of Hammurabi's is said to have been king of Ur and Larsa.²⁴ A bronze statue in the Louvre is dedicated by Kudur-mabug and Rim-aku, the father referring to himself as Lord of Yamutbul, a district which is now known from Elam. When, subsequently, Hammurabi attacked Rim-aku, he himself was a king right enough, but in an inferior position, being under the suzerainty of the Elamite emperor. Hammurabi was a native of Babylonia, whereas Rim-aku was an Elamite Kudurid and therefore a foreigner – and much less acceptable to the native Babylonians. The circumstance which led Hammurabi to rebel and go to war with a superior was probably the humiliation of this Elamite dynasty by Abraham. The assumption is made by many scholars, including George Smith and A. H. Sayce, that Rim-aku and Eri-aku are one and the same person. The grounds for saying this, apart from the fact that it seems the simplest way to explain the situation since both names are identified as "son of Kudur-mabug" and "king of Larsa", are a little complicated and revolve around the fact that in cuneiform the spelling is phonetic. Oversimplifying the situation, it may be said that Rim-aku can be spelled out as Ri-(im)-aku or Eri-aku.²⁵ In either case the meaning is the same, namely, "servant of Aku".

Summing up this situation, then, we have an individual who is king of Larsa and part and parcel of the Elamite dynasty of which Kudur-lagomer (Chedor-laomer) was paramount, taking part in the campaign in the time of Hammurabi, in which the Elamite dynasty suffered a defeat from which they never recovered. This provided Hammurabi with his opportunity for successful rebellion. As we shall see, the Amraphel of Genesis 14:1 is almost certainly this same Hammurabi.

22. One of these tablets is given in transcript and translated by Boscauwen, "Historical Evidences of the Migration of Abram," *Transactions of the Victorian Institute*, vol. 20, 1886; a translation of the other is given by T. G. Pinches, *The Old Testament in the Light of Historical Records and Legends of Assyria and Babylonia*, S.P.C.K., London, 1908, p.219.

23. T. G. Pinches discusses this in some detail from pp.216ff. in his work mentioned in ref. 22. He suggests in his article on Eri-aku (*Imperial Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol.II, p.970) that the dual form Rimaku vs. Eriaku could be a kind of bilingualism in view of the Sumero-Babylonian nature of his domains. Boscauwen (ref.22, p.102) observes that many of the Chaldean kings assumed dual forms for their names for this reason, including Hammurabi.

24. See T. G. Pinches, "Certain Inscriptions and Records Referring to Babylonia and Elam and their Rulers and other Matters," *Transactions of the Victorian Institute*, vol.II9, 1895, p.72, for a transcription and translation of this notice.

25. T. G. Pinches, quoting Lenormant, *Textes Inedits*, 70: see Pinches' work, *The Old Testament in the Light of Historical Records and Legends of Assyria and Babylonia*, S.P.C.K., London, 1908, p.216. Fritz Hommel in *Ancient Hebrew Traditions* (S.P.C.K., London, 1897, p.170) shows that the Sumerian form *irim*, *rim*, *iri*, or even *ri* mean "servant," so that Eri-aku or Rim-aku would have the same meaning in any case, i.e., "servant of Aku." Rene Labat, *Manuel D'Epigraphie Akkadienne* (Paris, 1952, p.59) gives the sign  a value of either *ri* or *eri*.

The name "Tidal," which appears in the Hebrew as Tidgal and in the inscriptions as Tud-khula, has also been found.²⁶ He is spoken of as "king of the Goim," translated as "nations". There is some evidence that by the "Land of Goim" is intended the "Land of Guti" or "Gutium" of the inscriptions, the district of South Kurdistan along the Median frontier.²⁷ I have no authority for the following observation, but it interests me that in the direction of Kurdistan lay one fragment of the Indo-European family, that section from which originated the Medes and Persians. In Genesis 10, which precedes this statement by only a little more than three chapters, the children of Japheth (i.e., the Indo-Europeans) are listed briefly concluding with this comment, "by these were the isles of the Gentiles divided" (Genesis 10:5). The word translated here "Gentiles" is the word Goim, and although the word may properly be translated "nations" without further identification, I think a study of Scripture lends some support to the view that it became in a special way a cognomen for Indo-Europeans generally.²⁸ This may be true, in fact, even in the New Testament (for example, Luke 21:24, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."). At any rate, we have here an individual mentioned who is said to have been king of the Gentiles who may, therefore, have actually been an Indo-European monarch— in which case the sovereignty of Elam was even wider than is commonly supposed.

And what of Amraphel? With the recovery of the Code of Hammurabi and a number of inscriptions giving some information about his deeds and the time in which he ruled in Babylonia, scholars who were sympathetic toward Scripture quickly sought to identify him with this Amraphel.

However, it was recognized from the beginning that a direct transliteration from the Babylonian form Khammurabi to the Hebrew form Amraphel was not feasible.

According to Hommel, one solution may be found in the discovery that the second element *-rabi* was set forth as an ideogram which had an alternative reading or value of *-rapaltu*. Thus the form Khammu-rabi could equally well have been read as Khammurapaltu, and the alternative form would quite properly be transliterated as Amraphel.²⁹

Hommel stated that the terminal *-rapaltu* is actually found in one bilingual text of Hammurabi's. He observes that the element *-rabi* which occurs in a number of seemingly genuine Babylonian names of the very same period was nevertheless

26. Duncan, J. Garrow, *The Accuracy of the Old Testament*, S.P.C.K., London, 1930, p.63.

27. Schrader, Eberhard, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, Williams and Norgate, London, 1885, p.123.

28. Since writing this, I have noticed that several inscriptions refer to people associated under Tidal and Chedorlaomer's campaign as the Mandu Tribes or the Umman-Mandu. See Friz Hommel, *Ancient Hebrew Traditions* (S.P.C.K., London, 1897, p.183, and T. G. Pinches, "Certain Inscriptions and Records Referring to Babylonia and Elam and their Rulers and other Matters," *Transactions of the Victorian Institute*, vol.II9, 1895, pp.61, 65. The Mandu Tribes were probably Aryan tribes, possibly Scythians, according to W. St. Clair Tisdale in his article on the Medes in *Murray's Bible Dictionary*, Murray, London, 1908, p.525.

29. Hommel, Fritz, *Ancient Hebrew Traditions* (S.P.C.K., London, 1897, pp.107, 193. The author observes that it was only in the time of the Hammurabi dynasty that the substitute ending of *rapaltu* is found for *rabi*, both words being derivatives of a root verb meaning "to be large". It should also be noted that the ideograph for the sound *pil* is also given a value *bi* (Labat, ref.25, p.111, sign list no.173) so that *Ammu-rapil(tu)* could have been pronounced as "Ammu-rabe".

replaced by the terminal form, *-rapaltu*. He suggests that this was done for euphonic reasons.³⁰

There are certain other explanations of how Hammurabi could be represented by Amraphel, one of which is suggested by Pinches, who thinks that it could have arisen as a result of the deification of the king (while he was still alive), turning the simple form of his name into the compound form, Hammarabi-ilu, where *-ilu* means "god".³¹ Skinner states that Schrader had actually found the form suggested by Pinches.³² However, there is some doubt among evangelical scholars today about the advisability of identifying Hammurabi with the Amraphel of Genesis 14, since there may be serious chronological difficulties. We do know that Hammurabi subsequently extended his domain to include Palestine and consequently referred to himself as Lugal-Martu, meaning "Lord of the Ammurru (i.e., Palestine)". But the true identity of Amraphel, king of Shinar, cannot be said to have been established yet. Nevertheless, we do seem to have archaeological evidence of three of the invading monarchs whose names are given in the biblical account. The whole atmosphere of the incident is clearly consonant with archaeological evidence regarding both the kinds of names common to that era and the kinds of local attachments and spheres of influence existing at that time.

We should not close this survey of kingly names, however, without making some reference to what are sometimes referred to as the Spartoli Tablets. These tablets were first translated and reported upon by Pinches.³³ They were found in a very mutilated form, two of them being entirely unbaked and one baked possibly in recent times by the Arabs who found them. In spite of their incompleteness, considerable portions of the text of each could be translated. When this was done, to the surprise and delight of Pinches, there appeared the names (in their original form) of Chedorlaomer, Arioch, and Tidal. Besides these names were details which seemed to refer to the events which transpired in Babylonia when the Elamites established their sovereignty over the country. Included in this information is the observation that Chedorlaomer had hired mercenaries under Tidal who were neither Elamites nor Babylonians but were referred to as the Umman-Mandu. The *-Mandu* appear not infrequently in cuneiform texts, and they have been identified variously as the Medes or, by Sayce as the Scythians,³⁴ but virtually always as Indo-Aryans. This would seem to bear out the suggestion which was made earlier that the Goim were indeed Indo-Europeans. It is also most remarkable to find a tablet with the names of three of the kings.

So confirmatory of Scripture were these tablets that the Higher Critics jumped on them and did everything in their power to deliberately suppress the

30. Hommel, Fritz, *Ancient Hebrew Traditions* (S.P.C.K., London, 1897, p.106.

31. Pinches, T. G., *The Old Testament in the Light of Historical Records and Legends of Assyria and Babylonia*, S.P.C.K., London, 1908, p.211.

32. Skinner, John, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, in *The International Critical Commentary*, Clark, Edinburgh, 1951, p.257.

33. Pinches, T. G., "Certain Inscriptions and Records Referring to Babylonia and Elam and their Rulers and other Matters," *Transactions of the Victorian Institute*, vol.II9, 1895, pp.45-65 for transcription and translation of Spartoli III, 2; Spartol II, 987; Spartoli I, 58; and Spartoli II, 962. Spartoli III, 2 appears to contain the names of Tudhula (Tidal), of Eri-aku's son, Durmah-ilani, and Kudur-lahmil (Chedorlaomer).

34. Sayce, A. H., *The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*, S.P.C.K., London, 1895, p.451. Sayce observes (p.126) that it was the combination of the Manda and Mada (or Medes) which led to the emergence of the Medo-Persian Empire under Cyrus.

significance of them. They pointed out that they were so mutilated as to be worthless, that they were cast in a literary form which suggested poetry rather than history, that they were dated very late (Driver suggested 300 B.C.³⁵), and that there were many phrases which were almost unintelligible even where the signs themselves were clear enough, and finally that the names of the kings were sometimes miss-spelled!

When Dr. Pinches first presented his translation, he was very careful to point out all these facts. Having done this, he stated plainly that in the nature of the case, one could not hope to prove anything in the scientific sense but that the three names in a single context accompanied by a state of affairs which fitted in with all that we know of the events of the time could hardly be a coincidence. *The Expository Times*, one of the "scholarly" papers which echoed the thoughts of the Higher Critics, picked up Pinches' words, quoting them verbatim only just so far as to report his confession that one could not hope to prove anything – and there they left it!³⁶ Such dishonest reporting, while preventing the discovery from being fairly presented to the Christian public, demonstrated a most unscholarly attitude on the part of the critics. It provoked from Dr. Pinches, who was the mildest and most scholarly of men, the only remark which has ever been noted in any of his voluminous writings that suggested the slightest tinge of anger. Even today, not too many references are made to these tablets, although a complete transcription was given by Pinches in a paper presented before the Victoria Institute in London.

Whatever may be said about the Spartoli Tablets, the biblical account is far from mythical. In fact, because of the complexity of the situation at the time and its being a period of transition in which the sovereignty was shifting into Babylonian hands, it seems likely that only a contemporary would have been able to set forth all the details involved with such exactitude and dramatic skill.

Genesis 14 closes with an exceedingly brief record of the encounter of Abraham with Melchisedec. Taken with Hebrews 7:3, where it is stated that the latter was "without father and without mother", we have the sum total of our knowledge of Melchisedec. Yet somehow he has stirred the imagination of Christian people because it appears that such a great man as Abraham, flushed with a recent decisive victory over apparently an invincible enemy, acknowledged him as a superior.

It seems somehow improper to be searching for archaeological evidence regarding Melchisedec, since to many people he appears almost as a supernatural figure. Perhaps he was a supernatural figure. However, even this incident has possibly received some light from archaeology, and it seems proper to set it down for what it is worth.

To begin with, the word *Jerusalem* appears to be a Hebraized form of a compound name, *Uru-Salim*. The first element in this compound is a Sumerian word meaning *city*. The second element is a Semitic word meaning *peace*. Jerusalem is therefore taken to mean "city of peace".

At one time it was supposed that Salim might have been the name of a deity rather than the word for "peace", so that the original name was entirely Canaanite or Sumerian and simply meant "city of the god Salim." The assumption here is that the name Salim is only accidentally like the Hebrew word *Shalom* and in itself

35. Driver, S. R., *The Book of Genesis*, in *Westminster Commentaries*, Methuen, London, 1904, p.157.

36. On this, for a full report see John Urquhart, *The New Biblical Guide*, Marshall, London, no date, vol.II, pp. 198-203.

did not originally have the meaning of peace. However, the evidence for such a deity has not been positively demonstrated. The idea is not held any longer.

In the Tell-el-Amarna Tablets are several letters from a king of Salim whose name appears as Abdi-Taba. This has been interpreted as equivalent to a Hebrew form Ebed-Tob meaning (if some liberties are allowed), "the servant of the Good One", i.e., God (?). The interesting thing about these particular letters which were (and may still be) in Berlin is that the phrase "neither my father nor my mother" occurs in three of them. The king says, "Behold, this land of Jerusalem neither my father nor my mother gave [it] to me – the arm of the Mighty King gave it to me." This phrase is repeated three times. There is some disagreement about its meaning, which naturally hinges to a large extent upon how one identifies the Mighty King. Pinches believes that it is simply a case of "apple-polishing", the writer being a vassal of the Egyptian pharaoh at the time.³⁷ Others, such as Sayce, believe it may very well be a reference to God, the Almighty King. At any rate it is remarkable that this turn of phrase should appear in letters coming from a king of Jerusalem to appear once again in Hebrews 7:3 well over a thousand years later. The city under the simpler name "Salim" is mentioned as one of the cities of southern Palestine captured by Ramses II as indicated on the walls of the Ramesseum at Thebes. It is mentioned also by Ramses III by the same shortened name.

This does not throw very much light on who Melchisedec was – and perhaps we should not expect it. But the circumstances are rather curious.

Insofar as the story of Abraham's tribute to Melchisedec is concerned, it might be pointed out that there is an almost universal custom in societies which are not necessarily primitive but have maintained older traditions unbroken, that in passing through a man's territory it is always customary to send a present to the lord or chief. Abraham passed through territory which evidently was under the jurisdiction of the king of Jerusalem. We have evidence of this from the fact that the Ebed-Tob,³⁸ whom we have already mentioned, describes himself as having repaired the roads on the very plain in which Sodom and Gomorrah stood. His dominion and responsibility extended at least this far.

Anyone who has read David Livingston's *Journals* will know how frequently and carefully he observed this custom, which was in no sense a mark of inferiority but a courtesy to the man whose territory it was safe to journey through. Moreover, certain rules existed in different areas with respect to what should be given as a proper present. For example, if an elephant was killed, that part of the elephant which was wounded belonged to the paramount chief in whose territory it was found. Sometimes some more valuable part was demanded, such as one tusk for example, even when several elephants were killed. So long as this was done, the traveller was received with respect and guaranteed safe conduct, being under the protection of the chief. Livingstone never once failed to recognize this

37. Pinches, T. G., *The Old Testament in the Light of Historical Records and Legends of Assyria and Babylonia*, S.P.C.K., London, 1908, pp.233-34, for a discussion of this.

38. See on this a quotation from Sayce by Urquhart in his *New Biblical Guide*, Marshall, London, no date, vol.II, p.214. Elsewhere Sayce points out that this same Ebed-tob worshipped a god named Salim according to a rather mutilated tablet which he "translated" with Winckler (see *The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*, S.P.C.K., London, 1895, p.176). It should be borne in mind, however, that this Ebed-tob was *not* Melchisedec, for he appealed to his Egyptian overlord (Sayce, *ibid.*, p.175) for help against the Habiru and therefore is much later. But the associations of "phraseology," etc., in this incident are interesting.

custom, a fact which very largely accounts for his safe conduct back and forth across Africa, even when neighbouring chiefs were at war with one another.

It may be disappointing to some readers to think that we should propose what has hitherto been taken almost as an act of worship should really have been a mark of courtesy only. However, this much may be said in defense of this view, namely, that Melchisedec is at least absolved from behaving, as some critics suggested, as a man who demanded his share of the spoils without having taken any risks in the conflict. Let me affirm once again, however, that I do not believe any of these things really explain the significance of Melchisedec. The New Testament makes it clear that he did actually in some way stand in God's stead, thus transcending the ordinary events of history. There would have been no need for Scripture to reveal these things about Melchisedec if archaeology could have supplied all the details.

There follows an incident in the life of Abraham which sometimes leaves one with the feeling that he was not as great-hearted a man as we like to believe. This incident is recorded in Genesis 16:2-4.

And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing; I pray thee go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened upon the voice of Sarai. And Sarai [...] gave Hagar her maid to her husband to be his wife.

And he went in unto Hagar and she conceived, and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

Strictly speaking, archaeology does not shed any light upon this incident, but the study by anthropologists of the ways of contemporary primitive people has done so. Moreover, recent research into the behaviour of "infants" (whether animals or humans) in the way in which they become attached to "parents" has also shed light on the incident. It is termed "imprinting."

It has often been observed that people who belong to cultures which do not share Western traditions tend to be unexpectedly practical in dealing with live situations which involve not merely mechanical problems but social ones also. Somehow or other such people have noted and made use of the fact that a newborn creature becomes attached strongly, presumably by instinct, to the first object which it fastens its attention upon, particularly in a time of special need.³⁹ Such needs as shelter from light, warmth, food, and protection – and perhaps also caressing – are all found to be powerful "triggers" in this attachment. It may be a little disappointing to find that what is commonly referred to as the "blood relationship" between a parent and child may have exceedingly little effect (if any at all) in establishing a bond between the child and mother. The order in which these two words occur is important, for it is often the *child* who initiates this bond.

Now, in most societies other than our own, a childless wife tends to have an inferior status, other things being equal. And in a community which raises flocks

³⁹. An interesting paper which summarizes some of the research work being undertaken on this aspect of child-parent relationship, commonly referred to as "imprinting", appeared in very readable form in the English journal *Discovery*, February, 1961. A useful though brief bibliography is included. The paper is R. A. Hinde, "The Early Development of the Parent-Child Relationship."

or herds, children are of particular importance because of their value as guardians and overseers of the animals; in a hunting or industrial society, this is not nearly so true. Such a wife,⁴⁰ then, was permitted by custom to bring to her husband a woman by whom a child might be born on the understanding that the child was immediately placed upon her knees in such a way that its first vision would be the wife rather than the mother. The actual mother withdrew and the attachment of the child to the adopting mother became secure. It was customary always for the wife, not the husband, to choose the woman who should bear the child, and presumably she would take good care that the true mother did not seek to take advantage of her subsequently. If this should occur, however, the wife was given the social right to have the mother removed from the household entirely. And if, as a result of nursing a foster child, the wife's barrenness came to an end and she bore her own child, that child became the "firstborn" in status. That the adopting mother, herself barren, could nurse a child is borne out from experience in primitive societies, and in fact—extraordinary though it seems—there have been cases reported in medical literature of men who have nursed children after premature death of the mother. It is reported by David Livingstone from Africa.⁴¹

In this particular instance, Hagar behaved quite improperly in terms of her own culture when she assumed a superior attitude toward Sarai. It was Abraham's duty, whatever he may have felt personally about the matter, to put an end to Hagar's presumption. Had he not done so, he would have invited other women in a similar situation to behave in an equally socially improper manner. There is no doubt, in the meantime, that Ishmael, Hagar's child—and Sarai's "son"—would have grown up with all the strong attachments of a son for his mother which are to be found in a Jewish home. The practice may seem strange to us, but I am quite sure that the relationship between our own sons and fathers and mothers would often seem equally strange to Abraham.

It should also be observed that a woman hitherto barren may, for reasons not yet understood, become pregnant after the adoption of a child into the family. In fact, Scripture supplies us with what is a case in point, i.e., when Rachel conceived after her handmaid, Bilhah, had children fathered by Rachel's husband, Jacob (Genesis 30:1-8, 22-24). I am not suggesting that we should seek to eliminate the miraculous by an appeal to natural science, and therefore this observation is only made as an aside—for it in no way accounts for the fact that Abraham was (insofar as procreation of children was concerned) already as good as dead, and Sarai already past age (Hebrews 11:11, 12, "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable."). The birth of Isaac was in a special way the Lord's doing.

40. The Code of Laws of Hammurabi (a contemporary of Abraham) makes a somewhat analogous provision. See George Barton's translation in *Archaeology and the Bible*, American Sunday School Union, Philadelphia, 1933, p.391, section 146, which reads: "If a man takes a priestess and she gives to her husband a maid-servant and she bears children, and afterwards that maid-servant would take rank with her mistress, because she has borne children, her mistress may not sell her for money, but she may reduce her to bondage and count her among the female slaves." The significance of the fact that the woman is listed as a priestess is not clear. Certainly the original reads as rendered.

41. Livingstone, David, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, Harper, New York, 1858, p.141.

The record in Scripture of the circumstances surrounding the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is as vivid and dramatic as was the record of Abraham's rescue of Lot from Chedorlaomer. These are both clearly eyewitness accounts. As one reads the story, brief though it is, one has no difficulty whatever in imagining what the event must have been like. What it all looked like to the eye is clearly drawn; the only thing missing is what it must have sounded like, for a geological "explosion" of such a nature must have shaken the earth indeed – must, in fact, have been almost as devastating an experience as the blowing up of Krakatoa in 1883.

That it was, for all its unusualness, a natural event resulting from a series of coincident circumstances is almost certain. The supernatural element, which really constituted it a judgment from God, was the fact that it was clearly predicted within a matter of minutes insofar as the timing of the explosion was concerned. Yet strangely enough, in spite of the immensity of the event, there is comparatively little evidence for it, archaeologically speaking.

Conflicting reports have been circulated from time to time regarding the site as it now is. Not many years ago, it was pictured as desolate and eerie, with little life and nothing but sulfurous fumes hanging heavily over everything to discourage all living things. More recently, it has been described as a most fruitful district set down in among the hills in a deep, deep valley where even winter temperature is almost ideal – 75-80 degrees (F) during the day, and 69-65 during the night.⁴²

It is apparent from exploration in the area during the past half-century that a measure of recovery took place as the years rolled by so that plant and animal life began slowly to populate it afresh. But in the time of Strabo and Tacitus and Josephus, the area was desolate indeed. In their day the description of the valley in which the Dead Sea lies as a veritable "garden of the Lord" (Genesis 13:10) must have seemed far from the truth. Today, with a little enterprise, the area could readily become, as Kyle put it, a most fruitful region – capable of supporting luscious grass, wheat, excellent vineyards, beautiful fig orchards, and even a sugar industry. It has taken 2,500 years to wash away the effects of the destruction of these cities of the Plain.⁴³

In 1924 an archaeological expedition was carried out under the direction of Melvin G. Kyle, president of Xenia Theological Seminary (U.S.) in co-operation with the School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem with the prime object of locating the sites of Sodom and Gomorrah and if possible some of the other cities which suffered a similar fate.

Kyle states as a basic conclusion of this expedition that "there is now scientific evidence that the civilization which the Bible represents to have been on this plain in the days of Abraham and Lot, and of Sodom and Gomorrah, was actually here."⁴⁴ Furthermore, he observes that the silence of Scripture which thereafter makes no reference to any subsequent recovery of this region is amply borne out by the complete absence of archaeological evidence of settlement from 2000 B.C. onward. A campsite was found and some graves, but nothing more until Byzantine times.

42. Urquhart, John, *The New Biblical Guide*, Marshall, London, no date, vol.II pp.226-27.

43. Kyle, Melvin G., "Ancient Sodom in the Light of Modern Science," *Transactions of the Victorian Institute*, vol. 59, 1927, p.224.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 221, 223.

Kyle and his co-workers were impressed, however, with the evidence which exists even now of what must have been ample water supplies, springs and free flowing rivulets which would almost certainly have supported and indeed encouraged the establishment of permanent settlements.

As to the destruction itself, Kyle believes the evidence is clear that the great catastrophe did take place exactly as narrated in the Bible. According to Scripture, a rain of fire and brimstone fell from heaven and destroyed the plain and all its inhabitants and rendered the area completely infertile for hundreds of years. The event was exceedingly sudden—in short, explosive in character. Seen from above as Abraham looked down upon it, it appeared that a vast column of smoke went up to heaven as from a furnace.

It is known now as the result of exploratory work carried out by the Standard Oil Company, among others, that there is oil in this region, and geologists state that where oil and asphalt are found there will also be highly flammable gases. Cognizance is taken in Scripture of the presence of oil by its reference to the slime pits (Genesis 14:10)—i.e., in the Hebrew, bitumen. It is quite possible that lightning or some other agency ignited a large pocket of gas which in effect blew up in the valley, and the very large quantities of sulfur and salt found in this area were carried red hot into the heavens so that it quite literally rained fire and brimstone over the whole region. One has only to observe the black smoke issuing from a barrel of tar where roads are under repair to realize how much of a cloud would ascend in the event of a vast area like this being involved in a flaming explosion. Accompanying all this confusion, there may well have been a very great earthquake, for the ruptured strata are plainly visible in the valley and the whole region has been known as one where stresses have accumulated, since the valley lies along the path of a major rupture in the earth's crust which continues far down into Africa.

What was not destroyed by shocks or by fire was destroyed by the acrid fumes that accompany burning asphalt. Lot and his family in flight ran desperately ahead of the advancing wave of destruction and barely escaped with their lives. Lot's wife lingered long enough as she looked back at this scene of frightful destruction in which all their wealth was lost, only to be enveloped by the suffocating gases before she could recover herself. Some of the vast quantities of salt that exist in mountainous forms, even to the present time, must have been carried high into the air; as they fell, her recumbent body was quickly buried and encrusted as a fallen pillar of salt.

In time the water courses were changed, the body of water which had always been there as an inland sea gradually deepened until it spilled over into the Plain or Vale of Siddim to the south, slowly burying and hiding the shame of the cities that had once flourished there. The main sea has always been fairly deep (a thousand feet or more), but its extension to the south is quite shallow, having a depth varying from a few inches to some thirty-five feet. It is still rising, in fact, and in the last forty years or so has increased its depth by about ten to twelve inches, submerging trees and probably what remained of the ruined cities. The strong concentrations of salt have tended to preserve what was submerged; in photographs published in the *American Journal of Archaeology*, some of these

submerged trees are visible. The impression one gets reinforces the knowledge obtained from Scripture that it is an area under judgment.⁴⁵

It seems unlikely now that the actual remains of Sodom and Gomorrah will ever be found unless some vast undertaking in the future should lead to the draining off of some of the accumulated waters, once more exposing to view the Vale of Siddim as it formerly existed.

Although the following hardly comes under the heading of archaeology, it is nevertheless a remarkable parallel from an interesting source. In the eighth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* there is an account of the destruction of a rich and populous country supposedly in Phrygia in Asia Minor.⁴⁶ Jupiter and Mercury disguise themselves and come down to earth in the form of men. They inquire as to the condition of mankind in the region and discover that the people are so godless and evil in their ways that they consider it improper to allow them to live any longer. The two gods go to the house of a devout couple whose names are given as Philemon and Baucis, his wife. There they spend just the length of time which accords with the time spent by the angels in the house of Lot in Sodom. They announce that the whole region is about to be destroyed because of its wickedness, and they recommend Philemon and Baucis to repair to an adjoining mountain. The gods help them away from the doomed place, and when they are within a bowshot of the summit of the mount, Philemon and Baucis look back and see the whole region sunk in a morass. Whether the story is really related or not it is difficult to say, but it would certainly appear to be.

At any rate, as with all the other scriptural accounts of these early times so far examined, the text here is undoubtedly to be understood in the most literal sense. The events as they occurred are described dramatically but without exaggeration or distortion, exactly as one would expect if the writer were either himself an eyewitness or a contemporary of those who had been present.



45. Clapp, Frederick, G., "The Site of Sodom and Gomorrah," *American Journal of Archaeology*, July-Sept, 1936, p.323-44.

46. See *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, translated by Mary M. Innes, Penguin Classics, 1961, p.214.

Chapter 2

Out of the Promised Land and into it Again: From Joseph to Moses

And so Abraham passes into history. The biblical story leads naturally on to events in the life of Isaac and Jacob, about whom archaeology has very little to say. But when we come to Joseph and find ourselves once more in the presence of the Pharaohs, the light of archaeology begins to shine more brightly again. Nevertheless, even here we do not have as much detailed information about Egyptian history in Joseph's time as we do about Babylonian history in Abraham's time.

Before discussing the general topic of Joseph's life in Egypt, there is one point of interest which may be worth mentioning with respect to Genesis 37, in which Joseph shares a dream with his older brethren. One cannot read this story without feeling that if ever Joseph displayed a less pleasant side of his character, it was in this instance. Everywhere else he seems to have been blameless, but here we apparently meet with a mixture of pride and lack of wisdom which is unlike the Joseph we know in Egypt. Was his behaviour really as out of character as it seems?

When anthropologists began to study the ways of people living simpler lives than ours – lives lived at a slower pace and uncluttered by the thousand and one distractions and demands for attention which we experience – they found that there was an almost universal custom of sharing dreams. Moreover, this sharing was frequently done first thing in the morning – while the details of these dreams were still fresh in the mind. Without the constant bombardment of newscasts and morning papers, and with the normal uneventfulness of the previous day lacking any mental stimulation, the telling of the past night's dreams took the place at the breakfast table of the sports page or the stocks and shares. Each man, if he had anything at all of interest, would tell his dreams for the entertainment of the company present. Moreover, the very fact of this habit sharpened their awareness of the content of the dream, which tends to be very quickly blurred for us because of life's complexity and distraction.

In Genesis 37 we are given a picture which leaves the impression that only Joseph communicated his dream, the listeners being an otherwise uncommunicative audience. Since an Arab family will exchange dreams with one another freely, I have no doubt that Joseph's brethren, being likewise Semitic, had already had their say being older than he; this sheds a slightly different light upon the fact that he, too, "volunteered" to tell his dream. He may even have been requested to do so, it being his turn. Moreover, he was quite possibly unaware of

their envy of him, a fact which may indicate that he was himself unenvious of others. And being very young, he may also have been naive which in youth is hardly a fault. Perhaps he genuinely believed that they would see his dream as he saw it. At any rate, I do not think that it was told in any deliberate spirit of boastfulness: he may even have been wondering about it himself. But his hearers took a dim view of his words.

The end result was that he became a slave in Egypt, an Egypt which was at that time ruled by a line of kings providentially well disposed toward Joseph's own people. These kings were known as Shepherd Kings (also as Hyksos), and they were clearly outsiders, not a native dynasty. Their presence throws much light upon the circumstances surrounding his rise in Egyptian "royal circles".

The Egyptians considered the Hyksos barbarians and destroyers of Egyptian culture, yet it appears that Egyptian dynasties continued to exist with some measure of authority even while they dominated the country. The period of their domination is confused, and little is known of these Shepherd Kings except that the founder may have been Apophis.⁴⁷ Among his successors there was one king named Kyan, two kings named Apepa, and one named Yaqeb-her. In view of the fact that these Shepherd Kings were Semites, it is interesting to find one of them bearing a name which may very well be a form of the more familiar "Jacob".⁴⁸ Since it is almost certain that Joseph rose to favour in Egypt while the Hyksos were dominant, it is conceivable that the name of his aged father may have been sufficiently revered to have been given to some child who was in line to become king. Or, of course, the name Jacob may have been common enough among Semites.

In the biblical record of Joseph's life, upon several occasions important figures are identified specifically as being *Egyptians*. This circumstance is analogous to a history of England in which occasional reference might be made to the fact that a person of the court was an Englishman. Such an aside would be rather unnecessary in the circumstances, since one might expect a courtier in England to be an Englishman. But if the court was *not* native, the presence of one courtier who *was* native might be worth recording. This little bit of incidental information indicates clearly that the writer of the record in Genesis had an understanding of the situation in government at that time. The identification is applied, for example, to Potiphar, a man whose name is undeniably Egyptian and to whom Joseph was sold by the Midianites. Genesis 39 states that Potiphar was an officer of Pharaoh, more properly a eunuch. He is also termed "captain of the guard", a title which, it is now believed, should be rendered "chief of the executioners". It was assumed at one time that this meant animal slaughterers, i.e., butchers, but it is now believed that this was not the case. Potiphar is specifically identified as an "Egyptian" (Genesis 39:1). Verse 2 says that Joseph was in the house of his master, the "Egyptian"; this statement is repeated three verses later. The point is of some importance, because when Joseph was accused by Potiphar's wife of a very serious offense, one might expect that Potiphar, as the official executioner, would certainly have Joseph put to death. However, the ruling house was Semitic and Joseph was a Semite, whereas Potiphar was an Egyptian. Discretion governed Potiphar's actions.

47. Baikie, James, *The Story of the Pharaohs*, Black, London, 1908, pp. 86, 93.

48. It should be said that many scholars reject entirely any connection between the two names, the apparent similarity of form being quite accidental.

Joseph became, in time, a man of great importance to his master in the management of his affairs. In the tomb of a certain high priest, paintings were found which enabled a plan of the priest's house to be made: it appears from this plan that the storerooms of all such houses—including Potiphar's, presumably—were at the back. Joseph had charge of these storerooms, which could only be reached by passing through the house. This sheds light on Genesis 39:11, in which it is stated that he went into the house to do his business. It was this circumstance that led to his temporary debasement through Potiphar's wife.

After his imprisonment was ended and Joseph was restored, we are told in Genesis 40:22 that the chief baker "was hanged". On the other hand, Joseph also said that "Pharaoh shall lift up his head from off him," i.e., decapitate him (verse 19). Does one behead a man and hang him, too? Apparently the Egyptians did! The condemned man was first of all beheaded, and then his body was hanged on a tree to be a prey for the birds.

