

Archeology Proves the Bible

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Chapter I How Genesis Was Written

THE BIBLE is the textbook of Christianity. Christ accepted the Old Testament Scriptures as the Word of God; he was guided in his ministry by their instructions and comforted by their promises. Jesus' apostles shared his confidence in the truthfulness of the Old Testament Scriptures; and in addition to the teachings and example of Jesus, they, like him, based their teachings on the Old Testament. The New Testament is in reality an explanatory supplement to the Old Testament, so that for Christians the Old and New Testaments together are an infallible revelation of the plans and purposes of the Creator with respect to his human creatures.

This understanding and acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God was quite general by all professed Christians until the nineteenth century, when in the minds of many inroads of doubt began to be made by the assertions of the Higher Critics, and the theory of human evolution. To the Higher Critics most of the historical records of the Old Testament have no basis in fact, but are merely allegories, myths, and fables. According to the theory of human evolution God did not create Adam and Eve, and there never was a Garden of Eden; but instead, man is said to have evolved from lower forms of animals.

Thus seen, higher criticism and the theory of human evolution have been as frontal attacks on the validity of the Holy Scriptures. However, in the minds of honest and thinking people this trend toward unbelief in the infallibility of the Bible is gradually being reversed. This is being brought about by the spade and the pick of the archeologist. Archeologists began their work of exploring the lands of the Bible about the middle of the nineteenth century, some even before this. J. E. Taylor; Paul Botta; A. H. Layard; Henry Rawlinson, were among the pioneers in excavating the ruins of cities mentioned in the Bible.

This work continued with varying degrees of enthusiasm until it was halted almost entirely by the outbreak of the First World War. Following the war it was resumed and, while slowed down considerably by the Second World War, the archeologists continue to find outstanding proofs of the validity of one after another of the historical accounts of the Old Testament. For example, the Bible speaks of Abraham's living in a city by the name of Ur. It was claimed by doubters that no such city ever existed, but the archeologists have proved that this conclusion was wrong, for they have discovered the ancient city of Ur, and in the locality where the Bible places it. The city of Nineveh, where the people repented as a result of the message the Prophet Jonah presented to them from the Lord, has also been discovered.

The Art of Writing

One of the claims made by the Higher Critics was that Moses could not have written the first five books of the Old Testament, for the art of writing was not known at the time the Bible indicates that Moses lived. Now we know that writing was in vogue in the days of Moses. We quote from *"New Discoveries in Babylonia"*: "Nearly a thousand years before Abraham was born and a millennium and a half before the birth of Moses, Lugalzaggisi, King of Erech, began his inscriptions with words which do not differ greatly from those used by the last king of Babylon, 2,200 years later."—p.38

It is believed that probably the earliest form of writing was by means of ordinary pictures, which the ancients used to convey their thoughts on stone or clay. Pictures are used today on roadway signs throughout Europe. The Hebrew verb "to write" means to "cut" or "dig." The ancients cut their messages mostly on clay tablets which they later baked in the sun to make them durable.

Ordinary cuneiform writing became quite general in the early ages. Thousands of clay tablets have been found which, according to the archeologists, were written before the Patriarchal Age. More than a quarter of a million cuneiform clay tablets have been distributed among the various museums of the world. This writing technique was used, not only for keeping family and business records, but also to communicate information on very ordinary matters to distant friends and relatives.

For example, a letter by a woman to her husband was discovered, informing him that the children were well, and asking advice on a trivial matter. Also discovered was a letter by a son to his father informing him that someone had greatly offended him, and that he wanted to thrash this person, but first was seeking the father's advice. All this indicates that at that early time the people not only were able to write, but also that an efficient postal system of communication had been developed. "Writing material was cheap, which may account in part for the fact that the Sumerians, Babylonians, and Assyrians seemed unwilling to transact even the smallest items of business without recourse to a written document."—Luckenbill's *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, pf.

Seals

In the Book of Job—which was written, as most scholars now believe, in the Patriarchal Age—we find a reference to the use of a "seal": "It is changed as clay under a seal." (Job 38:14, *Revised Standard Version*) Judah carried a seal about with him, and Joseph was given Pharaoh's seal ring. (Gen. 41:42) "At Ur of the Chaldees Sir Leonard Woolley found seals owned by men who lived before the Flood. The use of this seal impression was the equivalent of the modern signature. When the owner's seal had been impressed upon the clay, the tablet, if written by a scribe, had sometimes written on it the name of the owner of the tablet. I have in my possession tablets sealed over 4,000 years ago."—*New Discoveries in Babylonia*, p. 42

It would seem from all the archeological evidence that man has been acquainted with the art of writing from essentially the time of his creation. In the development of the art of writing the ancients first used tablets of soft clay on which they impressed their messages. Stone tablets were later used, and then papyrus on which the message could be written with ink. There is good evidence, we think, that the Book of Genesis was first written on clay tablets. The Ten Commandments were written on tablets of stone,

and in a sense similar to the ancient Babylonian tablets, in that they were written on both sides.—Exod. 32:15

Internal Evidence

While many clay tablets have been discovered which were written before the Flood, as yet the archeologists have not unearthed tablets on which are recorded any part or parts of the Book of Genesis. However, there are scholars who call our attention to strong internal evidence in the composition of Genesis to indicate that it was written in sections on clay tablets, and that these sections were kept together and finally came into the possession of Moses who used them in composing nearly all of that part of Genesis with which he was not personally acquainted.

This internal evidence is found principally in the expression, “These are the generations of.” Many suppose that this expression is an introduction to a new section of the book. However, based on the style and customs of records of other things written on clay tablets in that early period, many scholars have concluded that the expression, “These are the generations of” indicates the completion of a section.

The Hebrew word translated “generations” in this expression is **Toledoth**. Gesenius, a critical Hebrew scholar, explains this word to mean, “History, especially family history, since the earliest history among oriental nations is drawn from genealogical registers of families.” Prof. Strong gives “history” as a figurative meaning of Toledah.

This key expression appears first in Genesis 2:4. The text reads, “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day in which the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.” Certainly this is a reference to the preceding record of creation, not to anything which follows. In chapter I the expression, “And God said,” frequently appears. The writer of this chapter acknowledges that he had no personal knowledge of what he was describing, and that he received his information directly from the Creator.

Genesis 5:1 reads, “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him.” Here again the reference is clearly to the contents of chapters 2 through 4, because the chapters following have nothing to say concerning Adam except that he lived 930 years and begat sons and daughters. Adam was personally acquainted with the facts set forth in chapters 2-4, so the expression, “And God said,” no longer appears. Clearly, then, in these chapters we have the “book” or written record which was either written by Adam, or written by someone else and possessed by Adam.

Genesis 6:9 reads, “These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” This covers the record from chapter 5:1b to 6:9a. In this period Seth and Methuselah lived contemporaneously for 355 years. Obviously, then, this section of Genesis ascribed to Noah contains information which was readily available to him, either through personal contacts with those involved, or from those who possessed the necessary firsthand information.

The other names attached to the succeeding portions of Genesis are “the sons of Noah,” “Shem,” “Terah,” “Ishmael,” “Isaac,” “Esau,” and “Jacob.” The record following that section of Genesis to which Jacob’s name is attached deals more particularly with the story of Joseph, the circumstances that took him into Egypt, and his rise to favor and power under Pharaoh. Those associated with the royalty of Egypt were well educated, and without doubt a record of Joseph’s rise to power as food administrator in a time of dire national stress was chronicled, probably on papyrus by

this time.

There is a long lapse in the records of the Hebrews following the death of Jacob. After all, they became slaves in Egypt, and who would be interested in writing about them? Finally Moses appeared on the scene, and became learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. It is not difficult to believe that Jacob took the whole series of tablets beginning with the creation into Egypt with him, and that devout Hebrews treasured and cared for them, and that later they came into the hands of Moses, and were used by him in compiling the first thirty-six chapters of Genesis.

Another Proof

Another internal proof that the first thirty-six chapters of Genesis were originally inscribed on clay tablets and were used by Moses in compiling the book, is seen in certain brief editorial explanations he makes. Note these in Genesis, chapter 14: “Bela, which is Zoar,” verses 2 and 8; “Vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea,” verse 3; “Enmishpat, which is Kadesh,” verse 7; “Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus,” verse 15; and “Valley of Shaveh, which is the King’s Dale,” verse 17.

In Genesis 23:2 we read, “Sarah died in Kirjath-arba, the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan.” This is very revealing as affirming that this chapter was originally written at a very early date; certainly before the Israelites had entered the land after the Exodus. The Israelites must have known it quite well after its capture in Joshua’s day. It was given to Caleb for an inheritance, and under the Law was made one of the cities of refuge.

The fact that Moses thought it essential to give the current names of certain locations, and, as in the case of Hebron, to explain also where it was located, is strong evidence that he was copying the records from writings available to him. And it would also indicate that in compiling these records into a whole, he was loyal to the original text, giving only the additional up-to-date information which he considered essential for clarity.