In Joseph's final advancement to a supreme position of authority, many details are given which, like those we have already briefly considered, were often thought to be purely fictional and based upon misinformation—but now appear to be absolutely substantiated. One of the most striking of these is the statement that runners went ahead of Joseph when he was prime minister and cried before him, "Bow the knee" (Genesis 41:43). This is an interpretation of an Egyptian word, *abreth*. It was thought to be related to the Hebrew word *harak*, which means "to kneel down." But it is now known that this was a mistake.⁴⁹ Actually it was a word of warning in Egypt which has persisted even to the present time, meaning apparently, "Look out!" Lord Kitchener was perhaps the last counterpart of Joseph in this regard, for Arab runners went before him with swords in their hands shouting, "*Abreth!*" As Yahuda a few years ago said, "It is amazing that even the expression which was shouted by the runners in Joseph's time is still alive in present-day Egypt."⁵⁰

Consider one more case, found in Genesis 50:4. After the death of Jacob, Joseph—still prime minister—is reported to have said to members of the court, "If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak I pray thee in the ears of Pharaoh [...]." The critics jumped on this as a major inconsistency in the record. At one moment, they said, Joseph is introducing his father himself to Pharaoh, and a little later he does not even have direct access to the king at all. But the monuments have answered this little problem, indicating that Egyptian custom forbade mourners, however high their position, to approach the king while their dead was yet unburied.

So many and so striking have been the confirmations from archaeology of one detail after another in Joseph's story—confirmations which have been even clearer where it was thought the contradictions were most obvious—that the record must certainly have been written by someone with an intimate knowledge of the life of Egypt during the time of these Shepherd Kings. As we have already observed, these kings became increasingly distasteful to the natives, and their very monuments in due time were accordingly obliterated as far as possible until *all* shepherds became an abomination to the Egyptians. It is exceedingly difficult to

49. On this, see T. Miller Neatby, *Confirming the Scriptures*, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, London, no date, pp.42-43.

50. Yahuda, A. S., "Joseph in Egypt in the Light of the Monuments," *Transactions of the Victorian Institute*, vol. 65, 1933, p.47. This paper contains a great many remarkable incidental confirmations of Joseph's life.

believe that with all the circumstantial evidence gone, a scribe living centuries later could successfully invent the story of a foreigner in the land (as Joseph was) with such complete authenticity.

The Hyksos were finally overthrown by Aahmes (sometimes read "Amosis") who was the founder of the eighteenth dynasty and probably reigned from 1500 to 1300 B.C. This eighteenth dynasty included all the Pharaohs who figure most prominently in the events of the oppression, the Exodus, and less directly in the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites. Not unnaturally, every member of this dynasty—with one notable exception, and some of them with particular vehemence—looked upon everything reminiscent of this period of alien domination with utter distaste.

Now, this distaste was transferred to the Israelites, who continued largely as herdsmen in the land of Goshen. The common people may not have felt such hostility toward them, for later on they contributed as neighbours to the wealth which the Israelites took away with them (Exodus 11:2, 3). But the aristocracy and the court finally became completely hostile. The circumstances surrounding this rather sudden change of attitude, which appears to have taken place during the time of Moses' early manhood, are now reasonably clear. This clarification has resulted from the establishment of the date of the Exodus with a fair degree of assurance, thereby enabling us to identify the royal persons chiefly responsible.

If we could with certainty determine the date of the fourth year of Solomon's reign, it might be a simple matter to extrapolate backward to the date of the Exodus. It is necessary to say "it might be", rather than "it is", because the Hebrew year was not quite the same as ours and adjustments were made to bring it in line with the solar calendar as soon as it became apparent that the seasons were out of kilter. The actual words of Scripture that provide the basis of calculation are as follows (1 Kings 6:1):

And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come up out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign ...] he began to build the house of the Lord.

The time periods given for the Hebrew kings have been a source of constant confusion because the figures were apparently being misinterpreted. Edwin R. Thiele made a special study of this problem and wrote a remarkable book on the subject, entitled *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*,⁵¹ in which he showed that, properly understood, there was a perfect order and consistency in Scripture which made complete good sense of all the dates given for these kings. Thiele concludes that Solomon died in 931 B.C. His reign lasted forty years (1 Kings 11:42), so that the fourth year of his reign would be 967 B.C. Proceeding back 480 years, we reach a date of 1447 B.C. for the Exodus. In view of what we have said about the different calendar, this date must still be considered to be inexact, but in error by not more than a few years at the most.

At this point it is desirable to set forth briefly a list of the successive Pharaohs who figure most prominently in the events leading up to the Exodus. Assuming that the Exodus took place in about 1440 B.C. as a round figure, and that Moses was then eighty years old, it is evident that he was born about 1520 B.C. At this

⁵¹ Thiele, Edwin R., *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, University of Chicago Press, 1951.

time Thotmes I was Pharaoh, his reign lasting from 1539 to 1514 B.C.⁵² He probably did not like the Hebrew people, but did not have sufficient energy to oppress them continuously, attempting only to limit their numbers. His daughter was a most remarkable woman: Hatshepsut. There is a possibility that she was the princess who in 1520 B.C., when her father had been ruling for twenty years, came upon the little child in a basket of bulrushes on the Nile.



Figure 14. Hatshepsut: perhaps the beautiful "daughter of Pharaoh" who adopted Moses as a child.

A curious circumstance must be introduced at this point in which one might surely discern the providence of God. Hatshepsut was rejected by her descendants — for reasons which we shall consider briefly so that the majority of her inscriptions were mutilated. While she succeeded her father, Thotmes I, as Pharaoh (her brother, Thotmes II, being too young to rule — and even when he did come to the throne, surviving only to the age of thirteen years) and was, therefore, in the strictest sense as absolute a monarch as any other Pharaoh, she held the position apparently only by sufferance. When she died, her successor, Thotmes III, made determined attempts to erase all records of her reign. The obliteration of her inscriptions leaves us with very little knowledge of her personal qualities, but James Baikie observes that one little fragment of great importance has been preserved, an admission to the effect that she had a particular liking for foreigners.⁵³ Among these foreigners we must surely include the Israelites. The preservation of this personal note is rather remarkable.

Toward the end of her long reign, during which time Moses grew to be forty years of age, Hatshepsut became increasingly attached to a temple in the Sinaitic Peninsula at Serabit where evidently there was a form of monotheistic worship carried on by Midianites (descendants, in part, of Abraham) which has this

52. There are disagreements as to the exact dates to be applied to various Pharaohs, but they do not seriously affect the basic thread traced here.

53. See Baikie, James, *The Story of the Pharaohs*, Black, London, 1908, p.114.

interesting feature about it that it was three days' journey into the wilderness. This is surely significant in the light of Moses' request to Pharaoh as recorded in Exodus 3:18. Sir Flinders Petrie discovered and excavated this temple and remarked that, in his mind, it was almost certainly in part the inspiration of the purified worship which Moses subsequently was instructed to establish for the children of Israel. The evidence of Hatshepsut's association with this place of worship is unmistakable.

One further circumstance is of significance in this connection: there is evidence that the people associated with this shrine used an alphabetical script. What a preparation this was for Moses! For forty years the special favourite of a strong woman with a liking for his people and with all the authority of a Pharaoh, and the means to educate him in the wisdom of the Egyptians – and perhaps to encourage him in, or to introduce him to, or to share with him, the worship of one God in a place of solitude far removed from the grossly polytheistic temples of Egypt, where he was also exposed to a form of writing vastly superior to the hieroglyphics of the court.

However, the situation became worse and worse as this great queen began to age. Her attachment to Moses and his people, whose background tied them closely in the eyes of the Egyptians to the Shepherd Kings they abominated and whose prosperity must have aroused their envy – all these things rankled particularly in the heart and mind of her stepson, Thotmes III, whom she was finally forced to associate with herself upon the throne. This Thotmes III was, it now appears, the most ambitious and violent and powerful of all ancient conquerors. His campaigns carried him everywhere victorious, and he soon reduced the then powerful Canaanite cities to a state of subservience to Egypt.

While Thotmes III was busy in Palestine, trouble broke out once again in Nubia to the south of Egypt. The Nubians had apparently been a constant source of irritation to the Egyptians, but it appears that when Thotmes III returned from his campaigns in Palestine, he found a delegation of Nubians waiting to pay tribute to him. Evidently someone commanding an Egyptian force had, in his absence, successfully subdued them once more. Although archaeology gives us only this much information, there is a possibility that the commanding general in this instance was none other than Moses himself. The reasons for proposing this are as follows.

Under the protection of Hatshepsut, Moses had grown up not only as an educated and cultured Egyptian prince, but very probably also as a warrior: The New Testament tells us (in Acts 7:22) that he was mighty in deeds, not merely in words. If Thotmes III disliked the Semites, it is not too likely he would trust part of an army engaged in subduing Palestine to a Semite; but he may very well have felt that an accomplished general like Moses could be entrusted with the putting down of a *Nubian* revolt. Indeed, there is a tradition that when Moses attacked Mero, the capital of Nubia, and began the siege, the daughter of the Nubian king offered to deliver the city if he would marry her. This bargain was accepted – or so we are told by Josephus; the same story is repeated by Irenaeus.⁵⁴ At any rate, the circumstance of the tribute and of the Nubian king and his wife and daughter being "captured" is portrayed by Hatshepsut on the walls of her magnificent

54. See Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*, Whiston's translation, Milner, London, no date, p.57, Book 2, Chap.10. And Irenaeus, presumably from Josephus: see *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Scribner's edition, vol.I, 1913, p.573.

temple at Dier-el-Bahri at Thebes. If Moses had anything to do with these events, it might explain why Miriam and Aaron later spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian (i.e., Nubian) woman he had married (Numbers 12:1). The fact that Moses subsequently married again would not, I think, be in any way an exceptional event at the time.

It is possible that, flushed with his recent successes and secure in his position of courtly favour because of Hatshepsut, Moses may have felt himself well qualified to deliver his people (Acts 7:25). Perhaps it was just at this time that Hatshepsut died at the age of fifty-nine. Having killed an Egyptian and the fact now being publicly known, Moses may well have felt that discretion was the better part of valour because, as Exodus 2:15 says, when Pharaoh heard of it he sought to slay him. This he would hardly have attempted if Hatshepsut were still there to protect him. Meanwhile, Moses fled the country.

From the moment of Hatshepsut's death, Thutmose III turned against the Israelites with fury, and their real oppression began. This surely was the "new" king who "knew not Joseph", i.e., did not recognize Joseph's people (Exodus 1:5).

But God was still in charge of things. Although the one man – Moses – who might have done something to relieve their oppression had apparently deserted his people, God saw to it that he was re-trained for forty years in another school in the land of Midian. In due time, after Thutmose III was dead, he returned to Egypt when Amenotep II had succeeded to the throne. It is apparent from archaeology that this man was no equal to his predecessor. Very soon, foreign conquests began to be neglected, although the decay of the empire set in very slowly (being more evident abroad than at home). But Amenotep II did not have the strength of Thutmose III, and the events surrounding the circumstances of his encounter with Moses bear out that he was a vacillator. As far as the oppression of the children of Israel was concerned, he continued the policy of his father; but one has the feeling that it was the challenge to his authority which made him increase their oppression out of petulance rather than strength.

In 1441 B.C., the probable date of the Exodus, the final challenge came from Moses: the firstborn son of every Egyptian household died in one fateful night, the night of the Passover. One might not have expected to find archaeological confirmation of this event, but it exists nevertheless. When the Sphinx was first excavated and the accumulated sand of centuries cleared away from the base of it, an inscription was found on a stele which stands between its paws. This was written by Thutmose IV, who succeeded Amenotep II. It is an inscription which indicates that the writer never expected by natural processes to inherit the kingship but did, nevertheless, succeed to Amenotep II as Pharaoh.⁵⁵ The point here is that if Amenotep II's son and heir apparent died prematurely, i.e., on the night of the Passover, then the successor naturally came to the throne unexpectedly. He ruled only nine years approximately, but was succeeded by Amenotep III, during whose reign Egypt itself (but not the provinces) reached its period of greatest material prosperity and magnificence.

Meanwhile the Israelites, having failed to pass into the Promised Land when they first reached its borders, continued their wanderings in the wilderness. At the same time, Egyptian conquests in Palestine continued to be undermined in various ways so that when Israel finally crossed the Jordan and began their

55. Referred to by Baikie, *The Story of the Pharaohs*, Black, London, 1908, p.151. Also Stephen L. Caiger, *Bible and Spade*, Oxford, 1936, p.74.

conquest in earnest, instead of a well-organized province of Egyptian influence capable of uniting against them, they found the people of Canaan disunited and demoralized by having lost the strong leadership which had been established for them under Thotmes III.

Amenotep III was succeeded by Aknaten, a dreamy-eyed philosopher king who had a great vision of one God and was determined to replace the established religion of his land with this new faith. He set up a new capital city since the old one was too closely controlled by the established priesthood, and here he dreamed away his days while the people in the Canaanite provinces wrote desperately asking for help against an invading horde whom they seemed unable to resist and whom they refer to as the Habiru. These famous appeals are known today as the Tell-El-Amarna Letters.⁵⁶ One after another, these frantic calls for help reached the king and told of the fall of this city or that until it was too late and Egypt lost her Canaanite dominions.

God had promised that He would prepare the way for the Israelites and that He would send a hornet to subdue the land so that they would be enabled to take over their possessions. These events show how it was done. An utterly ruthless and powerful monarch (Thotmes III) broke the power of all independent chieftains there and welded them into an interdependent fortified community. Thotmes having done this by wiping out virtually all native leadership and replacing it by puppet governments dependent upon Egypt, a period of gradual decay was allowed to set in while the court of Pharaoh revelled in untold splendour under Amenotep III. Then, when the condition of the country was thoroughly disorganized and chaotic, the Israelites crossed the border; the appeals of their opponents to the Egyptian sovereign, for the help which might have made their resistance effective, fell upon the deaf ears of a philosopher and dreamer who had now succeeded the magnificent Amenotep III. And as for the hornet? The emblem of Thotmes III was none other than a hornet, an image of which appears engraved upon his scarabs and other insignia.⁵⁷

Thus, through a period of five hundred years, Israel was taken into Egypt, prospered and grew and multiplied, was welded by persecution, was unified into a nation by the greatest escape in history, was purified in the wilderness, and was finally assisted to obtain their possessions by kings who did not know they were fulfilling the will of God. At the beginning, the way was prepared for Joseph on a stage set in a special way for his coming. At the end, a man was prepared by circumstances which all dovetailed to reveal a pattern of Providence. All these things have been made clear by archaeology.

Of the forty years in the wilderness, archaeology has very little to say. There is some light to be obtained from sources not strictly archaeological, but of interest nevertheless, and this is considered in an appendix. But once the River Jordan is reached for the second time and the entry into the Promised Land is actually effected—not only by the crossing of that river, but by the capture of Jericho—then archaeology once more speaks with no uncertain voice.

Much has been written about the excavation of Jericho, partly because from the Christian point of view the story of its capture by the Israelites is such a

56. Some of the more interesting of these are translated in George Barton's *Archaeology and the Bible*, American Sunday School Union, Philadelphia, 1933, pp.440ff.

57. See Sir Charles Marston, *New Bible Evidence*, Fleming H. Revell, New York, 1935, pp.166, 223.

dramatic one. In the view of many scholars, earlier excavations of the city suggested some remarkable confirmations of the biblical account. Later excavations seem to have cast doubts upon the work of earlier archaeologists at the site. We may never know whether the evidence was correctly interpreted or not, since their work has now been destroyed.

One thinks of a city as being extensive in area: Jericho was very small indeed covering approximately seven acres. It had been a stronghold from its very founding and seems to have had so many walls that one wonders how it is possible to sort them out. Yet the Wellcome-Marston Expedition under the leadership of Starkey was able to establish with certainty the complete accuracy of many of the details given in the biblical account of Joshua's capture of it. On the other hand, in popular reports of more recent excavations, such as have appeared in the *Illustrated London News*, one may find absolutely no reference whatever to the evidence so ably set forth by Sir Charles Marston on numerous occasions.⁵⁸

I think one reason for this silence on the part of non-Christian writers is that they are so firmly convinced that the Exodus took place much later in history than the 1440 B.C. date which Marston believes is clearly established by the evidence. They cannot accept this evidence, since it would require them to change the whole pattern of their thinking.

As a rather extraordinary example of how one preserves one's bias at all costs, it may be noted that when archaeologists verified the presence of the Tribe of Asher already in Palestine by 1300 B.C., eighty years before the late date which they sought to establish for the Exodus, their explanation was almost laughable. Instead of admitting that this evidence undermined their dating system, they claimed that it was proof that probably most of the tribes of Israel never even went down into Egypt at all! As Miller Neatby said, "This really makes hay of Bible history."⁵⁹

On the other hand, if we assume that the date 1440 B.C. is essentially correct for the time when Israel left Egypt, then 1400 B.C. would be the time when they crossed Jordan and attacked Jericho. Now, the Pharaohs of Egypt in the interval between 1440 and 1400 B.C. are well-known. We have already noted that during this interval, even though Egypt maintained its domination over Palestine (including Jericho), yet its domination was weakening and in fact, when the Israelites' conquest of Palestine began in earnest, the Egyptian Pharaoh, Aknaten, to whom the besieged cities appealed for help, was no longer concerned with saving them.

The significance of this in the present context is that the necropolis associated with the city of Jericho was found by Garstang and excavated. In certain of the graves were found Egyptian amulets known as scarabs, which bore inscriptions somewhat as our coins do, identifying the reigning Pharaoh in Egypt at the time they were manufactured. Scarabs are found with the names of a number of Pharaohs, including three of Amenotep III whose reign began in 1413 B.C.⁶⁰ No scarabs of later ones were found. This would allow fourteen years for the burial

58. In addition to his book referred to above, see also Sir Charles Marston, *The Bible Comes Alive*, Eyre and Spottswode, London, 1937.

59. Neatby, Miller T., *Confirming the Scriptures*, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, London, no date, p.93.

60. Garstang's findings are reported by Sir Charles Marston, *New Bible Evidence*, Fleming H. Revell, New York, 1935, p.153.

of people of influence who might be expected to have such scarabs if we assume that no further burials took place after the capture of the city. If, on the other hand, the Exodus were dated somewhere around 1220 B.C. as the critics like to think, it is surely strange that in this period of nearly two centuries no further scarabs of Amenotep III found their way into the necropolis, nor any of his successor, Aknaten. It seems pretty clear that the cemeteries ceased to be used as such quite early in Amenotep III's reign.

Passing on for a moment to the successive campaigns of the Israelites over the next thirty years or so, as they laid siege to one city after another, the order of events allows very logically for the arrival at his new capital of urgent appeals for help to Aknaten, who succeeded Amenotep III in 1377 B.C. As we have seen, these urgent appeals come from governors in cities of Palestine who say they are being overwhelmed by people who are referred to as the Habiru—almost certainly to be equated with the name "Hebrew".

What did Garstang find when he excavated Jericho? The walls of the city proved to have been built of sun-dried bricks, some of which were surprisingly large. The city had been surrounded by two parallel walls, fifteen feet apart, the outer one of which was six feet thick and the inner one twelve feet. Both walls were about thirty feet high, and because of limited space within the walls, houses appear to have been built spanning the two. Excavation showed that the foundations of these walls were defective in both cases, so that in all probability the houses which spanned them contributed to some extent to their strength—and their weakness.⁶¹

In the biblical story, the children of Israel were told not to make an immediate frontal attack upon the city, but rather to march completely around it once a day until the seventh day and then seven times on the final day.

A wall thirty feet high would seem to be a pretty strong defense, but the height of the wall contributed materially to the success of the plan which the Lord had given to Joshua. In Joshua 6:10, explicit instructions were given to the people that they should make no noise by shouting too soon. The reason for this and for the seven circuits of the final day, climaxed at the end with the blowing of all the trumpets they had accompanied by a mighty shout, is apparent now. The steady tramp of feet day after day set up vibrations in the ground which slowly weakened the already deteriorating foundations of the walls. On the last day the cumulative effect of physical vibration from marching feet and the shock wave of the mighty shout served to bring down what otherwise must have seemed a strong defense. But it needed the period of several days in order to ensure that a substantial section of the wall would come down all at once. If the vibration had been initiated too soon, a collapse would have been piecemeal perhaps, and the enemy might successfully have plugged the gap. Moreover, the very mode of attack of so novel a kind and delayed for so long must have served at first to confuse the defenders and in the end to have given them a false sense of security. At any rate, the plan worked perfectly, the walls fell down outward, the very fact of their being tied together by the houses spanning them serving to ensure that both walls would come tumbling down together. To make such a march around a modern city would be impossible for such a large nondescript group of people, but Jericho—as we have seen—was only seven and a half acres in extent, so that

61. Jericho's walls are described by Sir Charles Marston, *The Bible Comes Alive*, Eyre and Spottswode, London, p.84.

seven trips around on the last day would still only amount to walking around a quite moderate-sized field seven times — a feat well within the capacity of people who had made the trip daily for a whole week.

A few years ago, just after the war, Salisbury Cathedral was found to be in danger of collapse. It was not the design of the building that was faulty — it had stood for centuries secure. But it was discovered, perhaps as a result of wartime explosions, that the walls were becoming increasingly sensitive to vibrations within a certain range which were causing a steady disintegration of the stone. The source of these vibrations proved to be the thirty-two foot stops of the cathedral organ; until steps were taken to repair the damage, it became unsafe to use these particular notes. This is therefore a modern illustration of what the trumpet blast effected in Joshua's day. Furthermore, if an army is set to march across a bridge, it is quite customary to order the men to break step, because the steady tramp of feet in unison can have a disastrous effect upon a structure capable of responding to the vibrations. The Lord told Joshua what to do: I am quite sure that Joshua had no scientific understanding of the "why", but he did it.

Garstang found, in his excavations of the walls, that not all the wall had fallen down. At one point it had remained undamaged and a house which had spanned it had clearly suffered very little, except that in the conflagration which followed when the city had been put to flames, this house had been burnt along with the others. In one of the rooms was found a piece of charred rope.⁶²

The children of Israel were explicitly ordered to touch nothing in the city except silver, gold, and metal articles. In the rooms and store chambers have been found the scorched remains of foodstuffs — wheat, barley, lentils, dates, onions, olives, and pieces of dough. As Sir Charles Marston has put it, "Despite the lapse of more than 3,300 years, these mute witnesses remain today to testify that though Jericho was burnt, it was not plundered." And when he says "burnt", he means *burnt*. Garstang found burnt strata three and four times as thick as any normal ones such as are commonly found when excavating other cities that have been sacked and burnt. It was as though the conqueror had collected combustible materials deliberately in order to increase the conflagration. Joshua 6 seems to indicate that this is what was done, as though to ensure that nothing should be saved.

Sir Charles Marston believes that the vibrations set up by the feet of the children of Israel were not alone responsible for the collapse of the wall, but that God may have sent an earthquake at the time of the crossing of Jordan which had thus already contributed to the weakening of the defenses. This surmise has been reinforced by the words of Psalm 114:3, 4: "The water saw it and fled: Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams and the little hills like lambs." By way of comment upon this, it may be pointed out that some sixteen miles upstream from the probable crossing of Jordan, at the place known as el-Damieh, the river takes a sharp bend; when it is in flood, it has a tendency to undercut the steep bank against which it impinges. In 1927, at just such a season and apparently accompanied by a very mild quake, a substantial section of the bank of the cliff broke away and fell into the water, damming the river for some hours until the pressure of the backed-up waters broke the dam and restored the normal flow.⁶³

62. The finding of this piece of charred rope is noted by Sir Charles Marston, *The Bible Comes Alive*, Eyre and Spottswode, London, pp.86-87.

63. Reported by Sir Charles Marston, *New Bible Evidence*, Fleming H. Revell, New York, 1935, pp.142-43.

In this interval it was possible to cross the river downstream at certain shallows on dry land for several hours.

It might be felt that this is really an attempt to "explain away" the miraculous element entirely – assuming that a similar occurrence took place in Joshua's time. But this is not really the case at all. In Joshua 3 we are told specifically that the Jordan was in full flood and that the children of Israel – with their priests going on before them bearing the ark of the covenant in obedience to God's instructions through Joshua – marched straight up to this torrent without hesitation and even began to step into the water before, suddenly, the flood ceased. Scripture says (verse 15): "As they that bear the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests were dipped *in the brim of the water* (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks at the time of harvest), that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the city of Adam." This city is none other than the present el-Damieh.

This is, surely, a miracle of timing. Moreover, if the people had hesitated, the "drying up" of the river would have occurred before they reached it perhaps, and they might still have walked over dry shod. This would have been a miracle of provision in which the timing was still dramatic enough, but not nearly so wonderful as what actually happened. The circumstance which made this such an exceptional event was really the extraordinary obedience and faith of the priests who were willing to step boldly into a river of no mean size which was in flood. It seems to me that so many Old Testament miracles were miracles, not so much because of the events themselves, which often turn out to have natural explanations -- such as the turning of the bitter waters sweet by Moses (see appendix), but because of some act of obedience requiring great faith. I do not believe that the day of miracles is past. A scientific age does not encourage us to believe that God will set aside His own firmly established natural laws to meet our own special needs. And this might seem to make miracles remote from our day. But I do believe that if we pay attention to circumstances, we shall find miracle once more not in the event itself, but *in the timing of it*, for in more than one sense "our times are in His hands".

Perhaps this answers the problem which not a few people have when they learn that some natural explanation has been discovered for an event which in their minds was sheer miracle. Some years ago I remember hearing a lecturer in Toronto speaking on the whale, or "great fish," which swallowed Jonah. Perhaps with less wisdom than enthusiasm, I went to see him after the lecture and told him of an authenticated instance of a man who was in a whaling crew who suffered a similar fate and enjoyed a similar escape. But the lecturer, who was no mean scholar, was genuinely offended and rebuked me with some vehemence, stating in no uncertain terms that Jonah's escape was miraculous and that it was almost sacrilege to suggest that there might have been any subsequent parallels. I believe, however, that the real miracle in Jonah's case was once again the matter of timing. In the more modern example, one may suppose (though one cannot be sure) that it was pure chance. In the case of Jonah this is not so at all, for as Jonah 1:17 says, "Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah [...]" – and this makes all the difference.

Perhaps the first lesson to be learned from all this is that if we did but recognize the matter of timing in the Lord's dealings with us, we should suddenly discover that our lives are as luminously full of divine interferences as were those

of any of the great saints of the Old Testament times. No, the age of miracles is not passed.

* * *

The main thesis of this essay is that in the study of the Bible we have passed from a primitive stage of unquestioning and sometimes unintelligent acceptance, through a period of criticism and doubt, sometimes sound but often hypercritical, to a position where we are entitled to claim that the best and most untrammelled scholarship can be shown to have vindicated its authenticity and its trustworthiness.

—Sir Frederic G. Kenyon⁶⁴



⁶⁴. Kenyon, Sir Frederic, *The Bible and Modern Scholarship*, Murray, London, 1949, p.1.

Chapter 3

From Abraham to Abel: Fact or Fiction?

If the purpose of this Paper were merely to provide a summary review of the archaeological evidence in support of Scripture, it would not do to close with the fall of Jericho. We would have to go on to consider a host of other exciting discoveries of recent years—the pit in which seventy slain men were thrown (Jeremiah 41: 7),⁶⁵ the tomb containing the remains of people to whom Paul refers in Romans 16:8,⁶⁶ and other equally dramatic finds such as are ably recorded by Joseph Free, Merrill Unger, and others. But this is not the purpose we have in mind.

What we have been attempting to show is that, in a peculiar way, the earlier portions of Scripture have tended to be confirmed with even greater precision than many of the later stories. It is these earlier records with their extraordinary circumstantial detail which were formerly most discredited. The walls of Jericho did fall down "flat", and this after the Israelites had merely marched around the city a number of times. The waters of Jordan did "stand up in a heap". The quails (as we shall see in the appendix) did fly over the camp of the Israelites at a height of approximately three feet. There is nothing whatever in the story of Moses which any longer seems unlikely, and we have even more evidence that the same must be admitted of Joseph. When we come to Abraham, in one chapter alone (Genesis 14) so many details are given, each of which was a potential source of error, that it almost looks as though it was God's policy to make the earlier records more precisely capable of ultimate vindication than the later ones.

But as we go back beyond Abraham, names and events are accumulated in ever increasing density until every single verse provides some new piece of information which is presented to the reader as though there could never be the slightest doubt about its historical reality. Other such ancient manuscripts become increasingly filled with mythological detail: we depart more and more from reality until we are in the presence of demigods and monsters and other such imaginary creations bordering upon fantasy. But not so with Scripture. If possible, the account becomes more factual, more like a simple straightforward chronicle of fact with every step taken back toward the beginning. The dividing of the nations after the Flood, the escape of Noah and his family chronicled like a modern ship's log, the building of the first cities, the invention of musical instruments and of technical arts, the first murder arising out of a circumstance

65. See on this remarkable find, including possibly some of the skeletons (!), Duncan Garrow, *The Accuracy of the Old Testament*, S.P.C.K., London, 1930, pp.53-54.

66. For a brief account of this, see A. Rendle Short, *The Bible and Modern Research*, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, London, no date, p.82.

which has been repeated throughout history and which bears the hallmark of plain truth, and suddenly we find ourselves in the presence of two very real and very human beings – Adam and Eve. Where in this chain of events do we pass from fact into fantasy? The answer is, Nowhere. The transition is simply impossible to establish.

Hitherto, archaeology seems to have found its greatest service in validating Scripture from the time of Abraham onward. Little has been found to carry the light of confirmation back beyond this. Is this because it is here that history begins and myth ends in Scripture? I think not. Although the evidence from archaeology applicable to pre-Abrahamic times is, in the nature of the case, less substantial than it is for subsequent ages, there is evidence nonetheless. Indeed, by its very nature, while less impressive in the minds of those who perhaps have not given the matter the thought it deserves, what evidence there is is all the more remarkable because of the circumstances. How could one expect to find archaeological evidence of events taking place before a Flood which virtually wiped out all that went before? Yet such evidence exists, and because of its sparseness it demands greater attention. Not all of it is archaeological in the sense that it results from excavation, yet indirectly we would not have most of this information were it not for archaeology. The evidence which we shall now examine, therefore, is only indirectly archaeological but is an important part of this Paper nonetheless. We shall work backward in this brief survey, extracting everything we can from the light we have at the present moment until it begins to fail us altogether. But when this has been done, we shall find ourselves virtually at the entrance to the Garden of Eden.

We have already noted the importance of the record of Abraham's antecedents as given in Genesis 11 insofar as they shed a wonderful light upon his relationship to Sarah. This chapter opens with the account of the proposed building of the Tower of Babel. There is no longer any doubt that such a tower was attempted. Nor is there much doubt that the agreement to make bricks in place of stone was exactly the kind of agreement these people would have reached, coming as they did from a region where stone was plentiful into one where it was very scarce indeed. That they were capable at this very early period of achieving the organization necessary for undertaking such a community effort is now unquestionable. Moreover, the level topography of southern Babylonia is such that a tower of sufficient height would serve those who were without other means of direction-finding as a landmark for rallying even after they had settled widely over the land (verse 4 – so the Hebrew), exactly as the record implies. It would readily be seen from great distances whenever it became necessary to come together for defence or any other reason.

In short, everything about this particular incident makes perfectly good sense in the light of what we know now. By a device of beautiful simplicity, God apparently miraculously accelerated the divergence of pronunciation and small shifts of meaning which we see occurring even today at a much slower rate which lead to the formation of dialects. Co-operative effort which depends so heavily upon free communication was rendered impossible between men who became effectively unintelligible to one another. In time, dialectic differences became language differences. And cuneiform, which was the means of written communication in use at that time, bears evidence of being a vehicle which has suffered considerable confusion, single ideographs often having a bewildering

number of sound values. This is exactly what would happen if a group of people who shared these signs did actually, for some reason, begin to attach to them quite different values.⁶⁷

This very fact was one of the reasons for the similar confusion of modern scholars when they first began to decipher ideographs. Their difficulties bore mute testimony to Genesis 11:7. The evidence for the confusion of language itself has been explored in another Paper, "The Confusion of Language"⁶⁸ and will not be repeated here. But it may be stated with a reasonable measure of assurance that the evidence for the truth of Genesis 11:1 increases daily, so that languages which were once thought to be absolutely unrelated are no longer held to be so. It becomes increasingly likely that linguists will find it possible to establish direct relationships between all known languages, ancient and modern, thereby demonstrating the truth stated here in Genesis 11:1 that all men once shared a common tongue.

Genesis 11:2 states that the people who first settled in Babylonia came from the east, from Elam. There is no doubt, in the light of present knowledge, that this statement is absolutely correct. Subsequently there arose a powerful leader in this area by the name of Nimrod. At the present moment, it cannot be said for certain that he has been identified, although a number of possibilities exist, the most probable ones being that he is to be equated with either Merodach or Ningirshu, both of whom were later deified.

The possible equation of this biblical character's name with Merodach is based on the supposition that the form "Merodach" is to be derived from a root meaning "to rebel", the consonants of which would be *m-r-d*. The prefix *nin* meaning "son of" would then give us a derived form signifying "son of rebellion" or some such compound as *Nin-mirud*, or simply Nimrod.

The second possibility—namely, that Nimrod is to be equated with *Nin-gir-shu*—is based upon a statement (which I have not been able to verify) that according to Brunnow's "Classified List of Sumerian Ideographs," the signs read as *gir-shu* could also be read as *mir-rud*. According to Labat,⁶⁹ the sound value *mir* can be read as *gir*, so that *nin-gir* could be *nin-mir*, thus accounting for the first part of Nimrod's name. The substitution of *ud* for *shu* I have not been able to verify. However, if Nimrod and *Nin-gir-shu* or *Nim-gir-shu* are alternatives, an interesting sidelight is shed upon this individual's history as the result of archaeological work undertaken in Nigeria.