Before leaving this aspect of our subject, we wish merely to observe that it has been only by the diligent study of styles and methods of writing on tablets that the expression, “These are the generations of” which appears in the first thirty-six chapters of Genesis, provides such clear proof that the art of writing was known and used, at least for the purpose of keeping records, from before the Flood.

It will be noted that the records pertaining to pre-Flood days are much more brief than those of the post-Flood period. This would seem to indicate—and this is not surprising—that the early art of writing was not so well-developed as it became in later times. In any case, we rejoice that archeologists have furnished us with this additional evidence of the validity of the first thirty-six chapters of Genesis.

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Chapter II

The Testimony of Babylonian Cities

THE LANDS of Shinar and Asshur referred to in the Bible comprised the general area known ‘as Mesopotamia, meaning “the land between the rivers.” This ancient country is now called Iraq, although a small section of its northern point is in Turkey. In earlier times the southern section of the country was known as Babylonia, and the northern

area as Assyria. Still earlier, the southern plain was called Sumer, and the northerly, Accad. The area is approximately 600 miles long and 250 miles broad. It is, generally speaking, a flat land through which flow two great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates.

This area has long been considered by scholars as the cradle of the human race, and it is here that certain important cities mentioned in the Bible were located. Ur is one of these. To believers in the Bible the city of Ur is important because the patriarch Abraham sojourned there. Genesis 11:31 reads, “And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son’s son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram’s wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.”

The reason Abram, or Abraham, left Ur to go to Canaan is stated in the first three verses of Genesis 12: “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy father’s house, unto a land [Canaan] that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” In the New Testament the Apostle Paul explains that this promise which God made to Abram was in reality a statement of the Gospel of Christ: God “preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”—Gal. 3:8

For a long time higher critics of the Bible insisted that no such person as Abraham ever lived; that the stories told in the Bible about him were merely allegories, or fairy tales, including the account of his leaving the city of Ur. No such city as Ur ever existed, these critics claimed. The claims of these unbelieving critics destroyed the faith of many in the validity of the Holy Scriptures. Since God’s promise to Abraham was in reality an early statement of the Gospel, the Gospel would have no real foundation in fact if God’s reported dealings with and promises to Abraham are merely allegories.

The Discovery of Ur

In this period of the Christian age when frontal assaults are being made on the Bible by higher critics and others, it is most reassuring to learn that archeologists are discovering one after another of the ancient landmarks mentioned in the sacred Word, and among them, the city of Ur. Today Ur is a railway station 120 miles north of Basra, near the Persian Gulf, and one of the many stops on the Baghdad railway. When the passengers alight from the train at this stop they do not, of course, see the ancient city of Ur. What they do see is a red mound, and it is this mound that led the archeologists to the discovery of the city of Ur nearby.

This mound was known to the Arabs as “Tell al Muqayyar.” In ancient times when cities were destroyed by enemies or by storms they would be rebuilt upon their ruins. As this process continued the cities would become elevated. Ultimately they would be abandoned, and the whole elevation would in time be covered with sand or earth. The word “tell” was used to denote the difference between these more or less artificially made elevations and the natural hills.

Arriving at Tell al Muqayyar in 1923 was a group of archeologists from the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania. In charge of the expedition was Sir Charles Leonard Woolley. Back about the middle of the nineteenth century an archeologist named Taylor, arriving at Tell al Muqayyar, was impressed by the height of the great mound and started his men working from its sides and top. It turned out that he had discovered a great religious tower and sanctuary which, as was later learned,

contained a shrine for the moon god of Ur.

However, great strides had been made in the science of archeology from the time Taylor's men picked away at Tell al Muqayyar until Woolley and his expedition arrived at the same location in 1923. Woolley's trained eye noted the smaller mounds that arose all around him and it was these that he decided to investigate, rather than the large mound. Werner Keller wrote, "Similar mounds exist in great numbers, large and small in the Middle East, on the banks of the great rivers, in the midst of fertile plains, by the wayside on the routes followed by caravans from time immemorial. No one has yet been able to count them. We find them from the delta of the Euphrates and Tigris on the Persian Gulf to the highlands of Asia Minor where the river Halys tumbles into the Black Sea, on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, in the valleys of Lebanon, on the Orontes in Syria, and in Palestine by the Jordan.

"These little eminences are great quarries for archeological finds, eagerly sought and often inexhaustible. They are not formed by the hand of Nature but are artificially created, piled high with the legacy of countless generations that came before; vast masses of rubble and rubbish from a bygone age that have accumulated from the remains of huts and houses, town walls, temples, and palaces."—*The Bible as History*, pp. 14,15

Beginning in 1923 the Anglo-American Archeological Expedition under Woolley worked for three winters excavating the mounds surrounding Tell al Muqayyar. And then, as we read beginning on page 18 of *The Bible as History*, "Under the red slopes of Tell al Muqayyar lay a whole city, bathed in the bright sunshine, awakened from its long sleep after many thousand years by the patient burrowing of the archeologists. Woolley and his companions were beside themselves with joy. For before them lay Ur, the 'Ur of the Chaldees' to which the Bible refers."

Not Abraham's Birthplace

From the limited references given to us in the Bible it would appear that Ur of the Chaldees was not Abraham's home city. Ur was in southern Mesopotamia and on the west of the Euphrates. This river is sometimes referred to in the Bible as "the flood." Joshua said to the Israelites, "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nachor." (Josh. 24:2) When Abraham sent his servant Eliezer to seek a bride for Isaac the servant was specifically instructed to go to Abraham's own people, and he "went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor."—Gen. 24:4,10

It would appear that for some reason Abraham and his father and other relatives had traveled from northern Mesopotamia to Ur, and that when they left Ur to go to Canaan, the land which God had promised to Abraham and his posterity, they traveled north to Haran first. Haran might well have been Abraham's home city, and he remained there until the death of his father. Perhaps he wanted to bury his father among his own people.

While the route from Ur to the Promised Land through Haran was a long one, had Abraham and his family attempted to travel the shortest route they would have been forced to cross what is now the Arabian Desert, which, no doubt would have been practically impossible, especially since he took his flocks and herds with him. The city of Ur was surrounded by rich grazing land, and it was here that Abraham pursued his occupation as a farmer, while possibly living in the prosperous, well-appointed city of Ur.

Abraham's birthplace was probably in the ancient kingdom of Mari. Haran and Nahor were cities within this kingdom. The city of Mari was one of the largest and richest of that period. It contained superb housing, and a richly appointed palace containing hundreds of rooms and courtyards. This was the palace of the kings of Mari. This mammoth building covered nearly ten acres. It was the most enormous building the archeologists had yet brought to light.

Clay tablets by the thousand were dug up in this ancient metropolis. These tablets confirm the existence of the progenitors of Abraham. The Bible says: "Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu; ... and Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug: ... and Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor: ... and Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah: ... and Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran."—Gen. 11:18-26

"Names of Abraham's forefathers emerge from these dark ages as names of cities in northwest Mesopotamia. They lie in Padan-Aram, the plain of Aram. In the center of this plain lies Haran, which, according to its description, must have been a flourishing city. ... Haran, the home of Abraham, father of the patriarchs, the birthplace of the Hebrew people, is here for the first time historically attested, for contemporary texts refer to it. Further up the same Balikh valley lay the city with an equally well-known biblical name, Nahor, the home of Rebecca, wife of Isaac."—*The Bible as History*, pp. 51,52

Thus the information found on the clay tablets unearthed in the kingdom of Mari are found to produce further evidence that the accounts of the patriarchs which are presented in the Bible are not merely legends. They are true historical records of God's dealings with his chosen people. It is these records which furnish us with a reliable foundation for the great theme of God's love in his promised blessing of all the families of the earth, as he gave it to father Abraham.

Man Is Fallen

The excavation of the ruins of ancient cities—cities that existed in the days of Abraham, and even before—reveals that a high state of civilization existed at that time. The late Prof. Palmer Hall Langdon of the Institute of Metals, London, upon his return from extensive work in Mesopotamia in 1929, described his findings of a great "flood deposit" at a considerable depth, and of the layers below it, which contain relics of the civilization which thrived there before that event. We quote from his article which then appeared in the *London Times*:

"Below this Flood layer was another, thirteen feet in thickness. In the lower part of this stratum were found the remains of brick buildings, which had been abandoned and silted up for many feet ... in which were brick tombs. ... This layer thus represented two periods—the earlier, when buildings were erected near its base; the later, when, after these buildings had been silted up, these shafts were sunk into it for the great tombs. In this layer [below the flood layer] were found a number of objects of copper, silver and gold, stone bowls, and a quantity of unpainted pottery."

How vividly this reminds us of the statement concerning Tubal-cain that he was "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron." (Gen. 4:22) Of Jubal the Bible states, "He was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." (Gen. 4:21) These brief bits of information indicate that the people of that day, only a few short years after man's fall into sin and death, were indeed intelligent and civilized. And now the spade

and pick of the archeologist confirm this.