In the first place, the father of Nimrod was Cush, and the name "Cush" is applied to several localities (where presumably his descendants settled), one in Africa. In an article which deals with some magnificent Nigerian bronze heads, K. C. Murray, speaking of the Yoruba tribe where they originated, has this to say:

Legends concerning the origins of the Yoruba seem to deal with the establishment of a ruling dynasty. It is believed that in

67. As an illustration, the simple sign  has among its some twenty-two sound values the following: *Ut, Ud, Tam, Par, and Hish!* Imagine how many different ways a word could be pronounced when a single element in it could be any one of twenty-two such sounds!

68. Culance, A. C., "The Confusion of Language," Part 1 in *Time and Eternity*, vol. VI of the *Doorway Papers*, Zondervan Publishing Co.

69. Labat, Rene, *Manuel D'Epigraphie Akkadienne*, Paris, 1952, p.159.

the second millennium B.C. a people known as the Kishites [Cushites?] began to enter the Horn of Africa from Mesopotamia and later gradually spread westward [...]. According to the account of Sultan Bello of Sokoto, the Yoruba were of the Tribe of Nimrod.⁷⁰

It is customary in reading cuneiform to replace the weak letter *n* at the end of a syllable by doubling the next consonant or by lengthening the vowel which precedes it. Thus Nin-gir-shu would tend to be pronounced as "Nigger-shu", or "Nyger-shu". It may very well be that we have here not only the origin of the word "Nigeria" (pronounced with a long *I*), but even of the form "nigger", for the native of Africa. The only representations of Nimrod of which I am aware are those given by Hislop, where he is shown as negroid.⁷¹

According to R. D. Dennett, the Yoruba tribe claims that the founder of their race had a wife whose name meant "child of brass".⁷² And if we go back a little farther in the line of Ham, the father of Nimrod, we finally arrive at an individual who was said to have originated the art of working metals, iron and brass. In Genesis 4:22 his name is given as Tubal-Cain; although the name does not appear in this form in antiquity, R. J. Forbes, one of the outstanding authorities on metallurgy in antiquity, points out that Cain means "smith".⁷³ According to the same author, one of the tribes long associated with metal working in the ancient world was the Tibareni, whom many scholars identify with Tubal, the *l* and *r* being interchangeable.

We may go one step further in this by noting the fact that the name of the individual who came to be constituted the god of the Tiber (a clearly related word) was Vulcan. To my mind there is very little doubt that Tubal-Cain is the earliest form of the name "Vulcan", which in its later stages was merely shortened by the omission of the Tu-. In his commentary on Genesis,⁷⁴ Marcus Dods points out that everything is so faithfully perpetuated in the East that the blacksmith of the village Bubbata-ez-zetua referred to the iron "splinters" struck off while working at his forge as "tubal". Is it entirely a coincidence that we should refer to an iron worker as a *blacksmith*,⁷⁵ in view of the fact that these Hamitic people, themselves probably dark-skinned, seem to have been the initial workers in iron?

Now, the traditions regarding Vulcan are rather interesting. He is, of course, associated with fire and the working of metals, later appearing as the divine smith of the Roman *Tubilustrum*.⁷⁶ He is said to have been a cripple, having been thrown out of heaven by Jupiter as a punishment for having taken the part of his mother in a quarrel which occurred between them.⁷⁷

In Genesis 4:23 there is a rather extraordinary story of how Lamech took vengeance on a young man for wounding him. Lamech's son was Tubal-Cain,

70. Murray, K. C., "Nigerian Bronzes," *Antiquity* (England), March, 1941, p.76.

71. Hislop, Alexander, *The Two Babylons*, Partridge, London, 1903, pp.44, 47.

72. Dennett, R. D., *Nigerian Studies*, London, 1910, p.75.

73. Forbes, R. J., *Metallurgy in Antiquity*, Brill, Leiden, 1950, pp.97, 88.

74. Dods, Marcus, *Genesis*, Clark, Edinburgh, no date, p.26, footnote.

75. It is, of course, possible that the colour of the metal is in view. But all other smiths are named for the metal they work, i.e., coppersmith, tinsmith.

76. Forbes, R. J., *Metallurgy in Antiquity*, Brill, Leiden, p.90. Also H. J. Rose, "The Cult of Vulcan at Rome," *Journal of the Royal Society*, vol.II3, 1933, p.46.

77. See T. Bulfinch, *The Age of Fable*, Heritage Press, New York, 1942, pp.7-8.

perhaps none other than Vulcan subsequently deified. In the brief account in Genesis it is stated that Lamech had two wives, one of whom was named Zillah. Let us suppose, for a moment, that it was with Zillah that Lamech had quarrelled and that Tubal-Cain, *son of Zillah*, took his mother's part and got into a fight with his father, Lamech. Whatever happened to Lamech is not clear, although he appears to have been wounded; but Tubal-Cain himself was injured sufficiently to become thereafter a lame man. Now, it is customary in a society where a man may have more than one wife to name each child, not after the father, but after the mother, since this obviously assures more precise identification. Thus any child of Zillah, besides having a personal name, would also be known as "Son of Zillah". If language at this time was some form of Semitic, this alternative name would very probably have become Bar-Zillah, i.e., son of Zillah. But custom early established the principle that names ending in *-ah* were reserved for females, the masculine form later ending in the letter *-u*, as it does in Assyrian and Babylonian masculine forms. Tubal-Cain would therefore quite possibly receive a second name, "Bar-Zillu."

The remarkable thing is that the Sumerian word for "iron" is just this *barzillu*, or *parzillu*, thus accounting for a word that has long puzzled Sumeriologists. The metal may simply have been named after the one who first discovered how to work it!

We could therefore have here incidental but striking testimony to the persistence of a tradition of a series of events which carry us right back beyond the Flood to Lamech's son, Tubal-Cain, the father of all that work in brass and iron. His name, his art, his relation to one of Lamech's wives, and his probable fate after wounding his father in defence of his mother, are thus all reflected in this chain of traditional lore which by its very artlessness bears all the more impressive testimony to the truth of these early records of a period written almost within the lifetime of Adam himself. Even Lamech's polygamy is indirectly confirmed by the fact that Tubal Cain's other name identified him, not as the son of Lamech, but as the son of one of his wives—by naming which wife in particular.

Putting all these things together, one has a remarkable series of fragments of tradition in which there is a continuity of name-forms, all related in meaning or association and wrapped up in a trade of very ancient origin, attached to a deity who had the strange experience of being ejected from his home and rendered lame for taking his mother's part⁷⁸ and who thereafter lent his title, "Son of Zillah", to the Sumerian people as their word for iron.

These same Sumerian people, in spite of paintings in which they are portrayed in reconstructions as having had bronzed faces, always referred to themselves as black-headed ones,⁷⁹ and are indeed spoken of by other people as black-headed⁸⁰, while their relatives in the Indus Valley were similarly termed black and noseless(!) by the white Aryans who conquered them. The very word "Ham" means "burned" or "dark", and while Ham's descendants were certainly not all black (witness the "yellow" Mongols, "red" Indians, and "brown" Malays), it seems

78. Kramer, S., *From the Tablets of Sumer*, Falcon's Wing Press, New York 1956, p.60.

79. So in the Code of Hammurabi, Deimel's Transcription, 1930, R.24, line 11. Sennacherib's Prism, (col.1, line 15) refers to the related Canaanites in the same way. Since *his* hair was black, it is hardly likely he is referring merely to hair colour only.

80. Piggott, S., *Prehistoric India*, Pelican Books, Hammondsworth, England, 1950, p.261.

that the traditions of iron-working were kept particularly within the circle of black people, so that Africa became the instructor of Indo-Europeans in the art of metalworking. It seems possible that they may have preserved some of this traditional lore and classed themselves as Hamites, or "Al Hami", and that in our word "alchemy" (hence, chemistry) we have still some faint recollection of this tenuous thread of unbroken history from Tubal-Cain down to modern times.

The brief picture we are given of Nimrod in Genesis 10:9-12 suggests a warlike individual of considerable energy who established the world's first kingdom by military conquest, thus expanding his sovereignty from a base in Babylonia in southern Mesopotamia by invading Assyria (the Asshur of Genesis 10:11) to the north. I believe the Revised Standard Version is more correct in its rendering of this verse. Nimrod there built what appear to have been several provincial capitals, of which Nineveh was one. Archaeology shows that Assyria in the north was first settled by Semites, who entered it from the north and west and then were conquered from the south. In this way one ruler united the northern Semites and the southern Hamites (Sumerians), the amalgam resulting in the rise of an extraordinarily complex civilization from which European civilization has unknowingly drawn so much of its inspiration. The events outlined in these four verses are factual history in miniature.

Beyond these observations, Genesis 10 will not be examined here in any detail since it is the subject matter of another Doorway Paper.⁸¹ But it may be said broadly that it presents in graphic form a picture of the relationships between the ancient nations of the world which has at no point been found to be in error. In fact, the subgroups of nations which are presented as "families" could have supplied a key to ethnologists if they had cared to accept it, which would have allowed them to advance their science far more rapidly than they were able to do — though they have reached virtually the same basic conclusions by alternative methods. Generally speaking, the nations of the earth (verse 32) are considered as three family groups. Anthropologists and ethnologists have never improved upon this enumeration. The only modifications proposed have been the raising to "racial status" of certain comparatively small segments of the world's population — such as the Australian aborigines who seem to combine features of both the negroid and the Caucasoid racial stocks.

While this may not appear a very impressive testimony to Scripture, it should be borne in mind that when this Table of Nations was written, it was not customary to recognize people of totally strange nations as even "human". Such people were less than human beings — much as the Nazis looked upon the Jewish people as less than human. Even today primitive people refer to themselves, in terms of their own language of course, as "men" or "people"; all others are less than men.⁸² It was a bold step indeed — and an inspired one — which led the writer to credit, not merely neighbours, but even enemies to the same ancestors as themselves. This was surely a remarkable Charter of Nations recognizing the

81. Custance, A. C., "A Study of the Names in Genesis 10," Part 2 in *Noah's Three Sons*, vol.I in The Doorway Papers, Zondervan Publishing Co.

82. Thus the Naskapi Indians of Canada call themselves Nenenot, meaning "real people". The Eskimos call themselves Innuvit, which has the same meaning. According to Murdock, Hottentots term themselves Khoi-Khoi, "men of men", i.e., "real men". The name Chukchee of the Siberian people studied by Bogoras means "men". According to Coon, the term Yahgan means men "*par excellence*" — rather ironical in that they are a tribe of Terra del Fuegians whom Darwin felt were scarcely human at all! Andamanese Islanders call themselves Onge, meaning similarly "men" or "people".

brotherhood of man through the fatherhood of Noah. It is even more amazing that the lines of brotherhood are traced so accurately.

From Genesis 6 to 9 we have the record of the Flood. If the Flood was universal in a global sense, then we shall not find archaeological evidence of it, but only geological. Many people believe this is exactly what we have. For those of us who believe it was universal only in the destruction of mankind and the animals who shared his habitat, the catastrophe did not *completely* obliterate the remains of prior civilization. In spite of the fact that Genesis 11 indicates, and archaeology supports, the movement of the first settlers in Mesopotamia after the Flood as having been from the East so that they must previously have been elsewhere than in the Mesopotamian Plains, many people believe that Noah's Flood occurred in Mesopotamia. Accordingly, they are predisposed to accept very readily the evidence presented by Childe and others for an inundation of no mean size which apparently put a temporary end to civilization in the earlier period of Ur's history. When evidence of a similar nature was observed in other neighbouring cities of the Plain, it was felt that archaeology had indeed vindicated the biblical Flood.

However, it can be shown, unfortunately, that these beds of apparently water-laid silt, though of considerable depth, were exceedingly local and in no way disturbing the continuity of life in neighbouring cities. Such inundations were therefore more in the nature of "flash floods" which caused the local people to abandon their homes and to desert the sites affected for some considerable time. The diagrammatic chart of this so-called Flood evidence (see Fig. 15) will show how local these disturbances really were and how widely spaced in time. Not one Flood, but several floods are therefore involved here.⁸³

Periods	Dates	Ur	Kish	Shuruppak	Uruk	Lagash	Nineveh
Early Dynastic	2470		■				
	2800		■■■■	■	■		
Jamdat Nasr	2800						
	3000						
Uruk	IVth Millennium						
Obeid		■					■
Halaf							

Figure 15. Mesopotamian sites showing flood deposits.

Nevertheless, whatever its actual range, Noah's Flood was of sufficient magnitude that mankind never forgot it. Flood traditions are found all over the

83. From Andre Parrot, *The Flood and Noah's Ark*, SCM Press, London, 1955, p.52.

world, and in certain essentials the concordance of their detail is very remarkable indeed.⁸⁴

Occasionally it has been argued that this worldwide distribution of traditions is clear evidence of a worldwide flood. Unfortunately, if this were the case, it would not be a vindication of the biblical story but a challenge to it in one of its most important aspects. Worldwide traditions – if each represented a recollection of the event as experienced in that particular part of the world – would imply survivors all over the world; but Scripture says that eight human beings alone survived the catastrophe.

The Flood story is factual in its presentation, reading very much like a ship's log. There is no doubt that only eight people came out of the ark and that from them was the earth re-peopled. Genesis 10 assumes this as a fact and leaves no question in the reader's mind that the writer intended it to be understood that all the world's people find their origin within the families of Noah's three sons.

And so we move back into antediluvian times. Genesis 5 is concerned chiefly with a genealogy leading from Adam to Noah. It has frequently been pointed out that the cuneiform literature agrees in that this span of years occupies the lifetime of only ten persons. The ages achieved by these antediluvian patriarchs are far, far in excess of current age expectancies. It has been proposed, therefore, either that we are misinterpreting the figures or that the figures have been artificially enlarged in an effort to give the same kind of heroic dimensions to these characters as their counterparts in ancient pagan literature, or that they are simply the work of some primitive scribe who had no idea what large numbers really signified.

Archaeology has probably recovered nothing tangible which sheds light on the civilization of pre-Flood times. But post-Flood cuneiform tablets in great numbers have been found which often confirm the biblical details of this period. Among these are several king lists giving us the names and lengths of reign of those who ruled from "Adam" to "Noah".

The names do not precisely coincide with those listed in Genesis 5, but the number of generations seems to be similar. In some lists there are only eight kings, in others ten, to be compared with the ten antediluvian patriarchs of Genesis. Various attempts have been made to demonstrate essential identity of most of the individuals in these cuneiform king lists, and from other tablets we gather some details of the lives of certain of them which strongly encourage the view that they are indeed the same people even when their names look different. One major problem has been the time spans involved, many of them having reputedly ruled for fifty to sixty thousand years according to current translations of these texts. One text shows the ten of them to have ruled a total of 345,000 years, another 432,000 years. Some suggestions have been made about these figures; for example, that they represent dynasties rather than individual reigns, but cultural remains in the area for such vast periods of time are lacking.

An alternative is to re-interpret the value of the unit of measurement upon which these enormous spans of time are based. This unit is the Saros, which has been taken to signify a period of 3,600 years. But the Saros has a shorter value,⁸⁵

84. See A. C. Custance, "Flood Traditions of the World," Part 2 in *The Flood: Local or Global?*, vol. IX of The Doorway Papers, Zondervan Publication Co.

85. Saros: On this question, see F. A. Jones, *The Dates of Genesis*, Kingsgate Press, London, 1909, p. 50. Also some valuable comments by Franke Parker, *Chronology*, Henry & Parker, Oxford, 1858, especially p. 790.

which if applied to the same figures reduces them to something rather closer to the figures given in Genesis 5. This value is 18 years, 11 days, and 8 hours. On the basis of the lesser value—and I know of no inherent reason why it should not have been taken into consideration—the cuneiform records approach much more nearly to the biblical record. The lower figure provides us with a remarkably close total period from Adam to Noah. It is slightly longer than the period as calculated on the basis of the Hebrew text, and very nearly the same as the figures given in the Septuagint texts (Alexandrian and Vatican) and in the works of Josephus. This general order of agreement is a remarkable witness to the essential consistency of ancient tradition on the subject. The reasons for preferring the figures given in the biblical text to those given in the Septuagint versions mentioned is considered in some detail in the Doorway Paper entitled "Longevity in Antiquity and Its Bearing on Chronology."⁸⁶

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We now find ourselves almost within sight of the Garden of Eden without having discovered any point in this retracing of biblical history at which to say with any confidence, "Beyond this, we are in the realm of mythology." So far nothing has the air of mythology. And if anything, chapter 4 of Genesis is even more matter-of-fact.

We have already dealt in part with some of the characters in this chapter: Lamech, Zillah, and Tubal-Cain. We have seen that even the name of Lamech's second wife seems to have been preserved for us in the ancient word for iron, *parzillu*. In due time, it is quite possible that we shall recognize Jabal, the first cattleman and tent-dweller, and Jubal, the father of music. In fact, I would venture to predict that God did not preserve these names (the chapter is full of them) through all these centuries of history without at the same time preserving somewhere—yet to be discovered—evidence of their existence as real persons. It is a "rule" in scientific research that one sees largely what one is looking for and is very apt to miss much that is significant simply because the mind is not attending carefully. It is sometimes said that Nature does not provide us with data but *capta*. There are very few "givens"—or perhaps one should say, *everything* is given, but the mind takes note only of selected groups of factors out of the whole. These "takens" (or *capta*) are what we blithely term "data". In a very similar way, the scholar is provided with hundreds of thousands of bits and pieces of information from existing cuneiform tablets and inscriptions and from a vast untapped accumulation of traditional lore among primitive and not-so-primitive people. Within this wealth of material there may very well be the supportive evidence which would bear testimony to the reality of these other ancient worthies, if we were only perceptive enough to find them or believing enough to make the search. Unfortunately those best qualified for this kind of

Also an extraordinary work entitled *Palmoni*, by an anonymous (Jewish?) author who discusses the long and short values of the Saros and favours the short value of eighteen years and ten or eleven days. The full title of this volume of 680 pages is *Palmoni: An Essay on the Chronological and Numerical System in Use Among the Jews*, Longmans, Brown, Green, and Longmans, London, 1851, p.10.

86. Custance, A. C., "Longevity in Antiquity and Its Bearing on Chronology," Part I in *The Virgin Birth and the Incarnation*, vol.V in The Doorway Papers, Zondervan Publishing Co.

research are by their faith, as a rule, least likely even to look for the evidence or recognize it for what it is if they should stumble upon it by accident.

Moreover, it sometimes has happened that even when this kind of evidence has appeared, it has not been given the recognition it should have because, of all people, scholars tend to be most sensitive to the good opinion of their colleagues and are afraid of the ridicule which sometimes attends discoveries strongly confirming some aspect of Scripture. This may account, I think, for the fact that evidence from archaeology has appeared in support of the statement made in Genesis 4:17 that Cain built a city, by implication the first one to be built, and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch, and yet this evidence has scarcely received any notice. And this, in spite of the fact that it carries us so far back in the biblical record that we are only one generation from the first human pair.

The evidence to which I refer is indirect in one sense, yet remarkable nonetheless. In the nature of the case, wherever a man and his family settled at the beginning, that territory would tend to become named after him. Consequently a single name might apply either to a country or to an individual. To distinguish in cuneiform literature whether the name referred to the individual or to the place, it became customary to add either before or after the word an identifying sign, the sign for man or place. The sign for man was written before the name; the sign for place was added after. The same procedure was followed with respect to cities which, naturally enough (and as we shall see in Genesis), were often named after some person of distinction. Thus the name "Cush" in Scripture is both the name of an individual and the name of at least one area of land—probably of several areas. In Hebrew there is no device for distinguishing which is intended, but in cuneiform there is.

There is, therefore, an almost universal custom of putting the cuneiform sign  (-*ki*) after the name of a city. I say "almost" because there is one notable exception. Whenever the name "Uruk" is mentioned, the determinative or identifying sign -*ki* was sometimes omitted.⁸⁷ Why is this? Well, the city Uruk is also written in the cuneiform literature as Unuk and this form is identified without question with the name Enoch. According to Scripture, therefore, this city Unuk or Uruk was the first to be built and it follows that it would not, at the very beginning, be thought of as a "city", because to be so distinguished there would have to have existed, prior to it, other similar congregations of buildings in order to constitute it one of a class. The concept "city" would arise after it was built, not at the very moment it was built. And being the very first one in existence, it would become, quite naturally, the *City*, identified uniquely: indeed it might well be referred to—as London is by Londoners—as *The City*. At any rate, the exceptional circumstance which led to the habit of writing this name without the determinative for city is most logically accounted for if we assume it was indeed the first one ever.

Now obviously the City which Cain built and named after his son Enoch must have been destroyed by the Flood, so that the physical entity itself has probably disappeared. As so often happens in history, the City was re-founded elsewhere, i.e., in Mesopotamia, receiving once more its original name. Perhaps if these

87. Uruk: on this point, see John Urquhart, "The Bearing of Recent Oriental Discoveries on Old Testament History," *Transactions of the Victorian Institute*, vol.38, 1906, p.48; and W. St. Chad Boscawen, *The Bible and the Monuments*, Eyre and Spottswode, London, 1896, p.94.

re-builders had followed our pattern, they would have referred to it as "New Uruk"! But though the original city was lost sight of, the special significance of the name was not, for in due time the very word "Unuk" ceased to be a name only and became also a word meaning "city". In later cuneiform, this same word became "Ereck" and it survives to this day as "Warka". Subsequently the word appeared in Asia Minor, not as *Wark-* but as *Perg-*, where it is to be seen in the name "Pergamos", for example. This form of the word for "city" travelled up into Europe with some variations, becoming in due time *-burg*, *-burgh*, and *-borough*. It is also interesting to note that in Greek the word took the form *purgos*, *πύργος* meaning a "tower" — a fact of added significance in the light of Genesis 11:4, which equates the building of a city with the building of a tower. Nor does the association end here, for the word "tower" came through into other Indo-European languages in the form of "tour" and its cognate in English, "town."

In short, a simple statement is made in Genesis 4 to the effect that Cain built the first city and named it after his son, Enoch. History shows an unbroken line of evidence associating the idea of a city with this word "Enoch". This is a remarkable confirmation, after so many thousands of years of history, of the biblical statement set forth with such artless simplicity.

There is one further line of inquiry which may perhaps be allowed here, though — like a number of other inclusions — it is not strictly archaeological. A remarkable number of traditions associate the building of some particular city of prominence with two brothers, one of whom invariably is killed by the other — usually out of envy. This, of course, is true of the building of Rome, where Romulus and Remus are the leading characters. Lenormant has a considerable section of his famous study, *The Beginnings of History*, devoted to traditions which he believes are relevant.⁸⁸ His attitude toward Scripture is not altogether satisfying, because he holds the view that the story of Cain and Abel and the subsequent building of the first city by the former are not so much original records but shared myths purified to be consonant with the spirit of the rest of Scripture. However, his remarks are interesting, for he shows how widespread the association was in ancient times. Moreover, Lenormant believes that from some basic truth underlying these traditions originated the practice in later years of performing a human sacrifice when founding any city or prominent building. He acknowledges at the same time that the record of Genesis is quite unlike the form taken by parallel traditions, in that the leading characters, including Cain's immediate descendants (Tubal, Lamech, etc.), are presented as ordinary men with not the slightest evidence of any inclination to deify them. Although he does not admit it, this distinction would surely greatly strengthen the claim of those who believe in Scripture as the inspired Word of God that these writers were overruled, not only in what they said, but how they presented it. Archaeology has on a number of occasions borne witness to this practice of human sacrifice when laying the foundations of ancient buildings of importance.

The light of archaeology is not quite exhausted yet. The recovery of the most ancient of languages in history — Assyrian, Babylonian, and finally Sumerian — has brought to our attention one further interesting piece of evidence that takes us as far as Abel. It turns out — as perhaps might have been expected if all existing languages once began from a common root — that certain words fundamental to

88. Lenormant, F., *The Beginnings of History*, Scribner's, New York, 1891, pp.149 ff.

society itself are shared by Semites, Hamites (in the biblical sense), and Indo-Europeans or Japhethites. Such words as denote family relationships, personal pronouns, and smaller numbers fall in this category. The word for "son" is an interesting example. But in order to explore this meaningfully, it is necessary first to set forth very briefly the kind of phonetic changes commonly found when words of one language group are shared by another language group.

The letters *b, f, m, p, ph, v*, and sometimes *w* are interchangeable: thus *mit* in German is *with* in English; *fire* in English is *pur* in Greek; *marmo* in Italian is *marble* in English; *amelu* (meaning "a person") in Assyrian is *awilum* in Babylonian; and so on.

In a similar way *l, n*, and *r* are interchangeable: thus, for example, *castrum* in Latin becomes *castle* in English. An excellent example of all three letters being interchangeable appears in the words *barrister, baluster, and bannister*. The list could be extended indefinitely.

Now the word for *son* in French is *fil*s. In Latin this appears as *puer*—the *r* reverting to an *l* sound in the feminine form *puella*. In Hebrew, the terminal consonants are replaced by *h* and *n* respectively, as in Ben-jamin. In Aramaic, *ben* appears as *bar*, as in *Bar-abbas*. Going back beyond Aramaic to the Assyrian, we come to the form *pilu*. It appears in the familiar name Tiglath-*pil*-eser. In Babylonian, this is found as *aplu*, and when we go further back still to the Sumerian, the form is *abel* or *apil*, and sometimes as *ibila*.

Although this kind of philology involves risks and has been carried to absurd extremes, there is no doubt that all these forms are actually related. As we have already noted in another connection, the word *parzillu* is almost certainly a construct which means "the son of Zillah". Thus very, very early in history the form *par* for "son" and the form *abil* are both in use—indeed, they are really alternative methods of pronouncing the terminal consonants which signify the word *son*. This essential word has never been lost sight of and is still with us today, though in English it appears as an adjective, *filial*. The significant fact in all this is that the child whom Adam and Eve must have looked upon as really their son received the name "Abel". In other words, this name by which they called the child became thereafter a generic word standing for "sonship", just as the name of the first city became a generic word for cities thereafter. There are reasons why I believe Cain was never really thought of by Adam and Eve in this way, but they are not properly part of this paper. It was not Cain's name, but Abel's which has been preserved throughout history as a prototype for all succeeding sons.

This seems, at the moment, as far as we can go. It is true that cuneiform tablets have provided us with parallels to the story of Eden. But none of them are truly parallel, for they all are characterized by fantasy, where the gods quarrel with one another over newly created man, and even man himself appears as something more than man. Scripture alone presents us with a picture of two truly human people behaving exactly as we might behave ourselves—the only exceptional circumstance really being the part played by the serpent. Perhaps one day we shall understand this, too. To those who have known the Lord personally, the rest of the story is not really exceptional. Certainly, from the very first there is every indication that we are intended to take the narrative in a very literal sense; as Adam and Eve pass out of this Garden of God, they assume the dimensions of ordinary people, and the events of their lives lead naturally and

without any evident break into the lives of their immediate descendants—and history is in the making.



Appendix: Further Examples

Several remarkable confirmations of exceptional events in the early chapters of Genesis have not been treated in the text which precedes, because there seemed no place for them without breaking the continuity of thought. Strictly speaking, these are not all archaeological confirmations.

The following are just a few instances of comparatively recent discoveries which bear upon or shed light upon events in Scripture that have been a source either of misunderstanding or of downright disbelief. It will be noted that all these events are related directly or indirectly to the birth of the nation Israel.

First, with respect to the time of the Oppression, the Israelites were forced to serve the Pharaohs by building "store cities", in particular the two cities named Pithom and Raamses (Exodus 1:11). Much has been written regarding the circumstance of the finding by Edouard Naville, toward the end of the last century: a site supposedly to be identified with one of these cities, in which the lower courses of brick contained free straw, higher courses stubble, and the uppermost courses little or no straw whatever (cf. Exodus 5:7-18).⁸⁹ At Tell el Maskhuta in the Delta of Egypt were found inscriptions containing the word *Pi-tum*, meaning "House of the god Tum". Archaeologists have since challenged Naville's identification, preferring to equate the site with Succoth (Exodus 13:20).⁹⁰

Whatever may or may not have resulted from these discussions, the controversy at least brought out one piece of information which is clearly apropos. Dr. T. Eric Peet of Liverpool University, after reading in Naville's account a statement made by a visitor to the site (a Mr. Villiers Stuart, who had expressed interest in the absence of straw in the upper course of brick), pointed out with evident pleasure that it was no surprise to himself at all. "For," Peet said, "it is almost inconceivable that any traveller in Egypt should make this statement with regard to the use of straw in bricks, for though straw has been used both in ancient and modern times, its use is somewhat rare, more particularly in ancient times."⁹¹ He proceeded to point out that the Nile mud makes perfectly good brick without any binder, making the assumption (as most of us have done) that straw served this purpose only. In his over-confidence, Peet has since been proved to be quite wrong. Edward G. Acheson, in a paper presented in the *Transactions of the American Ceramic Society* in 1904, described certain experiments he made as the result of a chance discovery which led to a technique for greatly improving the

89. Naville, Edouard, *The Store-City of Pithom and the Route of the Exodus*, 4th edition, London 1903, pp.9ff.

90. Garrow Duncan considered that the name Maskhuta is itself merely a variant form of the more similar Succoth; see *The Exploration of Egypt and the Old Testament*, Fleming H. Revell, New York, 1908, p.79.

91. Peet, T. E., *Egypt and the Old Testament*, University of Liverpool, 1924, p.99.

strength and impact resistance of bricks.⁹² He was surprised to discover on one occasion that certain German clays were far superior to local American clays for the making of pottery, with respect to both plasticity and tensile strength. His surprise sprang from the fact that they did not feel or look different nor did chemical analysis reveal anything unusual. However, being a novice and unaware of previous research work done in this field, he came to the subject with an entirely fresh mind and soon found that "residual" clay differed from water-laid or sedimentary clays, the latter being superior even though their compositions appeared to be identical. He hazarded a happy guess that the process of water-laying had introduced some component which had hitherto escaped recognition. To make a long story short, he discovered that gallo-tannic, when introduced into clay, had the unexpected effect of not only improving the tensile strength of the finished brick but considerably shortening the time for drying it, since less water was required to make it readily mouldable. His conclusion was that gallo-tannic acid was being introduced into water-laid clays by the fact that the water itself had washed through vegetation and in doing so picked up the modifying chemicals. Thus Acheson concluded:

It was therefore possible perhaps for the Egyptians to produce a sun-dried brick of greater strength from the straw-treated clay than from the same clay untreated *and burned*.

The addition of either tannin or straw emulsion to the clay diminished the amount of water that was necessary to produce a sufficiently plastic mass for moulding.⁹³

Thus, as Acheson observes, less water was required (important in a dry country), less shrinkage occurred, less cracking, less time to "temper", and fewer lumps: by contrast there resulted increased plasticity, greater density, greater tensile strength, and increased hardness.

The ancient Egyptian technicians were wiser as technicians than Dr. Peet as a professor. And, by the way, it accounts for the fact that even stubble served a useful purpose – which seemed much less likely to have been the case if it was to constitute as a binder only.

* * *

The second incident for comment is the turning of the waters of the Nile into "blood", as recorded in Exodus 7:17ff. In 1947 there was reported by Gordon Gunter and others an instance of catastrophic mass death involving millions of fish off the Florida coast of the Gulf of Mexico.⁹⁴ This occurred in the latter part of November, 1946, and the estimated number of animals killed was at least 50,000,000, apart from oysters, clams, crabs, shrimps, and other creatures. The cause of the death of these animals was found to have been micro-organisms of several species, with special emphasis upon *gymnodinium*, which had suddenly experienced an exceptionally rapid population growth rate. The effect was to turn

⁹² Peet, T. E., *Egypt and the Old Testament*, University of Liverpool, 1924, p.99.

⁹³ *Ibid*

⁹⁴ Gunter, Gordon, *et al.*, "Mass Mortality of Marine Animals on the Lower West Coast of Florida, November, 1946 to January, 1947," *Science*, vol.105, 1947, p.256

the water a reddish-brown colour, making it look to all intents and purposes rather like blood. More recently there have been other instances of such a "red tide" along Florida coasts.

The *Science Newsletter* of June 6, 1942, had a similar report referring not only to recent similar instances occurring in different parts of the world, but even the appearance of bloody rain—as reported by Homer. Furthermore, Andrew D. White, in a rather famous (or infamous) but very learned volume dealing with the conflict between science and faith, observed that "from various parts of Europe detailed statements had been sent to the Royal Academy of Science that water had been turned into blood A miracle of this sort appearing in Sweden, Linnaeus looked into it carefully and found that the reddening of the water was caused by dense masses of minute insects."⁹⁵ When it was suggested that this is what may have happened in Exodus 7, the ecclesiastical authorities of the time argued very strongly against it and explained that probably the subsequent examples were instances in which Satan was endeavouring to deceive Christian people by demonstrating that it was no miracle at all. Unless we keep in mind what has been said about the time element in such instances, I fear we might find ourselves sometimes reduced to a rather similar expedient. At any rate, the consequences were the same in Egypt as they were in Florida: decaying fish made the country "stink" and attracted flies—and other evils followed inevitably.

In Exodus 5:23-25 we have the story of the bitter waters made sweet. While doing some research in surface chemistry, I had occasion to read an important work by Robert Kunin on the subject and came across the following statement on the first page:

A recent interpretation of the miracle supposedly [*sic*] performed by Moses, as he led the Israelites safely through the wilderness, suggests the possibility of the application of ion exchange. In order to make the "bitter" water at Marah drinkable during their journey, Moses found a tree "which when he had cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet". It has been suggested that the oxidized cellulose of the tree entered into an exchange reaction with the bitter electrolytes of the water, rendering the water drinkable.⁹⁶

This would seem to provide a natural explanation of the event itself, but it does not in the least diminish the significance of the statement that it was the Lord who showed him the tree (Exodus 15:35).

* * *

There is one more instance of a miracle which is clearly a case of timing: the provision of meat in the wilderness in the form of quails, as recorded in Numbers 11:31ff. Here it is said that there went forth a wind from the Lord and brought quails from the sea and it "spread them out" (Hebrew *natash*) beside the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side and as it were a day's journey on the other side

95. White, Andrew D., *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, Braziller, New York, 1955, p.60.

96. Kunin, Robert, *Ion Exchange Resins*, Wiley, New York, 1958, p.1.

round about the camp, and as it were three feet above the face of the earth. I say this is a miracle of timing, because it is now known that the appearance of quails like this is an annual event.⁹⁷ It may seem strange that creatures should fly so close to the ground, but this is apparently an accommodation on the part of the older birds to the many very young ones which are with them. It is not a question of lessening injuries in case of a fall, but rather that the reduced altitude provides greater buoyancy so that the young ones fly with less effort.

In all fluid media, whether water or air, there is a natural sorting out of living forms which results from the fact that the density of any fluid – and its buoyancy also – is greater at the bottom. Thus fish sink to a depth suited to the density of their bodies, and birds fly with quite definitely established "ceilings" under normal conditions. This is true even of insects. In England, we used to trap wasps in cans with cider. If they escaped from the can, they were usually drunk in any case and had sufficient energy left only to fly slowly about eighteen inches above the ground, sometimes lower still. This shows how sensitive creatures are to variations in buoyancy. It was this fact rather than some special miraculous provision which brought the quails in around the camp so low above the ground that the Israelites had no difficulty in striking them down.

On the other hand, there is a limit to such a migrating flock, and it obviously did not cover the whole peninsula. Thus it was the result of air currents directed by the Lord (Numbers 11:31) that this migrating host exactly intercepted the line of march of the Israelites at the opportune moment.



94. Jarvis, C. S., "The Israelites in Sinai," *Antiquity* (England), December, 1932, p.436.

Part V

THE GENEALOGIES OF THE BIBLE: A NEGLECTED SUBJECT

[Doorway Paper #24, first issued 1967]

How fruitful are the seeming barren places of Scripture. Wheresoever the surface of God's Word doth not laugh and sing with corn, there the heart thereof within is merry with mines, affording, where not plain matter, hidden mysteries.

Lord, I find the genealogy of my Saviour strangely chequered with four remarkable changes in four immediate generations (Matthew 1:7,8).

1. Roboam begat Abia;
that is, a bad father begat a bad son.
2. Abia begat Asa;
that is, a bad father, a good son.
3. Asa begat Josaphat;
that is, a good father, a good son.
4. Josaphat begat Joram;
that is, a good father, a bad son.

I see, Lord, from hence, that my father's piety cannot be entailed; that is bad news for me. But I see also that actual impiety is not always hereditary; that is good news for my son.

Thomas Fuller,
quaintest of English divines,
in his *Scripture Observations*

Introduction

On my desk I have a little snuff box. When we were children we used to use snuff and I still recall how remarkably refreshing it was. It was somewhat like opening a window and getting a sudden, exhilarating breath of completely fresh air blowing away all the mental cobwebs. I don't know quite why it went out of fashion: perhaps it came under some Drug Act. This little snuffbox is made of whale bone, and on the lid it has a small silver plaque with my initial and name on it: "A. Custance". But it is not really my name, because underneath that is the date: 1766.

I often used to wonder who this forebear was and, not unnaturally, assumed that his first name was, like mine, Arthur. But then a few years ago, as a result of an odd circumstance, some of us Custances began to try to re-establish the lines of relationship between different members of the family in England and Canada and the United States. In due time the genealogy was completed without any breaks backward some five hundred years. In this genealogy there appeared the original owner of my little snuff box. But unfortunately his name was not Arthur! His name was Adam (1713 -1782).

Anyway, it was a bit of fun. And even when they are not our own, genealogies can greatly stimulate the imagination and provide a framework for historical events for which there is really no substitute. For anyone who has roamed widely and deeply in history, they serve somewhat the same purpose that maps do for those who have roamed widely and deeply over a country. The historian pores over the genealogy as the traveller pores over his map. Both provide insights into relationships and a kind of skeleton about which to hang much else that has stirred the imagination. Unlike the very ancient maps, however, which have a tendency to be grossly distorted, many of the most ancient genealogies are quite precise. Kalisch has observed, "The earliest historiography consists almost entirely of genealogies: they are most frequently the medium explaining the connection and descent of tribes and nations."¹ And they quite often insert, where appropriate, brief historical notes, such as those relating to Nimrod and Peleg in Genesis 10. The little notes have their counterpart in maps which often contain little inset pictures of local events such as where battles took place, and so forth.

The "value" of these biblical genealogies depends to some extent on one's specific interests, but each one of them can be shown to contribute its own particular kind of light. In this Paper we explore them, not merely as a guide to lines of relationship, but also for the light they shed in some cases on the world's spiritual history, its social customs, its contemporary value systems, on

1. Kalisch, M.M., *A Historical and Critical Commentary on the Old Testament*, Longmans, Brown and Green, London, 1858, p.235.

mythology, the bearing they have on chronology, and from several other points of view.

While it is perfectly true that they may not serve as appropriate passages to be read for the edification of the public as most of the rest of the Scriptures may do, they can form the basis of a very profitable private study. And of course, they provide fundamental links in the thread of historical narrative as well as valuable clues for the establishment of an overall chronology. This Paper contains one or two "interpretations" which will not appeal perhaps to many readers because they are based on certain assumptions which may not be justified. Yet these one or two sections have been included because they may stimulate thought which in due course will lead to a more precise understanding of why the genealogy in question contains the peculiarities which gave rise to my surmisings. For the most part my conclusions will not be seriously challenged except in the matter of chronology, in which it will be observed that I still hold to the very old-fashioned position that it is possible on the basis of these genealogies to establish a time interval from the First Adam to the Last Adam which is quite unacceptable to the anthropologists in general, not excepting some of the Lord's people among them.

In earlier times and among primitive people today, genealogical information was one of the most valuable parts of the inheritance which a man received from his forebears. Until quite recently, an Arab youth was required to know his own genealogy in the main line for seventy generations; it was his passport in society. Only a few years ago, a New Zealand Maori chief, explaining his claims to certain lands, engaged the government Land Commission three whole days with a recitation of descent from an ancestor twenty-four generations back, comprising very many collaterals and marriages and over fourteen hundred names in all (*Chambers Encyclopedia*, 1956 edition under "Genealogy").



Chapter 1

The Genealogies of the Old Testament

The bible contains a number of genealogies, some of which cover periods of time measured in centuries, and some only a few generations. On the whole, if they are merely read without any particular attention—as though it were a duty to read them since they are a part of the Bible—they are apt to be dull indeed. But my experience has been that all kinds of hidden treasures are to be found in them for the searching. They are, in short, much more than merely family trees. Not all of them have yielded such rewards yet, but what has been found leads me to believe that all these genealogies or fragments of genealogies will in time be found to contain exciting truths. This, I suspect, will prove to be the case particularly where, on the surface, there seems least likelihood of finding very much.

The kind of information that careful study can bring to light can be summed up under several headings. For example, according to many notable scholars, genealogies can supply us with a chronology from the First Adam to the Last Adam which cannot be obtained in any other way. This statement will be disputed in some quarters, but the question will be studied subsequently. A genealogy will sometimes reveal a relationship between two people which sheds a new light upon their behaviour toward each other. By a study of the meanings of the names given in a genealogy—that is to say, by substituting the meaning in English of the names of people who are said to be related in a certain way—it is sometimes possible to discover certain great spiritual truths. In some genealogies there are gaps which are revealed only by reference to the narrative portions of the Old Testament which deal with that particular period, and these omissions will be found to reveal how God deals with man in certain circumstances. In one or two cases fragments of a genealogy, when illuminated by other parts of Scripture, shed a wonderful light on cultural background. The earlier genealogies provide us not merely with information about the relationships between individuals, but the time frame within which succeeding generations followed one another. A statistical analysis of this time frame reveals a notable fact which finds its best explanation in the light of modern genetics. One of the earliest genealogies probably sheds a most interesting light on certain figures in the mythologies of classical antiquity. Finally, the genealogies of the New Testament which set forth the Lord's relationship to the Jews and to the Gentiles have so many wonderful things just below the surface of the text that it is amazing how few studies are made of them in modern Christian literature.

Such, then, are some of the things we intend to explore. In one case, which we shall note when we come to it, we may possibly be reading too much into the

genealogy. But it seemed worthwhile to draw attention to its peculiarity because it may shed light on a very ancient problem, namely, the interpretation of Genesis 6 and the question of the meaning of demon possession in the New Testament.

Consider, then, the matter of the relationship between the First and the Last Adam. It is clear from Luke's Gospel that a continuous succession of fathers and sons (or daughters) was believed to have been preserved in the archives of the Jewish people from the creation of Adam through several thousands of years until the time of Christ. We shall have occasion in the final chapter of this Paper to study briefly what is known at the present time about such continuous records and how they were kept. At the present moment the point at issue is not whether the people whose names are listed in Luke really existed, but whether they were related as successive generations or were merely selected as significant links in a chain composed of an untold number of other unidentified links. One hears people say sometimes, "My ancestors came over on the Mayflower and were descended through such-and-such a branch of the family from people who came into England with William the Conqueror." In other words, it is felt sufficient to pick out widely spaced individuals and assume that the rest of the links are there if one simply took the time to identify them. Thus a number of modern scholars who accept an antiquity for man reaching into hundreds of thousands of years are willing to agree that somewhere in the line there was an Adam and a Seth, and so on, but that they were not related as father and son in the sense that we attach to the terms.

On the other hand, there are many of us who feel that to establish a relationship between the Lord as the Last Adam and the First Adam, from whom we are all assumed to have been derived, by such a non-specific and generalized kind of family tree in which there are perhaps several hundred times as many names missing as are listed, is something less than satisfying. One feels that one is on solid ground when you read that Adam had a son whose name is Seth, and Seth had a son whose name was Enos, and Enos had a son whose name was Cainan, and so on through an unbroken chain of real people, many of whom are introduced to us in Scripture in a way which makes them live even when we only have a single sentence about them. For such is the descriptive power of the Word of God.

So I think it makes good sense to take the Old Testament genealogies which supply the basis for the two genealogies to be found in Matthew and Luke with complete seriousness and assume that they mean what they seem to mean. It was the conviction of many of the older biblical chronologists that sufficient information was given in the Bible, not merely to establish this unbroken chain, but to set it within a quite precise time frame. It was the basis, of course, of Ussher's chronology, which so many people today consider more the naive endeavour of a misinformed man than a serious contribution to understanding the Bible. But while Ussher's chronology may be in error in small details, it appears to me to encompass an overall view of the time span of man which is the right order of magnitude — though it is hopelessly in conflict with some modern Christian views. These modern views disagree with Ussher, and all those who have more or less followed his approach to the problem, by arguing that the genealogies in Genesis are not intended to provide us with an unbroken chain. We are told again and again that some of these genealogies contain gaps: but what is

never pointed out by those who lay the emphasis on these gaps is that they only know of the existence of these gaps because the Bible elsewhere fills them in. How otherwise could one know of them? But if they are filled in, they are not gaps at all! Thus, in the final analysis the argument is completely without foundation. It is simply wishful thinking.

This is not a Paper on chronology, so we shall not pursue this matter further at this juncture, but return to it briefly when we come to deal with Matthew's genealogy. Meanwhile we share the conviction of people like Anstey, Mauro, Urquhart,² and a host of others, that one of the most important functions of the genealogies of the Bible is to provide a connected thread from Adam to Christ with a sufficiently precise chronology to satisfy our time sense. This connected thread is also reassuring for it provides lifespans up to a significant point, which we shall consider subsequently, that allow us to discover for ourselves that these names are the names of real people, not merely of tribes or families or nations. God always deals with the individual as an individual, not merely impersonally as one of a group.

Genesis 4:1, 16-24

Where ages are not given. . . .
Where the first city is named. . . .
Where Vulcan's history begins. . . .

The first genealogy (Genesis 4:1,16-24) takes us from Adam to Lamech and provides us with some very exciting insights into early human history. These insights stem as much from the names of individuals who are listed as they do from the things they are said to have done – a circumstance which allows us, I think, to have considerable confidence that these are the names of real people.

It will be found, as a rule, that chronology *per se* was evidently not considered of importance except where the line from Adam to Christ was directly in view. Thus Cain bore Enoch, and Enoch Irad, and so on, but no information is given as to the age of the father at the time of his son's birth or at the time of his death. By contrast, in Genesis 5:6ff., which traces the line through Seth, complete chronological data is given. I think it is likely that this simple distinguishing mark in the Old Testament between the two types of genealogical trees – those which are accompanied by a chronology and those which are not – is a sufficient guide as to whether these individuals are in the line from the First to the Second Adam.

It is easy to be wise after the event and, in the light of the genealogies given in the New Testament, to look back through the record and identify the families which shared in this signal honour. But living in the Old Testament, even as late as the time of Malachi, one could still really have no assurance as to which line was to terminate with the Messiah. It seems necessary to qualify this statement and say rather that one could not identify the royal line with certainty unless one perceived that this line was provided also with a chronology. Thus genealogies

2. See Marin Anstey, *The Romance of Biblical Chronology*, Marshall Bros., London, 1913, p. 302; Philip Mauro, *The Chronology of the Bible*, Hamilton Bros., Scripture Truth Depot, Boston, 1922, p. 120; John Urquhart, *How Old is Man?*, Gospel Publishing House, New York, 1904, p. 116.

in the Old Testament which appear to be much the same are actually separated into two very different classes.

This point is a very important one, but it may easily be overlooked. Only God could know precisely in which line (of many parallel lines available) the Messiah would arise. How then, humanly speaking, would a writer, making his contribution to Scripture as the years rolled by, know whether he should or should not include a chronology? He could not know, of course, except by inspiration. And, if by inspiration, one might have expected that he would discern a distinction between the different parts of the record that he was being led to set down. He might therefore be inclined to append a note wherever he added a chronology, explaining why he did so on this occasion but not elsewhere. Yet none of the writers did. Such is the reticence of Scripture which often reveals as much by what it does *not* say as by what it *does*: which makes the study of Scripture so different from that of other books.

That this chronological feature is not accidental is clearly borne out by the fact that it is a recurrent circumstance. In Genesis 10, which is the great Table of Nations, there is not a single chronological note in the entire list; but after the confusion of tongues at Babel and the dispersion of the nations, a new selection is made and the line of Shem is singled out. This time, however, while the successive generations are repeated, only one name in each generation is given, instead of several as in Genesis 10. And in this line the chronology re-appears. The withholding of any time reckoning from those lines of descent which do not lead directly to the Promised Seed and the most precise enumeration of years in the line which does lead to the Promised Saviour cannot be accidental.

We find the same thing recurring in Genesis 36, which gives a very complete list indeed of the descendants of Esau but without any time scale, whereas as soon as we enter chapter 37 we immediately find ages being recounted once more.

Reverting, therefore, to this first genealogy, we may note that the line of Cain is traced before the line of Seth, and this again will be found on a number of occasions where the two lines are being brought up to date: the earthly or carnal is dealt with first, and afterward that which is spiritual.

Now, in the line of Cain there are some interesting clues to the history of antiquity. To begin with, in Genesis 4:17, we are told that Cain produced a son named Enoch and that he then built a city and called the name of the city after the name of his son. The naming of cities and other such landmarks in honour of individuals is very ancient, obviously. Consequently a single name might stand for a city, a river, a mountain, or a country: and in cuneiform literature it was customary to associate with any name some identifying mark or determinative in order to let the reader know whether it was the individual himself or the city or some other feature of the landscape that was intended. In the case where the name stands for a man, the name was preceded by the sign for man. In the case of a city, the name was followed by little mark which has the phonetic value *-ki* (and appeared thus: ). To my knowledge, all place names in cuneiform are followed by this determinative sign. But there is one exception, and this is the city known as "Unuk" (equated with Enoch), which later appears as "Uruk",³ "Warka", and finally, "Perg-", or "Purg-". For those unfamiliar with such changes, the

3. Uruk: on this point, see John Urquhart, "The Bearing of Recent Oriental Discoveries on Old Testament History," *Transactions of the Victorian Institute*, vol.38, 1906, p.48; and W. St. Chad Boscawen, *The Bible and the Monuments*, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1896, p.94.

conversion of "wark" into "purg-" follows well-established rules in the development of language and in the transfer of words between languages of a different family.

Why is this singular exception made? I think the answer is to be found in Genesis 4:17. According to the Bible, this was the first city ever to be built, and it did not therefore form one of a class requiring an identifying determinative. It is rather analogous to calling London (England) "the City". When people in England say they are going up to the City, they do not need to identify it; and I suspect that in Palestine the word "city" is often substituted for the word "Jerusalem" with no less certainty as to its identity. As other cities began to be built in the time of Cain, it seems likely that they, too, were named in honour of individuals then alive. But it would soon become apparent that the means of identification needed refining, and the determinatives would begin to be developed and applied appropriately. Yet this one city never required a determinative, being the very first one.

It is a curious thing that the word *Unuk* persisted for so long in history, re-appearing finally in the Greek word *Pergos* which, significantly enough in the light of Genesis 11:4, means "tower". The word *tower* is the basis of the English word *town*. And as has been demonstrated with cogency,⁴ the basic form *purg-* has come down into modern Indo-European languages in the form of *burgh* or the more extended form, *borough*. Thus, almost every day of our lives we are likely to come across a word meaning "city" which can be traced right back to within one generation of Adam to the City which Cain built and named in honour of his son.

Moving forward to verse 19, we are told that Lamech took unto him two wives, the name of one of which is given as "Zillah". In verse 22, Zillah is said to have borne Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron. Tubal-Cain was thus the world's first metallurgist. This compound name, "Tubal-Cain", is worth examining. According to R. J. Forbes,⁵ one of the outstanding authorities on metallurgy in antiquity, there was a tribe of people long associated in the ancient world with metal working who were known as the Tibareni. Many scholars identify this as a modified form of the name Tubal, the *l* and the *r* being interchangeable between dialects and often not even distinguished within a dialect. In his commentary on Genesis, Marcus Dods points out that things have been so faithfully perpetuated in the East that the blacksmith of the village Bubbata-ez-Zetua referred to the iron sparks struck off while working at his forge as "tubal".⁶ We may go a step further than this by observing that, in ancient Rome, the name of the individual who came to be constituted as the god of the Tiber (a river whose name seems again to recall Tubal) was the well-known Vulcan, whose forges were the volcanoes.

Now, the traditions regarding Vulcan are very interesting. He is, of course, associated with fire and the working of metals, later appearing as the divine Smith of the Roman *Tubilustrum*.⁷ He is said to have been a cripple, having been thrown out of heaven by his father Jupiter as a punishment for having taken his mother's side in a quarrel.

4. City: R. Eiseler, "Loan Words in Semitic Languages Meaning 'Town'," *Antiquity*, December, 1939, p.449.

5. Forbes, R.J., *Metallurgy in Antiquity*, Brill, Leiden, 1950, p.88.

6. Dods, Marcus, *Genesis*, Clark, Edinburgh, no date, p.26.

7. Vulcan: H. J. Rose, "The Cult of Vulcanus at Rome," *Journal of the Royal Society*, vol. 23, 1933, p.40.

In Genesis 4:23, there is the always-puzzling story of how Lamech took vengeance on a young man who had injured him in some way — "wounding him." Lamech's son was Tubal-Cain, and it would not be at all difficult to imagine how, by simply dropping the initial consonant *tu-*, the name "Vulcan" might easily have arisen. This son was subsequently deified. In this first of all biblical genealogies, it is stated that Lamech had two wives, one of whom was named Zillah. By making a further quite reasonable assumption — namely, that it was with Zillah that Lamech had quarrelled and that it was Zillah's part which Vulcan (as we may now call him) had taken — we find a possible reason why, in the struggle with his father, the son had ended up as a cripple and had been turned out of the house, leaving behind him an enraged and wounded father. If this is allowed, one further interesting discovery emerges. In many societies, polygamy is common, and where this occurs it is customary to call the children, as a means of more precise identity, after the name of the mother rather than the father. Thus, while Tubal-Cain was undoubtedly the son's given name, he may very well have been more readily identified by his contemporaries simply as Zillah's son. In a Semitic form of speech, this would appear as "Bar Zillah", i.e., "son of Zillah". The curious thing is that the Sumerian word for "iron" is found to be *Parzillu* or *Barzillu*, which would appear to be nothing less than a further link between subsequent tradition and this early genealogy, bearing a remarkable testimony to its historicity. Sumerologists have often expressed curiosity about the origin of this word for "iron."

Putting all these things together, one has a remarkable series of fragments of information set in the form of a genealogy shedding a wonderful light on tradition, in which there is a continuity of name form — all related in meaning or association to a form of metalworking that is very ancient, and attached to a deity who had the strange experience of being ejected from his home and being made lame for taking his mother's part in a quarrel with his father. This genealogy is certainly worth studying very carefully, and I suspect that Lamech's other wife, Adah, will also prove in time to shed unexpected light on early events, along with Tubal-Cain's sister, Nahma. I cannot believe that such detailed records from within a generation or two of Adam have been so perfectly preserved by accident. God had some purpose in mind: we have yet to discover what it was.

Of Giants and Demons

There is one further observation I should like to make about the genealogy of the line of Cain as opposed to the line of Seth. In this one section of the Paper I must confess that I am not certain that the text warrants what I am reading into it. Of the descendants of Cain, we are never told of their death. This might be simply the result of the fact that we are not given their age. But there were many subsequent historical figures in the Old Testament who were either enemies of the Lord's children or, though actually Israelites, were without faith, yet these people have their deaths recorded even though we are not told how old they were when they died.

There are those who believe that Cain was supernaturally born of Eve through the agency of Satan, who thereby hoped to present the Antichrist, supposing that Abel was actually the Promised Seed. The Hebrew of Genesis 4:1,2 has always

presented problems to the translator; it almost seems as though Adam knew his wife only once in spite of the birth of two children who are not presented to us in usual terms reserved for the birth of twins. There is a very ancient belief – and one still preserved by many primitive people – that when twins are born, one of them is actually a child of the devil.⁸ Having no means of identifying which child is the evil one, such societies customarily insisted that all twins must be destroyed at birth.

Now, however fanciful such an idea may be, we are not together without some warrant for holding it in this instance, in light of other passages of Scripture that bear upon the subject. For example, we are told that Cain was "of that wicked one" (1 John 3:12), a curious Greek phrase which in other contexts implies something more than merely being a servant of Satan; the phrase is also employed when speaking of the Lord's supernatural conception "of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:20). If we attach any importance to ancient traditions, we may observe that the legendary giants of antiquity were believed to have had supernatural birth and to have enjoyed a kind of super-natural life. They lived and continued to grow in size as long as they lived, and because they lived for such lengths of time they became giants in size and vastly superior knowledge. If these beings were descendants of one supernaturally born, they may have formed a *race* of giants and given rise to the tradition which seems to be reflected in Genesis 6:4. These men were not merely giants in size, but were also men of renown. And certainly one gets this feeling of those who are listed as Cain's descendants. While they did not die naturally, they were surely capable of being slain – as Goliath was. In Matthew 24:39, which speaks of the circumstances of the Flood destroying the old world, we are told, not that they died in the Flood, but merely that they were "taken away".

There are many people who believe that demons are disembodied spirits of human-like creatures, who seek embodiment again because for some reason they have not been "laid to rest" like the spirits of ordinary men. It is a curious fact that demons were notable for their physical strength, and it is also a curious fact that they had for some reason a fear of water. The instance of the Gadarene swine could conceivably be a case where the Lord permitted the evil spirit to enter animal bodies only because He knew that the animals would react to rid themselves of those who possessed them. It is a curious fact, too, that the Lord should have said that when the evil spirit has gone out of a man, he goeth through *waterless* places [so the Greek] seeking rest (Matthew 12:43). And it is another curious fact that in the day of judgment death and hell will deliver up its dead, but the sea will also deliver up its dead (Revelation 20:13). Perhaps these things are not really related in the way I have implied. On the other hand, such connected clues often lead a reader into new and fruitful lines of fresh inquiry.

Following this, we once more pick up the threads, in Genesis 5:6-32, of the line in which Messiah is to appear. Expectedly we observe that the details of the chronology are again introduced. Of the great ages achieved by these antediluvians we have written at some length elsewhere,⁹ but we shall refer briefly to the subject subsequently.

8. Twins: Loomis Havermeier, *Ethnology*, Grinn, London, 1929, p.81.

9. Custance, A. C., "Longevity in Antiquity and Its Bearing on Chronology," Part I in *The Virgin Birth and the Incarnation*, vol.V in The Doorway Papers, Zondervan Publishing Co.

*The Table of Nations and the History of the
Three Branches of the Human Race*

We come now to the tenth chapter of Genesis which, because it does not concern itself specifically with the line of the coming Saviour, does not provide us with a chronology. However, it does provide us with a great deal more than merely an uninteresting list of names. To what extent the whole genealogical tree in this chapter could be so treated, I do not know: but at least in one instance the names given provide us, when the English meanings are extracted, with an unexpected truth. I have in mind verse 15 which reads, "And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn and Heth", the only verse in which the first born is identified as such, and therefore to this extent, a verse which is apt to catch the eye. At any rate, the children of Canaan were to Israel what *sin* is to the Christian: a constant source of defeat. It is therefore not surprising to find that the name of the firstborn (of sin) is Sidon which means "snare", and the next born, Heth, which means "terror".

The really exciting thing about this Table of Nations, to my mind, is the clear light it throws upon the relationships between the various nations of the world who can be shown with reasonable assurance to have originated here. I am fully persuaded that this Table does provide us with a comprehensive view of the origins of all nations and not merely those which—to use a popular phrase of commentators—were within the purview of the writer. There are many who feel that the history is not intended to include the population of the Far East or the New World or even many of the present peoples of Africa. This is a subject dealt with at some length in Volume I of the Doorway Papers and will not be argued further here.¹⁰ But what I should like to draw the reader's attention to is one aspect of the genealogy which has also been elaborated at some length in two other papers,¹¹ but which, to my mind, is so fascinating that it is worth thinking about for a few minutes, even if the extended supporting evidence has to be merely referred to as being elsewhere.

Essentially, the genealogy traces the descendants of Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. In a previous passage of Scripture we have been given a cryptic statement about them which in point of fact summarizes to a remarkable degree the subsequent history of these three branches of the human race. This particular statement is found in Genesis 9:25-27 and reads:

And Noah said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

God shall enlarge Japheth and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

There will not be much argument if it is said that Shem and his descendants are here singled out as being appointed to perform a special role among the

10. Custance, A. C., "A Study of the Names in Genesis 10," Part II in *Noah's Three Sons*, vol.I, The Doorway Papers.

11. Custance, A. C., "The Part Played by Shem, Ham, and Japheth in Subsequent World History" and "The Technology of Hamitic People," Parts I and IV in *Noah's Three Sons*, vol.I, The Doorway Papers.

nations which is religious in character. Of Japheth we are told two things: the first is that he will be enlarged, and the second is that he will take over a position originally appointed to Shem. The enlargement will, I think, be admitted to have occurred in two directions, geographically and intellectually. By this I mean that the children of Japheth, who can be shown to be represented by the Indo-Europeans, have spread over the whole world largely at the expense of those people who were not Indo-European. And even if history should show in the future that some of this expansiveness is to be curtailed, there are still very large areas of the world in which such curtailment is never likely to occur: for example, in Europe, Russia, Australia, India, and of course, the New World. At the same time, there is no doubt that intellectually the children of Japheth have tremendously extended the bounds of man's understanding and mastery of the earth. This is not to say for one moment that the Negro people and the Mongol races have not made an equally tremendous contribution to modern technology: this is a subject of a very careful study in another Doorway Paper.¹² But this technology, everywhere marked by great ingenuity and creative power as it was, remained at a certain fixed level which it seemed it could not improve until Japheth's descendants became the inheritors of it and made it their own in a unique way by converting technology into science. So much, then, for Shem and Japheth.

We come, therefore, to the third branch of Noah's family, who is here represented by Canaan. It is curious that Canaan, rather than Ham, should be chosen to stand representatively for the third branch of the family. It is curious because the pattern has been broken at this point: Shem is singled out properly as standing for the Semitic people who became the religious leaders of the world, whether in true or false religion. I have in mind, not merely Judaism as representative of the true, but of Islam as a departure from it, and the Babylonian cults which provided the groundwork of most other religions of antiquity as a defilement of the truth. All these were contributed out of the family of Shem. And of course, Japheth stood very properly as head of the Indo-European people. The question is, Why is Canaan mentioned rather than Ham?

I think there are two ways of accounting for this. One way is to suppose that something has been dropped from the text, either in error or deliberately, by some Jewish scribe and that this omission comprised the words, "Cursed be [Ham, the father of] Canaan." There is some manuscript evidence for this.¹³ It would seem logical, since Ham was really the offending individual and since, by the inclusion of his name rather than Canaan's, there would have been a greater consistency in the literary form of the passage in question to read some such emendation of the text. However, there is an interesting reason why Canaan rather than Ham might have been used by Noah in making this pronouncement. It sheds an intriguing light on certain cultural patterns of thought which probably existed in Noah's time, are repeated in the time of David, and appear to have persisted right through into New Testament times.

It is customary in many parts of the world today to attribute to a father the credit or blame of anything which has rendered his son notable. Thus, the

12. Custance, A. C., "The Technology of Hamitic People," Part IV in *Noah's Three Sons*, vol.I, The Doorway Papers.

13. Custance, A. C., "Why Noah Cursed Canaan Instead of Ham," Part III in *Noah's Three Sons*, vol.I, The Doorway Papers.

Japanese, for example, will not congratulate a son for some commendable act, but will commend the father for having produced a notable son. In our own culture we sometimes accept this principle, but in a rather more negative way, blaming the parents for the misdeeds of the son without feeling it proper at the same time to credit them with his successes.

The circumstance is interestingly reflected in the story of David and Saul, which is to be found in 1 Samuel 17:50-58. In this instance David had performed a deed of great national importance by destroying Goliath. David himself was certainly no stranger to Saul, for he had on many occasions played his harp to quieten the king's distracted spirit. Yet, when Saul saw David go forth against Goliath (verse 55), he said to Abner, the captain of his hosts, "Abner, whose son is this youth?" Although Abner must certainly have known David by name, he replied, "As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell."

This has always seemed a strange circumstance. But the explanation lies in a proper understanding of the social significance of verse 58, where Saul said to David, "Whose son art thou, young man?" And David had answered, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite." The key to this is the realization that while Saul recognized David well enough, he wished to honour his father according to the proper custom — but he did not know who his father was. It was Jesse whom the king wished to honour on behalf of David.

In the New Testament there is another interesting illustration of this principle. While it is quite proper that a man may publicly give credit to the father of a worthy son, a woman could not discreetly compliment the father in the same straightforward way for fear of being misunderstood. In such a case, then, she could refer to the mother as sharing in the worthiness of her children rather than the father. This fact is clearly reflected in Luke 11:27, where we read of a woman who, suddenly perceiving the true greatness of the Lord Jesus, cried out in spontaneous admiration, "blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the breasts which Thou hast sucked."

It is apparent from this, therefore, that Noah could not really curse Ham without discrediting himself, and he was thus forced to go one further generation and so by this means to attach the blame according to social custom where it really was — i.e., on Canaan's father, Ham.

One further point needs consideration, and this is the meaning of the phrase, "servant of servants," a phrase which is taken almost universally by commentators to mean "the most servile" of nations. But it requires only a comparatively small knowledge of Hebrew to discover that this reduplicated form — which is found so frequently throughout Scripture and is to be observed again in such phrases as "Lord of Lords", "God of Gods", "King of Kings", "Heaven of Heaven", "Beauty of Beauties", "Song of Songs", "Holy of Holies", and so forth — is always a term of excellence, not debasement. The expression of debasement in Hebrew is provided for in quite another way, as for example in Daniel 4:17, where the text speaks of the basest of men and where the Hebrew is of a very different construction. The main objection generally raised against the above interpretation is that such a title, "servant *par excellence*", would hardly constitute a curse.

However, I think that there ought to be some degree of relationship between the seriousness of the offense and the severity of the judgment: and it has never seemed to me altogether justice that the descendants of one man should be condemned to abject servility because of the action of an ancestor who possibly

did no more than fail in respect for a father who was accidentally discovered in a situation for which the father was entirely culpable. The behaviour of the father was in a way far worse than the behaviour of the son. On the other hand, history shows that the descendants of the offending party have in fact ministered to the physical well-being of mankind by providing us until comparatively recent times with our basic technology, and they have done this in such a way that we have ultimately benefited from it far more exceptionally than they have themselves. It is not difficult to demonstrate this historically in virtually every area of technology, and this truth in itself lends strong support to the view that the judgment pronounced by Noah really fell upon the descendants of Ham as a whole and not merely upon that small segment of his family represented by the Canaanites.

In short, what we are saying is that this little cameo in Genesis 9 gives us a preview of the course of events throughout history as it unfolded in the three branches of the human race as defined in biblical terms – the Semites, Japhethites (Indo-Europeans), and the coloured races (black, brown, "red", and "yellow") – even to the extent of showing that Japheth would one day and for a season assume the spiritual responsibility originally assigned to Shem, an event foretold in Genesis 9:27 ("God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."), reiterated in Matthew 21:43 ("Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."), and initiated in Acts 18:6, ("And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.").

Now, representatives of these three branches of the human race are constantly cropping up throughout Scripture in a significant way. We shall not elaborate this statement, since this has been done elsewhere, beyond pointing out that Abraham married three wives, one of whom was a Semite, one a Japhethite, and one a Hamite. Three Gospels (the Synoptic Gospels) were written and rather specifically directed to Shem, Ham, and Japheth – in that order. In the story of the Nativity three men – at least men bringing three kinds of gifts – came in a body seeking "the young Child". Tradition, supported by some historic evidence, seems to indicate that one was a Semite, one a Hamite, and one a Japhethite. In the Crucifixion, we may discern the same pattern of events – a representative of each branch of the family of man directly involved in one way or another in the completion of that judgment, the part played by a representative of Ham being appropriately the actual carrying of the Cross to the scene of execution.