Evidences of a high degree of civilization in ancient times are further confirmed by the findings of Woolley in excavating the ruins of the ancient city of Ur. Sumerian temples, workshops, law courts, and beautiful dwellings were discovered. He also discovered “the graves of the kings of Ur.” These stone vaults were nothing short of priceless treasure chests, for they were filled with the glamorous and costly things which were to be found in Ur at that time.

There were golden drinking cups, exquisitely shaped jugs and vases. There was bronze tableware, and musical instruments. It is said that even the tomb of Tutankhamen was no richer in its contents. These treasures were not the products of a half-man, half-ape sort of creature. They reveal again that man had been created perfect, possessing a high intelligence; that he sinned and was condemned to die, and that through the millennia since, his retrogression has continued. Thus Paul’s statement in I Corinthians 15:21, “As in Adam all die,” is confirmed.

The Flood Attested

Woolley had his men continue to dig, even below the graves of the kings: In his diary he wrote concerning this further effort: “Almost at once discoveries were made which confirmed our suspicions [that the tombs were not located on virgin soil]. Directly under the floor of one of the tombs of the kings we found in a layer of charred wood ash numerous clay tablets, which were covered with characters of a much older type than the inscriptions on the graves. Judging by the nature of the writing the tablets could be assigned to about 3,000 B.C. They were therefore two or three centuries earlier than the tombs.”

So Woolley instructed his men to continue their digging. As they went deeper and deeper, new strata, with fragments of jars, pots, and bowls, kept appearing. However, the pottery remained the same. It was exactly like that which was found in the graves of the kings. The experts gathered from this that Sumerian civilization had remained essentially the same for a long time. Their high level of civilization was reached at a very early date indeed.

Finally, as the men continued to dig, some of them reported to Woolley that they had found ground level—the virgin soil. Woolley made a personal inspection and found, as he thought, that the report of his men was correct. But as he prodded the ground himself just to make sure, he received a great surprise. He discovered that it was not the nature of the ground common to the area, but sand—pure sand, of a kind that could only have been deposited by water.

How could there be mud in a place like this, he thought. At first he concluded that it must be the accumulated silt of the river Euphrates at a time when it flowed near the ancient city of Ur, for it is believed that this river did at one time flow very close to this ancient and famous city. But upon further reflection he ruled out this possibility, one reason being that the level of the sand deposit was much too high to permit of this explanation of its being there. Woolley said, “I saw that we were much too high up. It was most unlikely that the island on which the first; settlement was built stood up so far out of the marsh.”

No, the mud could not be river deposit. Woolley could not find an explanation, nor could his associates, so he decided to have his men dig down into this mud deposit. Deeper and deeper they sank their spades, with nothing but pure mud showing up. When they reached a depth of nearly ten feet the layer of mud ended as suddenly as it

had begun.

Naturally the diggers supposed that now at last they had reached the real virgin soil, but instead, what they found was rubble, ancient rubbish, and potsherds. What did this mean? Simply that below the mud deposit of nearly ten feet they had discovered evidence of human habitation. There was pottery there, not like the pottery found above the mud deposit, which gave evidence of having been turned on a potter's wheel, but handmade pottery.

Woolley, without doubt then reached the proper conclusion, a conclusion that was confirmed by Prof. Langdon, that the mud deposit had been laid by the biblical Flood. This was a find that warranted publicity, and the day that Woolley reached this conclusion he flashed the information back to his home base, "We have found the Flood." Here again, and in this remarkable manner, the truth of the Bible had been attested, as the archeologists dug deeper and deeper into one of the cities of ancient Mesopotamia.

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Chapter III

The Witness of the Promised Land

WHILE DWELLING in Mesopotamia the Lord said to Abram, whose name was later changed to Abraham, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." (Gen. 12:1) This Promised Land was Canaan, which later became known as Palestine, and today is called Israel, although the Israel of today does not embrace all the Promised Land. While Abraham went to Canaan in obedience to the call of God, and dwelt there, he did not actually take possession of it.—Acts 7:1-5

However, the Lord foretold that the descendants of Abraham, after sojourning for generations in a strange land, where they would serve as slaves, would be delivered from their bandage and brought into the Promised Land. (Gen. 15:13,14) The land in which the Hebrew people dwelt in fulfillment of this prophecy was Egypt. It was under the leadership of Moses that they were delivered from Egypt and, after forty years of wandering in the wilderness, entered the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua.

Moses led the Hebrews during their forty years in the wilderness, but did not lead them over Jordan into the Promised Land. However, shortly before his death Moses reassured the Hebrews that the Lord would fulfill his promise to them. He said, "The Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, that shall not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass."—Deut. 8:7-9

Surely the Promised Land was a "good land." And our point of chief interest at the moment is that among all the other good things the Hebrews would find in this land would be copper—mistranslated "brass" in the *King James Version*: "Out of whose hills thou mayest dig copper"—this statement continued to be a mystery to scientists and many students of the Bible. The general belief was that no copper existed anywhere in this land which God gave to the children of Israel.

Now, however, we know differently. In 1937, Nelson Glueck, a member of the American School of Oriental Research, headed a group of geologists, historians,

architects, excavators, and a photographer, who traveled to the mound known as Tell el-Kheleifeh, which is located at the intersection of three countries—Africa, Arabia, and Palestine-Syria. The first stage of the excavation produced encouraging results. They found fishhooks made of copper. There were remnants of walls. Also found nearby was a green material which was identified as copper slag.

This particular expedition did not have time to continue the excavation of Tell el-Kheleifeh. However, the work was resumed, and completed in three stages, which ended in 1940. The total discoveries proved that here, in the time of King Solomon of Israel, was a flourishing copper mine, and that King Solomon, in Glueck's opinion, was probably among the greatest exporters of copper in ancient times.

It was discovered that Tell el-Kheleifeh was actually Ezion-geber, mentioned in I Kings 9:26, where we are informed that "King Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea." It was discovered that this ancient seaport town was highly industrialized and that the mining of copper was one of the chief industries. Here, they discovered, had been an up-to-date blast furnace which was built in accordance with a principle that was brought into modern industry about a century ago and was known as the Bessemer system.

It was from Ezion-geber that Solomon sent his ships to all parts of the then known world. It was a center of world trade, from which many of the exports of the Promised Land went out. Returning, Solomon's ships brought gold, ivory, and other imports. The Israelites were not a seafaring people. They knew nothing about shipbuilding. But Solomon, in his wisdom, imported the necessary skills from other countries. The services of Hiram, a Phoenician, were enlisted. The Bible says, "And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon."—I Kings 9:27,28

A further statement concerning Solomon's riches and his accomplishments reads, "The king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom." (I Kings 10:22,23) It is now proven true by the archeologists that none of these accounts of the Old Testament concerning the riches and wisdom of Solomon are exaggerated. Copper did abound in the Land of Promise. So once again our feet are established on solid historical facts, and not on fairy tales, as the critics of the Bible have so insistently claimed.

The Testimony of Prof. Yadin

Prof. Yigael Yadin, Dean of Archeology in the University of Jerusalem, has more recently further confirmed the Bible's records in other areas of Solomon's accomplishments. In the spring of 1968 the producers of The Bible Answers television series interviewed Prof. Yadin on behalf of the Dawn Bible Students Association, and were given some very vital and interesting information. In I Kings 9:15 we read, "And this is the reason of the levy which King Solomon raised: for to build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer."

Prof. Yadin was asked if he personally believed that the findings of the archeologists in Palestine are confirming the historical records of the Bible. He affirmed that this was so, and gave as an example the reference in the Bible, quoted before, which tells us that

Solomon rebuilt the three cities, Hazor, Gezer, and Megiddo. We quote:

“I would say, generally speaking, that this is very definitely so. I would say that the historical portions of the Bible are thus far being proved true by archeologists. I would go one step further, and say that a biblical diary has actually helped us archeologists find our way and understand the data. The Bible tells us, for example, that King Solomon built three strategic cities. One is Megiddo, and one is Gezer, near Jerusalem. When we excavated Hazor, the third one, and we came to city number ten from the top, we reckoned that this could be the Solomonic city if the Bible story is correct.

“We found here a very strange city gate with six chambers and a casement wall; that is to say, a double wall. And exactly the same type of gate was found in Megiddo by an American archeologist. And then I discovered the third city, Gezer, and there again was an identical gate. Were it not for the passage in the Bible which tells us that Solomon built these three cities we would not have been able to identify them. The actual discovery of these gates proved that this example of a verse in the Bible was correct. Now this is only one example. Wherever we go in this land of the Bible we illuminate our finds with the Bible, and the finds, I would say, are illuminating the Bible.”

Prof. Yadin was then asked to explain further concerning his findings in Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer, the cities which the Bible says were built, or rebuilt by Solomon. We quote again:

“Hazor is a very interesting biblical site. This is a city which the Bible mentions several times. It is first mentioned in the 11th chapter of the Book of Joshua. The king of Hazor was the head of the Canaanite league which fought against Joshua. The Bible says that Joshua killed the king of Hazor, and burned the city with fire. Then we hear again about Hazor in the account which tells us that Solomon rebuilt the city, together with Megiddo and Gezer. So we have here a story. Joshua destroyed Hazor; Solomon rebuilt it.