In none of these instances will this discovery be made, this recurrent pattern of events discerned, except one has the clue provided by Genesis 10 and the detailed genealogy it sets forth. Here, then, is another instance where an apparently barren and uninspiring portion of Scripture, rightly used, can be a very storehouse of treasure, for without it we could not know which descendants belong within which branch.

After what was said in introducing this particular section of the paper, it seems appropriate to quote the words of J. J. Blunt:

All that I wish to impress is that in the book of Genesis a hint is not to be wasted but improved: and that he who expects every probable deduction from Scripture to be made out complete in all its parts before he will admit it, expects more than he will in many cases meet with, and will learn much less than he might otherwise learn.¹⁴

*Genesis 11:10-29: The Probable Cause
of the Sudden Reduction in Human Longevity*

In contrast with Genesis 10, which receives no time structure in Scripture, the next genealogy in Genesis 11:10-29 is once more provided with a precise chronology, because it is concerned with the line of the Promised Seed.

We shall examine two aspects of this genealogy. The first has to do with the light it throws upon the gradual decline in life span following the Flood, and the second has to do with the immediate relatives of Abraham as set forth from verses 26 to 29.

Consider, then, the decline in life span. Before the Flood, men normally were living to be almost a thousand years old. With the rise of that spirit of skepticism regarding Scripture which began during the last century, it became increasingly difficult for anyone who accepted these great ages to reconcile his faith with current scientific opinion about the potential of human life. While it was true, as we have shown in another Paper,¹⁵ that records of longevity amounting to 150 to 200 years were acknowledged to have some basis in fact, the idea of a man living to be a thousand years of age was considered quite absurd. But the climate of opinion has changed in this respect: while we do not find too many biologists willing to admit the possibility of any individual having reached any such age in the past, they are willing to admit the possibility of man surviving to such an age sometime in the future.

It appears that after the Flood, the life span of man was drastically reduced until, within a dozen generations, the mean had fallen to about 120 years. This decline in expected life span, when examined carefully, proves to be very revealing and to have a certain character about it which greatly strengthens one's confidence in the figures that are provided. While the population of the world was very small immediately after the appearance of Adam and Eve, and while, therefore, inbreeding was necessary, this apparently had no deleterious effect upon the population as a whole, if we are to judge by the ages to which people survived. When the Flood had once again reduced the world's population to only eight souls, close inbreeding naturally recurred: but this time manifestly the effect was deleterious in terms of life expectancy. Why should this be so?

I think it safe to say that the reason for avoiding inbreeding lies in the fact that human beings, individually, are the carriers in their germ cells of genes which are mutant, i.e., have deteriorated. Many of these deteriorated genes are harmless enough when they are crossed in the mating partner with other genes which are not mutant. But if a mother and father produce several children, these children

14. Blunt, J. J., *Undesigned Coincidences in the Old and New Testament*, Murray, London, 1869, p.8.

15. Custance, A. C., "Longevity in Antiquity and Its Bearing on Chronology," Part I in *The Virgin Birth and The Incarnation*, vol.V, The Doorway Papers.

are likely to share between them a large number of the same mutant genes, so that the chances of them becoming united, should they marry one another, is very considerable. In small towns or villages in some parts of the Old World where much inbreeding has taken place, there is a high incidence of deaf-mutism and other such evidences of reduced viability.¹⁶

Willard Hollander made the following observation in an article on this aspect of the problem:

The quickest way to expose lethal traits is by intensive and continued in-breeding. In man such matings are generally illegal or taboo; the experience of the race indicates bad results. But brother-sister matings in animals, and self-pollination in plants are a standard laboratory practice. The outcome is generally detrimental unless it has become customary in the species. When in-breeding begins, the heredity seems to be breaking down, all sorts of defects and weaknesses appear. The average life span decreases [...]. But if the family can weather the first few generations (five with plants, and ten with animals) a levelling off sets in. Members of the family may show defects and weaknesses but not new ones, and there is a striking uniformity. The type has become fixed.¹⁷

It will be noted here that in the case of animals, ten generations of inbreeding are required to maximize the effect, after which the process slows up significantly and finally levels off. In other words, closely related parents normally tend to produce less viable children. The most important single factor in the question of longevity is believed by some authorities [Maynard Smith,¹⁸ for example] to be the degree of relatedness of the parents.

An analysis of the data given in this genealogy reveals some interesting facts. Chronological information is provided whereby one may establish the temporal ordering of some fifteen generations in the line of Shem for whom the ages at time of death are given. Curiously enough, beyond this it is not possible to determine, except by inference, the total life span of an individual, not even of such great figures as Solomon or David. It seems as though the actual life spans of representative individuals in this initial period are given for a specific reason, after which no purpose would have been served by their inclusion—except to satisfy idle curiosity, of course.

It is important to note that what is *not* given thereafter is the total life span. What is provided in the line of the Promised Seed is the age of the father at the birth of his son. It is this information which makes a chronology possible. But the omission of a total life span once we leave this genealogy is, I think, significant for the following reasons. There is no reason to suppose that Shem's wife was closely related to him by blood, for the population at the beginning of the Flood may have been quite extensive. And therefore their son, Arphaxad, was not a child of inbreeding in any significant sense. But from then on, inbreeding would become

16. Deaf-mutism: Ballinger, "Diseases of the Nose, Throat and Ear," p.1025, and E. B. Dench, "Diseases in the Ear," in the chapter entitled "Deaf Mutism," in Salous, *Analytical Cyclopaedia of Practical Medicine*, p.450.

17. Hollander, Willard, "Lethal Heredity," *Scientific American*, July, 1952, p.60.

18. Smith, Maynard, "Biology of Aging," *Nature*, vol.178, November 24, 1956, p.1154.

necessary, for Arphaxad must have married either a sister or a first cousin. If we then plot the successive life spans of Arphaxad's descendants (representing the first generation of inbreeding) down to Jacob (the tenth generation) – and if we impose on these plots a smooth curve as is shown in Fig. 16 (the solid line) – we see that the life span has fallen drastically from the pre-Flood average of over 900 years (excluding Enoch) to 147 years. From this time on, taking all those individuals whose total life span is recorded in Scripture – namely, Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses, Aaron, and Joshua – we have an average of life of only 123 years.

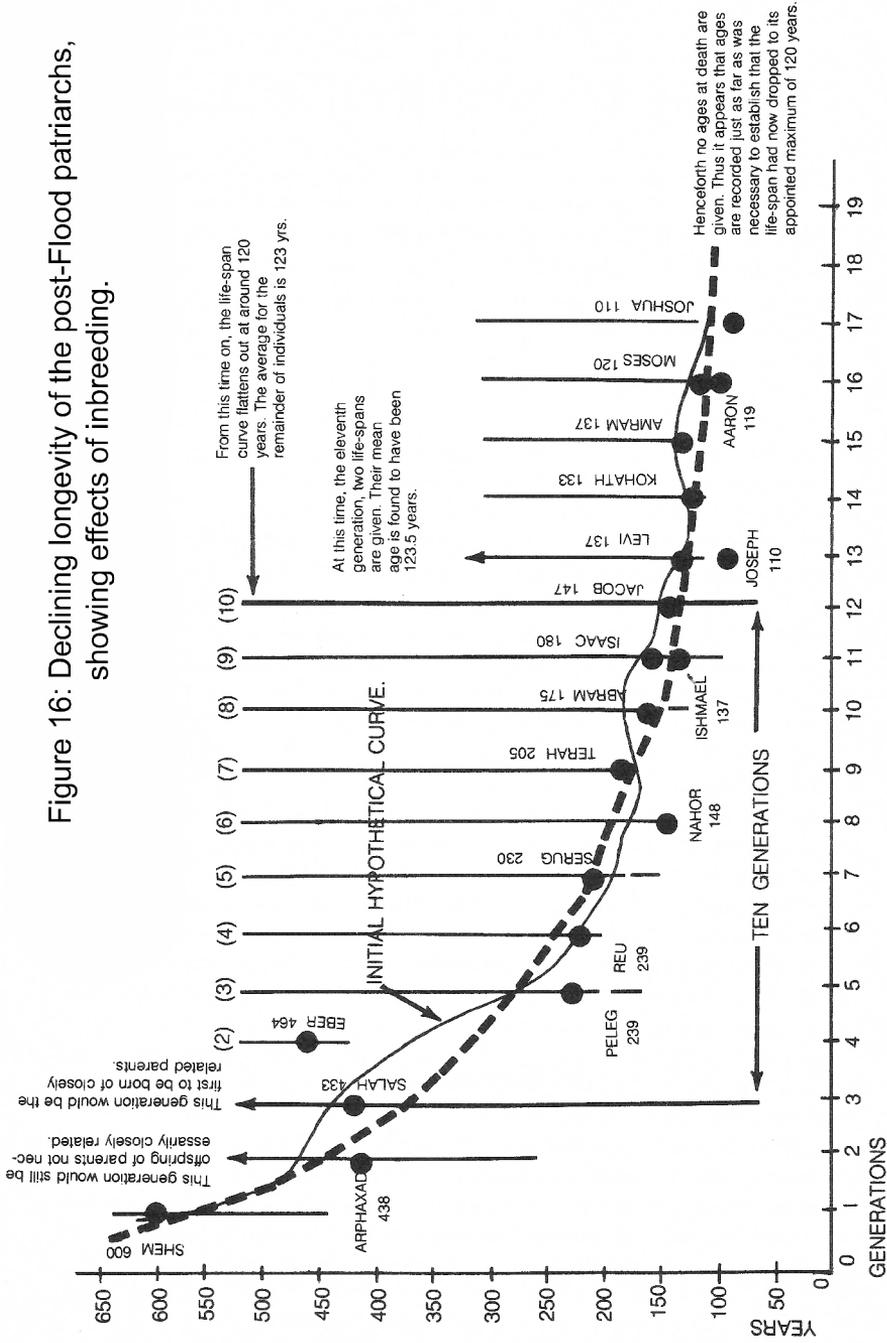
There has always been some question about the precise meaning of Genesis 6:3, which some people take to mean that hereafter the Lord would plead with men to repent before the judgment of the Flood was imposed for a period of only 120 years, while others take it to mean that God would only leave man's spirit within him (i.e., leave him alive) for 120 years before He would call it home to Himself. If the second interpretation is the correct one – and evidence in favour of this will be found in another Doorway Paper¹⁹ – it implies that God saw that it would no longer be safe for man to live to the great age that he did formerly, since his cumulative experience had led him into a degree of wickedness which could in part be avoided by shortening his life. At any rate, it seems highly significant to me that the ages of the post-Flood patriarchs are recorded just long enough to show that man had by this time reached the appropriate life span for the new age. And perhaps it is not without significance that Moses and Aaron almost perfectly fulfilled their time, living to be 120 and 119 years respectively. After this, only Joshua's age at death is given, as 110 years. In the meantime, we see that the modern discovery mentioned earlier – that in animals the effect of inbreeding is observed progressively for about ten generations – lends strong support for the veracity of the numbers given in this genealogy and the circumstances which accompanied their decline. For, if inbreeding is the most likely cause of this decline, then a real Flood reducing the world's population to eight people is the most likely cause for this inbreeding.

The curve is a normal one and appears undoubtedly to represent an historical sequence. This is all the more remarkable, considering the antiquity of the data from which it has been derived, and it supports the genuineness of the record and tends to establish three facts:

1. The Flood did reduce the population of the world to a single family of small size, leaving no other people for intermarriage;
2. The original life span was at first six-hundred years or more;
3. The record of names and ages is not a literary invention, but factual, with no extensive gaps – in fact, with no gaps at all in all probability, if the figure of ten generations has any genetic significance for an inbreeding population of mammals.

Furthermore, several doubles of names and ages are given. They appear at significant points. At the end of the ten generations, Jacob is preceded by Isaac and Ishmael, both of the same generation, who nicely straddle the curve to even it out: and immediately after Jacob two more are given whose average confirms the line.

19. Custance, A. C., "Longevity in Antiquity and Its Bearing on Chronology," Part I in *The Virgin Birth and The Incarnation*, vol.V, The Doorway Papers.



What is even more surprising, as we have already noted, is that once the life span had fallen to the appointed level, the recording of ages at death ceases. Job, who must surely be placed back somewhere in Abraham's time, is only said to have exceeded 140 years (Job 42:16) – his age, therefore, being of the proper order for Abraham's time, was not being recorded precisely because he did not fall in the line to the Promised Seed.

From Adam to Noah this steady deterioration in the viability of man is absent. The reason is not difficult to find. Adam and Eve were perfect as created, and therefore without defective or mutant genes. They would perhaps pass on to their children *some* defective genes when children were born later in their lives – by which time such genes might have appeared. With each succeeding generation, more and more defective genes would arise in the population, but at the same time the population itself would be growing. This growth in population made it less and less likely that close blood relations (who shared more of the same defective genes) would marry. Thus the chance of defective genes at the same locus on the chromosome (i.e., of the same kind), being "married" together and appearing in the children with pronounced effect would be smaller and smaller as time went on. Only when the Flood reduced the population, and only because this reduction took place when the eight survivors had already accumulated within themselves a fair percentage of defective genes, did close inbreeding have the effect of greatly reducing viability. It is also quite possible that the atmosphere itself prior to the Flood may have been such that the mere process of living did not at that time lead to the steady accumulation of defective genes to anything like the same extent – if at all.

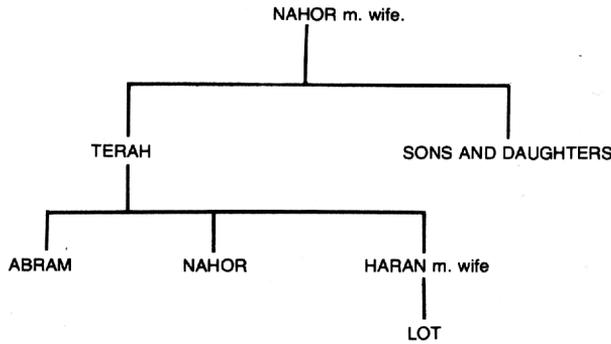
Genesis 11:25-29: Abraham Marries His Sister

The second feature of this genealogy that we want to touch upon briefly has to do with Abram and Sarai (Genesis 11:25-29). In another Doorway Paper,²⁰ we have dealt at some length with certain important events in Abram's life. These show why Abram felt that, if he claimed Sarai as his sister, he might expect not only to be quite safe at Pharaoh's court where he knew Sarai's beauty would arouse envy, but even that he would be specially favoured. His surmise proved to be quite correct. His statement regarding his relationship to Sarai was ultimately challenged, of course. When Abraham was accused of lying, he excused himself with a reply which can best be described as a "white lie". "Indeed, she is my sister", he said. "She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother." What did he mean by this?

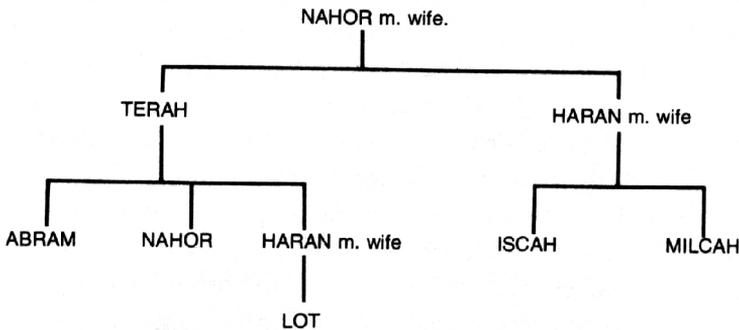
The background of this undoubted truth is a little complicated, but worth taking time to examine because it only goes to show that there is no part of this early record, including the genealogies, which cannot be taken literally and studied with profit. In view of what we now know about family relationships both in Abraham's time and even quite recently among non-Indo-European people, his reply states exactly the position in which Abraham stood with respect to Sarai. We need only to study carefully two sets of genealogical information provided in Scripture, the present passage and a passage in Genesis 24. In Genesis 11:25-29 we

20. Culance, A. C., "Some Remarkable Biblical Confirmations From Archaeology", Part IV in *Hidden Things of God's Revelation*, vol. VII in The Doorway Papers.

have: "And Nahor lived after he begat Terah a hundred and nineteen years and begat sons and daughters. And Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. These are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran: and Haran begat Lot." This can be set forth schematically as follows:



Up to this point, the sons and daughters of Nahor (Terah's brothers and sisters) are not named, but information given in the following verses provides very good grounds for believing that one of these was named Haran. We shall examine this shortly, but for clarity we now modify the above genealogy as follows:



It will be noted that Terah's brother Haran had two daughters, Iscah and Milcah. The former of these, Iscah, was Sarah by another name. This identification is very widely agreed upon, was accepted in Jewish commentaries, and is assumed by Josephus in his *Antiquities* (Book 1, vi, 5).

It may appear to the reader that large liberties are being taken with the text, but this is not really the case. Like many others, the Jewish people commonly accepted the principle that if a man's brother married a woman and subsequently died before the children were married, he took his brother's place and became in effect both her husband and the father of her children. This is the basis of the Sadducees' hypothetical question in Luke 20:27,28. If a woman had 7 successive husbands because each died, who would be her husband at the resurrection? If, therefore, Terah's brother Haran had died, the duty of becoming in effect the father of Iscah and Milcah would automatically devolve upon Terah. Terah's new children would then become sisters to his own sons; and when Abraham and

Nahor subsequently married Iscah and Milcah, they would, socially, be marrying their own "sisters", though in fact they were not—the girls being cousins. However, they were a special kind of cousin, namely, "parallel cousins". The term has been invented by anthropologists to signify the following relationship: my *father's* brother's children are parallel cousins; by contrast, my *mother's* brother's children are cross cousins. In a Semitic society, the ideal wife for a man was one of his parallel cousins. Furthermore, where several sons existed and several female parallel cousins, it was assumed that the oldest son would marry the oldest girl and so on down the line. The expected wife for Abraham would, therefore, be his uncle Haran's daughter of comparable age.

Now this seems a little complex, but it is particularly striking in this instance, because even today among many Arab tribes, in their love stories, the man looks upon his paternal uncle's daughter as his princess. This is the term by which he refers to her in his poetic moments. In Hebrew, the word for "prince" is *Sar*, the feminine form of which is *Sara*, meaning "princess". The terminal possessive pronoun "my" is a long *i* so that *Sara* becomes *Sarai*, meaning "my princess". This is how Abraham referred to his beautiful wife. Her name was Iscah, but he called her "My Princess," or "Sarai."

Thus Terah's brother Haran, who predeceased him, is identified in verse 29 as the father of Milcah and Iscah, whereas Terah's son Haran, who also predeceased him, is referred to as the father of Lot (verse 31). Because his son Haran (no doubt named after his uncle) died prematurely, Lot became in a special sense the charge of Terah and subsequently of Abraham.

It is interesting to find that the American Indians adopted virtually the same forms of social responsibility. According to Lowie²¹ the Seneca reckons the father's brothers as "fathers," exactly as Abraham and Nahor, by reckoning that their uncle Haran as a father, would look upon Iscah and Milcah as sisters. The same is true in Hawaii, where a single word exists for "father" and "father's brother", the two individuals being considered as standing in the same relationship simply because if the one dies, the other assumes his position.

So when Terah's brother died, Terah took his brother's wife and became the father of his brother's children. Because he was also the father of Abraham, this allowed Abraham to say with perfect truth (though with ulterior motives) that Sarai, his princess, was indeed his sister, being the daughter of his own father—but *not* the daughter of his own mother. There is, therefore, not the slightest element of invention here insofar as the record of Genesis goes. Genesis 11 gives us sufficient information, if carefully read, to see that there is nothing fanciful about the circumstance which so compounded Abraham's relationship with his own wife.

Only one further observation seems appropriate here. And this is that every brother in a society of this nature is given a particular responsibility for the sister who is next to him in age. He bears a special protective relationship toward her and must approve her husband. He will, moreover, be called upon to chastise her children if necessary—while the husband will not be allowed to do so. It was thus important to curry the favour of any brother who was manifestly the protector of the sister whose hand might be sought in marriage, in which position Abraham must have appeared in the eyes of Pharaoh. This is why Abraham felt sure of his

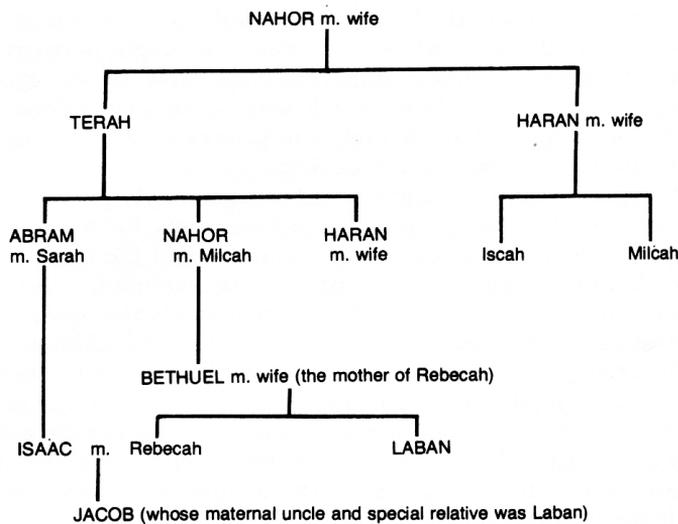
21. Lowie, Robert, *Social Organization*, Rhinehart, New York, 1948, p.62.

own safety, and indeed of being favoured by Pharaoh or anyone else who might be in a position to desire Sarai. And it worked!

This last observation is important on account of a peculiarity of the brief genealogy which is given subsequently for Rebekah in Genesis 24:15-24. The circumstances surrounding the search for a wife for Abraham's son, Isaac, are particularly beautiful; the literary form in which the story is cast in Scripture is surely the equal of any such love story in the English language. The old and faithful, though nameless servant, is sent by his master Abraham to find a wife for Isaac from the land from which Abraham himself had come to this present place. So the servant sets forth with camels and gifts, and he comes to the city of Nahor, that Nahor whose relationship to Abraham was established in Genesis 11. In due time, he comes to a well outside the city and there he decides to wait, asking the Lord to send out to him the maid of his choice and will reassure him by this sign, namely, that she will offer, not merely to allow him something to drink, but to draw water also for his camels.

It would be a pity to tell the story in any other words than those of the original, but we may note that before the faithful old servant has finished praying (verse 15), a girl comes to the well, very fair to look at. Her name is Rebekah, "born of Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother."

The genealogy which we have already reported twice is now repeated a third time in order to bring out a striking fact about the relationship in time between Isaac and Rebekah. The fact is that Isaac was born so late in the lifetime of Abraham and Sarah that he could not appropriately have found a wife in what would strictly have been his own generation, namely, the generation in which Bethuel was born. Had he married a sister, let us say, of Bethuel's, he would have been marrying a woman perhaps twenty or twenty-five years older than himself.



Now, the interesting thing about Bethuel is that, although he was the father of the girl whose hand was sought in marriage, it is very evident from the record – as Blunt²² was perhaps the first to underscore – that he is virtually ignored in all the transactions which surrounded the betrothal of Rebekah. It is Rebekah's mother and Rebekah's brother, Laban, who are the chief actors in the story. When the servant first speaks with Rebekah, he asks her, "Whose daughter art thou? Tell me, I pray thee, is there room in thy *father's* house to lodge in?" She answers that she is the daughter of Bethuel and that there is room. But when the servant thereupon declares who he is and whence he has come, we are told that "the damsel ran and told them of her *mother's* house these things also." This is not the normal thing for her to do, as is evident by Rachel's behaviour when, later, Jacob introduces himself (Genesis 29:12) under somewhat similar circumstances.

This might all be accidental, except for the fact that we are then told that Rebekah has a brother whose name is Laban and that "Laban ran out unto the man and invited him in."

This strange circumstance in which Laban acts as host instead of the father of the household has led some people to propose that perhaps Bethuel is dead at this time. But this is clearly ruled out by the subsequent statement (Genesis 24:50) to the effect that Laban and Bethuel together answer the servant's inquiries once he is in the house. So everything is agreed upon, and Rebekah is to go with the servant, who then makes the presentation of gifts. But these gifts are now presented, not to the father but to Rebekah's brother, Laban, and to her mother (Genesis 24:53). At the same time, it is suggested she should stay a few days before leaving; and once more the suggestion comes, not from Bethuel, but from her brother and her mother.

Some encyclopedias propose that Bethuel may have been sickly or even imbecile, able to assent to what is proposed but not to make decisions nor to be a sensible recipient of valuable gifts. Personally I think there is another possible reason for his taking such an insignificant part in all these proceedings which in no way casts doubt upon his character but results from the fact, already noted before, that in oriental society, as among many native people today, there normally exists a special relationship between each brother in a family and the sister nearest to him in age. There are several reasons accounting for this, the chief of which is probably that, as a guarantee of good faith in marriage, it was always customary for the groom to provide a substantial gift for his bride. This gift is known variously as the "bride price" or *lobolo*; among Europeans, to whom the idea seems strange, it has been somewhat misunderstood as though the husband-to-be was "purchasing" his wife, thereby making her virtually a chattel. It is a purchase in one sense – in that the more outstanding the status of the groom, the more necessary he feels it to demonstrate how worthy he feels the girl is to share his life. The actual gift itself has a special importance to the "particular" brother, because it in turn provides him with the means of performing the same office toward the maid of his choice. It all becomes a kind of status symbol which bounces back and forth between relatives, no one in the end being any richer, but each family feeling that they have honoured the bride.

In the present context, because Isaac was born at least one generation late, Bethuel himself could not have had a sister of the appropriate age to be Isaac's wife and therefore he did not receive the gifts. Because the two families were

22. Blunt, J. J., *Undesigned Coincidences in the Old and New Testament*, Murray, London, 1869, p.31.

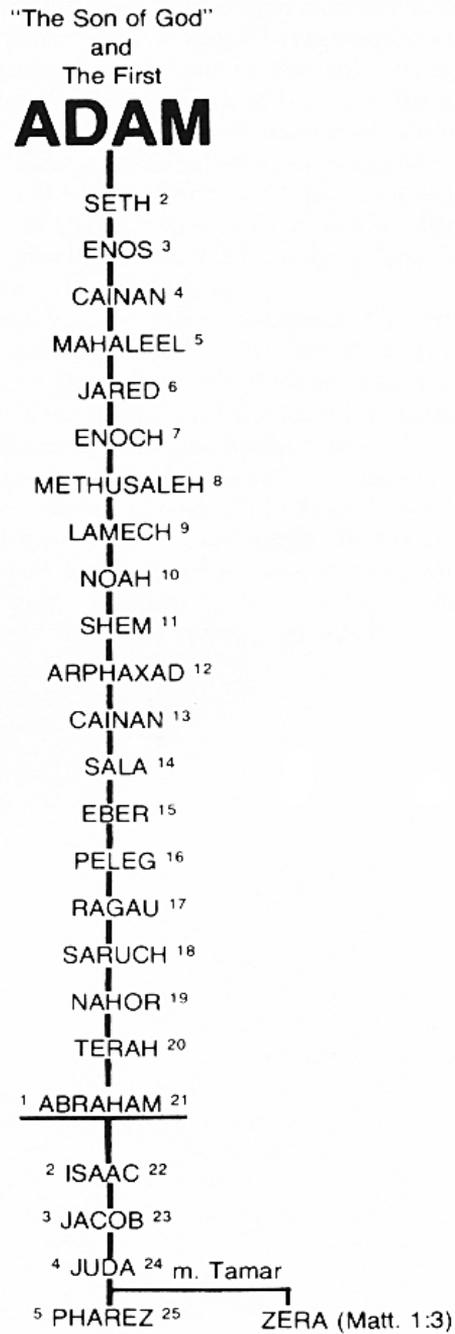
closely related, it is virtually certain that Bethuel would know very well that Isaac was a special child of his parent's old age. Even if he didn't know this already, the faithful old servant would surely explain it all while he was in the house: and since he was not looking for one of Bethuel's sisters and did not wish to cause embarrassment to them, he would almost in certainty avoid Bethuel's household. Thus the two people chiefly interested in the proposal being made would be Rebekah's mother (who would be very anxious to see her daughter so well married) and this Laban (who would be very happy to see the valuable gifts exchanging hands).

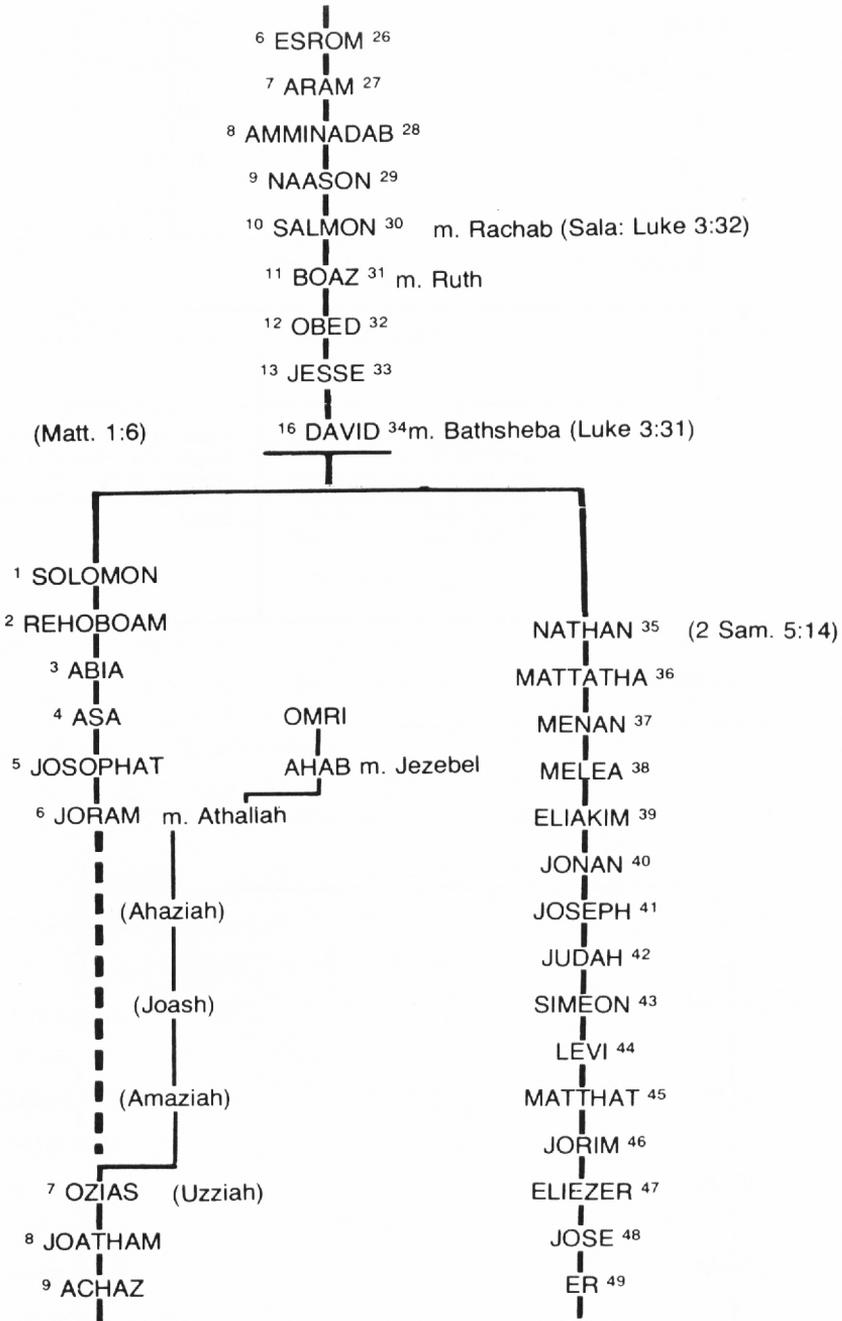
Now, part of this cultural pattern of behaviour led to an accepted practice which extended the interests of the brother beyond his sister to his sister's children. This is commonly found among non-Indo-European people. It is the maternal uncle who rewards the children when they are to be rewarded and punishes them when they are to be punished. Thus Laban, in due time, bore a special relationship to Rebekah's children, a fact beautifully reflected in the subsequent history of Jacob. When Jacob fled from the wrath of Esau, he found refuge by going to Haran and searching out his maternal uncle, Laban. It is true that he asked, "Know ye Laban the son of Nahor?" (Genesis 29:5), rather than "Laban the son of Bethuel"; but this may not mean very much in the light of the fact that Nahor, as the older man, would almost certainly be widely known, and the term "son" is quite often used merely to mean "descendant of".