“However, the history of the first city of Hazor goes much, much further back than Joshua. When we reached the virgin soil we found that we had dug through the ruins of twenty-two cities, one on top of the other. The first city was built about the 28th century B.C. And let's say that the city which Joshua destroyed was city number thirteen from the top; and the city which Solomon rebuilt was number ten from the top. Later Hazor was destroyed by Tegpalatzer, and this was the fifth from the top. It is a huge site, covering 170 acres. We worked there for four years, and managed as it were to merely scratch the surface, compared with what we would like to have accomplished.

“Now Megiddo, as we have found, was also rebuilt by Solomon. This site was excavated by the American Archeologist Institute of Chicago. They found also about twenty-two cities one on top of another. But when we found the true city of Solomon at Hazor, and we knew what his cities were like, I had a suspicion that the city which was identified by the previous excavators as Solomon's was not the real one. They found beautiful and huge stables, which they called Solomon's Stables. I had a suspicion somehow or other that they were wrong. On the basis of the Bible's information that Solomon rebuilt Hazor as well as Megiddo, I considered that these two Solomonic cities would have to be the same, because they were built by the same architects.

“I went back to Megiddo in 1960, and twice again last year, and we found the true city of Solomon, which is identical with and looks exactly like the one at

Hazor. So, while I do not like to destroy a beautiful tourist attraction at Megiddo, I am happy, with the aid of the Bible, to identify the true city of Solomon at Megiddo, which was under the so-called Solomon's Stables. The stable city, which is also important, was built by another famous—or infamous—biblical character, King Ahab, the terrorist husband of Jezebel.”

The General Testimony

Prof. Yadin has assured us that the findings of the archeologists thus far confirm the historical aspects of the Bible, and most archeologists will agree with this. A large portion of the history set forth in the Old Testament pertains to the land of Canaan, the Promised Land of the Israelites. As we have seen, it was under the leadership of Joshua that the Israelites as a people first entered this land to possess it. Their point of entry was at Jericho.

The story of the fall of Jericho has long been considered a mere fairy tale. Joshua was instructed by the Lord to have the Israelites, led by the priests, march around Jericho once a day for six days. On the seventh day they “compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city.” “So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.” “And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein.”—Joshua 6:15,16,20,24

Prof. John Garstang was leader of an expedition which discovered the ancient city of Jericho. From their discoveries they have concluded that Jericho is probably the oldest city in the world. They give its probable age as 7,000 years. The ancient walls of Jericho are of course of special interest to students of the Bible, and the question naturally arises as to whether or not it was a strongly walled city, and also whether the archeologists have found any evidence that these walls had suddenly and precipitately been destroyed to the extent that the Israelites could breach them and enter the city.

The answer to both these questions is yes. As for the walls of Jericho, there was an inner and an outer ring, with space between. From their investigations the archeologists discovered that the stones of the inner ring had fallen inward, and had buried the buildings which were nearby. They found also that the stones of the outer wall had fallen outward. Garstang reached the conclusion that this had been caused by an earthquake. There were also ashes apparent, indicating that the city had been burned, as the Bible states.

Many important cities mentioned in the Book of Joshua, which records Joshua's exploits in the conquest of Canaan, have been unearthed by the archeologists; among them, Debir: “And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir, and fought against it.”—Joshua 10:38

We read in Joshua: “The Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel.” (Joshua 10:32) Archeologists have found and definitely identified the ruins of Lachish. Joshua was buried “in Timnath-serah which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.” (Joshua 24:30) This city has also been located and identified.

Then there was the period of the judges. Two of these judges were Deborah and Gideon. The battles fought by these have been confirmed. Also brought to light is the fact that the army of the Midianites used camels as their beasts of burden and for travel.

Up to that time camels were considered wild animals, and it must have been frightening for the Israelites to see them being controlled by the Midianites. It is now claimed that the ten “camels” Abraham’s servant used when he went into Mesopotamia to seek a bride for Isaac were in reality donkeys.

Following the period of the judges there came the period of the kings, Saul being the first of the kings. Saul’s victories and defeats have been confirmed, and much in the life of King David has been brought to light by the archeologists. The fall of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel and the two-tribe kingdom of Judah have been confirmed, as well as the exile of these people in Assyria and Babylon. And the end is not yet. Prof. Yadin was asked if he considered that the archeological findings in Israel are nearly exhausted. To this he replied:

“I would say far from it. Just to give you an example, in the site where I dug in southern Galilee, we dug for four years with 200 people each season. And when I finished the excavation I reckoned that we have another 300 years to go on this one site only. Here we have an accumulation of culture of thousands of years with three dimensions. On each site we have from twenty to twenty-two cities one on top of another, so I would say that archeologists could go on working here for at least a few thousand years more.”

Heathen Religions

There is much said in the Old Testament concerning the corrupt heathen religious worship and practices which prevailed in Canaan when the Israelites entered the land, and continued to prevail. Time and again the Israelites fell victim to these false gods. These false religions are described by God as “the abominations of the heathen.” King Manasseh reigned fifty-five years, and during that time Israel was brought almost entirely under the influence of these heathen religions.—II Kings 21:1,2

And it was not merely that these religions presented different views of deity. They were vile, sensual views, which were translated into “holy” harlotry. The debauchery of the people in their practice of the rites associated with these false religions is almost beyond description, and certainly hard to believe. While these false and sensual rites are mentioned in the Bible, the revolting details are not furnished so clearly as they are in discoveries made by archeologists. The fact that the record of false gods and the sensual rites which accompanied their worship is verified by the findings of archeologists gives further proofs of the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures.

“For they also built them high places, and pillars, and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree.” (I Kings 14:23, *RSV*) Through the work of the archeologists we have learned much of what occurred in these “high places” of worship. These discoveries indicate that the rites of these gods and demigods were stupefying, gross, and sensual. What a temptation this was for the Israelites, and we can now understand better why Baal and other gods gained such a firm foothold among them on so many occasions. Thus, even in this area, the Bible becomes more understandable and more revealing.

The Library at Nineveh

About the middle of the nineteenth century the ancient city of Nineveh was found by the British archeologist Henry Layard. Nineveh (the Calah of Genesis), was founded by Nimrod. Discovering the ruins of this ancient city was in itself significant, but more important was the fact that in the palace of Ashurbanipal which was discovered within

the city was the famous library belonging to that monarch. This library was the most famous in the whole of the ancient Orient. From this library 22,000 cuneiform tablets were recovered, and later found their way into the British Museum.

It was about the same time that Sargon's castle was discovered, and in its ruins also were found many valuable records pertaining to Assyria's conquest of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. The tablets in the ancient library at Nineveh, together with those found in Sargon's castle, excavated by M. Botta, have greatly assisted archeologists, and indeed marked the birth of a new science—Assyriology. Nineveh was the ancient capital of Assyria.

These tablets have aided the archeologists to realize more fully than would otherwise have been possible that the narratives of the Bible, as they relate to Mesopotamia, and later to Canaan, the Land of Promise, are indeed true historical records. II Kings 17:24 reads, "And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel, and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof." These became what are often referred to as "the new Samaritans."

The Bible's record of this uprooting of the ten tribes from Samaria, and the substitution of alien people in the land, is abundantly confirmed by tablets found in the ruins of Sargon's castle, and in the great library of Nineveh. The Israelites of the ten-tribe kingdom became the "lost tribes" of Israel, being assimilated through generations by the people in the land of their captivity.

So it is that when we read in the Bible of Nimrod's building a city, or of Jonah's going to Nineveh, or of Assyria's conquest of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, we are not reading fairy tales, but accurate historical records—records of which the chosen people of God themselves became a part. How this should strengthen our faith in the Bible, and make us more determined to serve faithfully the God of the Bible—the great Jehovah of Israel, our Heavenly Father!

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Chapter IV

The New Testament Bears Witness

PALESTINE, THE land which God promised to Abraham and his posterity, is also the country in which Jesus, the world's Redeemer and Savior, was born. It was here that he conducted his world-changing ministry. It was here that he died to redeem the world of mankind from sin and death, and it was here that he rose from the dead. In Palestine today there are many legendary places which are shown to tourists, who are told that here Jesus did this, and here Jesus did that. On this hill he was crucified. they are told, and in this tomb he was buried.

It is natural that this should be true with respect to such an outstanding personage as Jesus. However, few of these legendary places have been authenticated as the actual sites of the occurrences associated with them. On the other hand, there is much in Palestine which does confirm the fact that this is the land in which Jesus was born, and where he served and died, and was raised from the dead: for there is much in this ancient Holy Land which has not changed since the Master walked in it in the pursuit of his ministry.

Jesus was a man of peace. He did not command a large and conquering army; he did not destroy and burn walled cities, leaving ruins to be discovered by archeologists later.

But tracing the ministry of the Son of God, the New Testament identifies many geographical facts which are true of Palestine today. There is the River Jordan. It is the same Jordan in which Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. There is also the Sea of Galilee referred to so many times in connection with Jesus' ministry. This is the same body of water on which Jesus walked and sailed, and it was at the Sea of Galilee that his fishermen disciples were found, and invited to become fishers of men. It was on the shore of Galilee that Jesus fed the five thousand with a small amount of bread and fish.

Capernaum

Capernaum was one of the principal cities on the shore of Galilee in the days of Jesus. Much of his early ministry was conducted here, and here a number of his miracles were performed. He preached in the synagogue in Capernaum. On one of Jesus' visits to Capernaum he said to the people of the city, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."—Matt. 11:23

This was in reality a pronouncement of destruction that would come upon the city of Capernaum. "Hell" is the death condition, not a place of torment, and Capernaum was destroyed as a city, and remains in ruins to this day. A similar pronouncement was made upon Chorazin and Bethsaida. These cities, on or near the shore of Galilee, had been highly favored, even by nature, and principally because the Son of God bore witness to the truth in them, by word of mouth and by his mighty miracles. But where are these cities today? Two of them are marked by desolate heaps of ruins, while the exact location of the third is an uncertainty.

A synagogue has been constructed amidst the ruins of Capernaum, but it is not the ancient synagogue in which Jesus preached. The old synagogue lies buried beneath the ruins of this ancient and honorable city upon which Jesus pronounced doom. The ruins of Capernaum are an attraction for tourists today, but probably few of these tourists, when viewing these ruins, realize that they stand out as incontrovertible testimony to the accuracy of history pertaining to Jesus and the infallible nature of his prophecy. By contrast Tiberius, which also existed in Jesus' day, still stands on the shore of Galilee because Jesus uttered no pronouncement of destruction against it.

The Pool of Siloam

The pool of Siloam is mentioned in connection with one of Jesus' miracles—the giving of sight to a man who had been born blind. We read concerning this that Jesus "spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he annointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."—John 9:6,7

Zev Vilnay, Ph.D., author of *Israel Guide*, informs us that at least a part of this pool can still be seen. King Hezekiah had a tunnel built from a spring outside the walls of Jerusalem to the pool of Siloam, which was within the walls. This was to supply water to the people of the city in case of siege. Dr. Vilnay writes, "The tunnel is still extant, its length being 553 m. (as the crow flies 335 m.) The waters of the Gihon flow through it from a height of 650 m. to the pool of Siloam, twenty m. lower down. From the Spring of Gihon the pool of Siloam can be reached through the dry bed of the Kidron."

Here is another landmark of Jesus' day. It is not a legend, but the authentic pool of water where the blind man washed, and through this co-operation with the Master, received his sight.

Jesus' Last Days

The entire earthly life and ministry of Jesus is of vital concern to all Christians. While Jesus was for a time popular with the common people, largely because he was able to heal them of their diseases, and on some occasions restored their dead to life, the religious rulers were opposed to him, and his ministry was brought to what appeared to be an ignominious end. His appearance in Israel and his conflict with the religious leaders were not considered important to historians, so little attention is given to him in secular history, although he is not completely ignored. The Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius both refer to Christ; also Josephus, as we shall see.

The closing days of Jesus' ministry are of special importance to us because through his death an opportunity of life was provided for all mankind. Concerning the Bible's record of these tragic closing days, Werner Keller, in his book, *The Bible as History*, has this to say:

"The descriptions of the trial, sentence, and crucifixion in the four gospels have been checked with scientific thoroughness by many scholars and have been found to be historically reliable accounts even to the last detail. The chief witnesses for the prosecution against Jesus have been indirectly attested, and the place where sentence was pronounced has been accurately ascertained by excavations. The various incidents in the course of the trial can be verified from contemporary sources and modern research."—p. 371

The Pavement

John 19:13 reads, "When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha." It was from this Pavement that Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified. (John 19:16) Father L. H. Vincent, an archeologist, through years of hard work, has found this Pavement. It escaped destruction when Jerusalem was devastated in A.D. 70.

We now have very revealing archeological data concerning Pontius Pilate, who questioned and condemned Jesus on the Pavement in his judgment hall. The Roman rulers of the time made their home in Caesarea. We quote an observation concerning Caesarea from *Israel Guide*, by Zev Vilnay, Ph.D.:

"The Roman amphitheatre is on the seashore, south of the Crusader wall. It was built in the second century and its remains were unearthed in 1961. Various debris and a fragment of a Roman inscription were brought to light. It mentions Emperor Tiberius and Pontius Pilate. This is the first archeological evidence of the famed procurator of Judea under whose rule Jesus' crucifixion took place. He persecuted the Jews and specially kindled their hatred by desecrating the temple and looting its treasures."—p. 327

The Jewish historian Josephus speaks of Jesus and of the fact that it was Pilate who condemned him to death. We quote:

"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the

truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him.”—*Antiquities of the Jews*, p. 535

Jerusalem Destroyed

Josephus not only thus historically verifies that Jesus lived and served, was crucified and raised from the dead at the time the Bible indicates, but he also records the terrible experiences which came upon the people of Jerusalem and, in fact, on the whole nation of Israel, as foretold by Jesus. Jesus said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”—Matt. 23:37-39

Jerusalem was the capital of ancient Israel, and her “children” referred to by Jesus would be all the Israelites in and out of the city itself. When Jesus said of Jerusalem, “Your house is left unto you desolate,” his reference was to the entire Jewish polity which till then enjoyed the distinct position of being exclusively God’s chosen people, the progeny of Abraham through whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed. However, the destruction of the literal city of Jerusalem is also implied in this statement.

Referring to the beautiful temple within the city of Jerusalem Jesus said, “There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” (Matt. 24:2) This prophecy had such a complete fulfillment that only a small section of one of the temple’s walls escaped destruction. This small section of the temple wall is now known as the Wailing Wall.

The historian Josephus records in considerable detail the horrible experiences which came upon the Jewish people in connection with the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. He points out that the Roman army surrounded Jerusalem at the time of the passover when thousands of Jews from all over Palestine, and from other countries, were in the city. Countless thousands lost their lives by starvation, by disease and plague. Mothers killed their own children to procure food.

Finally, however, the Jews were subdued and the Romans took charge. This was in A.D. 70. However, many of the Jews surrendered to the Romans; and secured a measure of amnesty, while others, still defiant, escaped. Many of these were known as the Sicarii. These banded together against those who had surrendered to the Romans, and inflicted much punishment upon them. Under the leadership of one Eleazar, 960 of the Sicarii took refuge in a strong Roman fort called Masada, and there they held out against the Roman army for a long time. But when it became apparent that they would either have to surrender or be killed, they chose, upon the advice of their leader, to commit suicide. Only two women and three children did not join in this suicide pact, and these lived to tell the story of what had occurred within the fort, which turned out to be the Tomb of Masada.

The historical account of Josephus concerning Masada has now been verified by Prof. Yigael Yadin, Dean of Archeology in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Prof. Yadin told his story of Masada to our representatives who interviewed him in his home

near Jerusalem. He was asked, "Can you describe your work at Masada, and what you consider the most important aspect of your work there?" He replied:

"Well, Masada is an example of archeology which is different from excavating the tells or sites of the Old Testament. Here we had, archeologically speaking, a sitting duck, if I may use that expression. We had the writings of the famous Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, in which he says that he was a commander in the first revolt of the Jews against the Romans in A.D. 66. That was against Titus. He describes in his writings in great detail how in the end Jerusalem was captured and the temple was burned.

"Only in one spot, in Masada, were found Jews who were resisting. Here 960 men, women, and children were holding back the whole might of the Roman Empire. He tells us how in the end they were surrounded by the Romans and how a siege wall was built around the fort. When everything was hopeless the people decided to take their own lives by their own hands rather than to submit to the yoke of the Romans. Then he describes how every man embraced his wife and children and then killed them, and then killed himself—both dramatic and tragic at the same time.

"Therefore Masada, even before our excavation, was a sort of symbol to the people of Israel and the world. It was a symbol of the way our people prefer death to servitude. It was also a challenge and a reminder to people of what can happen. So we went to the site. We knew from the writing what happened there. But we did not know what we would find.

"This excavation, which took place in 1966, we did with the help of thousands of volunteers from twenty-seven countries in the world. We did not want to go to this excavation with disinterested workers. We thought it would be sort of blasphemous. So we asked for volunteers. And, amazingly, thousands came, as I said, from all over the world, and they worked under very difficult conditions, and lived in tents. And we managed in eleven months of hard work to uncover the whole of the site, which normally would have taken about 26 years of excavation.

"The question was, Are the descriptions of Josephus correct, and what will we find? We knew, for example, that the first to fortify the site prior to this was Herod the Great; and when we found his palace, with beautiful mosaics and all, we were all very thrilled. But this was not the greatest moment of the excavation. Sometimes in archeology it is not the nice thing which has a story behind it. Sometimes a very small thing has a very great story. This was particularly true when we came to a floor covered with a thick layer of ashes, which was the evidence of the last tragic moments of A.D. 73, because Josephus said that before they killed themselves they burned the palace. These were exciting moments when we found the evidence of this.