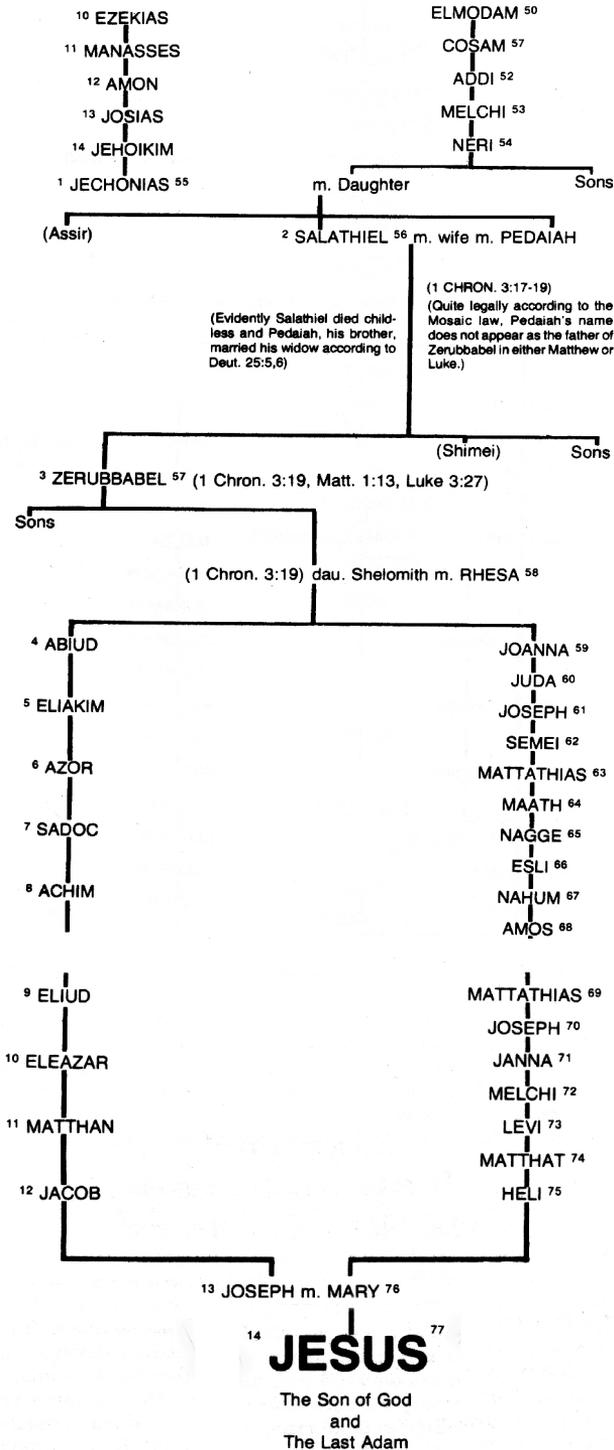
These observations illuminating the story unexpectedly reinforce its veracity in little circumstantial details. The fact that Isaac was born one generation late and that therefore Bethuel plays an insignificant role in his daughter's marriage, and the fact that Jacob subsequently takes refuge with Laban, who promptly takes advantage of him – all this is of a piece. It ultimately bears witness to the reality of the remarkable circumstances surrounding Isaac's birth. Only some such exceptional circumstance could begin to explain why the father of the bride played such an insignificant role. And only because sufficient detail is given to allow us to reconstruct the genealogy do we have this insight into this wonderful story.



THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS







Chapter 2

The Genealogies of the New Testament

We come to the genealogies of the New Testament. Most wonderful and most illuminating are these genealogies which establish the relationship of the Lord Jesus to the rest of the human family. It is no new discovery that each of the four Gospels appears to have been written and directed by the Holy Spirit with a particular type of audience in view. Matthew wrote for the Jewish people, presenting Jesus Christ as the Hope of Israel. Mark wrote for the common man, and in those days the common man meant virtually the slave, for the Roman Empire was a world in which a comparatively few were served by the vast majority, and that vast majority had little if any personal dignity. Mark presented the Lord as the Servant of Man *par excellence*. Luke wrote for the better-educated Gentile, for whom the great goal was to be "the cultured man" — or in Greek terms, one whose disposition was characterized by the dual hallmark of a gentleman: "sweet reasonableness and appropriate seriousness." Luke therefore presented the Lord as the ideal man, the very Son of Man. These three, the so-called Synoptic Gospels, set their sights at the same level, playing between them a beautiful harmony of chords by taking care to note, with inspired wisdom, those things which Jesus said and did in his character as man — though never failing to acknowledge his divinity. And finally, John built upon this concordant testimony to the perfection of the manhood of Jesus to show that part of the mystery of this perfection lay in the fact that He was not merely the Son of Man but also the Son of God.

Each of these authors, if one may allow some liberty in the use of language, accompanied his record with an appropriate genealogy. In Matthew the line of Jesus Christ is traced forward from Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation. In Luke the line is traced back to Adam, as the father of the human race. In John the line is traced back into eternity with God. And what of Mark? How fitting that there should be no genealogy here: who cared whence his servant came? Slaves are not recorded, for records of this kind are kept only to establish rights. And so it is only in a manner of speaking that each of the Gospels has its appropriate form of genealogy, but the absence of a genealogy in Mark is a beautiful tribute to the underlying unity of Scripture and the perfect agreement between its parts.

Sometimes this perfect agreement appears to be marred by contradiction, but I think it is an invariable rule that the apparent contradictions challenge us to resolve them and, in so doing, allow us to discover great truths which would not otherwise be discovered, but which are like a feast of fat things to the soul. This

is never more true than in the case of the seeming inconsistencies between the genealogies given by Matthew and by Luke.

The easiest thing here is to assume either that one of them is wrong, or that both of them are. Needless to say, a great many writers who have casual respect for the Word of God have concluded just this. To quote one such writer:

There can be no doubt that the anticipation that Christ would be descended from David was very general in our Lord's time (John 7:42, etc.). It is also clear that it was believed—at least by the disciples—that Jesus was indeed descended from him (Matthew 1:1; Acts 2:30; 12:23; Romans 1:3; Revelation 22:16, etc.). The genealogies in Matthew and Luke are apparently inserted to prove that this is a fact. But at first sight it would appear that the two genealogies are mutually destructive and that one or both are entirely untrustworthy. They both appear to be genealogies of Joseph, but they start from two different sons of David, and they end with the discrepancy, which cannot be ascribed to a copyist's error, in the name of Joseph's father.²³

These genealogies are provided as an insert, since it is important to have the text; human nature being what it is, there may be a tendency for the reader not to take time (even if he does get out a Bible) to check back and forth from the one to the other as we study the two family trees.

With this text before us, let us consider certain segments of these two genealogies under four headings:

1. Anomalies that appear within a genealogy itself;
2. Apparent conflicts with background information in the Old Testament;
3. Contradictions between the two genealogies;
4. Departures from the normal method of setting forth this kind of information in public records of this kind.

Section 1: Anomalies That Appear Within a Genealogy Itself

The number of names listed in Matthew's genealogy presents a problem, for we are informed that they total three times fourteen, or 42 in all (Matthew 1:17); but if we count them, there appear to be only 41. It is clear enough that there are 14 names from Abraham to David, and 14 names from Solomon to Jechonias, but unless we repeat Jechonias we have only 13 names for the balance. The only justification for repeating Jechonias is to make the assumption that this one name stands for two separate individuals whose original names may in their Hebrew form have been slightly different, but whose Hellenized transliteration has assumed the same form. Genealogical records provided elsewhere in Scripture supply us in a rather remarkable way with information demonstrating that this assumption is probably correct.

To begin with, it will be noted in Matthew 1:11 that the first-mentioned Jechonias is said to have been accompanied by "his brethren". If this Jechonias is

23. Crewdson, G., communication in *Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, vol. 44, 1912, p.26.

identified with Jehoiakim, he is in fact the immediate son of Josias, as Matthew tells us, and did indeed have brothers, as 1 Chronicles 3:15 informs us – namely, Johanan, Zedekiah, and Shallum.

This man Jehoiakim, in turn, had a son Jeconiah (I Chronicles 3:16), but this son did *not* have "brethren": he had only a single brother – whose name happens also to have been Zedekiah (I Chronicles 3:16). Undoubtedly Jeconiah is to be identified with the Jechonias of Matthew 1:12, who became, as I Chronicles 3:17 assures us, the father of Salathiel (of Matthew 1:12).

In other words, the first Jechonias of Matthew's genealogy is to be identified with the Jehoiakim who had *three* brothers. The second Jechonias of Matthew is to be identified with the Jeconiah who had only one brother and who went into captivity into Babylon and who there raised a son, Salathiel.

All this makes perfectly good sense and restores the proper number of names to complete the tally of three times fourteen, provided that one understands that the two entries of the name "Jechonias" in Matthew do not represent one individual but two. The first is distinguished by having several brothers; the second bore Salathiel in captivity.

Not a few commentators who have little confidence in the Word of God have, in the past, taken the apparent discrepancy in the total count of generations – along with the fact that Matthew omits a certain number of names (as we shall see in the following section) – as a proof that Scripture is far from being historically accurate or consistent. The mathematical inconsistency here in Matthew's genealogy is *apparent only* and results from paying insufficient attention to the precise wording. This inattention is inevitable if one has only a low regard for the Word of God. But if we observe that the first Jechonias is said to have had brothers and the second Jechonias had only one brother, then the difference between the two is clear to the attentive eye. Indeed, what better assurance could God have supplied us as a means of identification and distinction, especially if He foresaw that the names which are so distinct in their Hebrew form should in due time become confused in the Greek?

Section 2: Apparent Conflicts Within Old Testament Background Information

By contrast with a fair proportion of Luke's genealogy, Matthew's genealogy is clearly derived from records which are still accessible to us from the Old Testament. Many of the names in Luke are not to be found there. This enables us to go back to the originals, as it were, and when we do this, we may be surprised to find that Matthew has omitted quite a number of names which by normal standards of keeping such records ought to have been included. The circumstance demonstrates rather clearly that Matthew's genealogy has a special character to it.

Joash was succeeded by his son Amaziah who, unlike his father, seems to have tried to do the right thing but, as Scripture says, "not with a perfect heart". After various intrigues and a fatal engagement with Israel, Amaziah departed entirely from the vision he once had and ended up a defeated man and a fugitive. Escaping from Jerusalem when he learned of a conspiracy against his life, he fled to Lachish. But they pursued him there, and there he too was murdered (see 2 Kings 12:19-21).

Amaziah was succeeded by his son Uzziah, the "Ozias" whom Matthew in his genealogy sets forth as the son of Joram. In other words, three generations are missing, three generations of kings of Judah who, while they preserved intact the line of the Promised Seed, did not in themselves prove worthy to be remembered in it. Thus the curse pronounced upon the house of Ahab by Elijah, God's mouthpiece, persisted unto the fourth generation: Athaliah was the first generation of Ahab's line, Ahaziah was the second generation, Joash the third, and Amaziah the fourth. In the official temple records, it may be that the names of Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah were removed or marked in some way as having no official status in the royal line — just as in Europe a Bar-Sinister may be marked across the arms of a dishonoured branch of a family.

Evidently, at that period in history and for many centuries after, there was observed the practice of removing from all official records the names of individuals who had brought shame upon themselves. The Athenians, according to Livy, pronounced a similar doom on the memory of Alcibiades, and of Philip V of Macedon in the year 200 B.C.²⁴ In Egypt during the time of the eighteenth dynasty, the Egyptian priests similarly cursed the memory of Amenhotep IV and sought to remove his name from all monuments. The same thing was done with the name of Hatshepsut by her successors.

It is a curious thing how potent is the threat to the individual of having his very remembrance blotted out. It was called, in the days of Imperial Rome, the *Damnatio Memoriae*, and it was carried out in a striking manner against the emperor Commodus.²⁵ His "memory was condemned" in a single night's sitting of the Senate within twenty-four hours of his death, the same night in which Pertinax was nominated as emperor. It was decreed that every statue of Commodus was to be destroyed and his name erased from every private document and public monument. One wonders what they did with his name on the document which ordered its removal!

It seems a reflection of something we find not infrequently in the Old Testament and even in the New. God had warned Israel "whoso sinneth against Me, him will I blot out of my book" (Exodus 32:33). The same thought is reflected in Deuteronomy 9:14; 25:19; 29:20; and in 2 Kings 14:27. In Psalm 9:5 we read, "Thou hast rebuked the nations, Thou hast destroyed the wicked, Thou hast blotted out their name forever and ever." This is repeated in Psalm 69:28: "Let them be blotted out of the Book of Life." By contrast is the promise to the redeemed in Revelation 3:5, "I will in no wise blot out his name from the Book of Life." So in effect, when God assures David that He will blot out his sins and remember them no more, He is saying that they shall be as though they had never

24. Livy, Book XXXI, Chap. 44: as quoted by A. S. Lewis, "The Genealogies of Our Lord," *Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, vol. 44, 1912, p.12.

25. Lucius Aurelius Commodus was surely the most degraded and utterly corrupt of all Roman emperors. His short history is disgusting, and it is some credit to the Romans that after his murder in A.D. 192, the Senate attempted to blot out his very memory.

been. And in the genealogy which leads from Abraham to Christ, these three men—Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah—are blotted out as though they had never been and it seems therefore that if this erasure of their names took place in the original official documents which had been preserved in the temple from time immemorial, Matthew may have merely copied down precisely what he found in the record.

Some authorities wonder where either Matthew or Luke obtained his genealogy, since they believe that all such records were lost in the destruction of the first temple. However, it is generally agreed that a knowledge of one's genealogy was of very great importance in every Jewish family even when they went into exile, because it was only on the basis of this information that the Promised Land could be divided justly. With the ready means that we today have available for keeping written records, our faculty for remembering may have suffered in some respects. But where written record is more difficult to secure, prodigious feats of memory are not infrequently observed. Native people have been reported by missionaries to have memorized whole books of the New Testament, apparently without too much difficulty. And it is well-known that the Arab youth was formerly—and perhaps still is—expected to be able to recite his own genealogy for seventy generations. When an Australian aborigine comes unexpectedly upon another family's camp, he sits down some distance away from it until an elder from the camp comes out to him. Thereupon the two will recite their genealogies until they strike a common ancestor, and when this has been done, the stranger will be invited in and introduced with the proper identification as to his relationship, so that everybody else in the camp will know how to address him correctly, and he them.

Josephus speaks of the great care which the Jewish people in his day took to preserve certain lines, in particular the royal line from David and the royal priesthood. Julius Africanus²⁶ says that Herod the Great caused as many official registers as he could get hold of to be burned, because he himself was of a plebeian family and he wanted to conceal from the Roman emperor the fact that he had no blood relationship with either the royal line of David or the priestly line of Levi. But it seems unlikely that he could destroy them all, and the existence of private family registers is proved by the discovery of Aramaic documents concerning the Jewish colony which existed between 471 and 411 B.C. at Elephantine near Assouan. This is, of course, much earlier than Herod, but it shows that some genealogical information survived outside of Palestine even if Herod was fairly successful locally. According to a fairly recent Jewish Encyclopedia,²⁷ we are told that in the Talmudic Age—i.e., subsequent to Herod's time—interest in preservation of genealogies was lessened, but the patriarchs in Palestine and the exiled patriarchs in Babylon down to the thirteenth century kept these records alive wherever possible, and the former were believed to possess, interestingly enough, unbroken descent from David—in the female line only. This is a point of some interest in view of the fact that Luke's genealogy is widely considered to be that of Mary.

By the omission of these three names, we have an illustration of a point made much of by those who wish to extend the chronology of the Bible sufficiently to accommodate current views of the antiquity of man which demand anywhere

26. Africanus: quoted by Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 1.7.

27. "Genealogy," in *Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, Doubleday, New York, 1962.

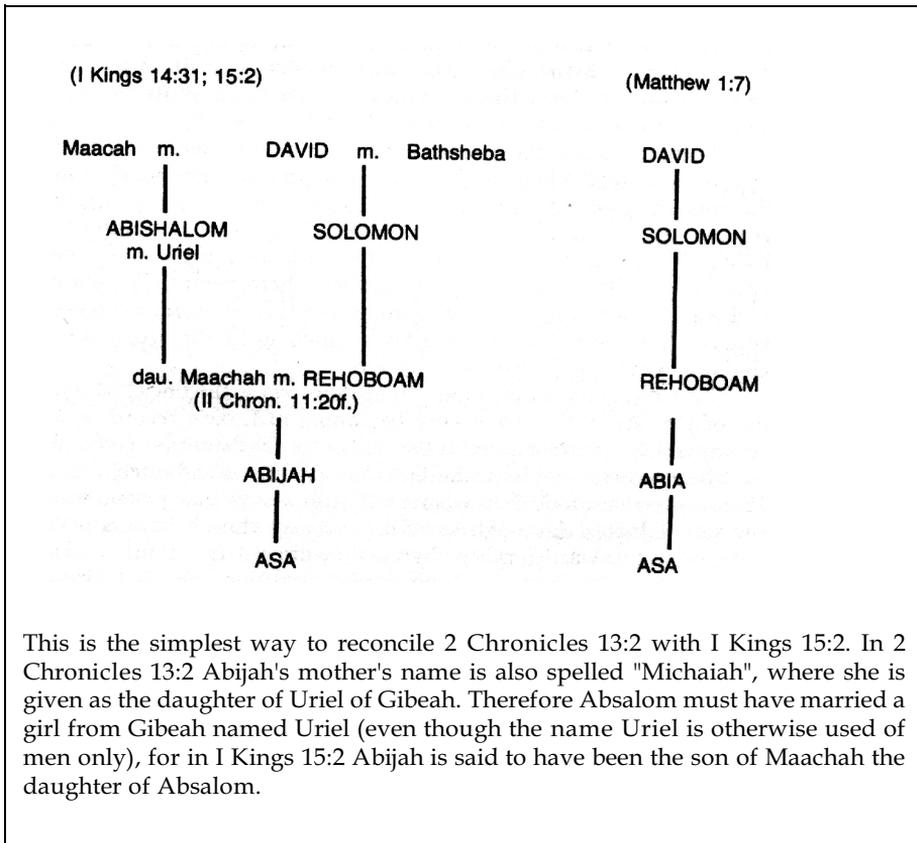
from 200,000 to 500,000 years. The claim is that these genealogies do not supply us with an unbroken series of generations because there are known gaps, such as that in Matthew 1:8, which makes a great-great-grandson a son, thus skipping three generations.

What is never admitted by those who attempt thus to extend the biblical chronology is that the possibility of arguing for such gaps exists only because elsewhere in Scripture the gaps are filled in. Had we only a single genealogy for example (for some particular period), we would have no evidence that gaps existed in it. It is only when the *same period* is supplied *elsewhere* with genealogical material (which neither provides us with more generations for the same period, or with fewer generations for the same period) that we can say with any certainty that a genealogy may be presented which is not actually complete though it has the appearance in itself of being so. It is perfectly true that when we are told that such-and-such a man is the "son" of some other individual, we are not always to assume that it means sonship in our more limited sense, since Ozias was the son of Jehoram only in the sense of being a descendant.

But this surely does not allow us to assume that, wherever we decide it would be convenient, we are free to insert an unlimited number of generations merely because the word *son* has this wider meaning. The fact is that in the historical portions of Scripture — that is, in those parts of the Bible which detail the lives and doings of individuals — we can find no break anywhere in the record in the historical account itself. People's doings are set forth relatedly so that one gets the feeling — which undoubtedly results from the fact that this *is* a continuous record — that each succeeding generation picked up the historical threads of those who immediately preceded them and united the past and the future by their own doings. This is manifestly true even in the very earliest parts of Scripture which record the growth of civilization before the Flood as well as its recovery immediately after it. Moreover, as we have seen, there are chronological cross-ties in the record wherever the line from the first Adam to the Last Adam is being traced. The omission of these three names from Matthew's genealogy does not give us permission to take liberties with the genealogies, but only teaches us that God discounts entirely and blots out of history whatever has come under his judgment. This is an unhappy thing for those who have not experienced redemption, but it is wonderfully reassuring to those who have, since by his gracious action in so doing, the redeemed can have nothing to fear in the judgment, for there will be no record against them.

Another example of apparent conflict appears in Matthew 1:7, which tells us that Solomon begat Rehoboam who begat Abia who begat Asa. In I Kings 14:31 we are told that when Rehoboam died, his son Abijam (to be identified with the Greek form *Abia* of Matthew) reigned in his stead. In I Kings 15:2 we are told that Abijam's mother's name was Maachah, and that she was the daughter of Abishalom. In 2 Chronicles 11:20,21 this individual, Abishalom, is named alternatively as Absalom. Jewish tradition identifies this Absalom as David's son — which is quite possible, since David bore Absalom by a woman named Maachah — and this would account for Absalom's naming his daughter after the mother. Now, in Matthew, Asa is said to have been Abia's son with which I Kings 15:8 agree — for it says that when Abijam died, his son Asa reigned in his stead. But the curious thing is that the record in Kings goes on to say that he reigned for forty-one years in Jerusalem after succeeding to the throne, and "*his* mother's

name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom." Thus Asa who was the son of Abia nevertheless appears from the text to have had the same mother. It is conceivable, of course, in a case of incest, but this is certainly not true here, otherwise Matthew's genealogy would surely have omitted one of the names at least, if not both – for such a thing as incest was an abomination in the sight of the Lord. The explanation is undoubtedly that Maachah was indeed the mother of Abia and the grandmother of Asa. Thus, while – as we have already seen – a son or a grandson may look back to a common father, similarly a son or a grandson may evidently look back to a common mother. Indeed, in I Kings 15:8,11 Asa is said to have been the son of both Abijah his father and the son of David, the latter being more precisely his great-great-grandfather.



Working out these little problems not merely enlarges one's understanding of the relationship of these peoples, but somehow makes the individuals live, as a map makes places live that we have once visited. And if it is not irreverent to say so, finding solutions is like finding a missing piece in a jigsaw puzzle or a missing word in a crossword puzzle – it provides genuine intellectual satisfaction.

Section 3: Contradictions Between The Two Genealogies

Luke provides us with a line from Adam to David, a section of the genealogy which is not found in Matthew, for reasons already noted, and which therefore in no way conflicts with it. But from David forward to Jesus there are disagreements almost all the way along.

Needless to say, these disagreements were once made much of by those who held a low opinion of the integrity of Scripture. But in due time these very disagreements led to a search for some means of reconciliation, and this search proved fruitful because it brought to light a further truth which might otherwise have escaped notice entirely. Now that the truth is recognized, there seem to be many incidental confirmations of it from other parts of Scripture; but these confirmations were not recognized as such until the truth they confirmed had itself been rediscovered.

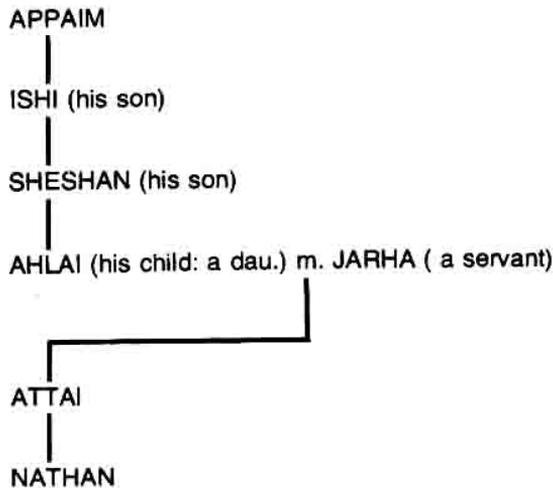
This discovery is that Luke's genealogy traces the line of Mary, not of Joseph. Thus, at the very beginning of Luke's record—a record which sets the names in the reverse order from that given in Matthew—we meet with the first "contradiction": namely, that Joseph was the son of Heli, whereas Matthew says that Joseph was the son of Jacob. Although some of the early Church Fathers perceived that this was Mary's pedigree, they did not apparently make the discovery that in the Talmud, Jewish tradition held that Mary was the daughter of Heli (Beth-Heli).²⁸ Early Christian writers held that Mary was the daughter of Joiakim and Anna. But the name Joiakim is interchangeable with Eliakim, as 2 Chronicles 36:4 shows, and Eli or Heli is an abridgment of Eliakim. It is thus quite possible that the early Christian tradition is in perfect harmony with that of the Jewish people themselves whose knowledge would be based on temple records. This is undoubtedly the basis of the early assurance that Jesus was, in the flesh, of the seed of David. In the annunciation (Luke 1:32), the promised Saviour is called at once "Son of God" and "Son of David": Son of God by virtue of his conception by the Holy Spirit, and Son of David by virtue of his birth through Mary. This should therefore be compared with Romans 1:3,4, in which we are told that He who was God's Son was "born of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power [...]." Later on, in his confrontation with the Jewish authorities, Jesus answered a question which had probably arisen from the fact that, while they recognized the validity of his lineal claim to being David's son through Mary, they would not recognize his further claim to being the Son of God. He pointed out to them from Psalm 110:1 that while the Messiah was indeed to be David's son, David nevertheless called Him "Lord". They had no answer to this. The Lord's argument could only have real force if the people to whom it was addressed recognized his claim as the son of Mary who was a daughter of David.

Why, then, is Mary's name not included in Luke's genealogy? Undoubtedly, to establish a legal pedigree it is necessary to set down the name of the head of the household—in this case, of course, Joseph. At the same time, according to the Jewish way of thinking—and indeed, according to the common practice of many other societies—the man who married could claim his wife's father as his own. We ourselves recognize this right, only we make the distinction of saying

²⁸. Jerusalem Talmud, Haggigah, Book 77,4.

"father-in-law", rather than "father". There are a number of examples in Scripture where this principle is followed.

In I Chronicles 2:31 we have an illustration of this practice of naming another as the father. In this instance it will be observed that son succeeded "son" until we come to Ahlai, whom we know had a daughter but not a son. Meanwhile Ahlai had an Egyptian servant named Jarha and, as was not altogether unusual at that time, he gave his daughter to him as a wife. But from then on the children are still credited to him as his descendants – that is, members of his own line through his daughter – and therefore listed as *his* sons and grandsons. Thus the children of his daughter are listed as *his* children rather than the children of his daughter's husband, and they in their turn would look back to him as their ultimate father. Of necessity, Jarha would therefore be accounted as Sheshan's son. The following genealogy sets this forth:



The manner in which Joseph's name is introduced in Luke's genealogy is also exceptional. Whereas each man in the line is said to have been, simply, "of" his father, Jesus is said to have been the son "nominally" of Joseph – such is the Greek which the Authorized Version renders "as was supposed". The verbal root of this qualifying term is *nomidzo*, which has the sense of legal standing or standing established by custom: it is cognate with the root which gave rise to the English form "nominal". Thus it was clearly recognized that Jesus was the son of Joseph legally, but not necessarily by natural generation. This claim is accepted without question in John 6:42, "whose mother and father we know [...]."

When a man wished to identify as his son one who was not his son by natural generation, he could do so by a process of legal adoption which involved two acts. In the first place, he must name the child. Evidently the name "Jesus" was registered as the child's name by Joseph in obedience to the angel's instructions in Matthew 1:21. These instructions, it will be noted, were given by the angel directly to Joseph himself rather than to Mary. The significance of this from the

legal point of view is great. Although Joseph appears to have predeceased Mary, it does not appear that anyone ever seriously challenged his familial rights.

The second requirement has an interesting history to it. It is well-known that the Code of Hammurabi played an important part in structuring much of the social custom of the Jewish people, since it was the legal code in force at the time of Abraham. In section 188 of this code it is written: "If an artisan takes a son to sonship and teaches him his handicraft, no one may bring a claim for him". Evidently Joseph taught Jesus to be a carpenter in fulfillment of this recognized requirement, a guarantee which would stand even if the records in the temple were destroyed. It was a kind of double insurance of legal status. A comparison of Matthew 13:55 with Mark 6:3 shows that both father and son were carpenters. Matthew 11:30 tells us something of his skill!

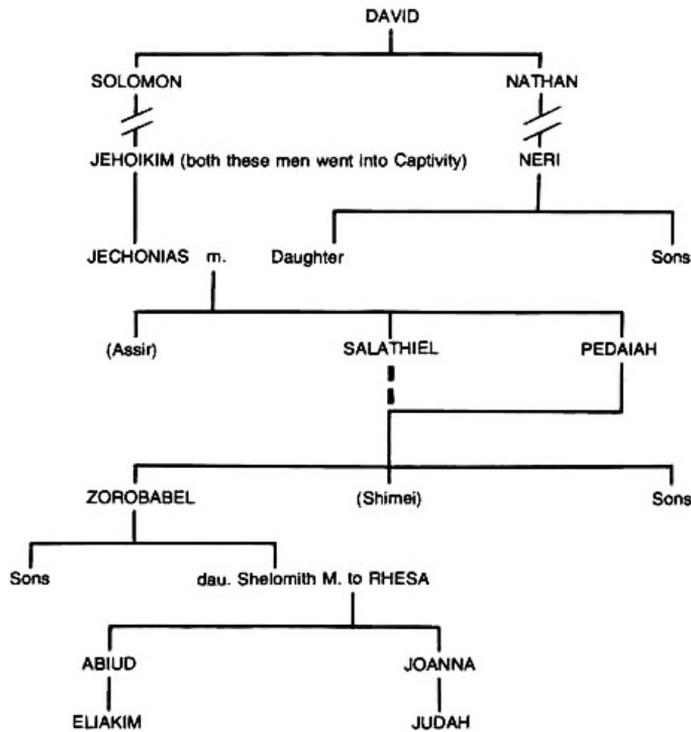
Thus, although Mary in her own right could claim descent from David through Heli her father, the temple record could not enter her name in the line but must enter the name of her husband, the adopting father of her child. So when Luke copied out this record, he quite properly omitted Mary's name and substituted that of Joseph.

We have, therefore, a genealogy from David to Mary preserved, presumably, in the family of Heli and perhaps actually in their possession—for as we have already noted previously—long after the temple was destroyed with all its records, there still existed families who claimed descent from David and claimed it, significantly, in the female line. On this account the names in Luke's Gospel from David forward do not coincide (except at one point) with the names in Matthew's Gospel. David had three sons of note—namely, Solomon, Absolon, and Nathan—and it is in the line of Nathan that Mary's claim is established.

In Luke 3:28 we have "Melchi"; in Luke 3:27 his son is given as "Neri"; and his son, in turn, is given as Salathiel followed by Zorobabel and then Rhesa. At this point we have some apparent connections with the genealogy in Matthew's Gospel, for in Matthew 1:12 we have Jechonias whose son was Salathiel followed by Zorobabel. When we turn to the Old Testament to find out what this uniting of the two families signifies, we find ourselves with insufficient information to provide an unequivocal answer—but just enough to allow a reconstruction which, in the light of what we have already observed of the way in which relationships are acknowledged, has a fair degree of probability about it. The Jechonias of Matthew 1:12 was, as we have seen, the king who terminated the Judean royal line when these unfortunate people went into captivity. Although he is stated to have been still a child, he survived long enough in captivity to reach a marriageable age; he evidently was later accorded kingly status—a not unusual circumstance in those days—for the girl he married is called (in Jeremiah 29:2) "his queen". Scripture has taken care to provide us with very concrete information to this effect (2 Kings 25:27-30) as though God foresaw that one day this information would be important.

Now, to bring the two genealogies at this point into harmony, it is only necessary to assume that Neri of Luke 3:27 also went into captivity and there raised both sons and daughters, and that one of these daughters became the wife and queen of Jechonias. This is a most reasonable assumption really, because, if Neri was known to be of the royal line through Nathan (and Nehemiah 7:5 shows that at least some genealogies had been saved in spite of the conquest of Judah), then who would be more proper as the wife of the still-acknowledged king than

a daughter of the royal line? Of this marriage, Jechonias had a son (among others) whose name was Salathiel (I Chronicles 3:17) and besides Salathiel he had also a second son named Pedaiah. In I Chronicles 3:19 Pedaiah had a son named Zerubbabel (the "Zorobabel" of the New Testament). Thus Salathiel was, in fact, properly called the son of Jechonias but also the son of Neri through the latter's daughter. The two lines from David through Solomon and through Nathan meet in Salathiel by this device. Salathiel's brother, Pedaiah, though not mentioned in either of the New Testament genealogies, appears to have exercised the right of the Levirate upon the early death of his brother Salathiel, and to have taken his wife, by whom he raised up to Salathiel's line a son named Zorobabel.



In Zorobabel we again meet with an example of a man's children being traced through their mother's father. Zorobabel had both sons and daughters, but the male seed for some unknown reason came to an end, thus fulfilling the prophecy made in Jeremiah 22:30 that no *man* of Jechonias' seed "should sit on the throne of David". We are, however, given his daughter's name in I Chronicles 3:19 as "Shelomith". We have only to make one further assumption, namely, that this girl married the Rhesa of Luke 3:17 and had of this union two sons—Abiud of Matthew 1:13 and Joanna of Luke 3:17—and the rest makes perfectly good sense and the two genealogies are reconciled, the one with the other.

By this means—always bearing in mind the manner of stating relationships which was allowable—we can see how, according to Matthew, Jechonias had a son Salathiel and Salathiel had a son (via his brother Pedaiah) Zorobabel, and Zorobabel a son (actually a grandchild through his daughter Shelomith) named

Abiud, and thence down to Joseph: and at the same time, according to Luke, how Neri could have a son Salathiel (actually his grandson), who had a son Zorobabel (again, in fact a grandson), who had a son Rhesa (actually his son-in-law, as Joseph was Heli's son-in-law), and Rhesa a son, Joanna by his wife Shelomith who was a daughter of Zorobabel, and thence down to Heli.

This sounds terribly complicated, but the full genealogical table (from Adam to Jesus pages 189 to 191) which gives both lines, will show that all the requirements of all that we know, both from the Old and the New Testament, seem to be satisfied.

There are no conflicts either between the Old and the New Testament records or between Matthew and Luke. The validity of the claim that Jesus was the promised Messiah as the Son of David, the Seed of the Woman as virgin-born through Mary, the Saviour of mankind as the Son of Man (from Adam) and the Son of God (as conceived supernaturally by the Holy Spirit) is assured on every ground.

Undoubtedly a study of the genealogies requires considerable effort, perhaps more effort (or at least a different kind of effort) from that which normally proves most fruitful when expended elsewhere in Bible study. But it is well worth it and brings with it a peculiar intellectual satisfaction.

Section 4: Departures From the Usual Way of Setting Forth a Genealogy

The fundamental departure found in Luke's Gospel, is that in this genealogy we are not presented at the top of the page with the oldest antecedent followed by father, sons, grandsons, and so on, but rather with the latest in the line, who is then by a simple device traced backwards – whereas all other genealogies trace forward. Why was this order adopted?

There is a second departure, namely, that whereas Matthew and John both *commence* their history by establishing the pedigree, Luke covers briefly but effectively a period of some thirty years in the life of the Lord before saying who He is in terms of his antecedents.