"When we found the sandals of women and children, pieces of cloth and of cosmetic objects, and we knew that these belonged to the people in their last tragic moments, these were the greatest moments of the dig. The greatest of these alone was perhaps when we found on the floor scrolls of the Bible, and we could see the tragedy of these people before they committed suicide. They had the Holy Scriptures with them. They did not want to burn them—they could not burn the Bible—so they left them where they were.

"We found that the Romans did tear the scrolls to pieces. But even the pieces, we discovered, were important scientifically, because by these we could establish the date. We know that this tragedy took place in A.D. 73. So we knew that

whatever we found there was prior to this date—sometimes fifty or a hundred years before. So this is an example of how a book written two thousand years ago [Josephus' history] was a guide—room to room, more or less—and it proved to be very accurate.

“We found the remains of the Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Psalms. One of the very interesting discoveries was the synagogue of these zealots. This, in fact, is the oldest synagogue known up to now, and it was under the floor of this synagogue that we found these scrolls. This was a Jewish custom. When a scroll went out of use, or was blemished, they used to bury it under the floor of the synagogue.

“Now these scrolls were under the earth, so we found them to be in very bad shape. One of them, for example, turned out to be the book of the Prophet Ezekiel. Essentially the entire scroll was decomposed. The only part which remained intact was the famous chapter of the resurrection of dry bones. We found remains of most of the books of the Old Testament that would obviously be there. These were pious Jews. They brought their books with them, and they left them there.”

We surely thank Prof. Yadin for this revealing account of his findings at Masada. The story of Masada is, of course, not in the Bible, but it is closely related to the Bible in that it gives us a further insight into the experiences of the descendants of Abraham, who are the people of the Bible. Besides, it helps us to realize the accuracy of the prophecies of Jesus, as well as of the Old Testament, concerning the tragic experiences which would come upon this people, and of how they would be scattered throughout the world.

Restoration

Prof. Yadin mentioned finding a part of the prophecy of Ezekiel referring to the resurrection of dry bones. This is found in Ezekiel 37:1-14. A “valley of dry bones” is mentioned and said to represent the whole house of Israel. These bones are seen to come together; flesh appears on them, and finally they are given breath and they live. While the resurrection of both Jews and Gentiles from the dead is promised throughout the Bible, this prophecy pertains to the resurrection of the Israelites as a people from the various national graves in which, through the centuries, they have been scattered. Many Old Testament prophecies assure us that at this end of the present age the Jews would be restored to their own land.

In the New Testament we find Jesus saying, “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” (Luke 21:24) Here Jesus' reference to Jerusalem includes the entire Jewish polity. We will not discuss the point here, but actually “the times of the Gentiles” is a period in prophecy of 2,520 years beginning with 606 B.C., when Zedekiah, the last Jewish king, was overthrown, and ending in 1914. It was the World War that began then that led to the opportunity for the Jewish people to return to their Promised Land. How accurately, therefore, was Jesus' prophecy fulfilled!

The Prophet Joel wrote, “For behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations.” (Joel 3:1,2) We have been witnesses to the fact that while the Israelites have been gathering in their own land, all nations have been gathering, for war on the one hand, and in the hope of maintaining peace on the other. Daniel refers to these general events as “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.” (Dan. 12:1) Jesus referred to

this “time of trouble” as a time of “tribulation” upon the world, and said that if it were not shortened no flesh would be saved.—Matt. 24:21,22

We all know that the trouble in the world today could erupt into a general conflagration which, by the misuse of hydrogen power, could destroy the entire human race. Thus Jesus’ accuracy as a prophet is again attested. He assures us, however, that the destruction of “all flesh” will not be permitted. After all, we are at the threshold of the messianic kingdom promised from cover to cover in the Bible, and through this kingdom all mankind is to be given the opportunity of enjoying health and life forever.

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Chapter V

The New Testament Corroborates the Old

THERE ARE many who, while they feel that the historical records of the Old Testament are largely myths, nevertheless express themselves as having considerable confidence in the narratives of the New Testament. For example, these people like to think of Jesus as having spoken the truth on the various subjects which he discussed. We are glad of this, for we believe we can present evidence that Jesus and the apostles of the New Testament themselves had faith in and confirmed all the most disputed records of the Old Testament.

In Luke 3:23-38 the genealogy of Jesus is traced through a long line of ancients, including a number of the well known personalities of the Old Testament, along with Seth, who was “the son of Adam, which was the son of God.” Thus clearly does Luke establish that Adam not only was the first man, but that he was the direct creation of God—“the son of God.”

In Romans 5:14 the Apostle Paul writes, “Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.” Here Paul confirms his belief in Adam and of the manner in which death came into the world through Adam. Adam willfully disobeyed divine law and was condemned, but this condemnation and death itself, were inherited by his progeny even though they may not have sinned with the same degree of willfulness as did Adam—they were born in a dying condition.

This continued unabated until Moses, and then God gave the one little nation of Israel an opportunity to gain life through obedience to his law.. Referring to the Law, the Scriptures state that “the man which doeth these things shall live by them.” (Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5) Paul explained that while the Law was designed to give life, it failed to do so because of the imperfection of the people.—Rom. 7:10

The Apostle Paul again refers to Adam in I Corinthians 15:22, which reads, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” This also confirms the Genesis record that death came into the world through the transgression of Adam; and here the additional thought is given that the opportunity to enjoy everlasting life through Christ is in due time to be just as far-reaching as has been the penalty of death which was imposed as a result of Adam’s sin.

We quote again from Paul: “The first man Adam was made a living soul.” (I Cor. 15:45) This is directly from Genesis 2:7, where we are told that God formed man of the dust of the ground, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and “man became a living soul.” Then Paul speaks of the “last Adam”: “the last Adam was made a quickening [or lifegiving] spirit.” Here we have set forth God’s great plan of

redemption and restoration through Christ.

“For Adam was first formed, then Eve.” (I Tim. 2:13; Gen. 1:27) Here again we note the full confidence Paul had in the details of the Genesis account of creation.

Paul also informs us that “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” (I Tim. 2:14) The great deception which the Adversary perpetrated upon mother Eve was that she would not die if she partook of the forbidden fruit. (Gen. 3:1-4) Satan’s lie that death would not result from disobeying God’s law has deceived essentially the whole world ever since it was first told to Eve. It is the basis of all the “no-death” theories that have existed throughout the ages. Its modern version is, “There is no death.”

In Jude, verse 14, we are informed that Enoch was the seventh from Adam. Surely Jude had confidence in the genealogical record of Genesis.

Thus we find that Adam’s name appears eight times in the New Testament. These references confirm the fact that he was the first man; that he came under sentence of death because he transgressed God’s law, and that all his progeny share in this condemnation.

Jesus also confirms the Genesis record of creation, but without mentioning Adam by name. In Matthew 19:4,5, *Revised Standard Version*, Jesus refers to the creation of man, saying, “Have ye not read, that he which made them from the beginning, made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and they twain shall become one flesh.” See Genesis 2:24

In his references to Genesis, Jesus mentions Abel, one of the sons of Adam. In a reminder of the trouble which would come upon the Israelites of his generation, Jesus said, “That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.”—Luke 11:50,51

Abel and the sacrifice which he offered to the Lord are mentioned in Hebrews 11:4, which reads, “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.” The story of Cain and Abel a myth? The writer of the Book of Hebrews did not think so!

The Flood Story Confirmed

Jesus believed in the Genesis account of the Flood. When describing conditions in the earth at the time of his return and second presence, he said, “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.” (Luke 17:26,27) If Jesus was mistaken concerning the Flood, then we could have no confidence in any of his teachings. But Jesus was not mistaken, as archeologists have since confirmed.

The Genesis record of Abraham, and the promises God made to him, are likewise discounted by the modern school of thought. But Jesus believed in Abraham, and referred to him several times: On one occasion he observed, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.” (John 8:56) Abraham’s vision of Christ’s day was the result of the promise God made to him—the promise that through his “Seed” all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Gen. 12:3) Evidently

Abraham understood that this Seed of promise would be the great Messiah, so he looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, which was Christ.

Paul confirms this viewpoint, also mentioning Abraham. We quote, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (Gal. 3:16) And then, Hebrews 11:8-10 reads, “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Paul wrote that God preached beforehand the Gospel unto Abraham—the good news being contained in the promise that through the Messiah all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Gal. 3:8) This same Gospel was proclaimed by the angel who announced the birth of Jesus: “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”—Luke 2:10

If Abraham was merely a legendary character, then no promises were ever made to him. This would mean that the first promise of the Gospel is a fraud. And in that case Jesus was deceived if he supposed that Abraham actually did exist and looked forward to the coming of his kingdom, and we would have no foundation at all in the Bible for “the Gospel of Christ, ... is the power of God unto salvation.”—Rom. 1:16

But Abraham did exist. Archeology proves it, and Jesus and the apostles confirm it by their many references to this friend of God, who is the father of the faithful. Abraham’s name appears in the New Testament more than fifty times. One of the very important references is in Hebrews 2:16, where we are informed that Jesus “took on,” or became, “the seed of Abraham.”

Another incident recorded in Genesis with which Abraham was associated was the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Apostle Peter refers to this. He said that God “turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly.”—II Pet. 2:6

Genesis records the experience of Abraham offering his son Isaac in sacrifice. Hebrews 11:17-19 confirms this. We quote, “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”

In the 7th chapter of Acts we find Stephen, the first Christian martyr, confirming the story of Joseph and the jealousy of his brethren which caused them to sell him into slavery. But God was with him and “delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him wisdom and favor before Pharaoh, king of Egypt.” We can say that every prominent person and incident in Genesis is confirmed in the New Testament.

Jonah and the Whale

One of the Old Testament accounts which has been classified by the critics as a fantasy of the first order is the one which pertains to Jonah and the fact that he was swallowed by a “great fish.” But Jesus believed this report to be true. We quote Jesus concerning Jonah: “Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying,

Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."—Matt. 12:38-40

Jesus then added, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here." (Matt. 28:41) From this it is clear that Jesus had the complete story of Jonah in mind, and believed it. The "sign of Jonah" is the fact that as Jonah was saved from the belly of the great fish, so Jesus would be raised from the dead. But few of the Israelites of Jesus' day believed this "sign." They denied that Jesus had been raised from the dead, even as the critics now deny that Jonah was swallowed by a great fish, and that after his deliverance he preached to the Ninevites and led them to repentance.

The Manna

Jesus, in confirming the fact that he would give his life that the dying race might be restored to life, referred to his flesh, his humanity, as "bread which cometh down from heaven," and used the manna which fell in the wilderness to sustain the Israelites as an illustration.. We quote: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:47-51) Thus does the Master confirm another of the great miracles recorded in the Old Testament.

Moses

Moses, like Abraham, is one of the outstanding personalities of the Old Testament, and over and over again Jesus either quotes from him or refers to him. He was the great lawgiver of Israel, having written what the Bible refers to as "the book of the law." Critics tend to discount the writings of Moses, claiming that in his day the art of writing was not known. But now, as we saw in chapter one of this series, it is realized that writing was known and practiced hundreds of years before the days of Moses. Jesus knew this, and adds his testimony to the authenticity of Moses' writings.

As a matter of fact, Jesus believed in the infallibility of all the Old Testament prophets. Speaking to two of his disciples after his resurrection, and comforting them with the fact that his death had been foretold, and therefore was not a miscarriage of the divine plan, he quoted' from the prophecies. He said to them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."—Luke 24:25-27

After Jesus left the two disciples, and they realized that it had been the resurrected Jesus who had been speaking to them, "they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32) We can well imagine the feelings of these two disciples when

they became convinced of Jesus' resurrection, and that his suffering and death were parts of the divine plan, and had been foretold by the prophets! May our hearts burn within us more and more as the evidence accumulates that the Word of God is truly a firm foundation for our faith.

Daniel

One of the favorite prophets for attack by the critics is Daniel. Daniel did not even write the Book of Daniel, it is charged. But here again Jesus disagrees. He said, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place." Here we have Jesus not only referring to Daniel, but calling him a prophet.

Daniel 12:1 speaks of a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." Although he does not mention Daniel by name, Jesus refers to this prophecy, speaking of "the time of trouble" as "tribulation." We quote, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."—Matt. 24:21,22

The Book of Hebrews also confirms incidents recorded in the Book of Daniel. The account of the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace is well known to Bible readers, as is also the experience of Daniel in the lions' den. Critics would like us to believe that these are merely fanciful stories with no foundation in fact. But the writer of Hebrews knew that they were real. In this book the apostle presents a number of the experiences of the Ancient Worthies, referring to them as those who through faith "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, [and] quenched the violence of fire." It was Daniel who "stopped the mouths of lions," and it was the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace who "quenched the violence of fire."—Heb. 11:33,34

In the 11th chapter of Hebrews we also find confirmation of many other incidents recorded in the Old Testament. It gives brief statements as to how the heroes of faith demonstrated their faith in God and in his ability to care for them. Paul mentions Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Joseph, Moses. Of Moses the apostle says that he forsook Egypt, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

By faith, Paul tells us, the Israelites "passed through the Red Sea as by dry land." Also "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." Then Paul speaks of Gideon, who defeated the hordes of the Midianites with his little band of three hundred; and of Barak, Samson, Jephthae; of David, also, and Samuel, and of the prophets.

In the Old Testament we have the records of two mothers whose children were awakened from the sleep of death. One was the Shunamite woman, and the other was the son of a widow. One miracle was performed by Elisha, and the other by Elijah. (II Kings 4:32-36; I Kings 17:19-23) Paul refers to these two miracles with the simple statement, "Women received their dead raised to life again."—Heb. 11:35

Paul knew that the miracles of the Old Testament would be followed during the Messianic kingdom by even greater miracles—even the resurrection of all the dead. Speaking of the faithfulness of the Ancient Worthies, he indicates that their inspiration to faithfulness was their hope of "a better resurrection." In Acts 24:15 Paul speaks of this "better resurrection" as the resurrection of the "just," and asserts that the faithful of

the past who had hope toward God, believed that there would be a resurrection, “both of the just and the unjust.”

And what a great miracle that will be—the resurrection of all mankind! This will not be accomplished in a day, but will be the work of the entire thousand-year kingdom of the Messiah. The “just,” the Ancient Worthies, will be the first to be restored to life, and these will co-operate in the glorious work of that kingdom, the work of blessing “all the families of the earth” in keeping with the promise God made to Abraham.

There are many other quotations and references in the New Testament concerning the people and events of the Old Testament. However, we believe we have referred to a sufficient number of these to establish the fact that Jesus and the apostles of the New Testament did believe that the Old Testament was the inspired Word of God. On its promises they built their message of the Gospel; the Gospel of Christ which holds out such a glorious hope for all mankind, and which is especially comforting in this day of increasing chaos and distress.

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Chapter VI

The Bible Reveals God’s Plan

IT IS stimulating to faith to realize that all the main events and places of the Bible are confirmed by the spade and pick of the archeologist. The same thing is true with respect to the principal personalities of the Bible. We know now that when we read the story of Abraham and his life it is not fiction, but a true statement of the events that took place back in the ancient time in which he lived. The same sense of reality is bound to grip us as we study any of the records of the Bible.

And this firm establishment of faith in the genuineness of the Bible’s records and its people should in turn lead us to a closer study of the message God has in his Word for us—the plan of redemption and salvation for all mankind which it reveals. There is little purpose in knowing that the Bible is trite unless we take note of what God is saying to us throughout its pages concerning his plans and purposes for the deliverance and eternal blessing of his dying creatures here on earth.

The Record of Creation

To discover God’s plan in the Bible, let us note what the inspired record says is the purpose in the creation of man. Concerning this we read, “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 [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.”—Gen. 1:27,28

Here is a plain statement indicating that God’s design for his human creatures was that the earth should be their home. They were created in God’s mental and moral image, and commanded to multiply and to fill the earth with their progeny. Nothing was said to our first parents about going to heaven. The earth was their home, and they were to subdue it and rule over it.

Genesis 2:7 gives us further information about man’s creation: “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Note that God did not give man a “soul,” but the union

of his perfect organism with the breath of life constituted a soul—man “became a living soul.”

God did not create immortal human souls. The expression “immortal soul” is not found anywhere in the Bible. Man was a soul, but his continued existence depended upon obedience to the laws of his Creator. One aspect of that law was stated to Adam. He was told that if he partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would surely die. (Gen. 2:17) He was not told that he would die and go to heaven, neither to a place of torment. The penalty was to be death, which is the absence of life. Thousands of years later Paul wrote, “The wages of sin is death.” (Rom. 6:23) And Solomon wrote, “The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything.”—Eccl. 9:5

Satan's Deception

Satan, the fallen Lucifer, masquerading as a serpent, approached mother Eve and asked her, “Hath God said, Ye shall riot eat of every tree of the garden?” Eve's reply was, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.” And then Satan uttered the blackest and most devastating lie that was ever told. He said to mother Eve, “Ye shall not surely die”—death will not be the penalty for sin.—Gen. 3:1-4

Jesus knew about this lie which Satan told to mother Eve, and referred to the Devil as a liar. Addressing the scribes and Pharisees of his day, Jesus said, “Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”—John 8:44

Thus does Jesus confirm the confrontation of Satan and Eve, and declares that Satan's statement, “Ye shall not surely die,” was a lie. But this lie, nonetheless, led to the transgression of our first parents, and to their death. However, almost without exception Adam's descendants have preferred to believe that “there is no death.” Satan's lie is responsible for the unscriptural theory concerning the alleged “immortal soul.” It is also responsible for the theory of reincarnation, and all the other “no death” teachings of the heathen.