It is not until this time – when Jesus, being now about thirty years of age, has been identified by John as the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" and singularly considered by God in heaven as His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased – that Luke sets forth his lineage, showing in effect that though the circumstances of Jesus' birth were such as to set Him apart from all other men, yet He was nevertheless truly representative of man in Adam.

The genealogy of Matthew reads forward from Abraham to Jesus, identifying Him as the Child of Promise. Promises are always of the future, and Matthew wished above all to establish from the very first that Jesus was the Christ, the fulfillment of this promise. He wanted to show the grounds upon which Jesus established his title as the Messiah, and his Gospel thereafter presents His credentials as the Son of David.

Luke, on the other hand, wished to show the potential of man, the model which God had in mind from which all other men derive whatever of manhood they happen to have. Hence he begins with Jesus and appropriately gives Him

alone, above all others, the title "Son of Man", and then he traces Him back to Adam, in whose place He stood.

Thus Matthew begins with Abraham and leads us forward to the Lord, whom he identifies by his *title*, "the Christ" (Matthew 1:17); whereas Luke begins with the Lord, whom he identifies by his *name*, "Jesus" (Luke 3:23), and leads us back to Adam and so to God.

Viewed as vehicles for conveying information, the genealogies of the Bible are supportive of one another. Were it not for the genealogical material in the Old Testament, the genealogies in the New Testament would be without historical foundation; and were it not for the genealogies in the New Testament, the genealogical material of the Old, preserved with such precision, would be without point. One set of data looks forward, and one looks backward. Each is required to complete the other. Just as we are learning, contrary to earlier expectations, that there are no useless or vestigial organs in the body, so we shall learn, perhaps contrary to present expectation, that there are no useless entries in the Word of God. *All Scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable . . .* (2 Tim. 3:16). The brief treatment of the genealogies in this Paper barely scratches the surface of only a few of them. There is yet much to be discovered, enough undoubtedly to keep a man occupied for a lifetime.



PART VI

**A TRANSLATION OF GENESIS 1:1 to 2:4
WITH NOTES**

[Doorway Paper #30, first issued 1961]

Preface

So many new translations of Scripture are being offered these days that it might be difficult to justify another one (even though this is limited to so few verses), but for the fact that one important point of Hebrew syntax has consistently been overlooked. This is the use of the verb "to be". It is particularly significant in many key verses in the early chapters of Genesis.

One of the great advantages of the Authorized Version is the use of italics for words which have been supplied by the translators which do not appear in the original. For this reason, in the text which follows, italicized words as they appear in the Authorized Version are also italicized, but not specifically to emphasize them. After each verse taken directly from the King James Version, a new translation appears in small capitals with further emphasis where necessary. After each re-translation, some comments will be found for throwing further light upon my alternative.

The Hebrew language is in one sense simple. Thus some of the subtleties of thought and meaning depended upon special devices, including the omission of some words in certain contexts where we would consider their inclusion essential to complete the sense. To the Hebrew writer, the omission had important significance. This applies in a special way to the use of the verb "to be".

A second method of making distinctions in meaning was by the use of special word orders, particularly changing the position of the verb, its object, and its subject in a sentence.

To ignore these literary devices is to miss entirely the original intention of the writer. To respect these carefully in translation is sometimes to discover a quite wonderful new light on many familiar passages, and sometimes to find an entirely new meaning of very great importance, possibly averting a serious misunderstanding of the writer's intention.

Let me give one simple illustration – which will be repeated in due course, but may serve to prepare the way. In Genesis 3:10 in the Authorized Version, Adam is recorded as having said, "And I was afraid because I *was* naked." In the English text, the verb *was* is printed in italics because it has been supplied by the translators. By contrast, Genesis 3:20 reads, "And Adam called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living." In this instance the word "was" is not written in italics because it did not have to be supplied by the translators: it appears in the original as part of the verb "to be".

The significance of these two uses is as follows. In Hebrew where it is desired simply to use the verb "to be" in any of its tenses, no verb at all appears in the original. However, if the verb "to be" has the more involved meaning of "a change of state or condition or circumstance", then it is written in the original Hebrew. Thus, whenever the word *was* is written in italics in the Authorized Version, it

means simply what we mean by the word. For example, Adam was naked: this is the way he was created, this is the way he observed himself at the time of making this statement. No change had taken place in this basic condition. On the other hand, Eve at the moment of Adam's speaking in verse 20 was not the mother of all living. She might have been in a prophetic sense, but at this moment she was not, for not until chapter 4, verse 1, did she become pregnant. It is therefore necessary to have regard to the fact that in the original Hebrew of verse 20 it does not say, "She was the mother of all living", but rather:

"She became (היתה) the mother of all living".

This is an important point to observe, and in a few instances it makes a profound difference in the meaning of the sentence.

For further illustration, turn to Judges 6:12 in any edition of the Authorized Version and read through to chapter 7, verse 14. Notice that various forms of the verb "to be" appear in italics as follows:

6:12	<i>"is"</i>	6:22	<i>"was"</i>
6:13	<i>"be"</i>	7:2	<i>"are"</i>
6:15	<i>"am"</i>	7:12	<i>"were"</i>

All of these are in italics and therefore are properly rendered as shown in the text by these simple forms. There is no change of state in any of these cases. In verse 15 Gideon *is* the least in his father's house and his family is poor. In verse 22 he perceives that the being who stands before him is an angel, and so forth. But in verse 27 the text reads, "And so it was, because he feared his father's household and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night." In this passage, the *was* is in the original Hebrew and it should more properly be rendered, "and so it became that . . ." or more familiarly, "and so it came to pass that. . . ."

The point here is that recognition by the scholars responsible for the Authorized Version of the need to pay attention to this distinctive use in Hebrew was accorded by their use of italics. As will become apparent now, this device makes it possible for the English reader with no knowledge of Hebrew to read the translation with much better understanding than is possible, for example, with the Revised Standard Version, which has not adopted this principle.

There is one caution here that is rather important. Sometimes the word *was* (or *is*, etc.) belongs to the verb that follows. Only a student acquainted with Hebrew will be able to resolve this difficulty by reference to the original where there is any doubt. But there are numerous cases where an ordinary understanding of English is sufficient guide. This is true in Genesis 3:20, for example, as already quoted – "because she became the mother of all living" – since the verb *was* is the only verb in the sentence.

The other point of importance, especially in certain key verses, is the fact that Hebrew does not have all the tense forms found in English. It does not have a specific form for expressing the future, nor is there a specific form to express the pluperfect. The future is expressed by using either the present tense or the past tense in a special way: the pluperfect is expressed by changing the order of the words. It is the second of these that concerns us particularly at this time. The

normal order for a Hebrew sentence is verb, subject, object. When the subject is placed first, one of two meanings is intended: either the writer wishes to draw attention to the fact that he is talking about a new subject, or he wishes it to be understood that the verb is in the pluperfect tense.

It is with the observance of these linguistic devices in mind that the translation that follows has been undertaken. Yet, while it is most desirable to hold as closely as possible to the original Hebrew at all times, it did not seem to us necessary to render slavishly the same word in the original by the same exact phrase in English every time it occurred, provided that there was no real departure from the manifest intent of the original. This will be found to be true in our rendering of the Hebrew which underlies the English phrases "the firmament of Heaven", "the moving creature that hath life", and "after his kind", for example. The really important thing is to grasp what the original text signifies and then find as many fresh ways of conveying the same meaning as is consistent with freedom of expression.

One further observation. This is not intended to be an attempt to reconcile Scripture with geology. It is an attempt rather to get at the Author's intent. This is not possible merely by word equivalents, faithfully giving the same meaning each time the same word occurs. For this reason, there can scarcely ever be any such thing as an absolutely literal rendering if the text is to have any flow of language to it. Interpretation becomes necessary, and interpretation always suffers from the bias of the interpreter. My own bias will be obvious enough, yet I think we have not betrayed the Hebrew text.

Finally, as we have it in existing manuscripts, the early chapters of Genesis are *not* written as poetry. The Psalms are written as poetry, and so are many other portions of Scripture. Poetry is most obviously indicated by the manner in which the text is arranged in lines, though there are more subtle means of signifying poetry, such as parallelism in couplets. But Genesis is not presented in this way. It would seem presumptuous, therefore, for anyone with this piece of information available to allegorize the text freely on the grounds that it is, after all, a poem of creation and not a sober history.

This Paper is a "commentary" for study purposes and is not intended in any sense as an aid to devotional reading.



ראש־דברך אמת

"The beginning of Thy Word is True. . . ."
Psalm 119:160

A Translation

Genesis 1:1-2:4

1:1 Originally, God brought into being and set in perfect order the heavens and the earth.

But the earth had become a ruin and a desolation, and a pall of darkness hung over this scene of disaster. And the Spirit of God moved mightily upon the face of the waters. And God said, "Let it become light." And it became light; and God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning together constituted one day.

6 And God said, "Let there come to be a space between the waters, and let it divide between the waters above and the waters below." And God appointed the space and divided the waters which were under the space from the waters which were above the space: and so it came to pass. And God called the space Heaven. And the evening and the morning became a second day.

9 And God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place and let the dry land appear." And this came to pass. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called the Sea: and God saw that it was good. And God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, herb yielding seed, the fruit tree yielding fruit—akin to itself—whose seed is in itself, upon the earth": and this came to pass. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed, akin to itself, and the tree yielding fruit whose seed was within—also akin to itself. And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning became a third day.

14 And God said, "Let the lights in the heavens above be to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years: and let them become in the heavens above as lights to give light upon the earth": and this came to pass. Moreover, God appointed the two great lights: the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night, along with the stars. So God set them in the heavens above to give light upon the earth and to rule over the day and over the night, and to make a distinction between light and darkness. And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning became a fourth day.

20 And God said, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly living creatures, and let fowl fly above the earth across the face of the open sky." And the very large sea animals did God also create, and the wealth of living creatures which the waters brought forth, like begetting like, and all the different kinds of fowl that fly, like begetting like. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the sea, and let the fowl multiply on the earth." And the evening and the morning became a fifth day.

24 And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures breeding true to themselves, cattle and creeping things and the wild creatures of the earth, also breeding true to themselves." And this came to pass. And God appointed the wild things of the earth, breeding true to themselves, and the cattle similarly, and likewise everything that creepeth upon the earth. And God saw that it was good. And God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our Likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him: male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth: to you it shall be for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for food." And it became so. And God saw everything that He had done, and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning became a sixth day.

2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished with all things necessary to them. On the seventh day God completed the work which he had been engaged in, so He rested on the seventh day from setting everything in order. And God blessed the seventh day and set it apart: because that on this day He had rested from the work involved in creating and appointing everything.

Such is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God prepared them both.



Word-for-Word Translation for Most of Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 2:4

1. Setting the Stage

i) Genesis 1:1 to 1:5

Authorized Version:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
And the earth was without form and void and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

An interpretative rendering:

ORIGINALLY GOD BROUGHT INTO BEING AND SET IN PERFECT ORDER
THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.
BUT THE EARTH *HAD BECOME* A RUIN AND A DESOLATION: AND A
PALL OF DARKNESS HUNG OVER THE SCENE OF DISASTER:

ORIGINALLY: The choice of this word in place of the phrase "In the beginning" was very carefully made. Almost every commentary of an exegetical kind on the Book of Genesis has struggled to find an appropriate phrase whereby to represent what is wrapped up in this original Hebrew compound word, the word *be-reshith* בְּרֵאשִׁית .

The trouble is that this noun, *reshith*, does not have a complete meaning in itself, but always needs some modifying word which must be supplied in English as the context seems to require. For example, in Job 42:12 it is written, "So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning." I do not think that by "the latter end" is meant the last few moments of his life, but rather the last few years. By contrast with "his beginning," these latter years were blessed indeed, provided that the word "beginning" (*reshith*) is not taken to mean literally his first birthday, but rather the whole period prior to the catastrophes which overwhelmed him. In other words, the word "beginning" denotes a state rather than a moment in time.

In Proverbs 8:22, wisdom is said to have been the Lord's possession in the beginning. Since the Lord had no beginning in the temporal sense, it must be clear that this is not a reference merely to a point in time. In Ecclesiastes 7:8, patience is advocated for those who wait upon the Lord so that the "end" is better than the "beginning," i.e., the state of things improved with time. The idea of a moment or point in time is not involved, but rather a later stage as opposed to an earlier one. Israel once enjoyed a measure of prosperity under the Judges prior to the monarchy. In Isaiah 1:26, God makes a promise to a faithful remnant that such a period of prosperity, still without a monarchy, would in time be restored to them. Once more the idea is not that of a point in time, but a period characterized by a condition or state of affairs.

There are a few cases in the Old Testament in which a true beginning is intended, this intention being clearly reinforced by a corresponding quotation in the New Testament. One of these is in Psalm 102:25, a passage quoted in Hebrew 1:10 in such a way as to make it pretty clear that we are dealing here with the foundations of things. In Psalm 102:25, the Hebrew word *reshith* is not used. This seems good evidence that this *reshith* is not strictly the word for "beginning". For this reason and for grammatical reasons¹, it is necessary to translate it by some such phrase as "In the former state" or—for simplicity and to use but one word—we might render it "Originally." For this word implies "beginning," but it also implies something which the Hebrew writer, I think, intended by his use of the word *reshith*, namely, a condition different from that which he describes subsequently. He is contrasting the first and therefore original condition with a second and changed condition in verse 2.

GOD: As is well known to every Bible student, the original Hebrew word, *Elohim*, takes a plural form followed by a singular verb. It has been customary for biblical conservatives to interpret this as evidence of a very early revelation of the fact that there is more than one person in the Godhead, yet acting as a single agent. With almost equal unanimity, liberal theologians have declared this to be an unfounded assumption; their explanation is that this is an example of the use of a plural form to designate majesty. As though to reinforce the dignity of their office, absolute monarchs would refer to themselves as "we" rather than "I." It is a little bit, though not quite, analogous to the editorial "we". This pronouncement, once it had been sponsored by one with sufficient authority in theological circles, was unanimously approved and accepted and reiterated by critics thenceforth right up to the present. It is always said in support of this interpretation that oriental monarchs customarily referred to themselves in this manner.

How this has passed undisputed for so long is difficult to understand. Neither in Scripture itself nor in the cuneiform literature of antiquity is it found to be the case.

In Joseph's time the pharaoh of Egypt—who could probably be considered a pretty good example of an absolute monarch—consistently refers to himself in the singular, as in Genesis 41:15 ("And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream..."). This is rather significant in view of the fact that the Higher Critics (and others) have been fond of saying that Moses was influenced by contemporary usage to put God's title in a plural form after the manner of other Great Ones.

Throughout their subsequent history the Israelites repeatedly suffered at the hands of the absolute monarchs of the Babylonians and the Assyrians. Not one of these, as far as I have been able to verify for myself, ever referred to his own person in the plural. In the Prism of Sennacherib (column 1, line 11, and many times thenceforth) he refers to himself in the singular. Sargon, properly referred to as "the Great"—who interestingly enough had the experience of being set adrift on his native waterway in a reed basket very much as Moses had been—consistently refers to himself in the first person singular. Shalmaneser III, to whom the Israelites paid tribute, likewise used only singular pronouns. So did Tiglath-Pileser III, to whom the Israelites paid tribute and under whose hand they suffered deportations. The same may be said of the king of Moab, the originator

1. See on this, A. C. Custance, "Between the Lines, An Analysis of Genesis 1:1-2," Part III in *Time and Eternity*, vol. VI, The Doorway Papers.

of the now-famous Moabite Stone. One may conclude, therefore, that the plural form *Elohim*, followed by a singular verb, is not a borrowed idea but a significant aspect of God's self-revelation.

BROUGHT INTO BEING AND SET IN PERFECT ORDER: This elaborate phrase is an attempt to convey the rather complex meaning of the Hebrew verb *bara* (בָּרָא), here appearing in the third person singular and rendered in the Authorized Version, "created". Although the subject is plural in form, the verb is singular, a circumstance very reasonably taken to mean that the three persons in the one Godhead acted in perfect harmony. There seem to have arisen some rather widespread misconceptions as to the meaning of the word. It is often said that the word is used only of God's activities, and it is only slightly less frequently said to signify "creation out of nothing". Both of these are erroneous. In the first place, the word is used of human activity on a number of occasions in Scripture, as can be readily verified by any English reader who will refer in Young's *Analytical Concordance to the Hebrew Index Lexicon* (page 7).

Essentially the word appears to mean "to cut" or "carve" (hence even "to cut down," i.e., "to kill"): then, "to put the finishing touches to" or "to polish". And so it came to carry the meaning of creation with a polish, i.e., creation in a finished state—and more than this, with adornment. The Greek word *kosmos*, translated into English as "world" and meaning rather the created order of things than the more common idea of the inhabited earth (which is a quite different Greek word), really implies adornment with particular emphasis upon order. From this arose the idea of adornment, hence the English word *cosmetics*.

In Hebrews 1:2 we are told that God *framed* the worlds by Jesus Christ, a statement which implies all that has been said above. One fact needs to be added: the Hebrew word *bara*, when it applies to the activity of God, is used only in what is called the "light" form. Where man's creative activity is concerned, it is used in the "intensive". It is as though creation was easy for God, but difficult for man. This thought is reflected by the juxtaposition of three passages in the Psalms: the first says that creation is the work of his Fingers (8:3, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;"); the second, punishment is the work of his Hand (39:10, "Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand"); and the third that salvation is the work of his whole Arm (77:15, "Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah."), thereby signifying that creation was simple, punishment a little more difficult, and salvation the most difficult of all to achieve.

In the second place, the word does not, either by use or in its root meaning, imply creation out of nothing. Cosmologically, it should be pointed out in any case that the universe was not created out of nothing, but rather out of things which "do not appear" (Hebrews 11:3, "...things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."), i.e., immaterial forces. Moreover, man himself was not created out of nothing, but out of the dust of the ground.

This may be a good place to mention also that the word *'asah* (עָשָׂה) translated variously in Scripture (but in Genesis 1:7 as "made") should not be assumed, as it often is, to be a synonym. Whereas in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, in six days He re-appointed them. For the word *made*

really means "appointed," as judges are appointed, refuge cities are appointed, and even some of the evils of city life (cf. Amos 3:6, "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"). Such categories of persons or things, already in existence, have sometimes received by God's appointment a new significance. We shall have more to say about this later, for "creating" is not at all the same as "making".

THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH: By these two words we are undoubtedly to understand the universe as a whole and not just the earth with its immediate "heavenly" envelope, since this envelope is subsequently referred to more specifically as the "firmament". It should also be noted that it does not say that the creation of the heavens and the earth were the work of the first day. The first day is actually occupied with a much more restricted aspect of God's handiwork. The first verse evidently is a grand opening statement of revelation, standing in a sense by itself—a circumstance borne out by the fact that not a few ancient manuscripts actually indicate a break in the text at this point. Fuller reference to this will be made in discussing verse 2.

BUT: The Hebrew conjunction, *waw* (ו), is not quite like the English conjunction "and". In the first place, it does not necessarily imply the continuation of a series of events: for example, it sometimes is used to open a book of the Bible with nothing previously connecting with it (cf. Leviticus 1:1; Judges 1:1; Ezekiel 1:1). It is also used disjunctively rather than conjunctively, so that it is quite properly translated "but". We have so translated it above because, like the authors of the Septuagint who used the Greek *de* instead of *kai*, we believe that this verse stands intentionally in contrast with verse 1. Many of the Church Fathers so interpreted it. Jerome in his Vulgate translation has *terra autem*, i.e., "[...] the earth, however,...]"; in verse 1 he uses *et* for the simple "and."

HAD BECOME: This translation, which is perfectly proper, is a point of major contention between certain groups of scholars. To explain why this is so is extremely difficult without become involved in some very complicated matters of grammar and syntax in the Hebrew language. But some attempt must be made to inform the reader what the contention is all about.

The King James Version has simply the verb "was". The implication is that the chaos described in verse 2 represents the state of the earth as it was first created. The alternative rendering implies otherwise. The creation was perfect, but some circumstance intervened between verses 1 and 2 to reduce a Cosmos to a Chaos. The earth was not created like this, but it had become so. Which picture is the correct one? Since almost all English versions translate the original Hebrew verb *hayah* in this instance as "was", it would seem that by common consent this is its proper meaning. But is this the case?

The normal rule in Hebrew, when the simple copulative form of the verb "to be" is required in a sentence, is to leave the verb unexpressed. Thus in the sentence "The man is good," the verb would be omitted and a literal rendering of the Hebrew would be "The man good", rather like an American Indian's "Me good man". If, however, the Hebrew author wishes to express something more than this, such as "The man is becoming good", thereby denoting a change in the situation, then he would introduce the Hebrew verb *hayah* in its appropriate form.

The difference is real. The presence or absence of the verb *was* in the original Hebrew has a significance that must not be ignored.

The translators of the King James Version, recognizing this difference and being fully aware that the English reader has difficulty with a sentence like "the man good", naturally *supplied* the missing verb and made it read "the man is good". However, to show what they had done, they adopted a policy of setting such supplied words in italics. The reader unacquainted with Hebrew is thus able to detect when the verb has been supplied in the original and when it has not; or to put the matter another way, when the Hebrew author intended to signify that a change had taken, or was taking, or would take place, and when he simply viewed the situation as unchanged or unchanging. If the verb is expressed in the original, thus denoting a change in the situation, the King James Version translators used standard type: if the verb is not expressed in the original, thus denoting no change in the situation, the King James Version has supplied it in italics.

In Genesis 1:2 the first "was" is printed in ordinary type, the second "was" in italics. Similarly in verse 3, the first "was" is in ordinary type, but in verse 4 it is in italics. We are by this to understand that the Hebrew original supplies the appropriate form of the verb in the first instances, but omits the verb in the second. This signifies that a change had occurred with respect to the earth in verse 2 and a change occurred in respect to the coming of light. What was a perfect earth became a ruin; what was dark became light.

This is not the place to enter into a complicated defence of this observation. In point of fact the evidence in its favour is to my mind almost overwhelming, and it has been recognized for centuries by the Jews themselves. Some of the evidence has been set forth by the author in this series (as noted in Part III in *Time and Eternity*, vol.VI of The Doorway Papers) and in a rather more extended work which, though it requires some dedication to read because of the unfamiliarity of the subject, is by no means beyond the capability of any intelligent layman to understand. It is titled *Without Form and Void*.¹

But we have rendered the verb in this instance not merely by the perfect ("became"), but by the pluperfect ("had become"). The normal order for the Hebrew sentence is conjunction, verb, subject object. In certain circumstances, however, the subject may precede the verb. There are two main occasions for this change of order. The first is when the writer wishes to underscore the fact that the subject of the verb which follows is in contrast to the subject of the previous verb. In thought this is found in the New Testament, where we frequently find after man has done one thing, the text continues "but God [...]." The second occasion is to indicate the pluperfect of the verb. Translators into English do not always follow this rule, but the text is invariably more meaningful when the rule is observed. Thus in Genesis 10:9 it is said that Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord. But in the original this should be, "Nimrod had become a mighty hunter before the Lord." Analogously, in Genesis 3:1 the original has, "Now the serpent had become more subtle [...]." This rule regarding the inversion of word order to express the pluperfect is not limited to the use of the verb "to be". Deuteronomy 10:16 should be "had journeyed"; Isaiah 1:9 should be "had left"; Jeremiah 12:21

1. Custance, A.C. *Without Form and Void: A study in the meaning of Genesis 1:2*, 2nd Ed., Doorway Publications, Ancaster, ON, Canada, pp209, 2012. Available at www.custance.org

should read "had planted"; Jeremiah 4:25, "had fled". In I Samuel 28:3 the tense is correctly observed, "Israel had lamented [...] Saul had put away [...]."

The word order in Genesis 1:2 and the inclusion of the verb "to be" in the original not merely allow for, but positively require, the rendering "had [pluperfect] become".

It is quite often stated that the English "become" or "became" is only an appropriate rendering when the object of the verb is accompanied by the Hebrew letter, lamedh. This is simply not the case, as any number of examples will show. For instance, in Genesis 19:26 Lot's wife "became a pillar of salt". The meaning here is absolutely clear, and the lamedh is not used. The following examples will perhaps suffice to demonstrate this.

- Genesis 3:20: And Eve became the mother of all living.
 Genesis 4:20: Abel became a keeper [...] and Cain became a tiller.
 Genesis 4:21: Jubal became the father of musicians.
 Judges 11:39: It became a custom in Israel [...].
 Jeremiah 7:11: Is this house [...] become a den of robbers?
 2 Kings 17:3: And Hosea became his servant.
 Isaiah 7:24: All the land shall become briars and thorns.
 Isaiah 17:1: Damascus shall become a ruinous heap.
 Jeremiah 26:18: And Jerusalem shall become heaps [...].
 Jonah 3:3: Now Nineveh had become an exceeding great city.

A RUIN AND A DESOLATION: So much has been written about the Hebrew words *tohu* and *bohu*, and so generally is their meaning agreed upon, that little need be said except to sum up the conclusions of Hebrew scholars by pointing out that the words are used to describe, not an incoherent mass waiting to be brought to order, but rather something that has fallen under judgment.

In Isaiah 45:18 we are told that God did not create the earth "in vain". Here we have the word *tohu* again. But it seems likely that it is used here, not as a noun, but as an adverb. A similar use of the same word *tohu* appears in Isaiah 45:19 in the phrase "seek ye Me in vain", where the usage is clearly adverbial and the meaning is obviously as rendered in the King James Version (KJV, "...I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain...") and not as the Revised Standard Version has it. (RSV, "...I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek me in chaos.'")

Some commentators argue that Isaiah 45:18 proves that Genesis 1:2 cannot mean that God created the earth a ruin (*tohu*) and that it therefore must have become a *tohu* subsequently. I am sure the conclusion regarding the earth's history is correct, but I am not sure it can be proved unequivocally by an appeal to Isaiah 45:18 in view of the use of *tohu* as an adverb in the very next verse (45:19).

It is reasonably certain, however, that the Jewish commentators themselves understood the words *tohu* and *bohu* in Genesis 1:2 to be an emphasized description of chaos resulting from judgment. Their own literature establishes that this view is a very ancient one.

Whatever is the exact meaning of these words, this much seems fairly certain: they signify a condition of judgment. Such a condition is pictured for us in Jeremiah 4:23 ("I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the

heavens, and they had no light.”), but with this very significant difference in the original Hebrew, namely, that as Jeremiah looked at the land it *was*—at that moment—desolate. The Hebrew original does not employ any form of the verb "to be", since Jeremiah's vision was rivetted upon the present moment and not intended to deal with past events leading up to it. The word *tohu* is also found used in connection with the desolation of a city ("a city of desolation" as in Isaiah 24:10). In Isaiah 34:11 both *tohu* and *bohu* are used together in the sentence, "and He shall stretch out upon it a line of confusion [*tohu*] and the plummet of desolation [*bohu*]". According to Gesenius, the root is probably to be found in the Aramaic "to be confounded", or "desolate".

THE EARTH: It will be noticed that the heavens are not included in this statement, and the idea that this passage refers to a nebular condition of the solar system seems completely without foundation.

A PALL OF DARKNESS: The darkness spoken of here is not exactly the absence of light which is later termed night, for we do not have in the Hebrew original in this instance the word for "night" but a word frequently chosen when the darkness has something unnatural about it—such as that darkness which fell upon the land of Egypt in judgment (Exodus 10:21ff.).

It might be argued that the word for "night" had not yet been introduced and therefore obviously could not have been used in verse 2. But the word *heaven* and the word *earth* are both used in the first three verses, and yet *they* are not defined till later. Evidently it is not to avoid a hitherto undefined term that the word for night was not employed. It was because the darkness was something more than merely the absence of daylight.

Quite frequently, this word is given a spiritual meaning, as for example, in Psalm 18:28 ("For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.") or Isaiah 9:2 ("The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."). It is quite true that the word is later identified with night-time (Genesis 1:5); but thereafter the night-time "darkness" is not referred to by the Hebrew word *hoshech* (חֹשֶׁךְ), but rather by the word *layilah* (לַיְלִילָה) which strictly means "night-time" as opposed to "daytime". The original word *hoshech* continues to mean something quite different. For this reason, we have tried to convey the idea of something other than merely night-time by introducing the word *pall*, which I think very nearly recovers the original meaning.

HUNG OVER: We have supplied these words. Nothing exists in the Hebrew corresponding to them. In the Authorized Version the word *was* is correctly printed in italics since there is no form of the verb "to be" representing it in the Hebrew text. The meaning is, in fact, simply that this pall of darkness existed, but it seemed appropriate, since this was a scene of desolation, to use the term "hung over" rather than merely "existed" or "was".

THIS SCENE OF DISASTER: The Hebrew word *tehom* translated as "the deep" in the Authorized Version is difficult to render exactly: it does not mean "the deep" as synonymous with "the sea", but like many of the terms in this second verse, it

is associated implicitly or explicitly elsewhere in Scripture with the idea of judgment. Thus although it is rendered sometimes as "waters" (cf. Deuteronomy 8:7), in Genesis 7:11 it is translated "the great waters," i.e., of Noah's Flood which, of course, came in judgment. In Psalm 36:6 it is rendered "a great deep" and is clearly associated with the judgment of God. In Job 28:14 (and on a number of other occasions) it is evidently distinguished from the sea, being rendered, in contradistinction, "the depth". In Syriac the cognate word means "a flood", a phenomenon which is normally considered as undesirable.

Thus, although the idea of water is involved and therefore the rendering "the deep" is in one sense quite justified, it does not convey the exact idea intended by the original, unless one associates with this water an element of judgment. The Septuagint substitutes the Greek word *abussos* (our word "abyss") for some thirty occurrences of the word *tehom* in the Old Testament, a term we meet again in Revelation (9:11; 11:7; 17:8; and 20:1,3) in circumstances which clearly indicate an undesirable condition. Associated with the Abyss is Satan, the Great Serpent or Dragon. This association is a very ancient one.

It was common in Babylonian times to personify the forces of nature. This may have been because they held these forces to be personal, but it may also have been for teaching purposes because the account was thereby rendered much more vivid and animated, easier to understand and recall. In the Babylonian account of the constitution of order out of chaos, the God of Order battles with an enormous foe, the Goddess of Chaos. Armed with his weapons, the orderly Marduk advances against his enemy, seizes the Goddess of Chaos in a huge net and transfixes her with his scimitar. The carcass of this monster he splits into two halves, one of which becomes Heaven and the other the Abyss of water upon which the earth was supposed to rest. Thus the Goddess is subdued and order is restored; and her name was Tiamat – probably related originally to the Hebrew word *tehom*, translated "the deep" in the Authorized Version. Although this tradition is mythological, it lends support to the idea that the Deep was not merely the unrestrained waters of the ocean (later to have their bounds set for them), but something more terrible.

Wallis Budge has pointed out that in one Babylonian tablet Tiamat is called "the Great Serpent," a fact which strengthens the contention that the Hebrew word *tehom* implies something far worse than merely water on the rampage. It is apparently related in some way to the activities of Satan, a place or a condition which even the demons themselves (although they are part of Satan's kingdom) would like to avoid (Luke 8:31, "And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.").

We have rendered this a "scene of disaster" because such is what it really appears to have been.

ii) Genesis 1:2b to 1:5

Authorized Version:

And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

An interpretative rendering:

AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD MOVED MIGHTILY UPON THE FACE OF THE WATERS. AND GOD SAID, "LET IT BECOME LIGHT": AND IT BECAME LIGHT. AND GOD SAW THE LIGHT THAT IT WAS GOOD.

AND GOD CALLED THE LIGHT "DAY", AND THE DARKNESS HE CALLED "NIGHT". AND THE EVENING AND THE MORNING TOGETHER CONSTITUTED ONE DAY.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD: The Hebrew word for "spirit" is also the word for "breath" and for "wind". It is therefore possible that the phrase "the spirit of God" could be equally well read as "the wind of God". Such an alternative does not make very good sense, but it happens that Hebrew writers, when they wish to convey the idea of something very powerful or very large or very tall, employ a similar sentence construction. Thus, in Psalm 36:6, David, in order to magnify the righteousness of God, speaks of it as being like the great mountains. In the original Hebrew the phrase "great mountains" is written out as "the mountains of God". Similarly, in Psalm 80:10 the "goodly cedars" are in the original spoken of as "the cedars of God". It is therefore quite possible in Genesis 1:2, where we are told that the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, that a legitimate alternative rendering would be "*a mighty wind* moved upon the face of the waters".

But there is one difference between Genesis 1:2 and the two passages from the Psalms. The word God in the Psalms is a translation of the Hebrew *El*, not the more familiar *Elohim*. *El* may possibly mean "mighty". In Genesis 1:2 the Hebrew has *Elohim*, not *El*. However, the difference may not have any significance, because other writers in the Old Testament who have used this mode of conveying the idea of magnitude have employed the longer form *Elohim* for *El*. Thus the city of Nineveh (in Jonah 3:3) is described as an "exceedingly great city", which in the original is written out as a "great city of God" (i.e., *Elohim*). It is a little analogous to an expression which I have heard farmers use when speaking of a severe storm as being a "god-awful storm".

There is some justification therefore for rendering this sentence "And a mighty wind swept over the surface of the waters" as the New English Bible has done, or "a tempestuous wind raging over the surface of the waters" as Smith and Goodspeed have translated it.

But it seems more consonant with the spiritual nature of revelation to follow the basic pattern of the King James Version, the Revised Standard Version, and the New American Standard Bible, all of which render this "the spirit of God".

MOVED MIGHTILY: The Hebrew word which is translated *moved* in the King James Version is *rachaph* (רַחַף). We have only three occurrences of this word in the Old Testament. These are Genesis 1:3, Deuteronomy 32:11, and Jeremiah 23:9. In Jeremiah the word is applied to the shaky bones of a drunken man!

Deuteronomy 32:11 is a reference to the eagle fluttering over her nest. It is this reference that is usually taken by commentators as the best clue to the basic meaning of the word. That the Holy Spirit should appear in the form of a dove (John 1:32) seems to confirm the appropriateness of such a word, as the Spirit of God hovered over the destroyed world about to be restored. The idea of concern is indicated in the Hebrew original by the use of a special form of the verb which is the "Intensive" or Piel Form. If the ordinary form of a verb means, let us say, *to kill*, the intensive form of that same verb would mean "to slaughter" or "to massacre". English uses a different verb entirely: Hebrew would use the same root word but change its form. The original Hebrew verb *rachaph* used in Genesis 1:3 is in the intensive form, hence the desirability of adding "mightily".

The Septuagint rendered this by the Greek *epipherein*, (ἐπιφέρειν) which in the New Testament means "to bring to bear upon" or simply "to bear upon". This word appears in Acts 25:18 and in Jude 9, where in both instances it is associated with the bringing of an accusation against someone. In Philippians 1:16 Paul uses it when he is speaking of circumstances which added to his afflictions. These three occurrences would not seem to support the previous observations to the effect that the word has a certain intensity of meaning, but in another sense they do in that both accusations and afflictions involve an element of violence. At any rate in classical Greek this aspect of the word is very much more evident from a study of its usage. For example, it is used in the sense of "laying heavy hands upon", of "attacking" or "assailing", of "imposing upon," of "gratifying passions," of "bringing something upon oneself," of "rushing upon," of "being eager to do", and of "great waves dashing against a ship."

If one attempts to compress into a single word all these ideas of active concern, of hovering over with eager intent, of effecting changes by deliberate intervention, or any other equally determined activity, one has to surrender much of the content of the original verb. A single word in English simply does not suffice. In short we need to coin a phrase which as simply as possible conveys all these ideas – even though the translation may then seem to have gone far beyond the original text. The word *moved* nicely combines both activity and an undertone of an emotional involvement. The word *mightily* reinforces the sense of power and energy, of successful operation and effectiveness, and reflects also something of the alternative meaning of the phrase which we have rendered "the Spirit of God".

LET IT BECOME LIGHT: AND IT BECAME LIGHT: In the original Hebrew, the verb "to be" is expressed in both instances, and therefore the words "be" and "was" are in the King James Version correctly printed in standard type and not in italics. It is clear that the Creator intended it to be understood that He was commanding a change, a fact which is surely in Paul's mind when he penned 2 Corinthians 4:6 ("For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."). Both instances have reference to a re-creation beginning with darkness that becomes light. On the other hand, God saw that the light *was* good, not that it became good. Moreover only the light is mentioned as good; not the darkness.

THE EVENING AND THE MORNING CONSTITUTED ONE DAY: Again, the verb "to be" is expressed in the original, signifying that circumstances have changed somewhat. The term "one day" has significance as a concept only for

ourselves, and not for the animal or vegetable world. In the vast untold ages which had preceded the scene of devastation in verse 2, the sequence of days really did not have the same significance. But now that man is about to be introduced upon the scene as a creature with a unique time sense, it is appropriate that God should begin to number the intervals by which man will consciously regulate his life.

But the concept of *days*, i.e., periods of light alternating with periods of darkness, was by no means a new thing upon the earth; therefore, as the Revised Standard Version has correctly shown, the divine Author does not refer to this as the *first* day. He is in fact saying, not that days began at this point in time, but rather that henceforth an evening and a morning constituted a day, and all man's days are hereafter numbered. The restrictive meaning of the phrase "evening and morning" is borne out by its use in Daniel 8:14 and in the New Testament by Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 11:25 ("Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;").

It is quite possible, however, that even more than this is intended. The original Hebrew phrase of Genesis 1:5—"one day"—is also found in Zechariah 14:6, 7, ("And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.") where the meaning of uniqueness rather than merely unity is involved. Perhaps this occasion in Genesis 1:5 was not one day simply, but a unique day also—the birthday of a re-creation.

The days which follow are properly referred to as second, third, and so forth: but not this day. Moreover, as will be noted by reference to the King James Version, it is said that the evening and the morning "were" the first day: italics are not used, because the verb "to be" is represented in the original. It therefore really has the significance of "becoming" a unique day. In this instance it would seem that the original intends us to understand that this was an occasion upon which God deliberately constituted this particular evening and morning time period as a "day" and thereby fixed the real meaning of the six days which follow as periods of twenty-four hours. Evidently when he wrote his Vulgate version, Jerome understood the original in this way, for he renders it *factum est dies unis*, i.e., "was made one day"—or, as we have rendered it, "constituted one day".

DAY: About the meaning of this word (יום , *yom*) in the context of chapter 1, very much has been written and very little new can be said. A few observations may be in order.

1. For several reasons there is little justification for interpreting the word as an age.
 - a. Hebrew has a perfectly good word (*'olam*, עולם), for what we mean by a geological age, which would surely have been used if this were the intention. *'Olam* would have been the logical choice, since it means a long period of time with very ill-defined boundaries. It is virtually impossible to think of any way in which God could have made it more obvious that He did not mean ages than by the deliberate avoidance of the word. The text could not have made it any clearer than it is that ordinary days are intended.

- b. Those for whom this record was intended could not possibly have understood the meaning of a geological age—the record would not have been meaningful, but rather mystifying. One cannot use a term—the meaning of which is familiar to a people in the context of their daily experience—to reveal to them something which is entirely outside this daily experience unless at the same time the new meaning of the term is made clear: and *'olam* simply meant the indefinite past or the indefinite future. The concept of a geological age was wholly foreign to the people to whom the creation account was committed for preservation. By contrast, these earliest readers were assured that the term *day* signified exactly what common experience would lead them to believe it did.
2. Unlike the word *'olam* which means an age of unspecified length regardless of whether it is accompanied by a numeral or not, the word *day* has definite restrictions placed upon its meaning by qualifying words. In ordinary non-prophetic language it consistently has the meaning of a twenty-four-hour period whenever it is accompanied by a numeral; this appears to be true in both biblical and extra-biblical Hebrew. In prophetic utterances the situation is different; whether accompanied by a numeral or not, it may then stand for an extended period of time. There is seldom any real difficulty in establishing whether a passage is prophetic or merely historical. In Genesis there is no evidence that the intention of the account is prophetic; it is a simple straightforward record of past events. Being not only accompanied by a numeral but also qualified by the use of the phrase "evening and morning", its meaning is undoubtedly intended to be understood literally.
3. If in Genesis 1 the days are geological ages, what are we to do with the seventh day during which we must assume that Adam remained unfallen, since God also rested on that day? It is impossible to believe that God would have continued at rest if Adam had fallen during that day. Did Adam then endure in an unfallen state and in perfect fellowship with God within the confines of Eden for thousands and thousands of years, a seventh geological age?
- And when, because of his disobedience Adam finally died having lived some 930 years (Genesis 5:5), are we to understand that these were literal years, or were they years composed of days which were really geological ages? At what point in the narrative did geological ages end and normal years replace them in the account of events which happened in the first five chapters of Genesis? By the time we reach the sixth chapter we know that the days are real days and the years real years. Where is the changeover point? It is impossible to find room for its insertion without making nonsense of a narrative which runs unbroken from Adam to Noah in a way that is clearly intended to be plain sober human history.
4. The weight of authority is in favour of literal days. One can scarcely find a single reputable Hebrew scholar who supports the view that the word *yom* in Genesis can properly be understood to mean anything other than a literal day. Personal correspondence with the heads of the Semitic Departments of a number of universities including Columbia, Harvard, McGill, Yale, Toronto,

and Manitoba and the head of the Near and Middle East Department of the University of London (England) confirmed in writing that they all believe the word as employed in Genesis 1 can only be taken to mean a period of twenty-four hours. These authorities were asked to express an opinion on purely linguistic grounds without regard to problems this may create in reconciling Genesis with modern geological views.

In the *International Critical Commentary* edited by Driver, Plummer, and Briggs, of Higher Critical fame, Skinner is the author of volume I on *Genesis*. He says, "The interpretation of *yom* (יום) i.e., day) as an age, a favourite recourse of harmonists of Science and Revelation, is opposed to the plain sense of the passage, and has no warrant in Hebrew usage — not even in Psalm 90:4 ("For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."). To introduce that idea here destroys the analogy on which the sanctity of the Sabbath rests [...]."

All in all, it seems that any attempt to effect a reconciliation with geology by interpreting the days as geological periods raises far more problems than it solves. It is, in fact, a rather camouflaged confession of doubt as to whether God is able to work miracles — in this case, a miracle of accelerated creation.

5. It is commonly asserted that the best argument for interpreting these days as ages is to be found in Genesis 2:4, where it is written, "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day when the Lord made the heavens and the earth." Two things may be said in answer to this: (a) the word *day* here is not accompanied by a numeral, and one need not insist upon it therefore as being a period of twenty-four hours. It has the meaning simply "when the Lord made, etc. . ." (b) The word "made" ('*asah*, עָשָׂה) is never to be confused with the word "created". In the Old Testament many words through the centuries enlarged their meanings also. One of the best ways to discover the more ancient meaning is to consider those personal names of which the word forms a part. For example, the name Asah-el in 2 Samuel 2 means "God has appointed". In 2 Kings 22:12, 14 we have the name Asa-jah, which means "Jah has appointed". In 1 Chronicles 4:35 we have Asiel, which means "appointed of God". In 1 Samuel 12:6 it is said that the Lord advanced Moses and Aaron. It is probable that this means that the Lord "appointed" them, for the Hebrew verb is '*asah*. In 1 Kings 12:31 Jeroboam appointed priests of the lowest of the people who were not Levites. Here again the verb is '*asah*. In Jeremiah 37:15, Jeremiah is put into a private house which had been constituted ('*asah*) a prison. Again and again the word "made" in the King James Version really has the sense of appointment, something which was not created, but arranged. Thus the cities of refuge were appointed ('*asah*) for the safety of those who desired to escape the hand of the avenger and sought fair trial. Amos 3:6 asks the question, "Is there evil in any city and God hath not appointed it ('*asah*)?" In Exodus 20:11, "In six days the Lord appointed heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." These are literal days and refer back to Genesis 1. Thus in Genesis 2:4 the meaning is surely, "When the Lord appointed the earth and the heavens." It will be noted in this verse that when speaking of creation, the heavens precede the earth, but because this is a re-constitution

primarily of the earth, in the second part of the verse the earth precedes the heavens instead.

It may be objected that the most casual reference to a concordance gives dozens of passages in which the word "made" (*'asah*) means quite obviously "constructed" — as in constructing an altar of an idol or a metal vessel. But while this is clearly the case, there is no question of "creation" — but only of *taking some existing material in one form and converting it into something else*. This is exactly what is involved in the reconstitution or "re-making" of the earth immediately prior to the introduction of man.

This brings us finally to a consideration of Isaiah 45:18, in which the words "created" (*bara*), "fashioned" or "formed" (*yatsar*), "appointed" or "made" (*'asah*), and "established" (*kun*) are all carefully used with clear distinctions being made between them, and the significant observation that the ruin of Genesis 1:2 (the *tohu*) did not form a part of the original creation.

Isaiah 45:18 in the Authorized Version reads as follows:

For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord, and there *is* none else.

It is difficult to avoid the impression that this verse was specifically penned to underscore the translation of Genesis 1:2 as we have rendered it. The Lord says here, speaking of the heavens, simply that He created them. Of the earth He says much more. First, He formed it (*yatzar*), a word which means to fashion in the sense that Jeremiah watched a potter fashioning a vessel. The implication is one of deliberate moulding and shaping with an end in view. Then He appointed it (*'asah*), i.e., provided its accoutrements or furnishings — trees, plants, rivers, animals, and so forth — again with a conscious purpose in view. Next He established it (*kun*), that is to say, set its processes to run in appropriate cycles. Moreover He did not create it *tohu* ("in vain" in the Authorized Version). Genesis 1:2 is not a picture of God's handiwork the way He originally created it. He *formed it to be inhabited* — by man. This was His original intention, and although Satan in some way disrupted the processes of the fulfilment of God's program, he could not do this altogether, for God undertook a work of re-ordering the earth's surface, as He undertakes the work of re-ordering a man's ruined life (2 Corinthians 4:6, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.").

Finally, it will be noted that the forming of the earth precedes the making of it (using the terminology of the King James Version). That is to say, God fashioned it first as a stage and then provided its appointments, its "properties".

An analogous use of the word *made* meaning "appointed", is found not infrequently in the New Testament, more especially — as is most appropriate indeed — in Hebrews 7:20-22 ("And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever

after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.", 28 ("For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."), in which the meaning is absolutely clear.

Since these five verses constitute an epilogue to the whole of the redemption story which occupies the rest of Scripture, it may be well to set forth as a single text this passage as we have proposed it.

Originally, God brought into being and set in perfect order the heavens and the earth.

But the earth had become a ruin and a desolation and a pall of darkness hung over this scene of disaster.

And the Spirit of God moved mightily upon the face of the waters. And God said, "Let it become light." And it became light; and God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night.

And the evening and morning together constituted a single day.

2. The Creation of Life

i) Genesis 1:6 – 1:8

Authorized Version:

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

And God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

And God called the firmament Heaven.

And the evening and the morning were the second day.

An interpretative rendering:

AND GOD SAID, "LET THERE COME TO BE A SPACE BETWEEN THE WATERS, AND LET IT DIVIDE BETWEEN THE WATERS ABOVE AND THE WATERS BELOW".

AND GOD APPOINTED THE SPACE AND DIVIDED THE WATERS WHICH WERE UNDER THE SPACE FROM THE WATERS WHICH WERE ABOVE THE SPACE. AND SO IT CAME TO PASS.

AND GOD CALLED THE SPACE HEAVEN.

AND THE EVENING AND THE MORNING BECAME A SECOND DAY.

LET THERE COME TO BE A SPACE: The word rendered "firmament" is a word which in the original implies "want of substance", and is used in a derived form to mean "not tangible". The root to which it is sometimes traced means "to beat out very thin", so thin in fact as to have little or no substance at all. There is little doubt that here it is the air space which separated the waters on the earth from the waters in cloud form in the sky. It is a peculiarly appropriate choice, therefore,

since air strictly speaking does not imply want of substance, but only a very attenuated form of it. In verse 20 it becomes the home of flying things.

Perhaps the omission of any statement to the effect that God saw that it was good in this instance is due to the fact that this space became the abode of Satan and his hosts, the Prince of the Powers of the Air.

ii) Genesis 1:9 – 1:13

Authorized Version:

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

And God called the dry land Earth: and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and God saw that it *was* good.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it *was* good.

And the evening and the morning were the third day.

An interpretative rendering:

AND GOD SAID, "LET THE WATERS UNDER THE HEAVEN BE GATHERED TOGETHER INTO ONE PLACE AND LET THE DRY LAND APPEAR". AND THIS CAME TO PASS.

AND GOD CALLED THE DRY LAND EARTH, AND THE GATHERING TOGETHER OF THE WATERS HE CALLED THE SEA: AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

AND GOD SAID, "LET THE EARTH BRING FORTH GRASS, HERB YIELDING SEED, THE FRUIT TREE YIELDING FRUIT – AKIN TO ITSELF – WHOSE SEED IS IN ITSELF, UPON THE EARTH": AND THIS CAME TO PASS.

AND THE EARTH BROUGHT FORTH GRASS, AND HERB YIELDING SEED, AKIN TO ITSELF, AND THE TREE YIELDING FRUIT WHOSE SEED WAS WITHIN – ALSO AKIN TO ITSELF. AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

AND THE EVENING AND THE MORNING BECAME A THIRD DAY.

GATHERED INTO ONE PLACE: There is a possibility that this is precisely the truth of the matter, that it is not merely a manner of speaking; that the waters which had played a part in destroying the previous world actually flowed into a great hole, the Pacific Ocean bed as constituted at that time.²

This Paper is not intended in any sense to be a scientific reconstruction of geological events. But it may be noted that according to the Continental Drift Hypothesis as first propounded by Alfred Wegener, all the current oceans at one time formed a single body of water "in one place". The continents meanwhile formed a single land mass. Only later, as this land mass fragmented into continents, were the separate oceans created as a consequence. There are some highly qualified experts who, like George Gamow, have held that the crust of the earth out of which the present continents were formed once constituted an

2. See A.C. Custance, "When the Earth Was Divided: An Imaginative Reconstruction of Early History," Doorway Paper #56, Doorway Publications. www.custance.org. Not available online.

unbroken shell over the whole of the earth's surface. The water which now fills the oceans at that time lay like a shallow sea everywhere except in those places where the rumples in the shell penetrated this shallow sea so as to form islands. These islands would presumably break the surface randomly all over the globe.

Once this shell fragmented into separate continents, deeper bodies of water would form as the water collected where the fractures opened up. The general water level over the land would fall as a consequence, and in due time these drained areas would constitute a new kind of "dry land" which would thus be exposed permanently and appear as a new feature of the earth's surface. The former world, of which the ruin is dramatically described in Genesis 1:2, was a world literally "standing out of the water and in the water" (2 Peter 3:5). The present world does not look as though it has any longer the tremendous up and down movement of its surface to which we clearly owe the miles of water-laid stratified fossil-bearing rocks observed over the whole of its surface. We seem to live now in a different world from that which existed prior to Genesis 1:2.

THE WATERS CALLED HE THE SEA: This is rendered in the singular though the Hebrew is in the plural, but there is nothing inappropriate about this, since the Hebrew word is always found as a plural form even when referring to a small body of water such as the Sea of Galilee.

AKIN TO ITSELF: The word *kind* is derived from the word *kin*, which gives rise to the term "akin to". The choice of this English word in the King James Version was a happy one, since it seems to capture the obvious meaning of the original Hebrew word *min* (מִיַּנּוּ). Whether *min* is equivalent to our terms "species" and "genera" and even "family" is a moot point, because we have not yet settled the precise meaning of these three classifications even for ourselves. It is clear, however, that God intended these created kinds to be hedged about in order to preserve the purity of each line.

It should also be pointed out that the catastrophe of Genesis 1:2 need not necessarily have destroyed the living cells required to re-populate the earth with green things. Consequently it does not say that God created them afresh, but rather that He commanded the earth to produce them out of itself. This may be reflected in the peculiar redundancy of the words in verse 11, "let the earth bring forth [...] whose seed is in itself, upon the earth". Perhaps the seed was in itself already upon the earth, i.e., it had never been entirely destroyed. Both the separation of land from sea and the provision of plant forms are said to have been good in God's sight. As shown by the King James text, these things did not *become* good; they were good from the moment of their appointment.

iii) Genesis 1:14–1:19

Authorized Version:

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it *was* good.

And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

An interpretative rendering:

AND GOD SAID, "LET THE LIGHTS IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE BE TO DIVIDE THE DAY FROM THE NIGHT, AND LET THEM BE FOR SIGNS, AND FOR SEASON AND FOR DAYS AND YEARS: AND LET THEM BECOME IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE AS LIGHTS TO GIVE LIGHT UPON THE EARTH". AND THIS CAME TO PASS.

MOREOVER, GOD APPOINTED THE TWO GREAT LIGHTS; THE GREATER LIGHT TO GOVERN THE DAY AND THE LESSER LIGHT TO GOVERN THE NIGHT, ALONG WITH THE STARS.

SO GOD SET THEM IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE TO GIVE LIGHT UPON THE EARTH AND TO RULE OVER THE DAY AND OVER THE NIGHT, AND TO MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

AND THE EVENING AND THE MORNING BECAME A FOURTH DAY.

LET LIGHTS IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE BE TO DIVIDE: In the original Hebrew, the verb *hayah* is introduced, and it is appropriate therefore to consider why. Its introduction here seems to require that we understand this passage to mean something more than merely the placing of the sun and the moon and the stars in the sky. The use of the term *heavens* in Genesis 1:1 seems to indicate that the sun and moon and stars were created in the beginning and therefore were already in existence. Verse 14 clearly assumes their existence but now declares what the purpose of that existence is to be. Their purpose is to divide day from night, and to be for signs and for the regulation of the seasons.

All living things require or respond to regulations of this kind; plant forms are obviously governed by the seasons, and there is considerable evidence that many living organisms like insects, birds, and even higher animal forms live by cycles regulated by the heavens. This regulation encompasses migratory movements as well.

Verse 16 tells us that God appointed (*'asah*) the two greater lights (i.e., the sun and the moon) to regulate the hours of daylight and darkness. There is no mention of them being created at this time, for light as opposed to darkness was already distinguishable, as verses 3 and 5 indicate. It seems quite possible that the aftermath of the devastation which had left its pall of darkness had not until this fourth day been cleared sufficiently for the sun and moon and stars to be actually visible. The appointment of these lights as signs comes only after they can be observed. The succession of evenings and mornings indicates that they did already exist, but perhaps a heavy mist or cloud blanket had up till now obscured them. This blanket or "swaddling band" may possibly be in view in Job 38:9 ("When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a

swaddlingband for it,"). Perhaps indeed it was only when dry land appeared that convection currents brought fresh winds to break up the overcast sky into cloud formations, allowing the sun and moon and stars to become visible. Hence the reference to dry land appears before any specific reference to the sun and moon and stars as visible objects, though they had been in existence since the beginning of creation.

iv: Genesis 1:20 – 1:23

Authorized Version:

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind;

And God saw that it *was* good.

And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply; and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

An interpretative rendering:

AND GOD SAID, "LET THE WATERS BRING FORTH ABUNDANTLY LIVING CREATURES, AND LET FOWL FLY ABOVE THE EARTH ACROSS THE FACE OF THE OPEN SKY". AND VERY LARGE SEA ANIMALS DID GOD ALSO CREATE, AND THE WEALTH OF LIVING CREATURES WHICH THE WATERS BROUGHT FORTH, LIKE BEGETTING LIKE, AND ALL THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF FOWL THAT FLY, LIKE BEGETTING LIKE.

AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

AND GOD BLESSED THEM AND SAID, "BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY AND FILL THE WATERS IN THE SEA, AND LET THE FOWL MULTIPLY ON THE EARTH".

AND THE EVENING AND THE MORNING BECAME A FIFTH DAY.

BRING FORTH ABUNDANTLY: The Hebrew uses a reduplication of a word which means "to swarm", the text literally saying, 'Let the waters swarm a swarm', i.e., "bring forth abundantly" as the Authorized Version most sensibly rendered it. The sea is prodigal indeed, and this statement, preserved by a people who had no great love for the sea and therefore presumably not too profound a knowledge of it, can hardly be explained in any other way than as the result of inspiration.

LIVING CREATURES: This is a rather loose rendering of the Hebrew original which reads literally "a living soul" (soul of life). The word "soul" (*nephesh*, נֶפֶשׁ) is therefore found in Scripture applied to animals before it is applied to man. This is by no means an exceptional instance.³ Since we have by custom reserved the

3. See A. C. Custance, "The Nature of the Soul," Part VI in *The Virgin Birth and The Incarnation*, vol.V of The Doorway Papers.

word *soul* for people, an unscriptural practice, it seemed more appropriate to render the phrase as we have. The same remark applies to verses 21 and 24.

ACROSS THE FACE OF THE OPEN SKY: There is a certain poetry in this descriptive phrase which fairly closely reproduces the original Hebrew.

THE VERY LARGE SEA ANIMALS ALSO: We have so rendered this because the text obviously singles out these exceptional creatures by emphasizing their specific creation. It is said somewhat less specifically of the smaller marine animals that the waters were merely to bring them forth in abundance. It seems that God wished us to observe a distinction between these two classes of marine life, almost as though to tell us that there are certain larger creatures (whales, porpoises, etc.) which are not natural to the sea in the sense that fishes are. The waters did not "bring them forth": they were for some reason introduced differently.

WEALTH OF LIVING CREATURES: Literally, every living swarming creature. An alternative might of course have been to assume that the reference here was really to creatures which actually swarm, but it does not seem that this restrictive meaning is intended.

LIKE BEGETTING LIKE: This is merely an alternative to the phrase previously translated "akin to itself" and is used only to avoid too much repetition.

ALL THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF FOWL THAT FLY: Literally, "every fowl that flies, according to its kind."

AND GOD BLESSED THEM, SAYING: This seems an innocent enough statement, but what it really means is that the kingdom of God extends into the animal world, for He gave them instruction in a direct form. He did not say, "Let them be fruitful and multiply", but rather, "Be fruitful and multiply."⁴ It will be noted that this command is almost, but not quite identical, with that given subsequently to Adam.

v) Genesis 1:24 – 1:25

Authorized Version:

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind:

And God saw that it *was* good.

An interpretative rendering:

AND GOD SAID, "LET THE EARTH BRING FORTH LIVING CREATURES BREEDING TRUE TO THEMSELVES, CATTLE AND CREEPING THINGS, AND

4. This thought is explored more fully in another Paper, "The Realm of Nature as Part of the Kingdom of God", Part II in *Man in Adam and in Christ*, vol.III of The Doorway Papers.

THE WILD CREATURES OF THE EARTH, ALSO BREEDING TRUE TO THEMSELVES".

AND THIS CAME TO PASS.

AND GOD APPOINTED THE WILD THINGS OF THE EARTH, BREEDING TRUE TO THEMSELVES, AND THE CATTLE SIMILARLY, AND LIKEWISE EVERYTHING THAT CREEPETH UPON THE EARTH.

AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

BREEDING TRUE TO THEMSELVES: This again is an attempt to find an alternative rendering in the interest of variety, for the phrase originally rendered "akin to itself". However this is rendered, the meaning is quite clear: God did not create a potential chaos of inter-fertile organisms.

WILD CREATURES: Scripture seems normally to distinguish between beasts and cattle as representing those creatures not yet domesticated as against those which are. It would appear therefore that there were some animals provided for man already "domesticated". It is, in fact, almost certain that one of man's most faithful companions, the dog, has been with him virtually from the beginning. Probably the same is true of sheep and perhaps other such immediately "useful" animals.

SIMILARLY . . . LIKEWISE . . . Here again we have in the original the same emphasis laid upon the orderliness of God's planned natural economy. All creatures are to breed true to their appointed pattern.

3. The Creation of Man

i) Genesis 1:26 – 1:31

Authorized Version:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

And God said, Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of the tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

And God saw everything that he had made and, behold, it was very good.

And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

In view of the fact that the Authorized Version has rendered the Hebrew of these verses with great faithfulness for the most part, it did not seem appropriate simply to present in different type a rendering of our own which in the nature of the case would be virtually the same. However, there are one or two places where a change in the wording could perhaps contribute to a better understanding of the original, and these are therefore offered in due course. What follows is essentially commentary rather than translation.

LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE AFTER OUR LIKENESS: Three very important truths are implied in this statement, and they relate to a great mystery: the nature of the Trinity, three Persons in one Godhead. First of all, we have plurality indicated by the words, "Let *us* make man." It has been argued by some commentators that this is merely an example of what is termed "the plural of majesty".

Queen Victoria was once told an off-colour joke. Her icy comment was "We are not amused." With devastating effect she used the plural when referring to herself. However, this practice, which has been common enough in Europe, is nowhere found in the Bible. It was not used, if we are to judge by the record of Scripture, by a single one of the monarchs of antiquity, including the pharaohs of Egypt or the emperors of Babylonia, Persia, Greece, or Rome. Nor is it found to my knowledge in any cuneiform documents. I do not think this is a valid explanation.

It is clearly a revelation of the nature of the Godhead, and it is reinforced on a number of occasions subsequently: explicitly, as in Genesis 3:22 ("And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us..."); 11:7 ("Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language..."); and Isaiah 6:8 ("Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."); and implicitly in such passages as Isaiah 5:4-7 ("What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry."); 61:1-2 ("The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;"); and in many other places.

As an alternative explanation it has been proposed that God was addressing the angelic hosts of heaven. But this would require us to believe that He was inviting them to join Him in his creation of man, a circumstance which is highly improbable.

The second important fact revealed by this declaration of intent is that the Persons in the Godhead are equal. To propose that man should be formed in the image of a plurality of Persons without at the same time specifying which member

of that plurality should be the model, is to make it very clear that all the members are equal.

A third great truth is subsequently brought out when, after Adam had sinned, the Lord said, "Behold the man has become as *one* of Us" (Genesis 3:22), by which statement we may learn that the Persons of the Godhead are separate and individual.

IMAGE . . . LIKENESS: Many Bible scholars have taken the view that these words are in reality synonymous. However, it will be noticed in verse 27 that whereas man was indeed created in God's image, nothing is said about the likeness. In fact, the wording of verse 27, in which the phrase "image of God" appears twice, seems almost deliberately directed toward establishing the fact that the likeness was not at this time, completed. In verse 26 God did not say "Let Us create man in Our image after Our likeness," but rather "Let Us *make* man [...]." Once again the word *make* is used where the image and likeness are both in view at once, but the word *create* is used in verse 27 where only the image is in view. It seems that in verse 26 the verb *make* has its more basic meaning of appointing.

A study of the use of the two words, "image" and "likeness," throughout the rest of Scripture, both in the Old and the New Testaments, confirms that there is a vital distinction between the two. The image establishes ownership in this special sense that a son belongs to the Father. This sonship is always created or, when necessary, re-created (Colossians 3:10, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:"); the association between image and sonship is affirmed in Romans 8:29 ("For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."); in Matthew 22:20 it was the image on the coin which established to whom it belonged. While Adam was created in the image of God and thereby was constituted a son of God (Luke 1:35, "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."), Adam's children, by contrast, were in *Adam's* image and therefore sons of Adam by procreation (Genesis 5:3, "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, and after his image; and called his name Seth:"), and not sons of God. It will be noted in Genesis 5:3, however, that Adam's son was also in his own likeness as well as in his image.

In Scripture likeness is not a matter of relationship but of similarity in character. While we are already sons ("even now," so the Greek of I John 3:2), the completion of the full plan of God whereby man was also to achieve likeness is finally guaranteed, as this verse points out. John says, "Beloved, we are even now the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be *like Him*; for we shall see Him as He is." This is not a hope limited to the New Testament, for in Psalm 17:15 David said, "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." What makes us sons of God is not that we were created, for cattle were created too: we are sons because we were created *in His image*. Having lost this image and accordingly the sonship that it signifies, a re-creation is necessary

and is possible for all who have a saving faith. Thereby we may, as John 1:12 is careful to point out, "*become* the sons of God" once more.

LET THEM HAVE DOMINION: The use of the plural pronoun *them*, means that God had in mind a race. This race was to have dominion over the earth, and it should be noted in verse 28 that its multiplication, its increase of population, was not to be an end in itself but to make such dominion possible. Unrestrained childbearing cannot be justified by an appeal to one part of this passage unless the second part is being equally served.

REPLENISH THE EARTH: In Hebrew the meaning of this verb is merely "to fill" (*malah* מָלָא). It is desirable to point this out only because a few, holding the idea that the earth had once before been inhabitable until it was destroyed, have tried to strengthen this view by an appeal to the basic meaning of the English word "to replenish," i.e., "to fill *again*". It has also been pointed out that the same command was given to Noah after the destruction of his old world. However, here again the Hebrew original does not in itself convey this meaning of *re-filling*. *Malah* means simply "to fill".

EVERY HERB BEARING SEED: Judging by the tooth patterns of animals from the world that had perished which we now know only as fossils, that world was composed of both herbivorous and carnivorous animals. It seems clear that the reconstituted world into which Adam was introduced was a herbivorous one only. After Adam's fall, in due course, our world reverted and became omnivorous.

There is some evidence of this change in man himself. It may account for the fact that he suffers rather frequently from appendicitis, that organ once serving to aid him in the digestion of tough vegetable fibre which formed part of his diet. It is apparently homologous with a similar organ (the caecum) in certain animals which have remained entirely herbivorous. Man's diet is now such that the organ no longer serves the purpose for which it was created, and partial disuse results in a sometimes diseased condition.

A carnivorous world seems now to be clear evidence of a fallen world, though this may not have been the case in the world which had been desolated prior to Genesis 1:2. In Isaiah 65:25 ("The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.") we are told that our world will revert to its intended herbivorous character when the Lord sets up His kingdom.

4. Epilogue

Genesis 2:1-2:4

Authorized Version:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made, and

He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.

And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

An interpretative rendering:

THUS THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH WERE FINISHED WITH ALL THINGS NECESSARY TO THEM.

ON THE SEVENTH DAY GOD COMPLETED THE WORK WHICH HE HAD BEEN ENGAGED IN, SO HE RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM SETTING EVERYTHING IN ORDER.

AND GOD BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY AND SET IT APART: BECAUSE THAT ON THIS DAY HE HAD RESTED FROM THE WORK INVOLVED IN CREATING AND APPOINTING EVERYTHING.

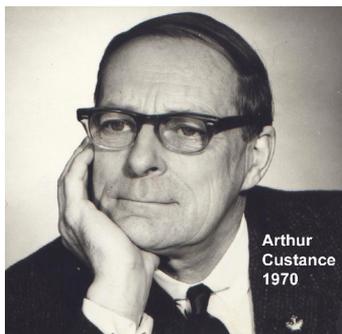
SUCH IS THE HISTORY OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH WHEN THEY WERE CREATED, WHEN THE LORD GOD PREPARED THEM BOTH.

In summary, then, what I believe these verses in Genesis are telling us is that God deliberately planned a world peculiarly suited for man, over which he was to be given dominion. For reasons which are only intimated in Scripture, when the earth was just about ready for man's introduction, it came under judgment and was desolated.

The six days of Genesis were, I believe, days of re-creation and re-appointment, at what was clearly an enormously accelerated rate. For all we know, only the area comprising the Garden of Eden need have been completely furnished when man was created and placed in it. The rest of the world outside the Garden may still have been partially disorganized.

The command that man should multiply and fill the earth in order to have dominion over it may be the reason why the earth was designedly left unsubdued. Man's duty was, perhaps, to extend the boundaries of the Garden until the earth became a paradise. This was to be the means whereby he would grow to maturity and turn innocence into virtue. But man failed in the first great test, and with his failure the whole world of nature suffered by default. In this sense what disruption still remains is due to the fall of man and his consequent failure to be lord of the earth. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Last Adam, will yet complete the purposes of God in this respect.





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