Condemned to Death

We have emphasized that “the wages of sin is death” because unless we are prepared to believe that death is a reality we will not be able to understand clearly God's great plan of redemption and deliverance from death as taught in the Bible. The record of Genesis is that Adam did disobey God's law, and that the sentence of death fell upon him. The Lord said to him, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Gen. 3:19) In the New Testament we are informed that “in Adam all die.”—I Cor. 15:21,22

When pronouncing sentence the Creator made a very revealing statement to Satan. We quote: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Gen. 3:15) This is highly figurative language, but in the light of the general testimony of the Bible we find it to be the first reference by the Lord to a coming Deliverer, or Messiah; One who would destroy Satan and his works, and rescue mankind from the results of that great tragedy in Eden.

There is an indirect reference to this in Revelation 20:1,2, which reads, “I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.” The remainder of this chapter reveals that following the binding of “that old serpent,” Christ and his church—the Seed of the woman—reign for a thousand years, and that as a result of this reign the dead are restored; Satan himself is destroyed, and death itself is abolished.

Promise to Abraham

After the Flood the statement concerning the Seed of the woman was enlarged upon in a promise which God made to Abraham. The promise was that through the Seed of Abraham all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Gen. 12:3) Later in his dealings with Abraham God confirmed this promise by his oath. This was following Abraham’s demonstration of faith in his willingness to offer his son Isaac in sacrifice. God said to him, “By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, far because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.”—Gen. 22:16,17

In the New Testament the Apostle Paul gives us a very revealing explanation concerning this promised “Seed.” Paul wrote, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (Gal. 3:16) Jesus, then, is the “Seed” God promised to Abraham, the One through whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed.

How beautifully this harmonizes with the angelic announcement of the birth of Jesus: “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10,11) The promise to Abraham was that his Seed would bless all families of the earth, and now we find the angel declaring that the birth of Jesus was “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people,” and the reason given that he had come to be a Savior, a blessing.

Why the Delay?

The question naturally arises, if Jesus came to bless all the families of the earth why has that blessing not reached the people? Sin and death were reigning in the earth in Jesus’ day, and sin and death are still reigning. Has there been a failure of God’s plan? No, there has been no failure of God’s plan. Rather, another feature of the divine plan for blessing the people has been in the process of development.

Paul furnishes information concerning this. We have noted Paul’s identification of Jesus as the Seed of Abraham. This is given in Galatians 3:16. In verses 27 and 29 of this same chapter we read, “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Thus Paul explains to faithful Christians that they, like Jesus, are looked upon by God as being the Seed of Abraham, that Seed which is to bless all the families of the earth.

This explains why the work of blessing all mankind with health and life did not begin when Jesus laid down his life two thousand years ago, for there was to be the work of

gathering from the world those who were to be associated with Jesus in the kingdom work of blessing. Jesus commissioned his followers to go throughout the earth proclaiming the Gospel, and the purpose of this has been, not the conversion of all mankind and making them church members, but the calling of those who have been willing to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, suffering and dying with him, that they might live and reign with him. (Rev. 20:6) This work of gathering those who would be the future joint-heirs with Jesus in his kingdom has already required more than nineteen hundred years, and it is still going on.

Jesus, the Redeemer

Life is, pre-eminently, the great blessing which is to be extended to “all families of the earth,” as promised to Abraham. This calls for an awakening from the sleep of death of all who have died. But in order for this to take place mankind must be released from the original sentence of death which came upon all through the sin of Adam.

This is accomplished through the sacrificial death of Jesus. Paul wrote, “By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [Jesus] shall many be made righteous.” (Rom. 5:19) In Romans 6:23 Paul writes, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The eternal life which will reach the world through Jesus will be realized through the resurrection. Again Paul wrote, “Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”—I Cor. 15:20,22

The Ransom

In I Timothy 2:3-6 the Apostle Paul uses the word “ransom” to describe the redemptive work of Christ. In the Greek text the word used by Paul means “a price to correspond.” It was the perfect man, Adam, who sinned and was sentenced to death. It was the perfect man Jesus who, in obedience to the divine will, gave his life in sacrifice for the sins of the world. This was “a price to correspond.” The Prophet Isaiah wrote that Jesus “poured out his soul unto death.” Isaiah also wrote of Jesus that “he shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.”—Isa. 53:12,11

We quote Paul’s explanation of the work of redemption in the passage already cited (I Tim. 2:3-6): “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

Yes, Jesus gave himself a ransom for all, and this great fact of the divine plan of salvation for a lost race will be testified, or made known, to all in due time. For the vast majority of mankind this “due time” will be during the millennial reign of Christ and his faithful followers. It will be then that the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea; and it will be then that the Lord will turn to the people a pure message that they may all call upon his name and serve him with one consent.—Isa. 11:9; Zeph. 3:9

A Resurrection

As we have noted, the fulfillment of God's promises to bless all mankind with an opportunity to live forever necessitates a resurrection of the dead. In the resurrection some will receive a heavenly life, but the vast majority will be raised from the dead as humans, and given an opportunity to live on the earth forever. Jesus said to his followers, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:3) This promise by Jesus has been misconstrued to mean that all who obtain life through him will spend eternity in a heavenly home which he prepares for them.

But this is not the thought at all. This promise is made only to Jesus' footstep followers; those who will be associated with him in his future, work of blessing the remainder of the world of mankind. These are promised "glory, and honor, and immortality." (Rom. 2:7) They are promised a heavenly inheritance. The Apostle Peter wrote: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."—I Pet. 1:3,4

These will be brought forth in what the Bible describes as "the first resurrection." Naturally, these must be the first to be resurrected, for they are to be associated with Jesus in the blessing of mankind in general. They are to live and reign with Christ a thousand years, and the purpose of that reign is, as explained by the Apostle, to destroy death. Paul wrote that Christ "must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."—I Cor. 15:25,26

The General Resurrection

As we have noted, mankind in general is to be restored to life on the earth as humans. God created man to live on the earth, not in heaven. The few to whom a heavenly reward will be given are those who, through their faithfulness in laying down their lives in sacrifice, prove worthy to be associated with Jesus in the work of the messianic kingdom. But the earth was created to be man's home, and it is on the earth that he will be given an opportunity to live forever. Isaiah wrote that God created the earth "not in vain," but "formed it to be inhabited."—Isa. 45:18

The Apostle Peter referred to that period of time in the divine plan when the work of restoring mankind to life will be accomplished as "the times of restitution of all things," which, he said, had been declared "by the mouth of all his [God's] holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21) And it is true that the holy prophets of the Old Testament were eloquent in their prophecies of this coming time of restoration for the world of mankind.

They affirmed that as a result of this work of restoration there would be no more blind eyes; none would be lame; that the ransomed of the Lord would return from death with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads, and that "sorrow and sighing will flee away." (Isa. 35) Isaiah also wrote, "He [the Lord] will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." (Isa. 25:8) Isaiah also wrote that the people in that day when God is blessing all the families of the earth will not say, "I am sick."—Isa. 33:24

In the Book of Revelation the Apostle John tells of a vision he was given of the manner in which the people would be blessed during the time of Christ's kingdom, and he wrote, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former

things are passed away.”—Rev. 21:4

First to Be Raised

The first ones to be restored to life as humans will be the ancient prophets, and other faithful ones of ages past. These will come forth in “a better resurrection,” as it is described in the Bible, and will be perfect humans from the start. (Heb. 11:35,40) These are the “fathers” referred to in Psalm 45:16, who are to become the children of Christ in the resurrection, and we are told that they will be made “princes in all the earth.”

These, we understand, will be the human representatives of the divine Christ. Jesus said of these that the people would come from the east and from the west, and would sit down with them in the kingdom—they will sit down with them, that is, as pupils before their teacher. And they will “sit down” thus to learn the ways of the Lord, the laws of the new kingdom, the messianic kingdom.—Luke 13:28,29; Matt. 8:11

And what a boon restitution will be for the redeemed world of mankind! As the work of restitution continues it will eventually reach out to bless “all the families of the earth,” even as God promised to Abraham. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and all the prophets will be on the scene to direct the affairs of the kingdom. The findings of the archeologists will not then be needed to verify the records of the Bible, for the ones who made those records will be personally present to vouch for them.

The people of the whole world will then know that these ancient men of renown, these faithful servants of God, were not myths, not imaginary people in fairy tales, but real men and women of God who willingly died in the service of the One who had promised to bless all the families of the earth.

This future joy of mankind will be very literal! There will be plenty of time for those “princes in all the earth” not only to direct the affairs of the kingdom, but also, if they choose, to relate some of their past experiences in serving the Lord. Who would not like to hear Noah tell of some of his experiences in building the ark?

We can only surmise the, details of joy which may be experienced in that new day. But we can be sure that they will be more wonderful than any or all of our dreams; for God, who so loved his human creatures as to give his Son in death that all might have an opportunity to live again, will see to it that his promises to bless all mankind are carried out in full measure. Nothing will be lacking, for he will open his hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

And what will the reaction of the people be? Isaiah wrote, “It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”—Isa. 25:9

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